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Latin labyrinths, Celtic knots: modernism and the dead in Irish and Latin American literature

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LATIN LABYRINTHS, CELTIC KNOTS:

MODERNISM AND THE DEAD IN IRISH AND LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

The Irish throughout their tumultuous history immigrated not only to North America but across Latin America, particularly to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and Mexico. Ireland and many of these Latin American countries share a close yet under-examined relationship, inasmuch as they are predominantly Catholic, post-colonial, hybrid populations with fraught immigrant experiences abroad and long histories of resisting Anglo-centric imperialism at home. More particularly, the peoples of these nations engage intimately with the dead (as shown, for example, by the Mexican Day of the Dead and Celtic roots of Halloween), and the dead appear frequently in literature from these countries that takes up issues of colonialism and anti-colonial struggles. The dead can function as repositories for forgotten history and allies in counter-imperial struggle; these roles become particularly important in the 20th century, wherein the forces of economic modernization have rushed to erase the memories of the dead. From the speech of the dead in the prose works of Juan Rulfo, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Samuel Beckett, and Carlos Fuentes, to the anticolonial poetics of William Butler Yeats and Julia de Burgos, this thesis examines how these two regions have, both in parallel and in concert, utilized the dead to bolster various nationalistic projects. This dissertation also explores patterns of Irish/Latin American literary citation and influence, tracing, for example, how Jorge Luis Borges's responded to James Joyce, or how a scene from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is re-enacted in the novels of Flann O'Brien and Gabriel García Márquez. This project contributes to comparative approaches to Irish literary and modernist studies, improves our nascent understanding of how the Irish and Latin Americans have interacted throughout their overlapping histories, and expands our comprehension of how the dead have been and continue to be utilized across the developing world to resist economic neo-colonialism.

Public Abstract

The Irish have a long and often overlooked history in Latin America and appear with surprising frequency in certain texts of Latin American literature. A common element shared by the literature of these two archives is a direct engagement with the presence and memory of the dead. This thesis examines how the dead have been presented in some of the major works of Irish and Latin American literature in the 20th century. These invocations of the dead become a touchstone for myriad transatlantic discussions on topics such as of literary influence between Ireland and Latin America, modernism, decolonialism, antistatism, the intersection between ecocriticism and postcolonialism, and resistance against economic neocolonialism.

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Introduction

Labyrinths and Knots

In 1872, the *New York Herald*, in an attempt to strike lightning twice after the success of their Dr. Livingstone search-and-find story, sought an interview with the Cuban revolutionary Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, one of the leading figures of the Ten Years War, the most recent revolt against the Spanish Crown. He was at the time hidden deep within the Oriente Province[1] of Cuba, a region renowned and romanticized as a wild place beyond the jurisdiction of state authority and its discontents. The *Herald* first sent reporter A. Boyd Henderson with explicit instructions to interview both Céspedes and his co-revolutionary Ignacio Agramonte; Henderson found the latter but faked an interview with the former, which fabrication was quickly uncovered to the embarrassment of the *Herald*. To repair their reputation, the *Herald* next sent Irish journalist James J. O'Kelly to finish the job—that is, they sent a man from beyond the pale to find someone from beyond another pale.[2]

The *Herald* apparently made the right choice. O'Kelly not only tracked down and interviewed the elusive Céspedes, but his Cuban adventures became the stuff of legend, complete with thrilling adventures, wartime intrigues, and daring escapes from Spanish authorities. He published his exploits in the popular 1874 travelogue *The Mambi-Land*, a book that, though now largely forgotten elsewhere, needs no introduction in Cuba, where it is still "frequently translated, reprinted, and quoted" (Hulme 65). Peter Hulme in *Cuba's Wild East* argues that O'Kelly succeeded where Henderson failed precisely because he was an Irishman, one whose

[1] Oriente was then known as Santiago de Cuba Province. Since 1976, Oriente has been represented by 5 Provinces: Granma, Las Tunas, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo.
[2] "Beyond the Pale" was a term that initially signified those regions of Ireland outside the bounds of English dominion.

"lifelong commitment was to Irish independence" (Hulme 47), and who therefore approached the Cuban rebels as "a movement analogous to contemporaneous Irish Fenians" (Hulme 52), fellow allies and compatriots in the causes of national independence. Such in any case were the reasons why Céspedes consented to an interview with O'Kelly:

> In a letter to his wife 20 March 1873, Céspedes reported: "O'Kelly lends himself to serve the interests of Cuba. I've formulated a plan to make the most of the Irish element. It is to help achieve…the recognition of our belligerence by the United States. The Republic of Cuba, once definitively established and recognized by other nations, will supply [Ireland] with 20,000 rifles and a steamship." (Hulme 58)

Céspedes did not just agree to meet with O'Kelly to express solidarity, but to negotiate an arms deal. That Céspedes should assume an Irishman would be amenable to such a trade was rooted in the fact that there was already a strong Irish presence within Cuba. Indeed, "one Spanish writer, visiting Cuba in 1839, noted that the ten most distinguished families on the island included the O'Farrills and the O'Reillys. Leopoldo O'Donnell had been Captain-General from 1843 to 1848" (Hulme 51). Of course, certain of those "distinguished" Irish families were likely members of the Plantocracy—but then, so was Céspedes (as were many other prominent criollos) when he freed his slaves at the *grito* and declared Cuban independence in 1868. The long and complex role of the Irish in Cuban colonial history, far from a liability, was apparently considered an asset by Céspedes. For him, the Irish were not just politically simpático, but blood relations.

The persistence of O'Kelly's *Mambi-Land* in the Cuban literary canon is but a beginning to the massive and labyrinthine web of historical and literary exchanges between the nations of Ireland and Latin America. Labyrinths are often key signifiers of both cultural traditions;

surveys of Latin American literature in particular often note their preponderance: for example, Octavio Paz's 1950 *El laberinto de la soledad*, the infinite labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges's 1944 *Ficciones*, Gabriel García Márquez's 1989 *El general en su laberinto*. Irish literature in turn, especially during the Modernist period, is often compared formally with the elaborate twists and turns of Celtic knots; the medieval Book of Kells purportedly reminded Joyce of his own writing style. Critics often examine Irish and Latin American labyrinths as reflective of the fraught and complex identities of these nations: how ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally, the various peoples of Ireland and Latin America form a complex mix of both indigenous and occupier, the "pagan" and the Christian, the pre- and post-colonial. The labyrinth becomes symbolic of the numerous identities and histories these peoples must negotiate. The labyrinths of Ireland and Latin America not only parallel, but are often interwoven and knotted together. Over the course of this project, I seek to illuminate patterns of literary exchange, influence, and citation that link Ireland to certain nations of Latin America, as well as specific writers of these nations with each other. As Pascale Casanova argues in *The World Republic of Letters*, this international exchange of seemingly disparate literary archives can open fresh avenues of inquiry,

> to explore a universe that writers themselves have always ignored, and to show that the laws that govern this strange and immense republic—a world of rivalry, struggle, and inequality—help illuminate in often radically new ways even the most widely discussed works, in particular those of some of the greatest literary revolutionaries of the twentieth century. (Casanova 4)

An examination of how the literary labyrinths of Ireland and Latin America knot together can help to illuminate even the most widely discussed works of their respective canons, by

examining the literary rivalries, struggles, and inequalities that exist between the writers of these regions.

An important aspect of these interwoven labyrinths, I increasingly find, is the presence of the dead—specifically, the memory, legacy, and after-shocks of the numerous casualties that resulted from the many conflicts that swept across these nations over the course of the 19th and especially 20th centuries. This type of remembrance is not quite the same as the memorialization of the martyred dead as national heroes that can be found amongst practically all nations, imperial and colonized alike, a tradition that extends from the many tombs of the unknown soldiers in our present day clear back to the Homeric odes of ancient Greece. I examine the Irish and Latin dead not so much in their roles as national martyrs, but rather in their much messier capacities as witnesses, as co-sufferers, and as part of the complex network of identities that must be negotiated, resisted, and embraced. These are generally not the officially "honored" dead, but those dead who were initially silenced either forcibly or through malicious neglect, such as the millions who fell victim to famine, conquest, and war. Thus, these dead speak not because they have been invited to by officialdom through memorial and song, but they speak *in spite* of the official apparatus—sometimes even in spite of themselves. These dead are not segregated from the concerns of the living, interceding only as benevolent or malevolent spirits, but are generally treated by those who acknowledge their existence as an ontological fact, indistinct from the concerns and effects of the present world. Such an attitude, I argue, sets apart the Irish and Latin American dead as distinct from other national-martyr traditions and is what in turns draws them closest to each other. It is worth noting that the literary labyrinths mentioned thus far all share a distinct affinity for the concerns of these dead: Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad* features an influential chapter on *el día de los muertos*, the Day of the Dead (which I

will touch on more in Chapter 1); Borges's many labyrinths inevitably concern the recurrence and return of the dead within the infinite (as I will discuss more in depth in Chapter 2); and García Márquez's *El general en su laberinto* details the final two weeks of the life of Bolívar, meditating upon how his presence still haunts the South American continent into the present day (as I will examine in Chapter 3). Celtic knots in turn, with their manifold twists and turns looping into, around, and through each other, become a sort of symbol for infinity, of endless recurrence, in defiance of the finality of death. The Irish texts that most self-consciously deploy prose styles reminiscent of knots, such as James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Flann O'Brien, are also, not coincidentally, the ones that are the most thematically preoccupied with the presence of the dying and the dead. Overall, the more I have examined and compared the canonical literary works of these two regions, the more I have been struck by how each of these countries' literary engagements with the dead are a key element of how their shared labyrinths connect across the Atlantic and relate with each other. These transatlantic relationships are sometimes competitive, other times admiring, but it is the dead who appear most frequently across their archives to mediate between them.

This project charts patterns of literary influence and exchange that have not been systematically described previously, and that are imbricated in common tropes of remembering the dead. My purpose here is not to speculate upon the veracity of the supernatural, nor to debate whether fictional representations of the dead should be read literally or symbolically, but rather to examine the peculiar manners by which the voices of the dead have been deployed rhetorically within the narratives of these particular colonized peoples as a mode of anti-colonial resistance. The specific manners by which these Irish and Latin American dead destabilize power are as varied and diverse as these peoples themselves are. As such, I necessarily must employ a wide

variety of different methodologies and critical frameworks in each chapter, adapted to the local historical and cultural circumstances are addressed in each example. Chapter 1, for example, centers primarily upon how the speech of the dead can disrupt statist frames of authority, and it examines how the authors that emerged in post-revolutionary Mexico and Ireland critique the failures of the regimes ostensibly tasked with fulfilling the promises of the revolution. But the specific concerns of post-revolutionary Mexican writers are distinct from those of mid-to-late twentieth century South American writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges or Gabriel García Márquez, whose nations are more preoccupied with negotiating their place in the emerging world socio-economic order. Hence, Chapters 2 and 3 examine how the memory of the dead connects to patterns of influence and intertextuality (for example, the outsized influence of James Joyce upon world writers). These authors' anxieties of influence are in turn metonymic for larger anxieties about the outsized influence of globalized economies upon the individual subject. Chapter 4 in turn utilizes an ecocritical framework, which is relevant given the vital importance of the highly limited wilderness landscape in the islands of Puerto Rico and Ireland. This ecocritical approach emphasizes how folkloric tropes of spirits are paired with the physical landscape to help incite revolution in the first place. Overall, there is no single strategy for resisting power associated with tropes of remembering the dead, but rather a collection of numerous distinct approaches collecting around the theme of the dead.

Given the long history of colonial and state violence in Latin America, as well as the catastrophic Famine in Ireland, the necessity of acknowledging the presence and voices of the disappeared within history becomes imperative towards the establishment of just societies in these regions. These dead form part of what Benedict Anderson once called an "imagined political community," one that "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation

will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6). The members of even the smallest nation will likely never meet most of their fellow citizens; they will likely never meet most of their fellow-dead, either, but that is precisely what renders the dead so essential to the formation of the nation. Indeed, the dead can help to imagine alternative communities in opposition to the prevailing state and/or colonial apparatus that determines these nations. As death is a great leveler, it can help to conceptualize the "deep, horizontal comradeship" that Anderson claims is necessary to create a cohesive national imagination, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [nation]" (Anderson 6). The dead can likewise assist in the proliferation of new national models across the world, help track the global exchange of texts and nationalist ideas, and can also invite communication and collaboration among past and present colonies engaged in anticolonial struggles. Overall, this project aspires to contribute to the fields of post-colonial studies, comparative approaches to Irish and Latin American literary studies, to contemporary conversations about immigration, and towards a richer understanding of revolution in the Americas, with an eye towards what "dead" movements may be revitalized next.

Entangled Histories

Before proceeding, it may be useful to provide a brief historical sketch of the Irish presence in the Americas. A handful of dedicated scholars, such as historian Jane Ohlmeyer, critic Maria McGarrity, and the nascent Society for Irish Latin American Studies (SILAS), have begun the hard work of tracing these intricate knots and labyrinths of entangled histories. They seek to "firmly established Irish discourse within the global field as a corrective to the usual Anglo-American cultural and critical alliance," as McGarrity claims in *Washed by the Gulf*

Stream (a title lifted from Joyce's *Ulysses*). This Irish reorientation towards Latin America, she argues, can help to liberate Irish discourse from the monopoly that the Anglophone world has traditionally held on it (as though the Irish exclusively emigrated to England, New York, Boston, and Chicago). McGarrity also finds that "Despite the varieties of colonial regimes and strategies, island cultures, fashioned and indebted to their specific geographies, use analogous strategies to confront their historic struggles" (McGarrity 28). The goal with putting Ireland in conversation with various Latin American nations is not to compile a list of superficial equivalencies, but to examine how similar strategies of resistance have arisen from similar socio-historical positions.

Yet even that attitude presupposes that Ireland and certain nations of Latin America are merely analogous; as Céspedes and O'Kelly highlight, Ireland and the various nations of Latin America share not only parallel but a wide variety of intertwined histories. Some of these histories stretch back to near the dawn of European imperialism. Susan Friedman notes in *Planetary Modernisms* that, "The travels and indigenization of three foods native to the Andes and long cultivated in what is now Bolivia and Peru provide a case in point—the white potato, the tomato, and the chili pepper…What is more Irish than the potato, more Italian than the tomato, more Indian (or Thai) than the chili pepper?" (Friedman 170). Among the many Andean vegetables to spread across the globe due to the Spanish *Conquista*, the potato became of special importance to the Irish. The most arable of *Eire's* land was commandeered for the English by means of the Catholic Penal Laws, the Enclosure Acts, and sheer bloody conquest, thus leaving the peasantry squeezed into the bog-lands, where only the potato could thrive. The Irish Potato Famine, then, has its roots in the conquest of *both* the Americas and Ireland—for the slim genetic variety in the potatoes introduced to Ireland rendered them peculiarly susceptible to blight. One particularly brutal blight notoriously resulted in the starvation of more than a million Irish people

in the Famine of 1845-1851, with at least another million immigrating across the Americas to escape their hunger pains.

But the Irish had been migrating across the Americas long before the Famine struck, and it was often involuntarily. In 1596, the English poet Edmund Spenser (himself of the Anglo-Irish settler class) published *A Veue of the Present State of Irelande* that called for a general extermination of the Irish natives, in order to remove the resistant native populations and thereby develop the land for themselves. When mass genocide proved unfeasible, forced labor provided the next best option, and Irish prisoners were shipped to England's new colonies in the Anglo-Caribbean. Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s aggressively expanded the practice of shipping Irish indentured servants to the Caribbean, partly as punishment for their revolts during the Interregnum, but also to provide the cheap labor necessary to develop England's lucrative new sugar plantations. Historical accounts record instances of the Irish organizing mass revolts alongside African slaves.[3] The origins of modern Race theory are rooted in part in these early attempts to divide and conquer these revolting laborers by convincing the Irish that, by virtue of their white skin and European ancestry, they were qualitatively different from the Africans, and hence their forced labor was for only seven years, and not for life (Stuart 100). Nevertheless, many Irish refugees were still not content to wait that long; and so, by process of stealing boats when and where they could, they effected a number of successful defections to Spanish-held territories, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, and what is now the Dominican Republic, to seek haven among their fellow Catholics. Many of these Irish refugees became instrumental in developing the agricultural base across not only the Caribbean, but the rest of New Spain and South America

[3] There were even old colonial reports of African slaves speaking Irish Gaelic in Montserrat, where the predominantly creole population still observes St. Patrick's Day to this day.

as well—which, it must be stated, included support for the *hacienda* and plantation slavery systems.[4]

The Irish also became key administrators within the expanding British imperial system globally; Aungiers Street in Dublin, for example, is named for Gerald Aungier, the third governor of Bombay in the mid-seventeenth century, who helped build up much of the colonial wealth in his native city upon plunder from India (where the Irish were regularly recruited as colonial military enforcers). Further complicating the Irish colonial position with the Spanish colonists is their shared Catholic faith: the Irish were among the ranks of Catholic missionaries sent to Latin America to impose Christianity upon the indigenous by the sword. Yet that account is further complicated by the fact that it was the missionaries who argued most vociferously for the humanity and rights of the indigenous, as seen in the Valladolid debates of mid-sixteenth century Spain.[5] Moreover, many of those same Catholic ministries centuries later helped form the foundation of liberation theology in late-twentieth century Latin America, as a mode to resist social, political, and economic exploitation. Irish missionaries in particular, along with the Republic of Ireland government, became immediate supporters of liberation theology, especially after an Irish-American nun educated at University College Cork was one of three volunteers brutally raped and murdered by a Salvadorian death-squad in 1980.

The Irish were often a simultaneous composite of both oppressor and oppressed, colonizer and colonized, capable of tracing their ancestry to both. As were likewise many colonial elites in Latin America; as noted earlier, Céspedes in Cuba, along with the many other

[4] Slavery was a practice the Irish carried with them to the future United States, as well. The O'Haras of *Gone With the Wind* remain today the classic example of Irish-American slaveholders in North America.
[5] Of course, that reading is even further complicated by the fact that African slaves were first brought to the Americas not only to replace the decimated indigenous populations, but because it was ultimately determined that the natives (unlike the Africans) had souls that could be Christianized and saved, and therefore did not merit slavery.

criollo plantation owners who voluntarily freed their own slaves when they launched their revolt against the Spanish Crown, was not an exception but a type for the many colonial elites who chose to fight on the side of freedom and independence. The Great Liberator Simón Bolívar, for example, was from one of the wealthiest families in Spanish America, nursed by a black slave, yet still determined to dedicate his extensive resources to the wars of independence. Upper class criollos, especially members of the oligarchy and land-owning class, spear-headed Independence efforts both continentally and in the Caribbean. When certain of the Irish arrived in Latin America as colonial administrators, they were joining a long tradition of potential colonizers-turned-liberators.

The classic example of this intermixture is Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme, one of the leaders of Chilean independence. He himself was the illegitimate son of an Irish aristocrat, Ambrose O'Higgins of County Sligo, who emigrated to South America to become a merchant. Ambrose later became a military governor of Chile (where he helped put down the indigenous Huilliche Rebellion of 1792) and Viceroy of Peru. Yet like so many other contemporaneous oligarchs and colonial administrators, Bernardo himself went on to become, alongside José de San Martín, one of the liberators of Chile from Spanish rule, and was noteworthy during his post-revolutionary Directorship for pushing such radical reforms as democracy and the abolishment of noble titles.[6] After his final fall from power and expulsion from Chile, O'Higgins joined Simón Bolívar in the liberation of Perú.

Bolívar in turn was no stranger to Irish assistance either; many Irish, veterans of the Napoleonic wars, lent their experience and their swords in the South American wars of

[6] When divisions arose within the newly independent Chilean government, he found support from Juan Mackenna, also of Irish extraction, and a governor of Osorno, on Chile's southern tip.

independence. Daniel O'Leary, from Cork, became Bolívar's aide-de-camp (memorialized in Gabriel García Márquez's *El general en su laberinto*), as did Morgan O'Connell in Venezuela and William Ferguson in New Granada and Peru. Colonel John Blossett led the second British Legion to assist Bolívar in his wars against Spain. Francis Burdett O'Connor of Cork became assistant chief-of-staff to Bolívar and later served as Minister of War in Bolivia (today, a province in the Department of Tarija, Bolivia, is named for him). Further south, John Thomand O'Brien served as an aide-de-camp to San Martín. Admiral William Brown, born in County Mayo, went on to become the "father of the Argentine navy." Similarly, Peter Campbell helped found the Uruguayan Navy after defecting from the British during their failed 1806 invasion of the Río de la Plata. Campbell later became the scourge of the river fleet of Paraguayan dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia. The Irish were defecting to South American countries as often as they were involved in invading them. These histories of simultaneous complicity and resistance run deep, and are what mark the long history of the Irish presence in Latin America. Their dead are often buried together in the same cemeteries, their blood intermingled within their family lines and on the battlefield.

Speaking of famed defections: as I shall detail in Chapter 1, a number of Irish immigrants drafted into the United States Army during the U.S.-Mexican War (many of them freshly fleeing the catastrophe of the Potato Famine) deserted to Santa Anna's army instead and formed the *San Patricio* (St. Patrick's) Battalion. Yet even before the arrival of the San Patricios the Irish had a long presence in Mexico; Juan O'Donojú, the "last viceroy of New Spain," has been heralded for his role in the final arbitration of Mexican independence, earning him the epitaphs of traitor and *persona non grata* in Spain, yet also securing him burial in the Altar of the Kings at Mexico City's cathedral. Long before O'Donojú, William Lamport in the seventeenth century arrived in

Mexico preaching the radical ideas of racial equality and the abolition of slavery, becoming one of the sources for the legends of Zorro. The list of the Irish Military Diaspora in Latin America goes on. Suffice to say, the Irish and Latin Americans have often mixed together, both militarily and ethnically, to resist the imperial exploitation of their peoples. Their destinies have been tied together from the dawn of the *Conquista* that first brought the potato to Ireland, clear through the many revolutions that marked the last century.

More often than not, it was the British Empire directly that tied together the destinies of these two regions. Jennifer L. French in *Nature, Neo-Colonialism, and the Spanish-American Regional Writers* details how there was a time in the early 19th century when it was the British, not the Spanish, who were perceived as the greatest existential threat to the liberty of Latin America: "In 1806…British forces attacked Buenos Aires and Montevideo in what was to be the first stage of a large-scale assault on Spain's Latin American possessions" (French 4). The united forces of the Río de la Plata delta successfully repulsed the British invaders at the time,[7] but not for long: "the defeat of Montevideo marked a change only in Britain's tactics, not its purpose with regard to Latin America" (French 4). Although Great Britain was ultimately unable to seize direct possession of the Spanish colonies militarily, they were able to exert their own overpowering economic influence over the region, which amounted to the same. Military colonialism transitioned to economic neo-colonialism (a term originally coined by Kwame Nkrumah). As French explains:

> By the term *neo-colonialism* I refer to the region's forcible subordination to Great Britain from the immediate post-independence period till the 1920s, when the United States

[7] Even before the 19th century, the British had already staged a number of invasions of Spanish Caribbean possessions—some successful (e.g. Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago), some repulsed (e.g. Cuba, Puerto Rico)—all in their bid to render the Caribbean a "British pond."

> became the dominant power in the Americas. While maintaining the appearance of autonomy, the Latin American republics, particularly but not exclusively in South America, performed the same economic functions as Britain's official colonies elsewhere. And they suffered many of the same deplorable results: growing debt and dependency on foreign manufacturers, and devastating exploitation of workers and the natural environment. The relationship between Britain and Latin America, according to historians and economists, was one of the single most important factors in the region's development, and a very real cause of its economic subordination to the metropoles of the United States and northwestern Europe today. (French 6)

When the British could not conquer South America militarily, they did so economically instead, in a manner specifically calculated to ensure the despondency and therefore dependency of the region. Hence, resistance against exploitative economic orders became as important to Latin America as political independence in the project of decolonization—a term that is itself heavily imbrued with the language of economic exchange. As Dane Kennedy argues:

> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines decolonization as the "withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence of such colonies." The key words in that definition are "withdrawal" and "acquisition," terms that connote sober financial transactions carried out by mutual agreement…Nothing could have been farther from the truth: decolonization was a violent, fiercely contested process. (Kennedy 2)

Far from a calm transaction, political decolonization has almost always been a bloody, violent, destructive affair. Nor has the process always been completed, even when political revolution has ostensibly been successful: "More often than not," says Kennedy, the imperial orders

"simply reconstituted themselves in new forms" (Kennedy 6). In these emerging post-colonial nation-states, a major frustration that emerges among many members of the post-revolutionary state is that the new regimes are often as complicit with the previous exploitative economic order as the governments they ostensibly overthrew (as I shall examine in the novels of Juan Rulfo, Carlos Fuentes, Máirtín Ó Cahdain, Samuel Beckett, Gabriel García Márquez, and others). As John Marx has argued, the globalized British Empire never actually dissolved, but merely carried on under other names (Marx).

French argues that when the British Empire finally collapsed, the United States swiftly took over in its stead. The U.S. was already well positioned, having pursued hemispheric hegemony long before they fully displaced the British. The 1847-1848 U.S.-Mexican War established continental dominion and commandeered the fertile Rio Grande river basin, in what is now southern Texas. The 1898 Spanish-American War extended U.S. holdings to the lucrative sugar economies of Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The 1823 Monroe Doctrine, initially formulated to discourage further European and Russian colonization in the western hemisphere, was increasingly utilized in the twentieth century to justify U.S. intervention in Latin American republics. But then, the U.S. had the successful British model to follow, and the British certainly had the practice: this economic imperialism exerted by the British across Latin America was first perfected upon the Irish themselves, England's first overseas colony. As Cheryl Herr writes in *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies*:

> Irish Columban Father Sean McDonagh…pointedly connects the so-called maldevelopment of the third world today with the situation of Ireland during the Famine, when families starved to death while haggards stood full of grain set aside for rent payments…[Similarly] according to UNICEF, third world children…die by the "tens of

> thousands" because cash-poor countries cannot pay their debts and feed their children at the same time. McDonagh deplores the intervention of the IMF and the World Bank not only insure loan repayments to developed countries but also, and more sinisterly, to engineer third world economies so that outstanding debts continue to grow at an exponential rate. It is not that World Bank officials are unaware of the damage they are causing but that a free market philosophy enables and actively mandates such unrestrained exploitation of the defenseless poor. (Herr 124-125)

According to McDonagh, whom Herr cites, there is a direct similarity between the exploitation of Famine-era Irish and that of twentieth century Latin America. The incapacity of the developing world, especially Latin America, to repay their interest loan debt to the IMF is a feature of the loan, not a mistake; the entire purpose of these loans was to ensure the crippling poverty of desperate Third World populations, and thus in turn ensure a large, exploitable pool of cheap labor at the behest of the First World. The "Lost Decade" of the 1980s, an era of stagnant economic development across Latin America, was not merely an unfortunate side effect of these nations' over borrowing throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but, argues McDonagh, was specifically engineered to arrest the region's economic growth, from which it is still recovering. Ireland, too, remains today vulnerable to the caprices of global lending; after the Republic of Ireland's "Celtic Tiger" boom of the early 2000s (when per capita GDP briefly surpassed the U.K.), the 2008 Market Crash hit Ireland's economy especially hard, and their crushing debt load caused them to be classified under the denigrating "PIGS" label alongside Portugal, Greece, and Spain. Overall, the economic experiences of the Irish and nations of Latin America across the 19th and early 20th centuries are not just analogous, but intersectional, subject to the same

merciless global market forces, and thus these experiences form a vital priority within their political resistances.

Modernisms

The historical intersections between Ireland and Latin America have often been overlooked and forgotten. But as Idelbar Avelar might argue, this forgetfulness is an integral feature of the market economy. He writes in *The Untimely Present*, "Market logic absorbs even the documentation of disappearances and tortures as yet another piece of the past for sale" (Avelar 22); as he argues, the past must either consent to become but another product for sale, or be erased entirely to make way for others that will. Avelar here writes primarily about the complicity of the post-dictatorial regimes in the southern cone of South America—Chile, Argentina, and Brazil—in perpetuating the neoliberalizing projects of their late-twentieth century dictatorships, [8] subjecting their nations to the caprices of Anglo-imperial capital. As Dane Kennedy likewise notes of the decolonial process, "When the violence and disorder that preceded the transfer of power prevented imperial authorities from claiming good will and gaining a graceful exit, they did their best to erase such unpleasantness from public memory through the destruction of documents and deliberate acts of forgetting" (Kennedy 3). Historical amnesia is in the self-interests of the former imperial powers in perpetuating their global economic hegemony, pressuring the post-colonial republics to participate in the neo-colonial order even as they resist it.

Yet that simultaneous resistance against and participation with the prevailing neo-colonial order is part of what has marked the relationship between Ireland and Latin America

[8] The cozy friendship between Pinochet and Thatcher is one such example of the relationship between neo-colonialism and southern cone dictatorships.

since its earliest days. The persistence of that tension into the present era is part of what renders this Irish-Latin relationship distinctly *modern*. Frederic Jameson in *A Singular Modernity* has argued that "modernism is essentially a by-product of incomplete modernization" (Jameson 103), that in fact Modernism is marked not only by participation in the process of economic modernization but also by a simultaneous *resistance* against these same processes of modernization. Jed Esty likewise contends that Modernism entails both participation with and resistance against economic modernization; in *A Shrinking Island*, he tracks how late British-modernism turned towards the pre-modern (as shown by Virginia Woolf's parochial final novel, T.S. Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism, and the popularity of J.R.R. Tolkien's neo-medievalism) in an attempt to draw upon an erased past, in order to resist the laissez-faire capitalism that had left so much of the English middle and working classes feeling radically isolated, alienated, and adrift. Lawrence Rainey similarly chronicles in *Institutions of Modernism* how our most canonical Anglo-Modernists had to constantly negotiate a love-and-hate relationship with the market economy (Rainey 10). Ezra Pound for example sought an old-style, pre-modern aristocratic patronage when he first moved to London, in an attempt to extricate himself from the mass-market; yet he also leveraged his elitism to drum up popular publicity for his work.[9]

Rainey also argues that T.S. Eliot's series of awards for *The Waste Land* were actually covert patronages by other names, an attempt to reconvene an older, aristocratic order ("These fragments I have shored against my ruin"); yet Eliot also worked at a commercial bank, a direct worker and beneficiary within the mass-market economy. Even James Joyce, with far fewer aristocratic pretentions than many of his peers, worked under the care of patrons who financed

[9] Pound, according to Rainey, was in turn following the polemical example of the Italian Futurist Filippo Tommaso Emilio Marinetti.

his works when he otherwise would not have been able to support his family by book sales; yet his special deluxe first edition of *Ulysses*, argues Rainey, was also an attempt to create an *object d'art* with higher resale value on the art dealer market. All these modernist writers were participating in and profiting from, one way or another, the market economy, even as they consciously resisted market commodification. Often they were simultaneously celebrating the fresh freedoms afforded them by the forces of modernization, while also remaining wary of their ramifications. For Rainey, Esty, and Jameson, that constant negotiation between wary resistance against and joyous participation with this new world order is what marks these canonical writers as distinctly modern.

Likewise, the majority of the authors I will be examining in this project are modern, not just in the chronological sense of existing during the twentieth century, but also in how they simultaneously participate with and resist against the forces of economic development and modernization. It is no coincidence that the most prominent literary labyrinths cited thus far have been twentieth century productions. For Paz, Borges, García Márquez, Joyce, Beckett, Yeats, and others, labyrinths are not only a representation of their complex subjectivity, but an expression of their contradictory place within the contemporary economy. Fernando J. Rosenberg argues of the Latin American vanguardistas:[10]

> these vanguardists…sought to produce a critique of the modern as a global project. From the perspective of a narrative in progress, Latin America seems to be cast either as a relic

[10] The vanguardias were a collection of early 20th-century literary and artistic movements spread across Latin America that can be regarded as counterparts to the modernist and avant-garde movements in Europe—including those of Ireland. I use the term "Modernist" in its broadest sense, referring not just to chronological periodization, but to the mass collection of transatlantic artistic movements in the 20th century that negotiated their simultaneous participation with and resistance against the forces of economic modernization. As such, I sometimes use the term "Modernist" in reference to not only the vanguardias, but also to later generations that might be called late-Modern or Post-Modern in the Anglophone world, or the Boom in the Hispanic world.

> from the primitive past or as an unrealized but promising future….But the difference that the avant-gardes opened to inquiry…is that at both ends of the narrative—the promise of the future and redemption through and of the past—Latin American discourse reencountered itself as subject to a larger order…a concept that neither clearly included nor excluded Latin America. (Rosenberg 1-2)

What Rosenberg argues of Latin America vanguardistas can be said of Irish literary modernists as well; Ireland, too, has often found itself "subject to a larger order," being largely portrayed by their various foreign tourism boards "either as a relic from the primitive past or as an unrealized but promising future," and their own avant-garde authors have likewise sought "to produce a critique of the modern as a global project." In all of these nations, literary and aesthetic modernism functions as an extended critique of economic and technological modernization, even as the modernist writers themselves likewise appreciate and take advantage of the new freedom afforded them by these new cultural and economic conditions. Their cautious ambivalence concerning the opportunities afforded by modernity is rooted partly in the fact that the colonized positions of their respective nations occupied simultaneous peripheral and central statuses within the global imperial system. Hence, their homelands were acutely aware of both the opportunities for liberation and the perils of exploitation afforded by modernity.

The writers that I examine in this project are likewise at once peripheral and central within their respective nations, positioning them ideally to "critique the modern as a global project." I examine long-neglected writers once considered parochial but now canonical such as Juan Rulfo, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, and Julia de Burgos. I also analyze self-imposed exiles such as James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and Gabriel García Márquez; as well as upper-class figures at once removed from and enmeshed in their national psyches such as Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis

Borges, Mario Vargas Llosa, or William Butler Yeats. These various authors all in some way, shape, or form, simultaneously occupy the margins and the core of their respective national consciousness. Yet the celebrity of each of these writers also illustrates the limitations of this project in its current form; though part of the point of this project, to return to Casanova's observation, is to "help illuminate in often radically new ways even the most widely discussed works" (Casanova 4), nevertheless the long-held biases of the current literary canon ensure that the most widely read authors remain overwhelmingly male and lighter-skinned. With the notable exception of Julia de Burgos, my archive unfortunately reproduces these strictures. My future work in this area will entail a deeper examination of the more racially and sexually marginalized members of these literary archives within the context of modernity and the dead.

This project likewise engages with a wide swath of genres: novels, short stories, plays, and poetry will all be treated in turn. Each of these generic forms plays with different modes of expressing the voices of the dead, and will each be so considered. Plays, for example, place a greater emphasis on performance, and are thus excellent modes for expressing how the influence and legacy of previous generations continues to manifest itself in the performance of the current living generation. I touch upon this performance lightly in my Chapter 1 discussion of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," with its austere, elliptical expressions of the Famine. Beckett's plays also offer opportunities for directors to have actors, and even audience members, "embody" the dead. I more minutely examine this performance in my Chapter 3 discussion of William Butler Yeats's late period play "The Words Upon the Window-pane," which interrogates how the voice of Jonathan Swift continues to inform the intellectual tradition of the newly-formed Irish Free State, in manners both constructive and overbearing. This ambivalence about the legacy of Swift ties into discussions of intertextuality and anxieties of influence; I

examine this anxiety by tracing how a séance scene from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is both re-enacted and parodied in Yeats's play, as well as in Flann O'Brien's 1964 novel *The Dalkey Archive* and Gabriel García Márquez's 1989 novel *El general en su laberinto*.

Prose, especially in novels, is well-adapted for parodying and thereby disrupting the tremendous influence of official discourse, whether it is the influence of literary ancestors or of empire. That is because prose tends to be more focused upon the construction of narrative, which in turn calls attention to the highly-constructed nature of historical narratives in general. These official narratives have often served to exclude the peripheries, the marginalized, and the silenced. Hence, the novels of Juan Rulfo, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Carlos Fuentes, and Samuel Beckett (as I examine in Chapter 1), and James Joyce (as I examine in Chapter 2) tend to be more interested in using the voices of the dead to posit a counter-discourse that is intrinsically disruptive to official discourse. Shortfiction in turn, particularly in the form employed by Jorge Luis Borges and early James Joyce, utilizes elisions to paradoxically raise awareness of all the silenced voices that have been similarly elided from official narrative.

Poetry, for its part, tends to place greater emphasis upon lyricism, on what Kate Trumpener calls "Bardic Nationalism," a core tenet of which is "[t]he displacement of political anger into cultural expression" (Trumpener 11). Hence the poetry of W.B. Yeats nd Julia de Burgos is less interested in the expression of any individual dead voice than in synthesizing their collective outrage into a single, unitary whole. Their goal is less disruption than synthesis, to not only overthrow imperial authority but to replace it with a newly-imagined political community. Since geographic location is essential for the formulation of a homeland, then the celebration and sanctification of the natural landscape becomes an important part of bardic poetry. Hence, my Chapter 4 discussion of Yeats and Burgos invariably includes a strain of ecocriticism, as I

examine how their poetic invocations of a spirit-inhabited wilderness help them to imagine the possibilities of an independent nation.

Each generic form invites a different mode of inquiry into the role of the dead in nationalistic projects. These genres, in fact, are treated as more distinct from each other than the literary periods I will be examining. Though I make gestures towards periodization and specific artistic movements, I remain wary of separating periods from each other as distinct, especially when the boundaries are often so arbitrary, and bleed into each other so fluidly. The topic of the dead itself renders the task of literary periodization especially difficult, because the return of the dead inevitably mixes disparate periods together, brings about the return of the repressed, collapses temporality, and places past generations into conversation with the present one—as well as future ones, for that matter. The eighteenth century can become co-present with the twentieth (as I shall discuss in greater depth, for example, in Chapter 3, wherein Jonathan Swift becomes a touchstone for W.B. Yeats, Flann O'Brien, and Gabriel García Márquez). Moreover, the impulse to periodize, categorize, account for, and separate into discrete components is a function of the sorts of economic systems of production that these writers are tacitly resisting. Indeed, a major assumption of this project is that any and all attempts to distinguish pieces from each other—the Irish from the Latin, the colonizer from the colonized, the living from the dead—is ultimately illusory, self-defeating, alienating, and counterproductive.

Days of the Dead

The dead are integral to this negotiation between resistance against and participation with modernity. That is in large part because the contemporary global economic order with whom Ireland and Latin America have most directly interacted and resisted is overwhelmingly Anglo-dominant in nature—and across the majority of English and Anglo-American literature,

apparitions of the dead are by and large classified as strange, hostile, and above all unwelcome. Hamlet and Horatio can scarcely believe their own eyes—or even each other—when the ghost of King Hamlet first appears. Ebenezer Scrooge famously refuses to believe the apparition of Jacob Marley, preferring to trust his indigestion before his own eyes with a glib, "There's more gravy than the grave about you" (Dickens 27).[11] The ghost nun that haunts Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* turns out to have a perfectly mundane explanation in the end, as does the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Even the real ghosts are denied existence: the late protagonist of Margaret Oliphant's 1884 *Old Lady Mary* returns to this mortal realm as a ghost, to reveal a missing will and correct an injustice; but she is frustrated to find her ghostly presence ignored at every turn, save only in whispered village folklore. Readings of Edgar Allen Poe, as in "The Tell-Tale Heart," invariably focus upon the unreliability of the narrator; the possibility of a straight supernatural reading of the text is denied at every critical turn. Likewise, the New Critics famously promulgated an entire reading of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* wherein the ghosts are not only nonexistent, but solely a hallucination in the fevered imagination of the protagonist.

[11] Christmas itself was often the sole exception to the English exclusion of the ghosts. Up until two generations ago, Christmas Eve was the time for "telling scary ghost stories" (as evidenced by the 1963 Holiday mainstay *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*). As British humorist Jerome K. Jerome claimed in 1891, "Whenever five or six English-speaking people meet round a fire on Christmas Eve, they start telling each other ghost stories...Nothing satisfies us on Christmas Eve but to hear each other tell authentic anecdotes about spectres." But why Christmas in particular? There is perhaps a hint in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, wherein Marcellus, the guard who first spies the ghost of King Hamlet on a cold December night, ponders aloud: "Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes/Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated/The bird of dawning singeth all night long/And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad/The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike/No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm/So hallow'd and so gracious is the time" (*Hamlet Act I.i.181-187*). That is, Christmas is when the ghosts have the least power to walk the Earth; hence, the English only dared to tell ghost stories at Christmas because they believed that's when the ghosts had least power to haunt them. Such has been the dread and care with which the English have engaged with the most unwelcome dead, before finally pushing them out of Christmas entirely—as they have nearly everywhere else. Perhaps that is part of the reason why Joyce's "The Dead" takes place at a Christmas party, as I shall touch on more in Chapter 2.

Even in those eras wherein the dead are explicitly invited, as in the séances of the Spiritualists[12] at the *fin de siècle,* still they were considered a strange thing that had appeared, difficult to access and appearing only with great effort after having crossed some extreme divide. A century later in 2000 (at the end of another *fin de siècle*), popular horror novelist and New England native Stephen King instructed other aspiring horror writers that ninety percent of everything one writes must feel ordinary, so that when the ghosts finally appear, they feel real, as though that were a difficult thing to do (King). Across most of the Anglosphere, there is the distinct understanding that the existence of the dead must always be horrible and terrifying, the sole province of literary thrill-seekers—or, the dead must be perpetually banished to the realm of the hucksters and the gullible. Like an old *Scooby-Doo* episode, the ghosts must be continually unmasked as a scam-artist scaring away patrons for the insurance money—and the fact that the motivation for the hoax was almost always economic is indicative of the larger reasons for this Anglospheric exclusion of the dead.

Part of this cultural fear and banishment of the dead stems from the rationalist Protestant theology that took root in Age of Enlightenment England, with its emphasis upon a God who can be accessed solely through reason, bypassing the need for priestly mediation or the mysticism of the mysteries. This more "empirical" theology had definite economic consequences; Max Weber famously argued in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that Calvinist Protestantism helped give rise to a "rationally" ordered capitalism, systematizing the age-old human failing of avarice into an "ethos" wherein the "duty of the individual . . . [is] the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself" (Weber 51). Monetary gain in this ethos is no longer desired for what it can buy, but solely for its own sake, trumping all other

[12] The Spiritualists were a movement of which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was an apologist.

considerations. In this Protestant model, all elements and beings not obviously engaged in the cause of maximizing economic production are excluded ruthlessly from the larger system as not only extraneous, but sinful and damned. As China Miéville outlines, the ghosts of English folktales cannot simply exist, but must perform a utilitarian function: "The eighteenth-Century ghost was a revenant who tended to moralism and anti-Popish sniping, embodying as dread example lessons about virtue, justice, and so on. In the early nineteenth century, the explicitly sectarian character of that moralism had waned, but the instructional nature of hauntings remained" (Miéville). Ghosts are never just allowed to ontologically be, but must fulfill some "useful" purpose. Otherwise there is no place for them. Thus the dead, which are almost by definition economically unproductive, are largely damned from participation in such an economic system. Henceforth, any appearance of the dead can only be considered as a horrific apparition of the damned, yet with this collateral effect: anything with the ability to exist independent of systems of production must hereafter be interpreted as a shadowy threat to the integrity of the prevailing economic order. Such apparitions must be repulsed as terrifying, and ultimately dismissed as illusory.

Within the Irish-Latin archive I have assembled, however, the dead are perceived differently. The Catholicism that predominates their nations perhaps renders them far less committed to Protestant epistemologies, and thus possesses less overtly hostile attitudes towards revenants and ghosts. In the texts I will be examining, the presence of the dead is treated in a manner far more matter-of-fact, even quotidian. Their presence requires little explanation or justification. For an English or Anglo-American audience, the dead may be horrifying, but for an Irish or Latin American one, they are, generally speaking, neither inherently horrifying nor benevolent, but rather a given quantity, simply another fact of the universe. If they appear as

ghosts or revenants, they may certainly provide moral instruction or warning, but are not necessarily required to; in fact, they do not require a utilitarian reason to exist at all, they simply are. Far from monstrous or damned, their mere existence provides an implicit sort of assurance that the prevailing Anglo-Protestant economic order is not the only possible system; by their sheer ontology, they give the lie to the Thatcherian "There is no alternative" and argue that economic utility is irrelevant towards determining social value. As such, they can provide solidarity with other groups that have been marginalized as economically extraneous or disposable—similar to how the Irish and Latin Americans have demonstrated solidarity with each other. Indeed, because the dead are so steadfastly ignored and discarded by Anglospheric neocolonialism, neither Ireland nor the Latin American nations can afford to neglect the dead as a potential ally.

The dead for the nations of Ireland and Latin America are not cordoned off into mere memorialization, carefully catalogued and organized like the perfect, indistinguishable rows of Arlington or other such national cemeteries, but are messy, porous, intimately enmeshed amidst lived experience. These dead are not solely championed (and segregated out) as martyrs or ideals, but are often regarded as casualties, fellow victims, a representation of a historical legacy that refuses to be ignored, and/or as an audible chorus of voices that speak incessantly, no matter whether they are acknowledged or even intelligible. In fact, often their very unintelligibility, their refusal to conform to any sort of clear narrative, whether official, governmental, or otherwise, is part of what imbues them with their unique destabilizing power against forces of economic neo-colonialism and statist power.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 opens by focusing upon the relationship between Ireland and Mexico specifically. I begin by discussing the San Patricio battalion, the aforementioned cadre of Irish immigrants who defected from the United States Army to the Mexican side during the U.S.-Mexican War, an act that has sealed together the two nations by a bond of blood. The immediate camaraderie between the two nations likewise extends to their amiable attitudes towards the dead, as exampled most popularly by the Mexican Day of the Dead and the Celtic origins of Halloween: two Autumnal festivals of pre-Christian, pre-Colonial origins centered upon the return of spirits from the next world. I identify both holidays as "Modern" in the Jamesonian sense, in that, though they are both completely (even comically) commercialized and integrated into the contemporary market economy, yet still they both foreground the fact of death in an economic order otherwise invested in ignoring that fact altogether. The dead can serve as a repository of historical grievances, a recorder of silenced voices, and as a disruptive influence against state authority.

I examine the specific manner by which the dead can disrupt first through a comparison of Juan Rulfo's influential 1955 novella *Pedro Páramo* and Máirtín Ó Cadhain's 1949 Irish language novel *Cré na Cille*.[13] The former takes place in a literal ghost town in rural Mexico, where the spirits of the dead still speak to the living. The latter is an Irish language novel that takes place in a churchyard located within the *Gaeltacht*,[14] and centers upon the dead conversing with each other from their graves, as loudly and gregariously as they ever did while alive. Both novels focus upon the trauma effected upon poor, rural communities in the aftermath of the

[13] The title is translated into English as either "The Dirty Dust" or "Graveyard Clay."
[14] The *Gaeltacht* encompasses those last few scattered regions of Ireland where Irish Gaelic is still largely spoken natively.

violent, early twentieth century revolutions that shook Mexico and Ireland alike. These revolutions were both waged against the caprices of market economies specifically, from the "modernization" projects of *Porfirismo* to the failure of extreme laissez-faire economics during the Potato Famine. These two texts are especially critical of how the post-revolutionary governments intended to overturn these exploitative economic orders instead became complicit in perpetuating them, to the neglect and demise of their most vulnerable rural communities. I first draw upon the recent work of Nuala Finnegan, who argues that the fragmentary nature of these two texts' prose is not only reflective of the decomposition of its dead bodies, but also fragmentizes the text into a massive cacophony of disparate voices that "serve to undermine, unsettle and ultimately dismantle the various frames of authority—literary—national—historical—metaphorical—that constrain them" (Finnegan 181). The cacophonous speech of the dead is especially pronounced in *Cré na Cille,* written in a language that was itself considered dying or dead; the larger meta-joke in Ó Cadhain's text is not only that Irish is not dead yet, but that it cannot shut up. In every attempt to silence the dead, they only speak out with all the greater cacophony. The speech of the dead, in this model, is inherently politically destabilizing.

Lest anyone assume that the speech of the dead is limited to the rural peripheries—where it is audible but ignorable—I next examine two novels that demonstrate how the legacy of the dead haunt and permeate to the very core of their countries, saturating all levels of society: Samuel Beckett's 1951 *Malone Dies* and Carlos Fuentes' 1962 *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. Both stream-of-conscience novels feature dying men on their deathbeds reflecting upon the wreck of their lives in their last moments. They are characters who were both victims of and participators in the revolutionary violence of the early twentieth century. In *Artemio Cruz*, the manner by which Artemio is inscribed with the violence and betrayals of the 1910 Revolution in

favor of North American business interests is presented overtly. In *Malone Dies*, that historical violence is rarely explicit (though there are oblique references aplenty to the Famine, the Anglo-Irish civil wars, and English racialism); nevertheless, the violence of the entire community is still engraved directly into the body of both Malone and of the fragmented text itself. I argue that this comparison with Fuentes can help to illuminate Beckett's own political projects, including his critiques of postrevolutionary Ireland.

The promise of these two novels is that the historical legacy represented by Artemio and Malone will not die with them, but rather that it will continue to haunt their respective nations long after their passing. This subtle shift from the dead to the dying is integral, as it bridges the gap between the worlds of the living and of the dead, highlights how the speech of the dead remains intimately enmeshed and entangled with those of the living, and emphasizes how the legacy and influence of the dead are still with us. The warning of all four of these texts is that the dead still haunt Mexico and Ireland; but they likewise contain the implicit assurance that the dead are likewise *with* these peoples, that their voices are still accessible and available for political resistance. The unspoken promise is that if these nations can access the vast legions of the dead, then they can at last outnumber the massive superpowers with whom they border, and thereby effect a broader liberation from poverty, marginality, exploitation, and economic precariousness.

In Chapter 2, I turn my attention to James Joyce, the author of "The Dead," whose most famous work *Ulysses* is structured around the deaths of a mother, a father, and a son, and whose final work is named for a *Wake*. I survey the extensive existing criticism that places Joyce in conversation with the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, whom Joyce influenced. As many critics have noted, both these literary giants share a preoccupation with labyrinths, infinity, and

the presence of the dead; these are not mutually distinct concerns, for if all labyrinthine possibilities are co-present within infinity, then so are all permutations of the infinite dead. As an example, I compare the ghost scenes in Joyce's "The Dead" with that of Borges's "The Garden of Forking Paths." Ghosts for Borges and Joyce are manifestations of infinity, and hence serve as another mode by which they can at last challenge and exceed the massive, yet still finite, totalitarian political and economic systems of totalization that attempt to catalogue, account for, and thereby colonize all things.

One of the systems of totalization that Borges actively resisted was Joyce himself. He came to feel that the maximizing tendencies of Joyce's novels, in their attempt to account for and encompass the world into a single work, were symptomatic of the totalitarianism he saw take shape in both Europe and Argentina. Borges rejected such maximization and instead wrote strictly in short stories, as a mode by which to avoid totalization. He defends his brevity with a quiet jab at Joyce in the introduction to the *Garden of Forking Paths* collection: "It is a laborious madness and an impoverishing one, the madness of composing vast books—setting out in five hundred pages an idea that can be perfectly related orally in five (a few) minutes"[15] (67). Likewise, as a number of critics have outlined, "Funes, His Memory," a tale about a Paraguayan farmhand blessed and cursed with perfect memory, is a direct parody of the ideal Joycean reader. Similar criticisms of *Ulysses* appear in such classic Borges fictions as "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" and "The Mirror and the Mask." In contrast to Joyce's massive novels, Borges's short stories leave the greater part of his narratives unsaid, thereby expressing infinity not in Joycean expansionism but through the silences of the page. However, I also argue that the

[15] "Desvarío laborioso y empobredecor el de componer vastos libros; el de explayar en quinientas páginas una idea cuya perfecta exposición oral cabe en pocos minutos. Mejor procedimiento es similar que esos libros ya existen y ofrecer un resumen, un comentario" (511).

critical tendency to label Joyce's expansive novels as maximizing (in contrast to Borges's minimalism) is somewhat reductive and misleading: Joyce's books are certainly much longer than Borges's, but his language likewise fragments and disintegrates in a manner that calls attention to the empty spaces—and that towards the same ends as the texts covered in Chapter 1, to challenge neo-colonialism and linguistic frames of authority.

Chapter 3 explores another Irish figure who weaves his way prominently through the fictions of Borges: Jonathan Swift, the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irishman, misanthrope, and man of letters. Though he is well outside the twentieth-century milieu of this project, his novel *Gulliver's Travels* was written early in the rise of British imperialism and therefore anticipates many of the concerns of the modern period. The text features an often overlooked scene that has been curiously repeated by Irish and South American modernist writers alike. Specifically, I examine the episode at the end of Part III wherein a necromancer enables Gulliver to summon the spirits of the famous dead—Alexander, Caesar, Aristotle, and countless Kings, courtiers, and ministers—and thus learns first hand their many sins, weaknesses, and moral repugnancy. Gulliver's séance becomes a literary mode by which to mock and puncture the pretentions of the powerful and their descendants, and thereby delegitimize their historical claims to authority. This séance, then, functions as a decolonial strategy to prevent the re-assertion of empire.

I first trace how this séance is reenacted in William Butler Yeats's 1934 one-act play *The Words Upon the Window-Pane*. In this drama, a group of Irish spiritualists meet to summon the dead through a séance. Midway through the play, the séance is interrupted by the spirit of Swift himself, who is described by the participants as "ugly," mad, and a nuisance. Given the outsized influence Swift wielded over that post-revolutionary generation of Irish writers—and over Yeats in particular—Swift ironically becomes one of those dead spirits whom Yeats must deflate in

order to liberate himself. A sort of anxiety of influence[16] permeates this play, a desire on the part of Yeats to both claim Swift as a forbear while also simultaneously swerve free of him.

This Swiftian séance is again reenacted in Flann O'Brien's 1964 novel *The Dalkey Archive*. Early in this comedic text, a mad scientist named De Selby allows the protagonist Mick, a local Dubliner, to converse with the spirit of the Saint Augustine. In the ensuing conversation, De Selby and Augustine mock and attack each other's intellectual integrity, virtue, and basic understandings of race and philosophy. The séance deflates the authority of a major Church Father and by extension that of the Church itself, but also punctures the pretentions of De Selby and his affectations towards intellectual mastery. That is, the séance is not merely interested in deconstructing ecclesiastical authority, but *all* forms of authority together. This mockery of authority then extends to James Joyce, whom O'Brien felt an especially great anxiety of influence; shortly before his death, Joyce called O'Brien, "A real writer, with the true comic spirit," thereby providing the pull quote that would forever grace the cover of every single O'Brien novel. Seeking to liberate himself from the shadow of his antecedent, O'Brien determined that Joyce's mastery needed to be deconstructed, too. Hence, in another reenactment of the Swiftian séance, Mick finds Joyce in a Skerries pub, who in this novel has faked his death, returned to Ireland, and now lives under an assumed name. Mick is initially excited to meet the legend, but quickly learns that this Joyce is senile, old, and does not recall having composed *Finnegans Wake* or *Ulysses*. He learns that *Dubliners* was coauthored, and all he writes now are cheap pamphlets of Catholic apologia. As with Yeats and Swift, O'Brien feels he must deflate

[16] This anxiety of influence is famously first outlined in Harold Bloom's 1973 study, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*.

the overbearing influence and pretentions of his predecessors, no matter his personal respect for them, as a mode of resisting all forms of authority.

This chapter concludes with an analysis of García Márquez's 1989 historical novel *El general en su laberinto*, wherein Irish aides-de-camps become the chroniclers of the final, unknown days of a dying Simón Bolívar, the Great Liberator of South America. The novel was written towards the end of the "Lost Decade," when economic neoliberalism had arrested the development of the South American continent, when empire had thereby reasserted itself upon these post-colonial states. While there is not a séance *per se* featured in this novel, I argue that the novel itself functions much like Swift's, in the way that the text invokes, only to desacralize, a mythic national figure who continues to dominate the political landscape of contemporary South America. While the novel at a surface level reads as a sympathetic portrayal of a defeated man, the text nevertheless implies that the mess of caudillos and dictators that arose after Bolívar's death were in fact following his example. Like Swift, Yeats, and O'Brien, García Márquez summons the spirit of a dead man in order to hold him to account. It is particularly noteworthy that it is the General's Irish aide-de-camps whom García Márquez highlights as the chroniclers of Bolívar's life, whose "names would be forever linked to the General's" (259). I argue that García Márquez chose the Irish as his archivists and Spiritualist mediums because they alone, as heirs of Swift, appear to best understand that to invoke and summon the ghost of a great man is inherently to disrupt and undermine him.

After three chapters analyzing the influence and legacy of the dead, Chapter 4 concludes this project by examining what happens when there is a resurrection. As my prime examples, I compare William Butler Yeats with Julia de Burgos, the 20th-century national poets of Ireland and Puerto Rico respectively, two islands that have long served as the colonial possessions of

neighboring Anglo superpowers. This chapter opens by examining how their two earliest and most popular poems—1886's "The Stolen Child" and 1935's "Río Grande de Loíza" respectively—imagine untamed wilderness as a sanctuary from imperial jurisdiction, where young children are led away by forest spirits to protect them from the tears of this world. "For the world's more full weeping than you can understand" say the faeries to Yeats's stolen child, while Burgos calls the Río Grande "Great flood of tears/The greatest of all our island's tears,"[17] save for "those that come from my eyes/of my soul for my enslaved people."[18] Given the centrality of wilderness to these poems, this chapter draws on the works of Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert and Elaine Savory, who argue that ecocriticism and postcolonialism, far from possessing competing priorities as many critics have long assumed, can in fact join together as allies in order to resist economic exploitation. In this model, the wood spirits that personify wilderness become not opponents of but allies with colonized peoples in their various decolonial projects.

I likewise track how both poets, as they aged, became increasingly cynical about the possibilities of poetry to ever effect any sort of real-world political change. Burgos would end up living in the United States, working for the State department in a minor clerical role, before her youthful activism got her fired. She was later buried in a potter's field after her death in Spanish Harlem in 1953. A middle-aged Yeats in turn declared that "Romantic Ireland is dead and gone" in his poem "September 1913," his youthful dreams of revolution having died the slow death of so many others in the Irish imagination. Which is why the Easter Rising in 1916 came as such a shock to him: a cadre of young poets influenced by Yeats staged a coup that began the long, violent process by which the Republic of Ireland came to achieve full political

[17] "Llanto grande/El más grande de todos nuestros llantos isleños." Gareth Price translation from the bilingual edition of *Song of the Simple Truth: The Complete Poems of Julia de Burgos.* Curbstone Press, 1997.
[18] "el que de mí se sale/por los ojos del alma para mi esclavo pueblo." Gareth Price translation.

independence. These same poets intentionally held the Rising on Easter—the day of resurrection—and it could not have been more astounding to Yeats than if an actual dead body had returned from the grave. Romantic Ireland was resurrected, rejuvenated, and returned by the wilderness where it had been hiding. Romantic Puerto Rico by contrast has yet to see its day of resurrection, though Burgos remains core to Puerto Rican secondary education curriculums, her poetry canonized, her memory engraved in their nationalistic imagination—the Romance still awaits its return. I conclude this dissertation by examining the resurrection motif in Yeats's and Burgos's middle-aged poetry, "Easter 1916" and "23 de septiembre." These poems make the case that the memory of the dead can not only destabilize authority, but return to complete the revolutionary projects they began.

For all of the various poets and novelists examined in this project, death is not a completion but an interruption, a hibernation. The legacy and historical influence of the dead persists even past the personal point of annihilation; it is not a static or passive force for these authors, but a power that possesses the ever-present possibility of radical change. To appropriate a John Maynard Keynes quote, in the long run we are all dead—but that does not necessarily mean we are all finished (Keynes 80).

Chapter 1

The Mexican Day of the Dead and Celtic Halloween: The Speech of the Dead from Rulfo and Ó Cadhain to Beckett and Fuentes

Early in the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-48, a small cadre of Irish immigrants, in defiance of their treatment by U.S. nativists and feeling common cause with their fellow Catholics against Anglo-dominant imperialism, famously defected to Santa Anna's army and formed the *San Patricio* (St. Patrick's) Battalion. Though they served with distinction, and helped put up some of the stiffest resistance of the war according to Ulysses S. Grant, they were ultimately forced to surrender during the fateful Battle of Churubusco (though even then, not until long after their ammunition ran out). The majority of the Battalion was executed in September of 1847, hung for high treason in Mexico City in one of the largest mass-executions in U.S. military history. They are on occasion mentioned in the same breath as the *Niños Héroes*, the famed six Mexican military cadets who preferred death to surrender. According to legend, one cadet leapt from the citadel of Chapultepec Castle wrapped in the Mexican flag to deny the Americans the honor of capturing it—and did so on September 13th, in full view of the last San Patricios to be hung, who purportedly cheered the Mexican flag with their last breaths. Though the San Patricios remain controversial[19] in the annals of U.S. military history, their deaths sealed Mexico and Ireland together in a bond of blood that has persisted into the modern day. "The members of the St. Patrick's Battalion were executed for following their consciences" declared President Ernesto

[19] Military historian Brian McGinn argues, "from the viewpoint of the U.S. military, the less said about such subjects, the better. Desertions reflect poorly on political leadership and military command; defections even more so...In general, Irish-Americans have also been uncomfortable with the story of the San Patricios. They could argue…that the overwhelming majority of the 4,811 Irish-born soldiers who served in the U.S. army during the Mexican-American War did not desert. Even if all the San Patricio soldiers were Irish—and they were not—Irish-born deserters would represent less than four per cent of Irish soldiers" (Connaughton 56).

Zedillo in the 1990s, "They were martyred for adhering to the highest ideals" (Connaughton 55). Likewise, President Vicente Fox stated, "The affinities between Ireland and Mexico go back to the first years of our nation, a brave group of Irish soldiers... in a heroic gesture, decided to fight against the foreign ground invasion" (Fogarty).[20] Joyce wrote that "All Ireland is washed by the gulfstream" (*Ulysses* 16), and the relations between Mexico and Ireland have likewise been correspondingly warm since the end of the U.S.-Mexican War.

The nations of Mexico and the Republic of Ireland draw together closest through the shared memories of their martyred dead. It may be more than mere socio-historical coincidence, then, that these two countries share a pair of mid-autumn festivals centered on remembrances of the dead: Celtic Halloween and the Mexican *Día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead). The two holidays occur within close proximity to each other, both temporally on and around Catholic All Souls Day, and spatially around the U.S./Mexican borderlands. In the U.S. Southwest particularly, millions of native-born, naturalized, and undocumented Chicano children[21] alike go out trick-or-treating on Halloween night, and then turn around and celebrate *Día de los muertos* two days later. On the same token, popular observance of Day of the Dead in the U.S. Southwest has reached a point wherein (formerly Mexican) cities such as Los Angeles now organize official Day of the Dead celebrations, often as a collaboration between the increasing Chicano majorities within these cities and white, African American, Asian, and other minority populations, of whom many possess at least partial Irish ancestry, as well. Halloween and Day of the Dead are

[20] There is a *Batallón de San Patricio* (St. Patrick's Battalion) street in Monterrey and a *Mártires Irlandeses* (Irish Martyrs) street in the D.F. In 1997, the Mexican government commemorated the 150th anniversary of the San Patricios' execution at San Jacinto Plaza in Mexico City, where both Mexico and the Republic of Ireland jointly issued commemorative postal stamps to mark the occasion. The San Patricios have likewise gone on to be memorialized in a number of films, books, plays, and most recently a 2010 Chieftains album, which was a collaboration with numerous Mexican musicians, and features a spoken-word track by actor Liam Neeson.

[21] Including Irish-Mexican children, for many Irish settled northern Mexico well before the San Patricios arrived.

currently in process of connecting across the porous borderlands of Mexico and the U.S., as they also symbolically bridge the borderlands between the living and the dead. In supermarkets across the western United States, Day of the Dead decorations increasingly crowd the October holiday aisles alongside their Halloween counterparts.

Day of the Dead has its root in an ancient, pre-colonial Aztec festival honoring the goddess Mictecacíhuatl, she who rules over Mictlán, the underworld. Though Aztec civilization was decimated by the Spanish *Conquista*, the festival itself continued, albeit in semi-Catholicized form, among Mexico's surviving indigenous and mestizo populations. Halloween is a Celtic transplant to North America brought over by the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh. These Celtic migrants had in turn adapted it from the ancient Gaelic Samhain, a festival observing the season when the boundary between this world and the Otherworld was more permeable, when the *Aos Sí* cross over and must needs be propitiated to ensure the survival of the living through the coming winter. Though the anti-Catholic Puritans of New England resisted Halloween celebrations early in colonial history, it continued to rise to prominence within U.S. culture, especially following the waves of Irish immigrants escaping the Famine (Rogers 49-50). Day of the Dead and Halloween both express the persistence and survival of the cultures with which they are associated—the polytheist within the Christian, the indigenous within the invader, the colonized within the colonizer, the ancient within the modern. The Jack-o-Lanterns, masks, and door-to-door costumers of the Samhain, intended to blend in with the walking spirits returning to the land of the living, as well as the sugar skulls and skeletons of the Day of the Dead, are a sort of ancient holdover like unto Christmas trees and Easter egg baskets, a persistent reminder of a far more ancient, non-Christian set of influences. In our contemporary moment, long after their Christianization around All Souls Day, these two festivals have circulated even

further globally, now by late-period capitalism as festivals of mass commercialism, no more "authentically" Mexican *or* Irish in North America than Cinco de Mayo and St. Patrick's Day. It is today axiomatic to note that they are both now largely consumer driven affairs, pale facsimiles and simulacrums of whatever ancient festivals they are descended from, borderline parodies of the cultures they ostensibly represent, the very type for superficial engagement with a different culture—or with death itself, for that matter. Arguably, whatever their ancient roots, Halloween and Day of the Dead today are at first glance fully complicit in the "market logic" that Idelbar Avelar argues "absorbs even the documentation of disappearances…as yet another piece of the past for sale" (Avelar 22), commodifying death as simply another product to push come October.

Yet still this pair of festivals remain, glaring aberrations that, in their quiet way, stubbornly foreground the presence of the dead and the persistence of decimated indigenous cultures within an Anglo-Protestant economic order otherwise invested in forgetting them entirely. This economic order has less absorbed these holidays than it has grafted itself onto them, in a manner that belies the supposedly unassailable hegemony of the prevailing system. By way of comparison, Susan Schroeder has noted how much the pre-conquest Aztec elites evinced a surprising level of continuity within the Spanish colonial system well into the nineteenth century. Similarly, R.F. Foster emphasizes in *Modern Ireland* the astonishing persistence of local land-ownership between pre-1600 Ireland and the post-plantation projects of King James I. In both cases, it is less that the original population was displaced by the colonizers than that the colonizers were merged with a pre-existing order that refused to be ever completely subsumed. We can read a similar grafting onto Halloween and the Day of the Dead: these two festivals can be read as examples of an indigenous perpetuation within a colonial system, always giving the lie to the complete erasure of native peoples. The dead still speak; though their voices

have certainly been distorted almost beyond all recognition, nevertheless they still, after all these centuries, have not been completely silenced. For if "[m]arket logic absorbs even the documentation of disappearances and tortures as yet another piece of the past for sale," then one can read the Day of the Dead's insistence upon the memory of the dead, what with its shrines and altars to the dearly departed, the joyous assumption that they are present for the festivities, and general refusal to allow that disappearance to be finalized, as another subtle form of resistance against economic modernization. The various skeleton figurines for sale every October across Mexico, all in pseudo-comic poses of the quotidian (in wedding-gowns, dressed as mariachi, playing football, teaching school, sitting on toilets, and so on), perhaps appear so macabre to Anglo-American eyes because these sorts of *memento moris* are not generally supposed to exist to us without appearing horrifying. Likewise, Halloween foregrounds the fact of death rather dramatically within a market-dominated culture that usually prefers to elide that fact altogether—and all of Halloween's Styrofoam tombstones, cotton spider-webs, rubber masks, kitsch and plastic cannot quite trivialize the awareness of our impending mortality.

That is, there is something intrinsically modern about these two ancient festivals. Jameson recall argues that "modernism is essentially a by-product of incomplete modernization" (Jameson 103), in the sense that Modernism is marked not only by participation in the process of economic modernization but also a simultaneous *resistance* against the same. Jed Esty likewise argues that Modernism entails both participation and resistance, as he tracks how late Anglo-Modernism turned towards the pre-modern is an attempt to draw from an otherwise-erased past in order to resist the radically laissez-faire capitalism that had left so much of the English Middle and Working Classes feeling isolated, alienated from their labor, and radically alone. If industrialized and imperial England needed to draw upon the pre-modern, then how much more

Ireland and Mexico. The forces of economic modernization within these latter nations did not simply arise internally to displace and leave adrift the local populations, but were aggressively imposed upon them by foreign colonizing forces. Even after the eventual expulsion of foreign occupiers, these peoples still had to negotiate the economic frameworks left behind in their wakes. In this sense then, Halloween and Day of the Dead, for all their ancient roots, are modern[22] simultaneously resist economic modernization while still negotiating and participating within the same process.

Certainly economic modernization has been a shared focus of resistance for both Mexico and Ireland even before the over-commercialization of Halloween and Day of the Dead. Avelar's statement on "market logic" refers primarily to the complicity of the post-dictatorial regimes in the southern cone of South America in perpetuating the neoliberalizing projects of their late twentieth-century dictatorships; yet an argument can be made that Mexico experienced an antecedent to this state of affairs under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, who prioritized economic modernization and the "liberation of markets" as a central part of his administration, and which left the much of the population impoverished and downtrodden. The Irish likewise had experience with the disastrous consequences of unchecked market liberalization, which had its expression in the Potato Famine of 1847. The Whig Party then in control of English Parliament opted to de-emphasize humanitarian aid and the closure of Irish food exports (policies that had helped stave off a similar famine during the potato blight of 1782), and instead

[22] A current example of the dead as a form of modern resistance is the rise of *Santa Muerte* (Saint Death) in 21st-century Mexico. Utterly unauthorized and condemned by the Vatican, this cult has nonetheless risen to prominence amidst the devastating drug wars currently plaguing the nation. Though worship of Santa Muerte is popularly associated with the cartels, narcos and police alike often pay their respects to this symbol of death incarnate, as both forces must daily face death within an economic order that privileges profits over lives, a system wherein the cartels battle ruthlessly for control of the smuggling routes into the lucrative U.S. markets (Chesnut). In her modernity, Santa Muerte is a mode by which to simultaneously participate in and resist an order of exploitation and murder, of which the Cartels are not an outlier, but merely the most extreme expression of the same economic forces that powered *Porfirismo*, drafts U.S. immigration law and economic policy, and that brought about the Potato Famine.

allowed the continued export of cash crops and cattle under armed guard back to absentee landlords in England, while literally a million starved to death. In a gross misreading of Adam Smith, the Whigs preferred to allow the "invisible hand" of the market to feed them. When it of course did not, the Famine was widely interpreted in England as divine retribution, there to reprove the Irish for their supposed "indolence"[23] and unproductivity. These "unproductive" living were consigned to join the "unproductive" dead.

This rhetoric has not entirely disappeared, as shown by how the Republic of Ireland found itself lumped with the "PIGS" alongside Portugal, Greece, and Spain following the 2008 global economic collapse. Even more dramatically in North America, Mexican migrant workers are consistently criminalized and characterized by certain sectors of U.S. society as deadbeats, thieves, and freeloaders by an economic order that has rigged immigration law so as to ensure the impossibility of their immigrating here legally, all in support of a system that is invested in ensuring a constant pool of cheap agricultural labor that can be easily exploited and then deported if they attempt to organize. It is also, not coincidently, a pattern reminiscent of the exploitation and maltreatment of Irish immigrants to the U.S. escaping the Potato Famine (which prompted the San Patricios' defection to Mexico in the first place). The economic marginalization of Irish and Mexican immigrants to the U.S. is part and parcel of the same marginalization of the dead across the broader Anglosphere.

Ireland and Mexico have therefore not had the luxury of ignoring the dead; as they both border massive superpowers that dwarf their own populations, they have needed all the allies they can get. As such, the Mexican and the Irish can and do approach the realms of the dead

[23] As Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to Her Majesty's Treasury, proclaimed in 1847: "[The Famine] is punishment from God for an idle, ungrateful and rebellious country; an indolent and un-self-reliant people. The Irish are suffering from an affliction of God's providence." For his relief efforts, Trevelyan was knighted in 1848.

with a much more cavalier insouciance than the English. As Octavio Paz famously claims in *El laberinto de la soledad* (*The Labyrinth of Solitude*):

> The word death is not pronounced in New York, in Paris, in London, because it burns the lips. The Mexican, by contrast, is familiar with death, jokes about it, caresses it, sleeps with it, celebrates it; it is one of his favorite toys and his most steadfast love. True, there is perhaps as much fear in his attitude as in that of others, but at least death is not hidden away: he looks at it face to face, with impatience, disdain, and irony.[24] (Paz 57).

Paz's statement gestures towards the potential political valences of the Mexican attitude towards death: for if the Mexican "looks at it face to face," this implies that the New Yorker, the Londoner, the Parisian, etc., does *not,* that death in these other imperial capitals *are* "hidden away." A place that the major powers cannot look at directly is not a place that the Mexican *or* the Irish can afford to overlook either—and can therefore provide a refuge wherein they can be overlooked by empire, as well. For certain of these modernist authors, the capacity of the dead to persist in memory and awareness is potentially destabilizing to authority and power. Though the voices of the dead have been distorted, nevertheless that very distortion is in fact where their capacity to resist lies.

Literary scholar Nuala Finnegan argues the same concerning the voices of the dead in 2016's *Rethinking Juan Rulfo's Creative World: Prose, Film, Photography.* She presents two graveyard novels in particular as representative of the dead's potential capacity to destabilize the legitimacy of hegemonic authority: Juan Rulfo's highly-influential 1955 novella *Pedro Páramo*,

[24] "Para el habitante de Nueva York, París o Londres, la muerte es la palabra que jamás se pronuncia porque quema los labios. El mexicano, en cambio, la frecuenta, la burla, la acaricia, duerme con ella, la festeja, es uno de sus juguetes favoritos y su amor más permanente. Cierto, en su actitud hay quizá tanto miedo como en la de los otros; más al menos no se esconde ni la esconde; la contempla cara a cara con impaciencia, desdén o ironía" (22). Translation by Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash.

and Máirtín Ó Cadhain's standard of modern Irish-language literature, 1949's *Cré na Cille*.[25] Both novels open in the aftermath of violent nationalistic conflicts—the 1910 Revolution of Mexico and the 1920s Anglo-Irish wars of independence in Ireland—with a distinct emphasis upon the destruction these enterprises wreaked upon the poor, rural communities of Mexico and Ireland respectively. *Pedro Páramo* in particular was both written and read by the descendants of the migrants away from the rural peripheries. As Jason Wilson argues:

> In 1928 Mexico City…reached 1 million inhabitants. Today, the rough figure is somewhere between 18 and 23 million. Juan Rulfo was but one of these urban migrants in his move from the state of Jalisco to the capital Mexico City. The majority of his local Mexican readers would have made the same move. So we have this curious pact between an urbanized writer, an urban reader, and rural texts, whose reticent characters would not be able to read what had been written about them. (Wilson 232)

The text is at least in part a sort of eulogy to the dying rural areas of Mexico, written by and for those who had left it behind. Indeed, Rulfo's sole long work opens with the son of one such migrant, a man named Juan Preciado, fulfilling his mother's deathbed request that he visit her old hometown of Comala,[26] to finally meet his biological father. But when he arrives, Preciado learns that Comala is a literal ghost town—as in there are actual spirits haunting the place, still speaking of the things they spoke of in life. As Carlos Blanco Aguinaga observes, "Comala...was a town entwined outside history in a land of death"[27] (Blanco Aguinaga 101). These references to a land of the dead cannot help but contribute to a mythological feeling surrounding the place; no less than Carlos Fuentes, in an early essay on the novella, identified

[25] Translated alternately in English as *The Dirty Dust* and *Graveyard Clay*.
[26] Comala is presumably located somewhere in rural Jalisco, Rulfo's home-state.
[27] "Comala…era un pueblo enclavado fuera de la historia en una tierra de muerte." The translation is my own.

Juan Preciado with Telemachus, on an epic odyssey to find his father (Boldy 114). But one need not only look to the ancient Mediterranean to find mythic parallels; as Joseph Sommers argues, "The mythic atmosphere of *Pedro Páramo* constitutes the concept, current among the popular beliefs of rural Mexico, of the souls in pain, doomed to sojourn across the earth, separated from their old bodies"[28] (Sommers 55). *Pedro Páramo* is rooted within a local folkloric milieu that presupposes the existence and presence of the dead; it also presumes that many of these dead are pained souls traveling the earth, wailing their grievances, of which the people of Comala are but one representative example. And the people of Comala have grievances indeed; even if their fragmentary utterances cannot fully articulate said grievances, all of the characters have been aggrieved by the local cacique, Pedro Páramo.

From the fragmentary utterances of these dead speakers, the reader pieces together the sordid story of Preciado's biological father, the titular Páramo—a surname signifying "barren plain" in Spanish—Comala's local *hacendado*, who rules the town as undisputed strongman in a sort of feudal system stubbornly left over from Mexico's colonial past. It is a dying order that had already ensured the deprivation and lifelessness of the community even before its demise; Comala is as barren as their Dueño's name even before they are all die off. As Blanco Aguinaga claims, "Comala, when the novel begins, is definitely what, in a sense, it had always been: a dead city"[29] (Blanco Aguinaga 103). The overthrow of this feudal order, far from revitalizing this dying community, only hastens its demise. Partly that is because the feudal order as represented by Páramo had no vitality in the first place. Though Páramo impregnates many of the women of

[28] "La atmósfera mítica de *Pedro Páramo* la constituye el concepto, corriente en las creencias populares del México rural, de las ánimas en pena, condenadas a errar por la tierra, separadas de sus antiguos cuerpos." The translation is my own.

[29] "Comala que cuando empieza la novela es ya definitivamente lo que, en un sentido, había sido siempre: un pueblo muerto." The translation is my own.

Comala (including Juan Preciado's mother), he only truly loves one, Susana San Juan, through whom his virility is ironically presented as impotent. As Adriana Méndez Rodenas argues: "Having isolated himself inside his despotic universe as a ruler of Comala, Pedro Páramo dies encased within what Kristeva refers to as an 'autarkic' love...where no other is really present: 'But which world was Susana San Juan living in? That was one of the things that Pedro Páramo never found out'"[30] (Méndez Rodenas 123). Páramo's "autarkic" self-love prevents him from accessing his beloved, or from perpetuating himself into another. He ultimately fails to infuse life into either her, their relationship, or into the larger community. Everywhere that he attempts to impose his potency instead withers and dies; even his illegitimate son Juan Preciado disappears entirely from the second half of the narrative. His life-sucking force extends to the 1910 Revolution, as well; later in the novella, Páramo cynically exploits the Revolution by sending his men on raiding parties conspicuously out-of-the-way from Comala, solely to stave off the raids of revolutionaries while further consolidating his local power, thus blunting the potency of even the Revolution itself. Páramo renders all he touches a wasteland. Overall, the novella is implicitly critical of the Mexican system that failed to fully overturn the old, colonial feudal order, and even more so of the failures of the 1910 Revolution to finish the job.

No plot summary can hope to communicate the strange experience of reading this singular novella, which appears to formally disintegrate and collapse at the textual level; the narrative is dominated by ellipses, sentence fragments, and endless conversational digressions that go nowhere and contradict each other, undermining all appeals to historical consensus or linguistic authority. Such stylistic choices, in fact, are how the novella expresses its grievances. As Finnegan argues: "the cacophony of voices…serves to undermine, unsettle and ultimately

[30] "¿Pero cuál era el mundo de Susana San Juan? Esa fue una de las cosas que Pedro Páramo nunca llegó a saber." Translation in the original Méndez Rodenas article.

dismantle the various frames of authority—literary—national—historical—metaphorical—that constrain them" (Finnegan 181). In Finnegan's reading, it is in the cacophony of the voices of the dead, as opposed to whatever specific grievances they may or not be able to articulate, that is the most disruptive against official discourse; it is less important what the dead say than the fact that they still speak at all.

However, Yvette Jiménez de Báez has critiqued this critical tendency to assume an inexorable movement wholly towards disintegration in the text. For example, she notes of an influential critical text on Rulfo by George Ronal Freeman:

> Undoubtedly George Ronald Freeman's sensitive and accurate analysis of Paradise and fall in Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* reveals a key dimension of the book. I was not surprised to know that it was one of the critical texts that most liked Rulfo: "The meaning of the novel, if one can be verbalized, is that the fall-from-grace is a constant in human experience. The total movement of the narrative is away from wholeness towards disintegration"…However, I think his study is limited by not having comprehended the complexity of the vision of the world embodied by the text. Evidently the author has not grasped the keys to the counterpoint that the text itself indicates over and over again, as for example right at the beginning of the novel, in the first two fragments. With an admirable logic and economy, we are marking the nuclei that point towards the sense of it.[31] (Jiménez de Báez 125-126)

[31] "Sin duda el análisis sensible y atinado de George Ronald Freeman en *Paradise and fall in Rulfo's 'Pedro Páramo*' revela una dimensión clave del libro. No me sorprendió saber que era uno de los textos críticos que más le gustaban a Rulfo….Sin embargo, pienso que su limitación estriba en no haber captado la complejidad de la vision del mundo concretada en el texto […] Evidamente el autor no ha captado las claves del contrapunto que el propio texto indica una y otra vez, como por ejemplo justo al inicio de la novela, en los dos primeros fragmentos. Con una lógica y economía admirables, se nos van marcando los núcleos que apuntan al sentido." The translation is my own.

For Jiménez de Báez, the text of *Pedro Páramo* does not merely give way towards total disintegration, but rather forms a definite "sentido," a certain sense of meaning. The complexity of the text's vision does not merely trace the dissolution of the community, but how that same dissolution can paradoxically perform a sort of reconstitution of the community as an alternative to, and in opposition against, the prevailing authorities. Instead of a collection of fragments, Jiménez de Báez maintains that the novella really does possess a formal unity, that in fact all of these so-called "fragments" meticulously together to form a reconstituted communal collective voice, in a singular blending of indigenous and Christian cosmologies.

It might here be worth noting that T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was translated into Mexican Spanish in 1930 by Enrique Mungía Jr. as *El páramo*. As Wilson speculates: "We have no idea if Rulfo actually read this translation, but the overlap of titles between his novel and Eliot in translation is not a coincidence, for Rulfo also deals grippingly with the same losses that Eliot's poem did…the prose banishes English rhythms, and sounds like a description of Rulfo's Jalisco" (Wilson 233). Whether the losses that Anglo-American Eliot dealt with are similar to those of Mexican Rulfo is highly debatable. Nevertheless, the famed poem does feature a similar attempt at reformulating an apparent fragmentation as its own kind of unity—"These fragments I have shored against my ruin"—while closing with a "Shantih Shantih Shantih" that Eliot's own footnote claims translates (albeit feebly) as "The peace which surpasseth understanding," achieving a sort of serenity amidst fragments. *Pedro Páramo*, by implication, also achieves a sort of renewed unity amidst its own purported fragmentation.

Of similar importance is the fact that these voices are distinctly audible; as Blanco Aguinaga claims of the novella, "In effect, nobody writes: someone speaks"[32] (Blanco Aguinaga 89). These voices are not intended to be simply preserved onto the dead and silent page for the benefit of posterity, but are presented as active and incessant, a continued presence. The working title of the novella was purportedly "Los murmullos," The Whispers, which kept the emphasis on the vocalized, denying that the dead are silent, or that their influence is no longer heard, their grievances no longer relevant. For if death was intended to silence the protests of the marginalized, then few things can be as radical as for the dead to continue to speak after their deaths.

Much the same can be said of *Cré na Cille*, which is likewise Ó Cadhain's sole long work. The text is structured around the manifold conversations of the freshly buried dead. The novel's spirits speak from their coffins in a Church yard in Connemara, an obscure corner of the *Gaeltacht*, those last few scattered regions in Ireland where Irish Gaelic is still spoken natively. It is perhaps not a coincidence that both texts feature C-named communities—Comala and Connemara—nor that both towns are associated in some way, shape, or form with stones, denoting both the sterility of the landscape but also the stone as stumbling block. "Like the 'abode of stones' of which Lucky speaks in his thrice-repeated naming of Connemara...rural Ireland is haunted by dead voices," writes Joseph Roach on the similar role of Connemara in "Waiting for Godot" (which I will touch on more later in my discussion of Beckett). Jason Kristal, meanwhile, writes of Comala, "This Mexican term 'comal' (referring to a stone, or a circular baked earth and later metallic hotplate for cooking maize tortillas) leads us to Comala in the novel" (Kristal 235). The novella itself ends with Páramo collapsing dead upon a pile of

[32] "En efecto, nadie escribe: alguien habla." The translation is my own.

stones; the name Pedro is, of course, also a reference to stone. Both the community and Páramo fulfill the definitions of his name, becoming stony wastelands. What is more, in both *Pedro Páramo* and *Cré na Cille*, the community's stone-like names are associated specifically with the haunting dead.

Under the stoned tombs of *Cré na Cille*, the dead carry on unabated the arguments these denizens held when they were still living. (Indeed, one of the repeating motifs of these cryptic conversations are arguments about who has the nicest tombstone.) *Cré na Cille*'s dead function as a sort of meta-commentary on dying Irish-speaking communities. By many metrics, Irish was functionally a dead language by the time of the book's publication; less than 2% of the island's total population still spoke it fluently (a percentage that has barely budged since). The existential threats posed against the *Gaeltacht* were, unsurprisingly, economic in nature: even in the 17th century, spoken Irish was fading fast, which Foster claims, "was an indication of disruption, penetration, settlement and *commercialization*, rather than a result of government policy" (Foster 122) (emphasis added). The integration of Ireland into the globally expanding British Empire heavily favored the adoption of English, the lingua franca of commerce, over any form of Gaelic. In the mid-19th century, the Famine hit the *Gaeltacht* especially hard, and the ensuing economic development overseen by Great Britain in the Famine's aftermath continued to marginalize Irish in favor of English. Even under the Irish Free State where the language receives official state patronage, continued economic modernization has resulted in an influx of English speakers into the *Gaeltacht*, pushing the language to the brink of extinction. As such, *Cré na Cille* is, like *Pedro Páramo*, critical of the failures of the post-revolutionary state to care for its most vulnerable rural peripheries. The novel performs this critique not through specific policy analysis, but, like *Pedro Páramo*, by undermining all frames of authority through multiple series

of ellipses, sentence fragments, digressional conversations, and unceasing disputations about Irish history that never settle, nor promise, to settle into any sort of conclusion.

Resistance against statist authority was in the blood of that inveterate anticleric, journalist, and IRA-man Ó Cadhain. If the rural characters of *Pedro Páramo* "would not be able to read what had been written about them," as Wilson claims, then *Cré na Cille*, by contrast, was written specifically *for* the *Gaeltacht*, so as to ensure that they first and foremost would know what they were writing about themselves. In contrast to the Rulfo text, Ó Cadhain's novel is not a sort of eulogy but an attempted act of cultural revitalization. It was with great daring that he chose to write and publish his novel in the rapidly shrinking Irish language at all (his novel remains today the sole crossover Irish-language work of any sort of international recognition). It was an act of resistance as much as of reinvigoration. There is a sort of larger meta-joke about this novel, that just because the Irish language is virtually dead, that by no means signifies that it is *silent*. On the contrary, the running joke of *Cré na Cille* is that the dead simply will not shut up! They are speaking and arguing as loudly and gregariously now as they ever did when they were alive, showing no sign of stopping. The novel in a sense thumbs its nose at those who consider Irish a dead language, insisting that even though it is certainly endangered, that even though it may certainly still *die* in the native-speaking sense, nevertheless in death the language will continue to speak loudly, even if not clearly—*especially* not clearly. As in *Pedro Páramo*, the goal is less to articulate specific grievances than to undermine the frames of linguistic authority that betrayed them in the first place.

Yet for all these texts' caustic indictments of official state apparatuses, their most biting commentary is often saved for the local populaces that consented to these institutions in the first place. For example, though Páramo tyrannically takes possession of all the town's lands and all

of its women, the community not only fails to overthrow him, but they appear to uphold his rule. Of Páramo's larger relationship with Comala, Laura Rosenburg writes: "the mother's opening demand (to Juan Preciado)—go and ask your father for what is (legitimately) ours—assumes a concept of justice as restoration through rights claims, and a complementary system of accountability—a justice of which Pedro, despite being cast as the wrongdoer, is the ultimate guarantor" (Rosenburg 37). For Rosenburg, Páramo's power is rooted not just in what he owns (which is extensive), but by his feudal position as the community's sole legal arbiter. But that is not to say that Páramo rules by tacit consent of the governed; rather, it is to note that the community has no other recourse, legal or otherwise, for disputing his local authority.

Cré na Cille features a satirical example of this same consent to unqualified elites. In this scene, a French WWII pilot who had crashed near Connemara makes a good faith attempt to learn Irish whilst his remains rest amongst the *Gaeltacht*. Yet his attempts are met with derision by the other buried dead, who after testing him on his Irish, inform him:

> The Institute has delivered the judgement that he has learned too much Irish of a kind which has not been dead long enough according to the appropriate approved schedule, and that there is a suspicion that some of it is "Revival Irish", they are of the opinion that he must needs unlearn every single syllable of it before he shall be qualified to pursue that study. He also wants to collect every piss and piddle of folklore that he can, and save it so that every new generation of Gaelic corpses will know in what kind of republic former generations of Gaelic corpses lived.[33] (Ó Cadhain 197)

[33] "Measann an tInstitiúid go bhfuil an iomarca Gaeilge—de chinéal nach bhfuil marbh ar feadh na tréimhse sceidealta—foghlamta aige, agus ó tharl go bhfuiltear in aimhreas gur *Revival Irish* corrfhocal di, ní foláir dó gach siolla a dhífhoghlaim sul a meidh sé cáilithe leis an staidéar sin a dhéanamh i gceart.

The joke that the hapless French pilot has "learned too much Irish of a kind which has not been dead long enough" is a parody of those Dublin state officials who had attempted to co-opt the Irish language away from those few who still actually spoke it natively, who attempted to "revive" and regulate Irish as a dead language, antique and "pure" and musty, rather than engage with it as a living language spoken by contemporary speakers. Implicitly, there is the accusation that Dublin officials *prefer* Irish as a dead language, and by extension the *Gaeltacht* as well. The fact that the term "Revival Irish" is rendered in English in the text's original Irish likewise emphasizes how foreign the Irish of the "official" English-speaking Irish state was to the actual spoken Irish of the *Gaeltacht*. This parodic scene, along with this text's other endless negations, ellipses and fragments, is all part and parcel of the novel's larger project, "an operation that is undertaken at various levels—against official Ireland; against literary tradition and discourse; against community—to render the novel as one long, noisy protest against all forms of authority" (Finnegan 167). In *Cré na Cille*, the speech of the dead undermines any and every form of authority, no matter how friendly or hostile these various authorities may claim to be. There can be no appeal to either official discourse or official history, because all are rendered unintelligible by the disintegrating speech of the dead.

Likewise, the events of the 1910 Mexican Revolution are treated in *Pedro Páramo* with similar ambiguity. For example, in a scene set during the Revolution, a character named El Tilcuate is tasked by Páramo with leading the raiding parties away from Páramo's own holdings. As such, the reasons why El Tilcuate fights, or for whom, are rendered largely irrelevant. El Tilcuate's directive becomes representative of the larger, frequent shifts in allegiance that

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Ta faoi freisin an béaloideas caillte uilig a bhailiú agus a shábháil i riocht is go mbeidh a fhios ag na glúinte Gaelchorp a thiocfas cén cinéal saoil a bhí i bpoblacht na nGaelchorp rómpu." (239) (emphasis added)

plagued and purportedly undermined the revolution. In this scene, El Tilcuate discusses with a fellow soldier how:

'We're with Carranza now.'

'Fine.'

'Now we're riding with General Obregon.'

'Fine.'

'They've declared peace. We're dismissed.'

'Wait. Don't disband your men. This won't last long.'

'Father Renteria's fighting now. Are we with him or against him?'

'No question. You're on the side of the government.'

'But if we're irregular. They'll consider us rebels.'

'Then take a rest.'

'As fired up as I am?'

'Do what you want then.' (Rulfo 115–16)[34]

A number of critics have read this passage as an example of the literary motif wherein Mexican revolutionaries unclear as to which side they are even on—and more damning, don't particularly seem to care. An antecedent that Rulfo appears to be following is that of Mariano Azuela,

[34] — Ahora somos carrancistas
— Está bien.
— Andamos con mi general Obregón.
— Está bien.
— Allá se ha hecho la paz. Andamos sueltos.
— Espera. No desarmes a tu gente. Esto no puede durar mucho.
— ¿Se ha levantado en armas el padre Rentería?
— ¿Nos vamos con él, o contra él?
— Eso ni se discute, ponte al lado del gobierno.
— Pero si somos irregulares. Nos consideran rebeldes.
— Entonces vete a descansar.
— ¿Con el vuelo que llevo?
— Haz lo que quieras, entonces. (187)

whose 1915 novel *Los de abajo* (The Underdogs) presents the revolution as less a peasant revolt than a power struggle between local caudillos, with the Mexican people always the underdogs, the "ones below," no matter who wins. It is less that these revolutionaries are indecisive, or don't realize that they are being manipulated, than that all forms of authority, no matter which cause they claim, are inherently suspect—a fact to which the dead in *Pedro Páramo* repeatedly call attention. This includes the authority of the novella itself. Not only is the authority of the text challenged by the sheer swarm of voices but, more intriguingly, by the careful refusal of the text to explicitly moralize. Critic Carlos Monsiváis argues that Rulfo "never preaches, never openly judges" (Wilson 241). Perhaps the preaching elements are what were cut out of the initial drafts of the novel. Rulfo once told an interviewer that he re-wrote the text of *Pedro Páramo* three times, editing it down from 300 pages down to the austere 124 for the final 1964 edition. The result of these cuts is to place the onus for interpretation and sense-making upon the reader, who is also then tasked with realizing the text's moral conclusions for one's self. This form of abbreviation also invites the reader to participate in the reconstitution of the community. Wilson may argue that the novella "forces the reader to collaborate in making sense of the dreamy voices and fragments" (Wilson 243), but that statement still assumes that fragmentation is the novella's overriding formal feature. It is less that the reader *making* sense of the text's voices than it is that the reader is joining *with* the voices, to at last access the underlying sense that had been there all along.

Again, *what* the dead have to say in these novels is less disruptive than the sheer fact *that* they speak. What *Pedro Páramo* and *Cré na Cille* share most in common is not only a seemingly disjointed formal structure, but also an assurance that *the dead are not silent*. Their deaths have not ended the narrative, nor silenced history, nor completely wiped out the

community, no matter how devastating Páramo's viciousness and willful neglect may have been—nor in turn how radically decimated the *Gaeltacht* has been by modernizing forces. Somewhat hopefully (if not necessarily optimistically), the speaking dead in these texts serve as a sign of resilience, of capacity to survive, to outlast their caudillos, and to reconstitute the community even in the midst of an apparent dissolution. In *Pedro Páramo*, it is noteworthy that of all the speaking ghosts that Preciado and the reader encounter, Páramo's is the one that is never encountered directly. We as readers never enter his head, hear his thoughts, meet his ghost. His words may still live on in the recollections of the people and in the literal, physical artifact of the dead pages of the book, but he is no longer the one that directs them, he no longer controls the narrative, nor the perception of his legacy. If there are genuine, bona fide fragments in this novella, it is Páramo who is now the fragment, and who has now been exiled out into the absences and silenced. In fact, it is the silenced that now ventriloquize his authority, the dead that at last determine his voice. As Joseph Sommers once noted, "The result of this process of characterization [of Páramo] is a figure of great size, but still an echo of the people"[35] (Sommers 53). The people of Comala may have had no real choice but to consent to Don Páramo's authority, but the corollary effect is that Páramo is not able to speak, be recollected, or be portrayed free of the citizenry, either. He echoes Comala, not the other way around.

Overall, *Pedro Páramo* and *Cré na Cille* push back against the limits and shortcomings of state authority; yet at the same time, they also point towards the limits of their own rural settings. While these texts protest the failures of the post-revolutionary state to care for their rural peripheries, they also call attention to the fact *that* these communities are marginalized to the peripheries in the first place. The peripheries can no more reach out to influence the center

[35] "El resultado de este proceso de caracterización es una figura de tamaño gigante, pero todavía un eco del pueblo." The translation is my own.

than the center can reach out to them. They are as distant and exiled as the dead are. Except that the dead are *not* peripheral, nor exiled—they saturate our entire lived experience, at all levels of society, from the peripheries to the centers. The Irish and Mexican novels that most immediately suggest themselves for such a discussion are Samuel Beckett's 1951 novel *Malone Dies* (the second part in his *Molloy* trilogy) and Carlos Fuentes's 1962 *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (The Death of Artemio Cruz). Both stream-of-conscience novels feature dying men in their last moments, characters who were both victims of and complicit with the violence that traumatized their respective nations and betrayed their revolutionary values. This subtle shift in focus from the dead to the dying can help to emphasize how the dead are not merely quarantined off into their own isolated realms of protest—audible yet ignorable—but that their cacophonous voices are intimately enmeshed and entangled with those of the still-living, how the legacy and influence of the dead are still with us. The influence of the dead was an obsessive topic for both writers: Beckett in particular wrote often about the process of dying, as in *Murphy*, *Mercier and Camier*, *Malone,* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. In fact, many of these same texts are united together into *Malone Dies,* as Malone at one point observes that "then it will be all over with the Murphys, Merciers, Molloys, Morans and Malones, unless it goes on beyond the grave…" (229). The unity of all these deaths together emphasizes that this novel is not just about how death is suffered by one person, but by a community entire—and that death is not the end of their speech, either. Beckett's most famous work, "Waiting for Godot," is infused with the speech of the dead. As Joseph Roach claims, "The natural-historical landscape of *Godot* is desolate but not empty. In addition to a tree with five leaves and a handful of the living...it is thickly populated by disembodied voices. In other words, it is haunted" (Roach 85). He cites for example the following noteworthy dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon in Act II:

Estragon: All the dead voices.

Vladimir: They make a noise like wings.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: Like sand. [connect to Malone Dies, which anticipates this passage]

Estragon: Like leaves.

Silence.

Vladimir: They all speak at once.

Estragon: Each one to itself.

Silence.

Vladimir: Rather they whisper.

Estragon: They rustle.

Vladimir: They murmur.

Estragon: They rustle.

Silence.

Vladimir:What do they say?

Estragon: They talk about their lives.

Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.

Estragon: They have to talk about it.

Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.

Estragon: It is not enough.

Silence.

Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: Like ashes.

Estragon: Like leaves.

(*Waiting for Godot* 40)

Like the dead in *Cré na Cille*, "They all speak at once," and "They talk about their lives." They also "rustle" and "whisper," like The Whispers that became *Pedro Páramo*. Much has been written, and still will be, about the voices of the dead in "Waiting for Godot." Nevertheless, though Vladimir and Estragon acknowledge "the skeletons" and "corpses" about them on the stage, they still tend to allude to them all as a separate ontological fact from themselves. What marks *Malone Dies* so distinct, I argue, is the fact that Malone as dying subject helps to bridge the gap between the realms of the living and of the dead, bringing the two into clear overlap.

Fuentes for his part continued to explore the persistence of the dead with his novella *Aura* (published the same year as *Artemio Cruz*), wherein a young scholar in Mexico City is hired to translate the memoirs of an ancient widow's husband. He slowly learns to his horror that he is the reincarnation of that self-same husband: a certain French commander who became an exile in Mexico after the French Intervention that destabilized the country in the 1860s and thus gave rise to Porfirio Díaz. The novella becomes a metaphor for how the legacy of the dead continues to influence modern Mexico, no matter how much that historical memory has been repressed or forgotten. But whereas *Aura* allegorizes how the dead influence the living, *Artemio Cruz* in turn tracks how the living pass into death in the first place—as does *Malone Dies*. The two novels together trace how the traumas of the larger community become imprinted upon the psyche of the dying man, foreground how enmeshed and entangled the protagonist is with larger social and historical forces, and emphasize how, at the point of death, the violences that were both suffered

and perpetrated by these men will not cease with him, but continue haunting and persisting beyond their own personal point of annihilation.

Even irrespective of the topic of death, Samuel Beckett and Carlos Fuentes recommend themselves for more comparatist study than they have previously received: for starters, they are both Nobel laureates, celebrated and canonized within their own lifetimes (as opposed to the long-deferred appreciation for Rulfo and Ó Cadhain), and central to their respective nation's literary identities. Their canonization is especially ironic, given how Beckett lived most his adult life in self-imposed exile in Paris (famously "preferring France in war to Ireland in peace"), while Fuentes spent his growing years abroad, living in various Latin American capitals, Washington, D.C., and likewise in France as Mexican ambassador. The fact that these options were available to them speaks to their privilege. Unlike their more rural counterparts Rulfo and Ó Cadhain, Beckett and Fuentes were of urban and upper-class extraction: Beckett, a son of the Protestant ascendancy, came from the suburbs of Dublin, while Fuentes was raised the son of a diplomat. They observed the traumas that afflicted their homelands from a certain remove. Yet that very remove likewise helps to emphasize that trauma is not endemic solely to the peripheries, but permeates the totality of a nation, irrespective of privilege or position.

Comparing *Malone Dies* and *Artemio Cruz* may also help to foreground Beckett's oft-elided anti-colonialism more explicitly. Many have taken as axiomatic James Knowlson's claim that, "[Beckett] would draw…on his own inner-world for his subjects; outside reality would be refracted through the filter of his own imagination" (Knowlson 329), as though Beckett's manifold characters had monastically withdrawn and exiled themselves from the world of history, or even of physicality. Patrick Bixby has likewise noted how "critics…have routinely portrayed his novels as progressively relinquishing their tangential concern with social realism

for an outright rejection of the external world" (Bixby 4). Bixby for his part disagrees—as does Emilie Moran, who argues that *Malone Dies* in particular, "engages post-war debates about the roles and responsibilities of state institutions" (Bixby 138), in a manner that critiques "a State that pretends to know, control and pre-arrange the reality experienced by those living under its authority" (Bixby 143). Anna McMullan likewise argues that "the biographical, political, and cultural contexts of post-independence Ireland, World War II and post-war Europe undoubtedly shaped Beckett's resistance to unitary or hegemonic definitions of proper and improper identities and bodies" (McMullan 3). *Malone Dies* then, like *Pedro Páramo* and *Cré na Cille*, can be read as an extended critique of the failures of the post-revolutionary state, as well as a resistance against any sort of hegemonic definitions and impulses. No such ambiguity, however, surrounds the purposes of Fuentes's *Artemio Cruz*; his critiques of the post-revolutionary Mexican state are always overt and explicit. Reading *Malone Dies* in tandem with *Artemio Cruz,* then, can again reaffirm how embedded Beckett was in the politics of the "external world"—as well as in the politics of the next.

To begin with *Malone Dies*: the novel presents itself as the manuscript produced by an aged, infirm man as he lays bed-ridden in what appears to be some sort of hospice care (at one point, he claims to have been unable to write for three days when his pencil rolls under the bed). His entire ontological being is inscribed by political forces he has observed and participated in over the course of his long life. He rarely has to articulate said forces in his writing, for they are already marked into him, and cannot help but surface over the course of his many monologues. The very infirmity of his body is itself a form of critique and protest. Kaja Silverman has argued that bodily forms are shaped by the dominant hegemonic codes: "Hegemony hinges upon identification; it comes into play when all the members of a collectivity see themselves within

the same reflecting surface." As McMullan further argues, "Beckett's work shatters this hegemonic reflection, foregrounding the experience of subjects who fail or refuse to maintain the fiction of an autonomous, integral subject or body" (McMullan 9). As in the previous texts I have discussed thus far, Malone' infirmity is not a bug but a feature, a form of dissolution that by its sheer ontology reformulates itself as a kind of resistance against hegemonic forces.

For example, early in the novel Malone muses to himself: "…how long can one fast with impunity? The Lord Mayor of Cork lasted for ages, but he was young, and then he had political convictions, human ones too probably, just plain human convictions" (Beckett 266). The line is a direct reference to a Hunger Strike held during the Anglo-Irish Civil Wars by the Sinn Féin Mayor of Cork Terrance MacSwiney, who died October 1920 of his fast in Brixton prison. Though the reference is spoken as an aside by Malone, this invocation of MacSwiney connects the wars for Irish independence together with the Famine, which the Hunger Strike reenacted and thereby attempted to recall to popular memory, making explicit Ireland's grievances against English colonial administration. All of these are events that Malone himself has surely lived through himself—at least if we accept his early statement that he is almost a hundred years old: "Such is the earnestness from which, for nearly a century now, I have not been able to depart" (174). The novel was first published in French in 1951, so therefore Malone should have distant childhood memories of the Famine's 1850s aftermath, a trauma that informs so much of Ireland's subsequent history, and hence Malone's as well. Malone is, in a sense, a metonym for Ireland itself, complete with a lapsed memory of that inarticulable national trauma. Roach has noted that, "With some notable exceptions, literature has approached the subject of the Great Hunger with a tact bordering on amnesia" (Roach 89), as though the Famine had been erased

from both collective and individual memory. However, though no explicit mention of the Famine is made in this novel, it is signaled throughout this text.

The ruthlessness of an unfettered market economy that produced the Famine in particular is one of the central preoccupations of Malone's monologues. Early in the text, Malone states abruptly: "The market. The inadequacy of the exchanges between rural and urban areas had not escaped the excellent youth" (190). This statement starkly observes the colonial situation wherein the majority of the wealth and political power is concentrated in the urban zones of colonial administration, leaving the rural areas to literally starve. Though the Famine is largely erased from Malone's recollections, he still obliquely references it in the line, "Think of the price of manure, said his mother" (181). "The price of manure" has great historical relevance to the Irish in the run-up to the Famine. As David Lloyd outlines,

> No traveler in Ireland ever failed to note the ubiquity of the peasant's dunghill and its immediate proximity to the cabin door. There were, of course, good material reasons for both the existence of the dunghill and its closeness to the cabin. As a striking handbill of 1831 put it, 'The greatest part of a Poor Man's Treasure is his Dunghill.' Dung fertilized the potato field, without which the 'Poor man' and his family would have starved; it was frequently the means to reclaim waste and barren land and its closeness to the cabin door bespoke the real value it embodied and the peasant's fear of the loss of this indispensable supply of what was, in effect, their only capital, or 'treasure.' Dung was the means to the reproduction of the peasant's life and an intrinsic element of the culture that it reproduced. As Whelan comments: 'The dung heap beside the door was not, as casual observers all too frequently asserted, a symbol of indolent slatterliness, but of persevering

industry. In the absence of artificial fertilizers, natural ones were valuable.' (Lloyd 41-42)

Manure was literally all the peasantry had that was worth anything pre-Famine, the sole means of sustaining their meager potato crops in the face of the Enclosure Acts and Catholic Penal Laws that had dispossessed so many of them of the most arable farmland. These same colonial systems that dispossessed the Irish are likewise what introduced the potato to Ireland from South America—and that in such a weakened condition (as noted in the introduction) that the Irish potato was peculiarly susceptible to blight. Manure, then, was the Irish peasantry's primary bulwark against mass starvation, the ever-present possibility of which had been built right into the colonial structure. Hence, when Malone "think(s) of the price of manure," that is no idle consideration at all, for the price was their lives.

It is also worth noting that the manure was produced *by* the Irish themselves, meaning that "the price of manure" is not a theoretical abstract, but dependent upon the Irish body proper. According to the Marxist labor theory of value in *Capital*, the economic value (or price) of a good or service should be determined by the total amount of socially necessary labor required to produce it, rather than by the use or pleasure its owner gets from it. But for the pre-Famine Irish, the "price of manure" is both: it is an expression of the utility they get from it *and* the total amount of socially necessary labor required to produce it. In this colonial system, the Irish are both producer and (indirect) consumer of manure. It is the sole means of production they can seize. This globalized system, that has rendered life so completely dependent upon and identified with excrement, is likewise a fair representation of Beckett's works. As Terry Eagleton claims, in the "starved, stagnant landscapes of his work…are also a subliminal memory of famished Ireland, with its threadbare, monotonous colonial culture and its disaffected masses

waiting listlessly on a Messianic deliverance that never comes" (Eagleton). Malone's speech expresses the historical traumas of the Famine without ever needing to explicitly articulate it; the voices of the dead, of the nation entire, utter through him as he approaches death himself. Moreover, the "manure" line in the text is attributed to the character of Mr. Saposcat, one of many people that Malone recounts. Such is not a coincidence, for Saposcat's name could be translated to human excrement, as a portmanteau of the Latin *sapiens* with the Greek *skatos*. For that matter, his roommate Macmann could be a pun on "Son of Man," a reference to Jesus Christ, whom Malone often refers to as lying in hell on Easter weekend, and thus by extension so does the rest of Catholic Ireland. The name Malone itself can be separated apart as "M alone," which could very well be a pun on the English for Sinn Féin, "ourselves alone." When Malone writes of all those alliterative "Murphys, Merciers, Molloys, Morans and Malones," he is listing a whole host of previous Beckett prose-works, other characters who are products of the same imagination. Whether the other characters that Malone discusses are real or are creations of his mind (as indeed that is all they really are in the mind of Beckett) is less important than the fact that his every dialogue is really a sort of inner monologue. Beckett here almost seems to anticipate Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, parodying the idea that nations are formed from people imagining a sense of connection with people they have never met. Beckett in turn takes the leap of imagining these other people entirely; whether they are based on real people or are solely figments of his imagination is largely irrelevant, since they are imagined either way. Yet to claim that they are all imagined is not to say that they are not real—there is real historical horror undergirding these texts. All this again emphasizes how Malone's body and imagination altogether is imprinted with not only his own sufferings, but with the traumas of an entire community. Despite Malone's extreme isolation in the hospice, he still carries the

grievances of a broader nation within him. He engraves them with his own pencil into his journal; they are also engraved upon his body, as well as upon the body of the text.

These resonances of national trauma take a turn towards the violent as the text progresses, when Malone begins to wonder, "How many have I killed, hitting them on the head or setting fire to them?" (229). Here the text first hints that Malone is not merely acted upon, a passive actor (as are so many characters in Beckett's oeuvre), but that he is (like the residents of Comala) as much a participant and complicit with the violence of his nation as he is its victim. He at one point confesses to having killed six men, including a stranger whom he cut across the throat with a razor. But his was no violence for sheer violence's sake; he declares, "This club is mine and that is all about it. It is stained with blood, but insufficiently, insufficiently. I have defended myself, ill, but I have defended myself" (242). Given that Malone's century-old life overlaps with the 1867 Fenian Revolt, the 1916 Rising, and the 1919-21 wars of independence, and the 1922 Anglo-Irish civil wars, then Malone's admissions to violent self-defense can be historicized; and the fact that his self-defenses have been largely "insufficient" could have been spoken by all of Ireland together across their many centuries of rebellion. Malone himself may be radically disinterested in detailing whatever his roles might have been in these historical catastrophes; but then, any narration he could make would be redundant, for again, these conflicts have made their physical imprint upon Malone himself—he himself is a text as much as the paper he writes on. And what is written upon him cannot be erased: as Bixby argues, "The effort to exorcize the specters of Irish history results in a writing that resists reference, even as it continues to construct a fictional landscape strewn with uncanny reminders of the existence of a communal inheritance" (167). If Malone makes few explicit references to "the specters of Irish history," it is because Irish history resists reference. The events themselves are un-representable,

the language necessary to mediate them fails as completely as does Malone's own dying body. It is paradoxically only within absence that Malone's elliptical and anti-expository writing style can call attention to "the specters of Irish history."

The absence is where the text is inscribed directly. Malone significantly observes at one point that, "my notes have a curious tendency, as I realize at last, to annihilate all they purport to record" (252). Malone's memories are consigned to annihilation in the very moment he records them, they die along with him. However, that annihilation also ensures that his memories are now in the realm of annihilation, of the dead—which signifies they are now perfectly preserved. "*Nothing is more real than nothing*" (186; emphasis in the original) he declares in an oft-quoted passage, and his trauma is now recorded into the annihilation directly, where it will remain real. The nothingness of death thus becomes where he will remain real as well. He obliquely declares his allegiance to the realm of the dead with the opaque line, "One could live here, perhaps happy, if life was a possible thing, but nobody lives there" (279). The statement establishes the impossibility of life, but it also by corollary establishes how death is the one possible place—for life, for everything.

Yet though there is nary a faith-affirming bone in Beckett's body, nevertheless there is still a preoccupation threading through the text with the distinct possibility (possibly a threat for Beckett) that death is *not* the end, that death is as impossible as life, that life cannot be so cleanly escaped, even if one desires it. For example, Malone amidst his writings wonders aloud, "This last phrase seems familiar, suddenly I seem to have written it somewhere before, or spoken it, word for word" (203). There is an unbearable heaviness of being here with Malone, a quiet suspicion that words are repeating themselves, that all that happens has happened before, that moreover all that has happened *will* happen again, that history will recur, that the presence of the

dead will continue to manifest itself. Likewise, there is that cross carved into the teeth of Moll, the elderly nurse who has a sexual affair with Malone's roommate Macmann until her own death. It is a grotesque and unnerving image for sure, from a writer who has produced many. Yet though macabre, it is not entirely clear that the image is as ironic as some critics have assumed. For an expectation that the dead will return (as the cross so represents) is also engraved into the teeth of this novel: "Back and forth, back and forth, that must be wonderful" (231) says Malone, with the inferred promise that the dead will likewise continue traversing back and forth between life and death as well. The return of the dead is also meditated upon by means of the text's aforementioned references to Easter, the archetypal Christian season of returns from the dead: "Can it be Easter week?…the first to rise from the dead, to him who saved me, twenty centuries in advance?" (202). Granted, this is a rather ironic and hopeless engagement with the promise of resurrection, as betrayed by such glib lines as, "It is doubtless the Easter week-end, spent by Jesus in hell" (273), implying Malone anticipates his time in hell, too.[36]

Malone also allows for the prospect that he is already dead, pondering that "There is naturally another possibility that does not escape me, though it would be a great disappointment to have it confirmed, and that is that I am dead already and that all continues more or less as when I was not" (213). What would disappoint Malone the most here is not death, but the possibility he has already died and there was no real change. If for Beckett the absolute worst-case, most pessimistic scenario is also the most likely, then Malone here is staring down the very real possibility that he will not cease at all with death, that there is still more to come—with the implicit promise of more writings to come, of a never-ending voice that continues to speak restlessly from beyond the grave as persistently as any of the spirits in *Cré na Cille*. Such in fact

[36] Given that the Easter Rising occurred within Malone's lifetime, one can read in Malone's statement a rather grim assessment the ensuing was of independence and the 1922 Anglo-Irish Civil War.

is exactly what occurs in *Malone Dies*' follow-up *The Unnamable*, as an apparently disembodied, amorphous voice speaks in disjointed monologue. The unnamable's voice observes early and repeatedly that "Malone is there" (*Unnamable* 286) as are "All these Murphys, Molloys and Malones" (297). The voice asserts that, "there will not be much on the subject of Malone, from whom there is not much further to be hoped" (286), cryptically alluding to the finality of their currently deathly situation—however, that by no means signifies that Malone's voice is through. Indeed, *Unnamable* presages in prose form Beckett's many dramatic works that feature a voice speaking incessantly well past the point of physical dissolution: *Play* with its characters sitting in urns; *Not I* with its single disembodied mouth floating on stage; *A Piece of Monologue* that opens with "Birth was the death of him." That disembodied voice speaks not only in spite of a body, but without someone with whom to converse. Blanco Aguinaga has written of *Pedro Páramo*, "Who speaks? With whom? Where? The dialogue has been a sort of inner monologue of someone, monologue, in truth, without person, space and time"[37] (Blanco Aguinaga 90). This analysis, that the dialogue is really a sort of inner monologue, is not only applicable to Becket as well, but is uncannily reminiscent of the opening lines to *The Unnamable*: "What for? Wherefore? Whyfore? Unquestioning, I, say I," begins the novel, refusing to answer the 3 most basic questions of any novel—Setting? Characters? Plot?—to instead present us with a voice that maximizes and amplifies the cacophonous statements and voices of the previous two texts in the trilogy, as well as all of Beckett's preceding prose works. Even more so than *Cré na Cille*, whose voices merely refuse to shut up, those of Beckett are incapable of shutting up, even when they reach the end of the silent page—especially when the page goes silent. The final fragment of that 9-page last line reads:

[37] "¿Quien habla?, ¿con quién?, ¿dónde? El diálogo ha resultado una especie de monólogo interior de alguien, monólogo, en verdad, sin persona, espacio ni tiempo." The translation is my own.

> you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on, perhaps it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before already, perhaps the door that opens my story, that would surprise me, if it opens, it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. (*Unnamable* 407)

The words the narrator speaks also speak the narrator; he is both at the threshold and the entrance to his story; he can't go on, he'll go on, but then he doesn't, for the text reaches a period, full stop, followed by an empty, blank page. The silence has been reached. The unnamable now inhabits the silence proper, where the speaker now goes on, perpetuates. Even in the total silence—*especially* in the total silence—the voice by implication continues on all the more. Such is the fate awaiting Malone.

"Birth was the death of him" is the opener to *A Piece of Monologue*, but in *Malone Dies* by contrast, death is the birth of him: "an old foetus, that's what I am now" (219) he declares, overtly framing the transition into death not in terms of an ending, but of a beginning. He states, "I am being given, if I may venture the expression, birth to into death, such is my impression. My feet are clear already, of the great cunt of existence. Favourable presentation I trust. My head will be the last to die" (276). As any midwife or delivery nurse can affirm, to be born feet first is to be born badly indeed. In this formulation, Malone's birth into death offers no liberation from his prior trauma, nor will the realm of the living be freed from *his* trauma and violence. The dying will still carry their historical grievance into death, and death will not disappear the trauma, but continue it, preserve it, *be* it, in contra-variance of all of the myriad forces that had attempted to erase it. Now, Malone *does* appear to affirm the totality of his

impending annihilation when he declaims, "How life dulls the power to protest to be sure. I wonder what my last words will be, written, the others do not endure, but vanish, into thin air" (242). Malone in this first sentence expresses the futility of protest in this life; but the corollary to that statement is that death does *not* dull the "power to protest"—to the contrary, death opens a space, perhaps not for revolt exactly, but for an amplified expression of grievance. As for the second sentence, his conviction that his last words will "not endure, but vanish," annihilated, is complicated by the fact that, again, Malone had already stated earlier, "*Nothing is more real than nothing*." To be inscribed in the vanished nothingness is to make something all the more real and permanent. The dead in this model are more real than the living, and therefore possess all the greater power to protest. Malone likewise states of death, "It too seeks me, as it always has, where I am not to be found. It too cannot be quiet" (180). Death cannot be quiet; Malone is no more likely to be free from the noise, to be safely encapsulated in the silence, in death than in life. In fact, death for Malone will only be all the louder, as this "old foetus" comes wailing from the womb of life to be a terrible power for protest in the hereafter.

The difficult formal elements of *Malone Dies* also fulfill the same function that Finnegan identifies in *Cré na Cille* and *Pedro Páramo,* wherein the cacophonous, deconstructing voices in turn undermine all frames of authority. Malone makes statements such as, "The noises of nature, of mankind and even my own, were all jumbled together in one and the same unbridled gibberish" (201), erasing distinction between nature and mankind, such that "mankind" no longer has any primacy over nature—nor, by extension, human beings over each other. Since the noises can no longer be discerned according to any sort of hierarchal structure, all hierarchies are leveled together. As Steven Connor famously writes:

> Malone's chain of being does not extend from the natural world up through the human to the angelic and divine orders, but rather places those elements in reverse order of priority. For Malone, the terminal, and most desirable condition is that of stone, while the basest and most repulsive condition is that of thinking humanity. (Connor 35)

The old Cartesian chain of being had long reified a series of hierarchies in the colonial world, with northern Europeans naturally on top as the least animal-like and the most conscious. Malone, according to Connor, reverses, parodies, and mocks this chain of being, positing consciousness as the basest of attributes. It is also worth noting that the stone, the "most desirable condition" in this new order, is non-living—which is what dying Malone soon will be. Priority then is granted to the non-living in Malone's new chain of being; Malone's own proximity to non-living status ironically gives him, if not power, then at least preeminence, over his caretakers. But this is not to say that either the stone *or* the dead are silent in this arrangement; though the cries are denied intelligibility, their existence is not: "Each tree had its own cry, just as no two whispered alike…There was nothing, not even the sand on the paths, that did not utter its cry" (206-7). Sand is disintegrated stone, just as the dead are disintegrated living—yet still they all utter their cry. In the aforementioned cited scene from Act II in "Waiting for Godot," Vladimir and Estragon had described the voices of the dead as being "Like sand," "Like leaves," like animal "wings": the voices of the dead had taken on the characteristics of the inhuman world, animalistic and inorganic alike. Across Beckett, the inhuman world joins the non-living human world in a grand cacophony of protest; primacy is given to the unintelligible *by* the unintelligible, so as to ensure that articulated language, wielded by empire, is no longer allowed primacy or privilege.

It is not just Ireland's contemporaneous histories and traumas that have imprinted themselves upon Malone, but all the histories and traumas of Ireland that have long preceded him. Near the novel's conclusion, Malone and certain of the other inmates are taken on a brief holiday to the western islands by their vicious caretakers: Lemuel "the Aryan" and another known simply as "the Saxon," two characters whose racialized monikers represent how the Anglo-Saxons had rationalized Ireland's conquest under the banner of ethnoracial superiority. It is also geographically significant that they visit the western islands specifically, for the west in Ireland has long been symbolic of being furthest beyond the pale, where Irish is still spoken, where Anglicization is least potent. There is a journey here not just spatially, but temporally, as Malone and the other patients are informed that, "on the island, there are Druid remains" (279). On the printed page itself, there is a full paragraph break between the words "Druid" and "remains," signifying the break between the present day and the ancient Druids who once inhabited pre-Christian, pre-colonial Ireland. But the page-break also provides an empty space, the silence and emptiness of death, where the Druids still exist, still "remain," both in the sense of left-over ruins, but also in the sense "remaining." They are still present, within the body and text of Malone, within historical memory, and within the physical land itself. They are the novel's final expression of the fact that the indigenous are not erased nor silenced, no matter how long they have been disappeared, that their legacy and influence will still persist into the future—as will Malone. In this sense *Malone Dies* is a graveyard novel like unto *Cré na Cille*, as Malone dies in the place where the ancient Druids are still buried, still "remain," with the implicit promise that Malone will likewise remain—and persist—alongside them after he fulfills the title's promise and passes on himself.

Beckett's anti-colonial project in *Malone Dies*, as I stated earlier, is further clarified when we compare it to his peer Carlos Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, who provides us with another dying subject who is inscribed with the violence and trauma of his larger country and community. It will not be necessary to provide here as thorough an exposition of Fuentes's novel as with Beckett's *Malone Dies*, largely because that historical and political elements are far more overt than in the *Molloy* trilogy. The novel functions as a fragmentary series of stream-of-conscious remembrances of the fictional Artemio, as he recalls his involvement in the 1910 Revolution, and of his own personal betrayals of family, friends, and lovers—which are portrayed as symptomatic of the emergent Mexican business class and their willingness to betray revolutionary principles to North American business interests. Lanin A. Gyurko describes Artemio Cruz as a sort of Citizen Kane figure, a populist figure who in reality seeks to enrich himself at the expense of all his personal relationships. Artemio similarly positions himself as a man of the people and heir to the 1910 Revolution, but in practice spends his energies integrating himself into the old Porfirio elites, whom in this text are increasingly indistinguishable from the Institutional Revolutionary Party that purportedly replaced them. (Artemio literally marries into these elites; at one point, he breaks off an affair not out of any sense of loyalty to his wife, but strictly to preserve his social status). He is symbolic of Mexico's *nouveaux riche*, far too in the thrall of social status and foreign capital, and thus more than willing to sell out their own nation for both—a common theme in Fuentes's fiction, according to Gyurko.

As with Malone, Artemio Cruz identifies himself as "old and forgotten and always present"[38] (Fuentes 4). Like the dead whose ranks he is soon to join, his influence is felt all the more strongly in the very moment when he is about to disappear from history and conscious

[38] "vieja, olvidada, siempre actual" (9). Translation by Alfred MacAdam. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

memory. From the first line to the end, the legacy and imprint of the dead are foregrounded in Artemio's mind—particularly that of his long-lost twin: "His twin, Artemio Cruz, his double. Yesterday Artemio Cruz, he who lived only a few days before dying, yesterday Artemio Cruz, who is…I am I, and yesterday"[39] (7). A recurring motif throughout the novel is that Artemio had a twin brother who only survived a few days. Though Artemio has no possible memories of his infant brother, nevertheless the presence of this dead sibling is a perpetual weight over the memory of Artemio Cruz. As oft noted by critics, this dead twin becomes symbolic of another Mexico that could have happened but did not, while Artemio himself is representative of what arose instead: A Mexico ruled by a new bourgeois class that does not even desire to be identified as Mexican, one that is thoroughly seduced by and ingratiated into the U.S.-dominated market economy. Artemio states as much in a monologue addressed to himself in the second-person (a rhetorical move that also functions to implicate the reader):

> For ever since you began to see what you are, to learn to appreciate the feel of fine cloth, the taste of good liquor, the scent of rich lotions, all those thing that in recent years have been your only isolated pleasures; ever since then you have lived with regret for the geographical error that has prevented you from being one of them. You admire their efficiency, their comforts, their hygiene, their power, their strength of will; and you look around you and find intolerable the incompetence, misery, dirt, the weakness and nakedness of this impoverished country that has nothing.[40] (Fuentes 28)

[39] "Su gemelo. Artemio Cruz. Su doble. Ayer Artemio Cruz, el que solo vivió algunos días antes de morir, ayer Artemio Cruz…que soy yo…y es otro…ayer…" (12-13)

[40] "…porque desde que empezaste a ser lo que eres, desde que aprendiste a apreciar el tacto de las buenas telas, el gusto de los buenos licores, el olfato de las buenas lociones, todo eso que en los últimos años ha sido tu placer aislado y único, desde entonces clavaste la Mirada allá arriba, en el norte, y desde entonces has vivido con la nostalgia del error geográfico que no te permitió ser en todo parte de ellos: admiras su eficacia, sus comodidades, su higiene, su poder, su voluntad y miras tu alrededor y te parecen intolerables la incompetencia, la miseria, la suciedad, la abulia, la desnudez de este pobre país que nada tiene…" (32-33).

Artemio, as representative of this post-revolutionary business class, long felt himself neither connected nor beholden to his own people, including those who came before and those of the next life. But now that he is approaching that next life himself, he is increasingly forced to come to terms with the fact that he was never completely disentangled from his nation, that he will continue to bequeath all his same alienations, violence, and betrayals onto the coming generations of Mexico.

Artemio, though he had attempted to isolate himself from his nation through self-imposed economic exile, is nevertheless also inscribed with his nation's many historical traumas, both as a participant and a victim. As Artemio explicitly spells it out:

> We have all been corrupted, though battles are still won, the revolution is lost. We have all been responsible. We have allowed ourselves to be divided and controlled by the ruthless, the ambitious, and the mediocre. Those who wanted a true revolution, radical and uncompromising, are unfortunately ignorant and bloody men. And the literate element want only half-revolution, compatible with what interests them, their only interest, getting on in the world, living well, replacing Don Porfirio's elite. There you have Mexico's drama.[41] (Fuentes 186)

Just as Malone is inscribed with the implicit trauma of the Anglo-Irish wars and the aftermath of the Famine, Artemio is similarly inscribed with the traumas and betrayals of the 1910 Revolution, and of the half-hearted reforms of a self-interested educated class that sought only to

[41] "Una revolución empieza a hacerse desde los campos de la batalla, pero una vez se corrompe, aunque siga ganando batallas militares ya está perdida. Todos hemos sido responsables. Nos hemos dejado divider y dirigir por los concupiscentes, los ambiciosos, los mediocres. Los que quieren una revolución de verdad, radical, instransigente, son por desgracia hombres ignorantes y sangrientos. Y los letrados solo quieren una revolución a medias, compatible con lo único que les interesa: medrar, vivr bien, sustituir a la *élite* de don Porfirio. Ahí está el drama de México." (194-195).

replace Porfirian elites, not overthrow the system entirely. All post-revolutionary actors, from the radical to the moderate, are complicit in this mass failure within this formulation.

Fuentes therefore, like Rulfo and Ó Cadhain before him, destabilizes language in order to challenge all frames of authority used to justify the post-revolutionary government. In the final third of the novel especially, his linguistic disruptions become positively Beckettian, as he engages in a sprawling series of elliptical sentence fragments. Here is but a sample:

> …why these last ideas…this I know, I think, I think…why they pass distant from my will, ah, yes…as if the brain…is asking…and the answer comes before the question…probably they are both the same…to live is to find separation (…) but not another's…not that of another…different life but…also separated…*ay*, deceptions…in the land of men…life hidden…hidden death…[42] (Fuentes 263)

The fragments found in this difficult section all in some way, shape, or form have reference to absences that are implicitly present: the answers before questions, the deceptions, "hidden life and hidden death," the very ellipses themselves. Similarly, the dead are all the more present for being absent, hidden, and silenced. As in Malone, to engrave something into the absence is to engrave it permanently. The dead are disappeared, but that by no means signifies that they are gone, or no longer speak or exert force; quite the opposite. Artemio continues: "…continue life from where the other cut it off…speak again…be born again…go back and start over from the beginning…revive…be born…revive…chose again…revive…decide again…"[43] (Fuentes 264). Like Malone, Cruz's death is really a birth into this new, even more permanent deathly world,

[42] "porque estas últimos ideas…eso lo sé…pienso, disimulo…corren ajenas a mi voluntad, ah, sí…como si el cerebro, el cerebro…pregunta…la respuesta me llega antes que la pregunta…probablemente…las dos son la misma cosa…vivir es otra separación (…) sino otra…sino la de otro…distinta…pero también separada (…) ay decepción…en la tierra del hombre…vida escondida…muerte escondida…" (271).

[43] "continuar la vida donde la cortó la otra…muerte…no…volver a empezar desde el principio…resucitar…volver a nacer…resucitar…volver a decider…volver a escoger…" (272).

"[to] be born again," though like Malone's, this is clearly going to be a bad birth—precisely because it is also a bad death. Artemio's death is an expression of Fuentes's one-time friend Octavio Paz's statement in *Labyrinth of Solitude*: "Our deaths illuminate our lives…Each of us dies the death he is looking for, the death he has made for himself…Tell me how you die and I will tell you who you are"[44] (Paz 54). Fuentes makes explicit near the end of the novel what he and his generation's bad death are bequeathing to Mexico:

> …you will bequeath the futile dead names, the names of so many who fell that your name might stand: men despoiled of their names that you might possess yours: names forgotten that yours might be remembered: you will bequeath this country: your newspaper, the hints and the adulation, the conscience drugged by lying articles written by men of no ability; you will bequeath the mortgages, a class stripped of natural human affection, power without greatness, a consecrated stultification, dwarf ambitions, a fool's compromise, rotted rhetoric, institutionalized cowardice, coarse egoism.[45] (Fuentes 269)

This influence will continue to recur, for, as in *Malone Dies*, the dead will return. Cruz, after all, signified "Cross" in Spanish, as in the Cross of Christ, an allusion that, like Easter for Malone (and the cross in Moll's teeth), carries explicit connotations of resurrection—not to mention of punishment, torture, and immense suffering, all parts of the legacy that Artemio, his generation, and his class bequeath to Mexico. This resurrection motif is foreshadowed early in the novel:

[44] "Nuestra muerte ilumina nuestra vida (…) cada quien tiene la muerte que se busca, la muerte que se hace (…) Dime cómo mueres y te dire quién eres" (48-49).

[45] "llegarás las muertes inútiles, los nombres muertos, los nombres de cuántos cayeron muertos para que el nombre de ti viviera; los nombres de los hombres despojados para que el nombre de ti poseyera; los nombres de los hombres olvidados para que el nombre de ti jamás fuese olvidado: Llegarás este país; llegarás tu periódico, los codazos y la adulación, la conciencia adormecida por los discursos falsos de hombres mediocres; llegarás las hipotecas, llegarás una clase descastada, un poder sin grandeza, una estulticia consagrada, una ambición enana, un compromiso bufón, una retórica podrida, una cobardía institucional, un egoísmo ramplón" (277).

> They say that the cells of a sponge are in no way united, yet the sponge itself is clearly a united whole: that's what they say, I remember they say that if you pull a sponge apart, the pieces will come together again, it will never lose its unity. It will always find a way to join its scattered cells again. It never dies…never dies.[46] (Fuentes 81)

In this passage, the sponge comes back together, the pieces reunite, the dismembered rejoin, as fragmentation itself becomes a form of unity. The national community dies, as did Comala in microcosm—but also like Comala, the community's disintegration becomes a sort of communal recovery, a form of perseverance and therefore resistance, with an assurance of the persistence of these voices beyond the point of annihilation. A sponge is also absorbent; and as Artemio feels himself integrated back into the national sponge he had once thought to separate himself from, he brings with him all of the violences, betrayals, and traumas he has absorbed and sopped up.

Now at the moment of death, Cruz realizes: "I carry you inside and with you I die. The three, we…will die. You…die, have died…I will die"[47] (Fuentes 306). To carry something inside at the moment of death, as we have seen with Malone, is in fact to carry it all the more permanently; to die in these texts is not to fade away, but to render one's legacy and influence all the more immovable and fixed within the larger constellation of the community. I do not choose the word "constellation" arbitrarily, for the text itself emphasizes this constellation in cosmic terms:

> Time that is incarnate in the unique being called you, now a boy, now a dying old man, a being who in a mysterious ceremony links together tonight, the little insects glowing against the dark cliff, and the immense stars whirling in silence against the infinite

[46] "Dicen que la células de la esponja no están unidas por nada y sin embargo la esponja está unida: eso dicen, eso recuerdo porque dicen que si rasga violentamente a la esponja, la esponja hecha trizas vuelve a unirse, nunca pierde su unidad, busca la manera de agregar otra vez sus células dispersas, nunca muere, ah, nunca muere" (88).
[47] "te traje adentro y moriré contigo…los tres…moriremos…Tú…mueres…has muerto…moriré" (316).

> backdrop of space…You are, you will be, you have been the universe incarnate. For you galaxies will flame and the sun will burn.[48] (Fuentes 303-304)

"Time incarnate" here binds together all of Artemio's ages, from his boyhood to his elderly age, into a single moment, such that no moment is successive of another, but all are co-present and contemporaneous. By extension, the various prior historical moments of Mexico are not isolated apart, but all continue to have bearing upon each other, the past and the dead co-persisting with the living in the present (just as the Druids still "remain" in Ireland). Distance collapsed not only temporally in this passage, but also spatially. Artemio Cruz ceases to be separated, isolated and alienated as so often occurs in modern economies, but enmeshed in the massive, cosmic whole, wherein all the living and the dead are co-present at once. He is linked by a "mysterious ceremony" that telescopes out from the tiniest insects out towards the very stars and galaxies, where the individual parts are no longer separated from each other, but are fused into one absolute whole, "the universe incarnate." Malone alone had leveled the great chain of being by reversing its hierarchies. Artemio in turn levels the great chain of being by eliminating the chain altogether, by collapsing all of its elements into one. Though the overall tone of this novel is one of guilt, despair, and futility, nevertheless its oddly expansive ending, while perhaps not optimistic *per se*, nonetheless articulates at least the possibility of transcending the historical horrors that encapsulate both Artemio and Mexico by exceeding them in size. He is now part of the entire universal system that is bigger than, contains, includes, and exceeds all North American business interests and the total globalized economy. In this manner do the dead become bigger and more powerful than the neo-colonial forces that both marginalized them and

[48] "Tiempo […] encarnado en este ser singular que eres tú, un niño, ya un Viejo moribundo, que ligase en una ceremonia misteriosa, esta noche, a los pequeños insectos que se encaraman por las rocas de la vertiente y a los immensos astros que giran en silencio sobre el fundo infinito del espacio (…) Eres, serás, fuiste el universo encarnado…Para ti se encenderán las galaxias y se incendiará el sol" (312-313).

enjoined their willing complicity. By joining the dead, he becomes bigger than economies, than galaxies even.

Perhaps those possibilities of expansiveness best explain the motivation behind this Irish and Mexican intimacy with the dead: through the dead, they not only have access to potential allies impossible to their Anglo counterparts, but allies that are far more numerous than them, too. For the promise is that, with the dead as their allies, they can at last vastly outnumber the forces of modernization and neocolonialism that had engulfed them in the first place. Tiny Ireland is suddenly more than teeming England, and Mexico is finally bigger than the gargantuan United States, because these peoples now have the vast hosts of the dead beside them. The U.S., like the previous British Empire, may have a reach that spans the globe, but the dead have one that spans the universe. In the Anglosphere, as I discussed in the introduction, this proliferation of ghosts is often seen as a threat; e.g. in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, the time traveler, as he explores the super-distant future beyond the year A.D. 800,000, absently wonders aloud, "If each generation die and leave ghosts…the world at last will get overcrowded with them" (Wells 49). He talks of ghosts as though they were an infestation, one that would crowd out the enterprises of the living and by extension undermine economic productivity and growth (which is exactly the forlorn future that the time traveler encounters). The return of the dead can never be seen as less than a pestilence in the English world. But the ghosts that are only a threat to the Anglosphere are perceived as a boon to the colonized worlds of Mexico and Ireland.

In this model, colonial and neocolonial economies no longer become the only logic that can possibly exist, the sole voice that speaks, because there is now a cacophony of voices that can potentially speak over it, disrupt it, challenge it, overwhelm it. Economic production ceased to be the sole arbiter of intrinsic value. Thatcher's "[t]here is no alternative" is at last

overwhelmed with alternatives, by means of the remembered dead. As the Day of the Dead and Halloween continue to dance around each other and draw ever closer across the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, there is the implicit promise the two festivals can perhaps collaborate together, to speak louder than economies, to undermine power and challenge the tyranny of production, to thereby effect a liberation not of markets but of peoples, *all* peoples, no matter where they might be found along the similarly porous borderlands between death and life.

Chapter 2

"Upon all the living and the dead": Joyce, Borges, and Their Infinite Ghosts

No discussion of the dead and modern Ireland can afford to elide James Joyce—he the author of the "The Dead"; whose *Ulysses* is haunted by the deaths of a mother, a father, and a son; whose final work is named for a *Wake*—as Jim Blanc once said, Joyce's dead just won't stay dead. His books are permeated by what Cóilíb Owens calls the "familiar Joycean scenario—persisting from 'The Sisters' to *Finnegans Wake*—of an encounter between a living character and a revenant" (Gibbons 7). On the same token, no discussion of Joyce and Latin America can afford to elide Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine who as a youth wrote a pair of valedictory poems in honor of Joyce and crowned himself (albeit erroneously) the "first Hispanic adventurer" of *Ulysses* in an early review. Borges's fictions are likewise littered with a menagerie of knife-wielding gauchos, doomed soldiers, executed Nazis, and revolutionaries, kings, poets, spies, and detectives whose deaths continually repeat and recur—Borges's dead just won't stay dead, either. Death is a crucial and oft-ignored nexus of comparison between these two authors, for whom death is not a finality, but an expression of their common obsession with infinity. Like the authors detailed in the previous chapter, the dead for Joyce and Borges are part of a strategy by which they exceed and thereby challenge neocolonial frameworks—a decolonial mode within which Borges is not often associated.

Yet even before considering their analogous engagements with the dead, Joyce and Borges have often proved irresistible subjects for comparatist studies for critics. As L.A. Murillo first catalogued clear back in 1968, in a list that has scarcely been matched since:

> Both have worked on their respective cities, Dublin and Buenos Aires, like mythographers resurrecting from sounds, local sights, houses, and streets, a timeless vision of their inhabitants. And, although at home in several languages and literatures, a shocking parochialism locates the center of their cosmopolis. Both are Daedalian architects of word structures, of labyrinths. Both are exorcists of the shadowy feelings and meanings, the mystery and power of words: literary exorcists of consciousness. Both betray that predilection for compounding the erudite and trivial, the esoteric and the ecumenical, implicating, at its most sensitive, our twentieth-century sensibility. And of course both have pressed an obsession with form, with style and technique, to bounds that dazzle even where they feel familiar. (Murillo ix-x)

Simultaneously universal and parochial, esoteric and quotidian, dazzling and familiar, architects and exorcists—these are the contrasting tensions in the works of Joyce and Borges that suggest to Murillo a natural fraternity. These contrasts also indicate the expansive visions of both authors: their fiction often attempts to express the infinite at both the macroscopic and microscopic levels. Likewise, Patricia Novillo-Corvalán opens her 2011 study, *Borges and Joyce: An Infinite Conversation*, by observing that:

> both are renowned for their polyglot identities, prodigious memories, cyclical conception of time and labyrinthine creations, for their condition as European émigrés and blind bards of Dublin and Buenos Aires, and, of course, for not being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. (Novillo-Corvalán 4)

For Novillo-Corvalán, Joyce and Borges' membership in the rarefied club of Nobel non-laureates more renowned than the prize itself, as well as their shared statuses as blind bards *à la* Homer (with whom both artists have likewise engaged), naturally pair Joyce and Borges together

in the Western pantheon. Their "cyclical conception of time" also gestures towards their similar attitudes towards the dead: not as something irrevocably lost, but as something that inexorably returns. These gestures towards the return of the dead are part and parcel of their larger project of expressing infinity. If, as I argued in the previous chapter, Beckett's and Fuentes's dead are an attempt to at last outnumber their neighboring superpowers, then Borges's and Joyce's infinite ghosts are a mode by which they can finally exceed the massive (yet finite) political and economic systems of totalization that attempt to completely catalogue, account, and thereby colonize.

Joyce and Borges likewise reach across the Atlantic to place Ireland and Argentina in conversation with together. Borges's 1942 story "La forma de la espada" ("The Shape of the Sword") for example, features a mysterious fugitive from the Anglo-Irish Civil Wars living in the Río de la Plata delta; likewise, his famed essay "The Argentine Writer and Tradition" specifically cites "the case of the Irish" as "analogous" to that of the Argentinian writer, who "can handle all European themes, handle them without superstition, with an irreverence which can have, and already does have, fortunate consequences" (*Non-Fictions* 177). Meanwhile, in Joyce's 1914 story-collection *Dubliners*, young and put-upon Eveline, "in (whose) nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne" (*Dubliners* 31), is offered an escape from the paralysis of Dublin with passage to "Buenos Ayres"—that is, Joyce presents her with passage from a city of Bad Air to a city of Good Air. She does not board the ship to Argentina at the crucial moment, however, due to an impossible promise she made to her dying mother to "keep the home together as long as she could" (35), which paralyzes her into indecision as she stands on the docks. The ghost of her mother hangs over the passage between Dublin and Buenos Aires. Joyce's choice of Buenos Aires as her potential escape is notable here, for in addition to being the home of Borges, the city

features, among many other immigrant groups, the world's fifth largest Irish population.[49] This community has produced many renowned Irish-Argentine figures including the author and activist Rodolfo Walsh, Perón's precursor General Edelmiro Julián Farrell, and that famed descendant of Patrick Lynch, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, whose own father declared "The first thing to note is that in my son's veins flowed the blood of the Irish rebels" (Anderson 5), and who remains himself today the very archetype and symbol for Latin American resistance against the tyrannies of Anglophone empires.

The irony, then, is that the one Argentine with whom Joyce is most often placed in conversation is not Irish- but Anglo-Argentine, one who was, moreover, a self-declared Conservative, avowed Anglophile,[50] and an anti-Peronista,[51] none of which have endeared him to sympathetic anti-colonial readings (at least not in the manner that Joyce has routinely come to be since the 1990s). The idea that Borges can be read as a postcolonial writer remains contentious

[49] Of course, the dream of Argentina itself was often treacherous to the Irish in particular. In 1889, the Dresden Affair had made international headlines when a group of 1,774 Irish immigrants bound for Argentina aboard the steamer *City of Dresden* were subjected to inhumane travel conditions and dumped in an ill-fated colony a hundred miles south of Buenos Aires. The incident created a scandal. In the aftermath of the investigation, Thomas Croke, Archbishop of Cashel, wrote: "I most solemnly conjure my poorer countrymen, as they value their happiness hereafter, never to set foot on the Argentine Republic, however tempted to do so they may be by offers of a passage or an assurance of comfortable homes" (Croke).

[50] Perhaps best exemplified by the fact that the title of *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* is awkwardly phrased in Spanish, yet trips off the tongue much more fluidly in English (alternately rendered as "Garden of Bifurcating Paths" and "Garden of Forking Paths"), almost as though Borges were already anticipating the English translation—or thinking in the English of his Grandmother.

[51] Juan Domingo Perón, thrice-elected President of Argentina from 1946-1955 before he was overthrown in a military coup, and then serving again from 1973 till his death in 1974. A polarizing figure in Argentinian politics to this day, he was to his supporters a champion of the *descamisados* (literally, the "shirtless"); to his detractors, he was a demagogue and a dictator. The basic principles of Peronism are Social Justice, Economic Independence, and Political Sovereignty. A purported "Third Way" position, Peronism attempted to reject both capitalism and communism, mediate Labor disputes, and construct a sort of welfare state for the impoverished and elderly.

Borges lost his position at Miguel Cané Library when Perón first came to power, which certainly did not endear him to the new President. Perón's treatment of Borges became a cause célèbre for the Argentine opposition and intelligentsia. When Borges died in Switzerland in 1986, the Peronist *Partido Justicialista* declined to send a delegate to his memorial service in Buenos Aires, citing disparaging comments Borges once made of Perón's iconic wife Evita.

to this day.[52] Borges in his time did take the (today rather uncontroversial) stance of being anti-Nazi, nevertheless the European fascists were far distant from the more conservative military juntas of Argentina and Chile, with whom Borges was on much more congenial terms.[53] Indeed, few if any of the manifold comparatist studies on Joyce and Borges have addressed how the two might both be operating within similar decolonializing frameworks; critics have largely side-stepped the sticky issue of their politics by instead focusing upon their aesthetics.

But then, despite their surface similarities, their aesthetics diverge radically as well. As Sergio Waisman more soberly observes, "Thinking of the ever-expansive, massive Joyce as a predecessor of the ultra-condensed Borges does not seem possible," noting that though "Borges maintained a life-long dialogue with Joyce," it was nonetheless "a deeply ambivalent one in which the Argentine quotes and translates and refers to Joyce as much to disagree with him as anything else" (Waisman 41). Umberto Eco may have raved in a cover-blurb, "Though so different in style, two writers have offered us an image for the next millennium: Joyce and Borges. The first designed with words what the second designed with ideas: the original, the one and only World Wide Web" (Eco), but that praise still does not fully emphasize just how divergent their styles really were—or how important that divergence was to Borges. Indeed, as Borges matured, he began noticeably distancing himself from *Ulysses*, often labeling it "unreadable," calling his own reading of the tome "inattentive and transient" (*Non-Fictions* 12), and even bragging that, "I (like the rest of the universe) have not read *Ulysses*" (Borges 221), as

[52] Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin did choose to identify him as a postcolonial writer, and Beatriz Sarlo has called him a peripheral writer. Rosenberg has observed the curious position of Latin American modernists such as Borges, who often veered toward political conservatism yet also challenged Eurocentrism and colonialism.

[53] Borges in the late 1960s expressed in an interview support for the United States, Richard Nixon, and escalation of the Vietnam war—although Professor Ted Lyons, who has researched over 700 Borges interviews, warns against taking any Borges interview at face value, for he frequently played with the tropes of interviews as much as he did any other genre (Lyons).

though the expansive cosmos itself resists being encompassed into Joyce's novel.[54] It is also worth noting that while Joyce quickly left behind the short-story genre, Borges never did. He rejected the possibilities of the novel, citing Joyce as a primary reason why: "[I]s not *Ulysses*, with its maps and timetables and exactitudes the magnificent death throes of a genre?" (*Non-Fictions* 389) he asks in an essay on Flaubert, comparing the modern-day Odyssey to the original only insofar as "Homer had already exhausted the possibilities of poetry" (390). *Ulysses* for Borges is an act of exhaustion, closing possibilities rather than opening them, a dead-end to infinity rather than an entrance into it. In the same essay, he back-handedly compliments Joyce as "the near-infinite Irishman" (393), that is, *near*-, not *actually*-infinite, a subtle and implied coming up short by Joyce, not so much to denigrate him, but an attempt to blunt Joyce's capacity to encompass the universe in his fiction—which Borges felt was symptomatic of the all-encompassing tendencies of totalitarian systems generally.

To briefly touch back on Jameson's *A Singular Modernity*: Modernism arises from an industrial modernization process that only ends once said modernization process actually finishes; Jameson's chief examples are Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, regimes that effectively ended the experimental art movements within their respective countries when they turned towards totalitarianism in order to finish "modernizing" economically. Totalitarianism for Jameson is but a more radical expression of economic modernization, which literary modernism attempts to simultaneously participate within and resist. Jameson's citation of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia are especially relevant here, for those two regimes are likewise specifically name-checked in Borges's 1940 fable "Tlön, Uqbar, Tertius Orbus" as examples of

[54] Now, Borges never completely turns on Joyce, even consenting to speak at the Centenary of Joyce's birth, significantly choosing to arrive in Ireland on Bloomsday 1982; nevertheless, the fact that that late date was the well-traveled Anglophile's first ever visit to Ireland speaks to the arm's length at which he came to hold his one-time hero.

exactly the sort of overly-systematized order that Tlön represents: "Ten years ago, any symmetry, any system with an appearance of order—dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism—could spellbind and hypnotize mankind. How could the world not fall under the sway of Tlön?"[55] (Borges 81). The story details the sudden and unexpected rise of a constructed fantasy world that seeps into our reality and overlays itself upon ours. When Borges critiques the "dialectical materialism" of the Communists alongside his attacks against Nazism in "Tlön," he is not simply making some facile observation about how each ideology is just as bad as the other, but he is identifying them as twin expressions of the same destructive impulses towards economic modernization run unfettered. Even his anti-Peronism is couched in similarly economic critiques: "The dictatorship loathed (or pretended to loathe) capitalism, yet as in Russia, copied its methods, dictating names and slogans to the people with the same tenacity with which businesses impose their razor blades, cigarettes, or washing machines" (*Non-Fictions* 409). For Borges, the same drive towards marketing and commodification that ensnares capitalism likewise finds expression in all others forms of economic materialism, Marxist, Fascist, Peronista, or otherwise; what all these various systems share in common is a will-to-totalization: a drive to comprehend, catalogue, and account for everything and everyone within a single, unified system. Borges's various infinities, then, are a move towards exceeding any and all forms of totalization, including totalitarianism. In fact, it may be precisely within Borges's resistance against his one-time hero Joyce that Borges's decolonial sympathies can be most firmly located.

An oft-cited example of Borges's resistance to Joyce is his 1942 story "Funes, el memorioso" ("Funes the Memorious"), Borges's fictional character-study of a young Uruguayan

[55] "Hace diez años bastaba cualquier simetría con apariencia de orden—el materialismo dialéctico, el antisemitismo, el nazismo—para embelesar a los hombres. ¿Cómo no someterse a Tlön?" (528).

farm-hand who, after a freak accident, is endowed with perfect memory. Borges explicitly identifies Funes with Joyce in a 1941 fragment, stating bluntly:

> (Funes) he is a monster. I have evoked him because a consecutive, straightforward reading of the four hundred thousand words of *Ulysses* would require similar monsters (I will not venture to speak of what *Finnegans Wake* would demand; for me, its readers are no less inconceivable than C.H. Hinton's further dimensions or the trinity of Nicaea). (*Non-Fictions* 220-1)

The monstrosity of Funes (a reading not readily apparent within the story's sympathetic narration) is seen only within the context of a direct attack at Joyce. As Waisman comments of the passage, "Borges is critiquing not the sheer size of Joyce's work (there are definitely longer books than *Ulysses* or the *Wake*), but rather its *totalizing tendencies*" (Waisman 68) (emphasis added). It is not the length of Joyce's novels, but rather their "totalizing tendencies," that Borges most resists, and are what he parodies by means of "Funes." As Anthony Cordingley argues:

> "Funes, his Memory" is in some way a portrait of the sleepless reader which Joyce famously invoked as the ideal reader of *Ulysses.* Despite being a rural Argentine, Funes is rumoured to have an English father though his name is the decidedly Celtic, O'Connor…Reminiscent of Joyce's mapping of the clouds in what Hugh Kenner calls the "parallax" effect in the Telemachus and Calypso chapters of *Ulysses*, Funes "knew the forms of the clouds in the southern sky on the morning of April 30, 1882." (Cordingley 140)

Funes, with his possible Irish-bastard ancestry and penchant for mapping clouds on specific days, is the parody of the ideal Joycean reader (as is the fact that 1882 is Joyce's birth-year). If Funes were a government or a corporation, he would be terrifying, as opposed to pitiful. Yet

Funes's impotence is itself an implicit statement of the futility of totalitarianism—in addition to a commentary on the futility of the "near-infinite Irishman's" own attempts at totalization. This critique of totalization is further expanded upon by Borges himself in a 1967 conversation with writer Richard Burgin, in which he said of *Ulysses*:

> Well, by the time it's read through, you know thousands and thousands of circumstances about the characters, but you don't know them…You know, for example…that they went twice to the men's room, you know all the books they read, you know their exact positions when they are sitting down or standing up, but you don't really know them. It's as if Joyce had gone over them with a microscope or a magnifying glass. (Burgin 36)

Here, the problem for Borges is that all this ultra-close attention to detail has the defect of alienating the parts from the whole. Totalization has the paradoxical effect of particularizing, separating apart, isolating the base components one from another, as opposed to synthesizing them altogether. We might recall that such is the exact same problem as Funes, who "was not very good at thinking. To think is to ignore (or forget) differences, to generalize, to abstract. *In the teeming world of Ireneo Funes there was nothing but particulars*"[56] (Borges 137) (emphasis added). This statement echoes Borges's claim about Joyce, that he was "Lacking the capacity to construct" (Borges 221)—which is another possible way of saying he lacked imagination. As James Ramey also observes,

> It is worth mentioning that Joyce himself privately lamented his lack of imagination; as Richard Ellmann notes, "(Joyce's) method of composition was very like T. S. Eliot's, the imaginative absorption of stray material. The method did not please Joyce very much

[56] "Sospecho, sin embargo, que no era muy capaz de pensar. Pensar es olvidar diferencias, es generalizar, abstraer. En el abarrotado mundo de Funes no había sino detalles, casi inmediatos" (590).

> because he considered it not imaginative enough, but it was the only way he could work" ... Borges seems to home in on precisely this deficit by suggesting that if Joyce's gods had bestowed upon him a greater imaginative capacity, he might not have had to resort to such plotless, meandering deployments of his "verbal omnipotence." (Ramey 146)

Joyce apparently considered himself short-handed in the imagination department as well. Borges himself writes in "Tlön, Uqbar, Tertius Orbus": "There are many men adept in those diverse disciplines, but few capable of imagination"[57] (72), or "invention" (a more direct translation of the original Spanish), and Joyce by implication is not among those chosen few. Joyce, as diverse as his masteries may be, nevertheless cannot synthesize, construct, or invent, according to Borges, so instead he is relegated to massive assembly instead—as in an industrial factory or plant, concerned less with imagination than the maximization of production. Borges may have associated himself too comfortably with the neoliberal regimes of Argentina, Chile, Great Britain, and the United States, but that is not to say that Joyce was so extricated from these same economic systems, either. It is less that Borges resists Joyce than it is that Borges resists the totalizing systems that have entangled his one-time boyhood hero—and the dead become a crucial element of his resistance.

Borges most overtly marries together his resistance against Joycean totalization and his engagement with the infinite dead in one of his most classic stories, 1948's "The Garden of Forking Paths" ("El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan"). In his introduction to the collection of the same name, he famously declares:

> It is a laborious madness and an impoverishing one, the madness of composing vast books—setting out in five hundred pages an idea that can be perfectly related orally in

[57] "Abundan individuos que dominan esas disciplinas diversas, pero no los capaces de invención" (518).

five (a few) minutes. The better way to go about it is to pretend that those books already exist, and offer a summary, a commentary on them.[58] (67)

Numerous critics have read in this passage another swipe at Joyce, as Borges classifies the Irishman's tendency towards massive books as "madness," not to mention a needless waste of time: long novels for him are "laborioso," laborious in a manner only a factory could love. The story in question follows a Chinese collaborator for the Nazis named Yu Tsun while he is on the run from British Intelligence during World War II. In the midst of his escape, he stumbles upon the residence of a certain Dr. Stephen Albert, an English sinologist. Dr. Albert converses with Yu about one of his ancestors, an ancient nobleman named Ts'ui Pên, who famously retired from public life with the declared intention to both write a book and create a labyrinth. Dr. Albert's great discovery is to realize that Ts'ui Pên, contrary to popular opinion, actually succeeded in his twin projects, because the massive and confused manuscript he eventually produced *is* the labyrinth in question. That is, the book is a kind of ancient Chinese precursor to the labyrinthine *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*, in all of their contradictory and sprawling madness. As Cordingley argues:

> This *ficción* is a sharp satire veiled in a sinologist's garb at the meaningless of *Ulysses* to a non-academic reader. To my knowledge César Augusto Salgado is the only critic to have identified "The Garden of Forking Paths" as a critique of Joyce's aesthetic. Salgado also makes the fascinating discovery that Joyce's "official interpreter", the man to whom he gave the diagram schema of Ulysses, Stuart Gilbert, is actually disguised under the anagrammatic repetition, in ST-ephen Alb-ert, the character who in "The Garden of

[58] "Desvarío laborioso y empobrecedor el de componer vastos libros; el de explayar en quinientas páginas una idea cuya perfecta exposición oral cabe en pocos minutos. Mejor procedimiento es simular que esos libros ya existen y ofrecer un resumen, un comentario" (511).

> Forking Paths" provides the answer to the riddle of the labyrinthine novel. (Cordingley 142)

For both Cordgingley and Salgado, it is no coincidence that the scholar who reveals that the book itself is the labyrinth is named "Stephen," as in Stephen Dedalus, the Joyce stand-in—nor that "Albert" is anagrammatic for Stuart Gilbert, the scholar and first translator of *Ulysses* into French. Dr. Stephen Albert, in this reading, is simultaneously both Joyce and the interpreter of Joyce, lost in the labyrinths of his meaningless pedantry that will blind him to the futility of his efforts; as if to punctuate that futility, the story ends with him shot in the back of the head by Yu Tsun, who murders Dr. Albert in a final, desperate bid to communicate to his German contacts that the city of Albert should be their next bombing target. In this reading, Borges vicariously puts a bullet into the head of Joyce himself, in his formal repudiation of Joycean aesthetics. But such a reading elides the fact that there is an *actual* Irishman at the heart of "Garden of Forking Paths": British officer Richard Madden. As Yu Tsun describes him:

> Madden was implacable—or rather, he was obliged to be implacable. An Irishman at the orders of the English, a man accused of a certain lack of zealousness, perhaps even treason, how could he fail to embrace and give thanks for this miraculous favour—the discovery, capture, perhaps death, of two agents of the German Empire? (Borges 119).[59]

Yu Tsun and Richard Madden are mirror figures: they are both colonized subjects, entangled with and serving racist regimes in a sort of misbegotten desire to prove their own utility. A scenario that appears far-fetched in Yu becomes sadly familiar in Madden. Madden and Yu, in other words, may be opponents, but they are nonetheless still complementary figures. (As are

[59] "Madden era implacable. Mejor dicho, estaba obligado a ser implacable. Irlandés a las órdenes de Inglaterra, hombre acusado de tibieza y tal vez de traición ¿cómo no iba a abrazar y agradecer este milagroso favor: el descubrimiento, la captura, quizá la muerte, de dos agentes del Imperio Alemán?" (567).

Joyce and Borges; we can perhaps even read in the name Madden a subtle pun for the "Maddening" Joyce.) Both Yu and Madden are simultaneously participating yet resisting their colonial regimes—as were Borges and Joyce—all without ever becoming consciously aware of their twisted camaraderie.

Nor is it an accident that the centerpiece of "Garden" is "a novel…a labyrinth in which all men would lose their way"[60] (122), which has long been a fair description of Joyce's final work *Finnegans Wake*. Stephen Albert notes of the book that "The only way I could surmise was that it be a cyclical, or circular, volume, a volume whose last page would be identical to the first, so that one might go on indefinitely"[61] (Borges 125), formalistically exactly what happens in *Finnegans Wake* as well, wherein the closing sentence is finished by the first line, meaning that the book can potentially be read in a continuous loop. There is a sense of infinity about the *Wake*: a circle is calculated according to the never-ending decimals of pi, which potentially signifies that every possibility is contained within this infinite numerical code; it is an infinity that transcends and exceeds the far meager sums of market economies, no matter how large and globally encompassing the latter may be. *Finnegans Wake*, by sheer dint of its infinite readings and misreadings and nonreadings placed on infinite loop, likewise potentially contains everything—including the ever-present cacophonous voices of the dead. It is a Wake after all, a death ritual whose very circular structure posits the inevitable return of the dead, a book whose radically deconstructed and fragmentary language is of a kind with the speech of the dead found in Ó Cadhain and Rulfo. *Finnegans Wake*, then, can be approached as a sort of incantation that

[60] [60] "una novela…un laberinto en el se perdieran todos los hombres" (570).
[61] "No conjeturé otro procedimiento que el de un volumen cíclico, circular. Un volumen cuya úlimta página fuera idéntica a la primera, con la posibilidad de continuar indefinidamente" (573).

both performs and conjures all possible voices of the silenced dead upon its silenced pages (all the more silent because so much of it is unpronounceable, and therefore unutterable).

Yet it is also worth noting how, even as Borges describes an ancient Chinese *Finnegans Wake* in "Garden," he never actually attempted to produce one. He declared contemptuously of the actual *Wake*, "I have examined it with some bewilderment, have unenthusiastically deciphered nine or ten calembours…*Finnegans Wake* is a concatenation of puns in a dreamlike English that is difficult not to categorize as frustrated and incompetent" (*Non-Fictions* 195). Borges may have been fascinated by infinity, but any attempt to encapsulate it through literature—especially Joyce's attempts—he apparently considered presumptuous, ineffective, incompetent, and above all, monstrous. Indeed, every other time an infinite book appears in the works of Borges are also treated as intrinsically monstrous by Borges—from the hypothetical one in "The Library of Babel" with its infinitely thin pages and "inconceivable middle-page" with no back, to "The Book of Sands," an actual infinite book that drives mad every man that handles it. Recall also Stephen Albert's explanation as to why Ts'ui Pên never explicitly identified his manuscript with his labyrinth: "to always omit a word…is perhaps the most emphatic way of calling attention to that word"[62] (126). Such is also the aesthetic that Borges privileges, a radical concision that paradoxically calls attention to all that's absent—which would be *everything*. It is precisely *because* his stories leave out almost everything, Borges indicates, that they are even *more* comprehensive than Joyce's sprawling novels. Infinity is thereby contained within Borges's omissions. By implication, Joyce's entire oeuvre is also contained in Borges's stories; his minimalism has turned the tables on Joyce's maximization. Perhaps a likelier interpretation of Yu Tsun's assassination of Dr. Albert is not that Borges symbolically

[62] "Omitir *siempre* una palabra…es quizá el modo más enfático de indicarla" (576).

repudiates Joyce, but rather that his single bullet does more to encompass Dr. Albert within the infinity of absence than his forebear's entire Garden of Forking Paths.

Yu Tsun appears aware of this infinity; indeed, the story ends with Yu Tsun expressing "mi innumerable contrición y cansancio", a contrition that is innumerable, uncountable—"infinite" is the most common English translation. That is, Yu Tsun is now all the more entangled in the infinity of the Garden of Forking Paths than ever; he has not rejected the labyrinth but entered it. Borges likewise appears to become aware that he has entangled himself in the same infinity as Joyce. In fact, "Garden" goes so far as to recreate a key scene from Joyce's classic 1914 novella "The Dead," as Yu Tsun reports in the home of Stephen Albert: "I sensed that the dew-drenched garden that surrounded the house was saturated, infinitely, with invisible persons"[63] (127). Compare the wording of this scene to this one from Joyce's "The Dead," which to my knowledge is the first time this comparison has been highlighted:

> …in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. (235)

In both passages the protagonist detects an infinite number of invisible persons saturating a scene of mourning. For superstitious[64] Joyce (more a blasphemer than a heretic, according to T.S. Eliot),

[63] "Me pareció que el húmedo jardín que rodeaba la casa estaba sataurada hasta lo infinito de invisibles personas" (576).

[64] "Stuart Gilbert observes that Joyce did not share his own esoteric beliefs in theosophy and magic but adds that Joyce was equally unimpressed by their secular replacements: 'I doubt if Joyce, though he owned to several deeply rooted superstitions…believed in any such doctrines. But he accepted their existence as a fact…He had none of the glib assurance of the late nineteenth-century rationalist'" (Gibbons 2).

it is apparently the literal dead teeming about; for far-more skeptical Borges, it is the infinite number of possibilities for existence that Ts'ui Pên's book represents, which include any and all of the infinite dead. Infinity is of vital importance for Borges because, as a self-professed agnostic and non-believer, the existence and persistence of the dead was an even more ambivalent possibility for him than for Joyce. In 1978, the brightest thing elderly Borges could write on the topic of death was:

> I would say that I believe in immortality, not in the personal but in the cosmic sense. We will keep on being immortal; beyond our physical death our memory will remain, and beyond our memory will remain our actions, our circumstances, our attitudes, all that marvelous part of universal history, although we won't know, and it is better that we won't know it. (*Non-Fictions* 491).

One's actions and effects may continue to ripple across the cosmos, but Borges was still largely pessimistic about the actual possibility of ontological persistence—that is, unless one counts infinity, where by definition all possibilities are co-present, and therefore all the dead are still likewise co-present and can exert their influence. Nietzsche's concept of the eternal recurrence, another common explanation for Borges's preoccupation with the return of the dead, was in reality of little interest to Borges, other than as another weary dogma to be debunked: "If the universe consists of an infinite number of terms, it is rigorously capable of an infinite number of combinations—and the need for a Recurrence is done away with" (*Non-Fictions* 117). Eternal Returns are unnecessary if infinity exists; the dead in this model return not because of the finite number of configurations possible in infinite time, but because *all* configurations are not only possible, but already co-present. If Borges did not have much traditional faith in the existence of an afterlife, he was still deeply preoccupied with the fact that infinity by its very nature keeps the

dead co-present among all available possibilities for existence. For Borges, the only place that the dead can exist is in these infinities—but exist they do, and form part of the "vast hosts of the dead" that Borges, like Joyce, utilizes to rally against the imprecations of an insidious economic modernization that constantly attempts to reduce humanity to finite, quantifiable numbers. In both passages, there is a distinct sense that the innumerable dead have multiplied and exceeded even the most extreme limits of totalization and empire.

This capacity of the dead exceed empire is pivotal towards understanding "The Dead" as a whole. The Joyce passage in question appears at the end of his 1914 debut *Dubliners*, composed back when Joyce still practiced the short-fiction form himself. Death permeates the collection: it opens with a funeral ("The Sisters"), and is haunted throughout by the ghosts of raving mothers ("Eveline"), of lonely suicides ("A Painful Case"), of betrayed Parnell ("Ivy Day in the Committee Room"), of the disquieting promise of death to come ("The Clay"). The specter of the dead, whether directly or indirectly cited, hangs like a funeral shroud over the entire collection, discomfiting the memories of the living, and calling attention, for better and for worse, to the oft-elided yet still inescapable debt the breathing still owe the dead. As Jim LeBlanc glosses the role of the dead in *Dubliners*:

> Slavoj Žižek, in *Looking Awry*, remarks that "if there is a phenomenon that fully deserves to be called the 'fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture,' it is this fantasy of the return of the living dead: the fantasy of a person who does not want to stay dead but returns again and again to pose a threat to the living." Žižek goes on to ask the question: "why do the dead return?" His answer, drawing primarily on Lacanian theory, is that "they were not properly buried…The return of the dead…is a sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in

> the process of symbolization; the dead return as collectors of some unpaid symbolic debt." (LeBlanc 28)

In Žižek's model, as rehearsed here by LeBlanc, the dead engage with the living on their own economic terms, seeking to collect "some unpaid symbolic debt." Though the debt is often ignored or even disavowed, the dead nevertheless continue to return to exact the debt in full. It is a debt that *Dubliners* never allows the reader to forget—particularly as the collection finishes with the bluntly titled "The Dead."

In this famed story, Gabriel Conroy, a local Dublin literature professor, and his wife Gretta attend a Christmas party hosted by his Aunts. Over the course of his conversations throughout the evening, the reader learns he possesses some Unionist leanings, writes literary reviews on the side for a Unionist newspaper, and is therefore taunted as a "West Breton" by his colleague Molly Ivors. For all his Unionist sympathies, however, Gabriel comes off as not so much malicious as slightly pathetic. As Vincent Cheng writes, "I would not wish to dispute that Gabriel Conroy is a quite sympathetic character, especially in contrast to all the other male rogues, drunkards, and failures who populate Joyce's gallery of *Dubliners*" (Cheng 135). Nevertheless, Cheng also argues that Gabriel is presented to us as a colonial subject who is complicit with and participating in the larger imperial apparatuses that have long determined his island—which includes the Anglo-centric globalized economy that erases memory of trauma and exploitation. For example, as Cheng astutely notes, the galoshes that Gabriel makes entirely too much ado about early in the story were produced by rubber harvested under the most appalling conditions in the Congo and Peru. Despite receiving no explicit mention within the story, the rubber trade's abuses were no obscure historical footnote at the time, but an international scandal that had already made headlines across Western world. That dissemination came in large part

thanks to the exposés published by Gabriel's fellow countryman Roger Casement, whose expeditions to the Belgian Congo and Peru under the auspices of the British Crown helped to publicize the gross atrocities of the global rubber industry. By the time of *Dubliners*' publication, Casement was not only an international celebrity with many prominent friends and supporters (including Joseph Konrad, author of *Heart of Darkness*) but had begun to gain some infamy when he refused a knighthood for his efforts. For his experiences among the colonized abroad had radicalized him, and made him aware of the colonial position of his own native Ireland. Casement would later be memorialized in a Yeats poem, "The Ghost of Roger Casement," when he became one of the executed in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. In 2010, Casement was again memorialized, this time by the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, in *El sueño del celta* (The Dream of the Celt).[65] Casement, then, is an Irish name that was synonymous with anti-colonial resistance within exploitative market economies that had long entangled Ireland and Latin America—and that particularly centered upon the rubber that form Gabriel's galoshes.

Yet despite this headline news, the most Gabriel seems to be able to articulate about his new galoshes is that "everyone wears them on the Continent" right now. Moreover, no one else at the party calls him out on this oversight; they appear mostly either confused or unimpressed, not horrified. As Avelar might note, all present have had the knowledge of the larger colonial network of capitalist exploitation largely disappeared from their memories and consciousness. Though Casement had yet to be executed when *Dubliners* was published, already he was a ghost, haunting the peripheries of popular awareness but largely immaterial and unseen—much like the ghosts of indigenous Congans and Peruvians who had already died such horrific deaths in the harvest of rubber. The implicit promise of this story, then, is that an increased awareness of the

[65] Incidentally the same year Vargas Llosa was finally awarded the Nobel Prize.

dead can facilitate a heightened awareness of one's own subjectivity with the globalized imperial system.

It is an awareness that Gabriel has long needed. For in addition to his blithe ignorance of the larger systems of exploitation within which he is tacitly complicit, Cheng argues that Gabriel has internalized and consequently displays the paternalistic attitudes of Empire. As his paternalistic attitudes towards Gretta indicate, Gabriel is marked as part of

> what Gyatri Spivak has referred to as "the masculinist-imperialist ideological formation"…a reading of Gabriel Conroy as a well-meaning patriarch who is *almost* a domestic tyrant…a qualified representation by Joyce of a potentially oppressive patriarch in symbolic collaboration with the ruling masters of the English colonial empire. (Cheng 134-5)

This masculinist-imperialist formation is most foregrounded near the story's ending, when he feels a great desire to take lustful possession of his wife Gretta, as he beholds her on a stairwell lost in memory while she overhears an old Irish ballad sung from the next room over. In that moment, his feelings focus not on what her thoughts might be, but only on his own; he is not really thinking of her, but only of how he might capture that image of her in a painting ("If he were a painter"), of how he might represent and possess her. At that moment he had occasion to fancy himself a conquering hero: despite his various faux pas and petty humiliations over the course of the evening, his dinner toast had come off swimmingly, and so he now sought to cap off that victory with an easy conquest of his own wife. But when the couple arrives back at their hotel, she does not come to him nor respond to his tender touches as he had imagined and hoped, but continues distracted. As insensitive to his annoyance as he had been to her grief, she reveals that the ballad she overheard has reminded her of her first love at seventeen, for a young Irish lad

named Michael Furey. Gretta collapses in tears as she describes how Michael Furey fell sick yet still braved the rains to see her the night before she left for convent, saying "he did not want to live" (233), and dies shortly thereafter. At this point Gabriel deceases and surrenders, and no longer attempts to possess her; "shy of intruding on her grief" (234), he lets go her hand and allows her to cry her refreshed heartache.

Up till this point in the story, "The Dead" has followed the fairly familiar structure of a sentimental romance, in an apparent tale of sexual jealousy and lost lovers. Such genre assumptions have influenced the many pessimistic readings of the story's ending, wherein "it seems more likely that the Conroys' marriage is about to unravel as the psychological paralysis that Joyce sought to convey throughout Dubliners claims another set of victims" (LeBlanc 36). But that narrative trajectory only holds consistent if one ignores the titular apparitions of the dead, who turns the story in a different direction entirely, swiftly expanding beyond Gabriel's narrow myopia to engulf the cosmos. This shift begins at the page break, wherein Gabriel, after Gretta's revelation, does not regard her with envy nor her story with anger, but instead observes "unresentfully," almost clinically: "So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life" (234). He suddenly becomes disinterested in his own life as well, and so swiftly becomes disinterested in life altogether, as his thoughts turn towards how lately he and Gretta have begun to approach the realms of the dead more than he usually cares to confess: "He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful, but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death" (234). It is not a far leap for him to then consider who *else* close to him nears the realms of the dead:

> Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing arrayed for the Bridal. Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees…crying and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones. (235)

It is not just the sad reminder of his Aunts' impending mortality that now weighs on Gabriel, but how their deaths will challenge and defeat language itself, rendering it "lame and useless"; for a literature professor and book-lover like Gabriel, one who prides himself on his turns of phrase during a toast, that is no minor confession to make. As argued in the chapter previous, death has the uncanny capacity to render *all* words "lame and useless," and thereby disrupt and undermine the various frames of authority dependent upon the immutability of language, a project that Joyce would explore much more radically in the linguistic experiments of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

Swiftly the story ceases to be about frustrated love (either Gabriel's *or* Gretta's), but about how deeply entangled Gabriel remains with the economy of the dead, *all* of the dead, far more than he had previously supposed—which brings me back to the passage in question:

> …in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. (235)

Here, Gabriel's gross materialism (his heritage as a British Unionist) is challenged by the "wayward and flickering existence" of a dead that his epistemology had neither accounted for nor acknowledged. As Luke Gibbons claims in *Joyce's Ghosts*, "To ask if the ghost literally exists is to miss the point, for it is precisely the equation of literalism with truth that is being called into question" (Gibbons 6), because what Joyce is resisting is the economic assumption that only physical materiality should be ascribed value. Joyce pushes back against physicality's privilege altogether, as he states in the following line: "His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling" (235). In this moment, it is no longer the next life but rather *this* one, the living, corporeal, physical one, that dissolves and dwindles, breaks apart and disintegrates, as he feels himself approaching "that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead." The dead in this passage are the ones who are *actually* real, who still influence and intercede, much more than this flickering, ephemeral, material life. Joyce has reversed the polarities, establishing the regions of the dead, so opposed to this gross material economy, as the only permanent and established order, one with far greater reach and lasting impact than the ephemerality of commodification.[66] Gabriel Conroy, who had spent far too much time in his narrow little world reconciled to his colonial status, now realizes that the dead are far larger and more pervasive than any Empire he had considered before. Theirs is an influence that is diffuse and widespread, general like the snow across Ireland:

> Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland…It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It

[66] In a 1976 interview with Ted Lyons, Borges inquired as to whether shadows, being two-dimensional, are aware of the being casting them; when Lyons confessed "I suppose not," Borges asked playfully, "Then how do we not know whether we ourselves are not shadows cast by some four-dimensional being?"

> lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (236)

In this passage, his perspective expands outward to become aware of the presence of all the living and the dead across not only all of Ireland, but "through the universe." Without the dead, Gabriel cannot think to merge with anything larger than the British Empire; but with the dead, he can exceed the Empire to join with the universe entire, trivializing Empire altogether. Like Artemio Cruz on his deathbed, he begins to perceive how for him as well, "galaxies will flame and the sun will burn." Inasmuch as the 1916 Easter Rising (that is, a resurrection of the dead) was first planned by the rebels Christmas 1915, it is worth noting that the first awakenings of Gabriel's decolonializing consciousness are also on a Christmas—his is the prelude to the Rising (Ó'Hare 97). The Archangel Gabriel is he who also announced the Holy Birth to Mary.

There is likewise a note of potential resurrection and return embedded within Borges's "Garden of Forking Paths." Of Ts'ui Pên's labyrinthine manuscript, Yu Tsun initially protests, "in the third chapter the hero dies, yet in the fourth he is alive again"[67] (124). But Yu protests before he fully understands the nature of the book; the dead hero is back in the next chapter because chapter four occupies a different timeline than chapter three—the implication is that in an infinite number of parallel timelines, all the dead still exist, still persist, still speak, and are thereby still co-present within this self-same infinity. As Dr. Albert also tells Yu Tsun, "in another (timeline), I say these same words, but I am an error, a ghost[68]" (127); even in the

[67] "en el tercer capítulo muere el héroe, en el cuarto está vivo" (573).
[68] "en otro, yo digo estas mismas palabras pero soy un error, un fantasma" (576).

timelines where he is not alive, he can still speak, still be heard, because all of infinity is co-present at once. In Ts'ui Pên's book, we are *all* ghosts in infinity; as in Joyce, it is the ghost world that is the real one, not this flickering, ephemeral, material world. The implicit lesson here is that our transactions should not be with this passing material world, but with the infinite one. Sadly however, Yu does not attain the epiphany of Gabriel; he remains as trapped in his labyrinth of colonial subservience as Richard Madden. He has sought only to eliminate possibilities from the labyrinth until his code was intelligible to the Germans, not embrace their infinity that would allow him to now outnumber the Nazis. Though Gabriel had demonstrated the hints of a nascent nationalistic consciousness as he recognizes his kinship with the vast hosts of the dead, Yu Tsun only has the promise that he will join their ranks shortly, as he is sentenced to death by hanging. That epiphany is now tragically left to the reader to realize; yet though Yu Tsun never fully realizes, that epiphany nevertheless remains all the more available to the reader precisely because it has been omitted, for "to always omit a word…is perhaps the most emphatic way of calling attention to that word" (126).

Such an aesthetic philosophy, as I have indicated, is core to how Borges most self-consciously differentiates himself from Joyce. But then, that very embrace of omissions—of absences, of *silence*—is likewise a Joycean project, one explicitly highlighted in *Dubliners*' successor, 1916's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The novel is likewise haunted by the specters of the dead. Early in Chapter I for example, there is another pivotal Christmas dinner: here, a young Stephen Dedalus witnesses a family argument centered on the then-recent fall of Parnell, the "uncrowned King of Ireland." Parnell is a dead man who will continue to haunt like a specter throughout the rest of Joyce's works, and whose home rule aspirations will likewise rise back from the dead the same year as the novel's publication, during the Easter Rising; it is

another Christmas that sets up a coming Easter. Likewise, Stephen's own personal rising in Chapter V—including his decision to refuse the Easter Eucharist, not even to please his Mother—is couched in death-like diction and vocabulary. As he tells his friend Cranly in an oft-quoted passage:

> I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning. (*Portrait* 218)

From here on out, "silence, exile and cunning" become the watchwords for Dedalus—and naturally it is silence that leads the list, for silence is most associated with the dead. Silence represents not only the termination of breath, but also functions as the most complete expression for how death disrupts and undermines the efficacy of official language, by refusing to express it at all. This conversion to silence is precipitated in part by a walk along a Dublin beach Stephen takes at the end of Chapter IV. There, he beholds a young woman wading her feet in the surf; she not only never interacts with him but scarcely regards him, and never appears in the narrative again. Nevertheless, this image still elicits an epiphanic "O Heavenly God!" (155) from him. Unlike Gabriel Conroy, Stephen seems to intuit that it is not for him to conquer or inhabit this woman, but rather to acknowledge her complete opacity, and respect her fundamental inaccessibility to him.

It is worth noting that, up until that moment, Stephen's interactions with women had consisted primarily of either the woman as mother (both his mother Mary Dedalus and the Mother Church), or of the woman as romantic partner, as evinced by the Virgin/Whore

dichotomy he encounters in the prostitutes of nocturnal Dublin of Chapter II and in the Virgin Mary of Chapter III. As Deborah Pope notes, "Stephen's initial encounter with the prostitute and his later trembling submission generate identical feelings of response...the irony...goes unrecognized by him" (Pope 113). Freud[69] had argued in 1913's "Theme of the Three Caskets" that these first two types, Mother and Virgin/Whore, are representationally part of "the three relations that a man has with a woman—the woman who bears him, the woman who is his mate, and the woman who destroys him" (Freud 403). Freud of course identifies "the three caskets symbolically as three women" (Freud 397), three tomb-like wombs. The young lady nonchalantly playing in the surf may initially appear to be a far cry from some deathly, destroying angel, save for her very silence towards Stephen. She completely excludes (or exiles) him from her inner life, and even her outer life. Freud had first formulated his ideas surrounding the three caskets from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, but the same vocabulary that fixates Freud about the Bard's play are likewise Joyce's key words in *A Portrait*: "Cordelia makes herself unrecognizable, inconspicuous like lead, she remains dumb, she 'loves and is silent'…we may perhaps equate concealment with dumbness…in dreams dumbness is a common representation of death" (Freud 397). That "dumbness" is a representation of the silence of death that young Stephen must accept, to the rejection of the first woman types. It is not coincidental that the chapter immediately following this encounter is where he first articulates his new strategy of "silence, exile and cunning." It is likewise not incidental that Stephen's encounter occurs at the liminal space of a beach: where the surf meets the sand, the land meets the water, the marked limits of U.K. polity meets the unfathomable depths of the fluid ocean that surrounds, exceeds, and dwarfs the British Empire. The sea can represent the immensity, opacity, and

[69] Joyce had already been exposed to Freud as early as 1909. The Austrian psychologist had a well-documented influence upon the Irish master.

inaccessibility of infinity (and often has); the beach is therefore where Stephen's encounter with silence and death first become associated in his mind with the possibilities of infinity.

Joyce's preoccupations with silence, absence, and infinity are the elements of his fiction with the most direct correspondence to Borges's fiction. Borges's own resistance against Joyce can be read as less a rejection of the man than a desire to push even further than him into that same infinity. In fact, Borges's initial modes of engaging with infinity take many of their initial cues from Joyce's *Ulysses*. No comparatist study of Borges and Joyce fails to bring up the fact that as a young man, Borges performed a fragmentary translation of the final page of *Ulysses* that is still considered by certain translators as "without doubt, the best translation of Joyce ever achieved in Spanish" (Rice 53). The reason Borges's partial translation of *Ulysses* is so often celebrated is because of the extensive liberties he took; Borges took to task translators who did not attempt the same level of linguistic inventiveness in the translation that Joyce took with English. Pérez Simón summarizes Borges's alterations to *Ulysses* thusly:

> I would like to emphasize briefly…the peculiar use of the pronoun "vos," typical of the spoken Spanish in Buenos Aires, substituting the standard Spanish "tú", as well as several colloquialisms. With his translation, Borges sought to achieve an Argentine version of *Ulysses*. (Pérez Simón 122)

Borges did not simply attempt to render *Ulysses* in Spanish; rather, Borges attempted to make *Ulysses* Argentine, deleting all references to local Dublin landmarks and deploying the *voseo* form endemic to southern cone Spanish, such that his *Ulysses* could be read as *Porteño* from Buenos Aires. We should expect nothing less from the author of "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," which outlines such a practice as a strategy for rendering another's text infinite. In this 1939 fiction:

> (Pierre Menard) did not want to compose *another* Quixote, which surely is easy enough—he wanted to compose *the* Quixote…His admirable ambition was to produce a number of pages which coincided—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes…Being, somehow, Cervantes, and arriving thereby at Quixote—that looked to Menard less challenging (and therefore less interesting) than continuing to be Pierre Menard and coming to the Quixote *through the experiences of Pierre Menard.*[70] (Borges 91)

Menard's process of arriving at the exact same text as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* by means of Menard's own experiences becomes analogous to Borges's own fragmentary translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, which likewise attempts to arrive at *Ulysses* through the experiences of Borges. Menard "ignores, overlooks—or banishes—local color"[71] (93), similar to how Borges would ignore, overlook, and banish local Irish color from *Ulysses* to make the text Argentine and consequently his own. Considering that Borges's fictional reviewer writes of Menard, "The Cervantes text and the Menard text are verbally identical, but the second is *infinitely* richer"[72] (94) (emphasis added), it is not hard to read a similar boast on behalf of Borges's younger self, a desire for his fragmentary *Ulysses* to be read as "infinitely" richer than Joyce's. Borges's own re-working of Joyce is perhaps subtly alluded to in "Menard's" closing line: "This technique fills the calmest books with adventure. Attributing the *Imitatio Christi* to Louis Ferdinand Céline or James Joyce—is that not sufficient renovation of those faint spiritual admonitions?" (95). Joyce

[70] "No quería componer otro Quijote—lo cual es fácil—sino *el Quijote*…Su admirable ambición era producer unas páginas que coincidieran—palabra por palabra y línea por línea—con las de Miguel de Cervantes…Ser, de alguna manera, Cervantes y llegar al *Quijote* le pareció menos arduo—por consiguiente, menos interesante—que seguir siendo Pierre Menard y llegar al *Quijote*, a través de las experiencias de Pierre Menard" (533-4).
[71] "Desatiende o proscribe el color local" (536).
[72] "El texto de Cervantes y el de Menard son verbalmente idénticos, pero el Segundo es casi infinitamente más rico" (536).

here is the final writer cited by "Pierre Menard's" narrator as a potential re-reader of older literature (arguably that is precisely what *Ulysses* manifold stylistic parodies are, a re-read of older texts and genres). Perhaps by implication Borges also sees himself as a re-reader of Joyce, as he renders the latter "infinitely richer" by doing to him what Joyce had already done to others—he takes the "near-infinite" Irishman and renders him *actually* infinite. Again, for Borges, the way to render a text "infinitely richer" was not through expansion, but concision; he contains Joyce not by encompassing him, but by disappearing him into the silences of his short stories. The silence of the unwritten pages, not the disintegration of fragmenting polyphonics, is for him the most efficacious strategy for undermining linguistic frames of authority. It is also worth noting that Menard's *Quixote* is likewise fragmentary and incomplete; the greater portion is disappeared into the infinite silences as well. Moreover, the story itself is presented as an obituary—Menard is a ghost haunting infinity in this story. Borges called *Ulysses* "the magnificent death throes of a genre," which in turn could hint that the deathly silence of Borges's own thin pages is where the entire novelistic genre, *Ulysses* included, now resides and is at last made infinite.

But then, much of Borges's assumptions are based in the supposition that *Ulysses* really is as totalizing as its reputation indicates. Any cursory reading of *Ulysses* (as well as *Finnegans Wake*, for that matter) reveals that it is as formalistically fragmentary as any other text examined thus far. Indeed, *Ulysses*' massively intricate, polyvocal language engages in the same project as Rulfo and Ó Cadhain of producing a staggering cacophony of voices that undermine all frames of authority; the novel refuses to allow any single interpretation to predominate and colonize the text, as almost each line lends itself to multiple potential, labyrinthine readings. That is, among the plethora of other genres that the text performs and appropriates, *Ulysses* can be read as a

graveyard novel, inasmuch as it records the persistent, fragmented voices of a dying community still inhabited by the specters of its dead. Joyce famously boasted of *Ulysses* that, "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book," though as M. Keith Booker sardonically quips, that claim "has been quoted so often that it bears the weight of truth" (Booker 93). That is, Joyce's claim should perhaps be read as suspiciously as any given Borges statement. For needless to say, despite the text's extreme detail, Dublin, 1904 or otherwise, could most assuredly *not* be reconstructed based on the text of *Ulysses.* If Dublin is to be reconstructed at all from this book, it will be in *Ulysses*' omissions, where "to always omit a word…is perhaps the most emphatic way of calling attention to that word." For all its expansiveness, *Ulysses* and the *Wake* as well are not comprehensive texts. This is an important point to emphasize, because in all of the major Joyce/Borges comparatist scholarship I have examined, there persists this highly uncritical assumption that Joyce and Borges form a simplistic binary: maximalist vs minimalist, comprehension vs compression. Joyce's novels may certainly be expansive, but that is not the same as *comprehensive*. Joyce's novels perhaps attempt to account for a far greater portion of the disintegrating and fragmentary voices than do Borges's stories, but they are both nonetheless participating in the same project of calling attention by omission, of examining how the dead are present within infinity and can thereby upset totalizing systems.

These are deathly voices that Stephen is still learning to hear himself at the outset of *Ulysses*. Stephen in *A Portrait* has at best a nodding acquaintance with death; such is no longer the case by the opener of *Ulysses*. In one of the many manners in which *Ulysses* complicates any sort of simplistic, triumphalist reading of *A Portrait*, the novel opens by revealing that Stephen has carried his bold "*non servium*" to its logical extreme, as he refused to pray over his mother as

she lay on her death bed—a decision for which he is now deeply haunted, both internally by his own conscious, and externally by his rather callous roommate Buck Mulligan: "The aunt thinks you killed your mother…You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you" (5). Stephen in turn expresses his irritation with Mulligan, for he had overheard him remark, "O, it's only Dedalus whose mother is beastly dead" (8). This in turn prompts Mulligan, a medical student, to fire back with: "And what is death…your mother's or yours or my own? You only saw your mother die. I see them pop off every day in the Mater and Richmond and cut up into tripes in the dissecting room. It's a beastly thing and nothing else" (8). Intriguingly, Mulligan, despite repeatedly proclaiming himself as some *Übermensch* and staunch home ruler as good as Stephen, nevertheless still restricts himself to a strictly Anglo attitude towards death, as some sort of scientific, materialistic event to be dissected and catalogued, "beastly" as though without soul or higher consciousness, "cut up into tripes" like a consumable commodity for sale, "and nothing else." Mulligan operates within the same economic framework wherein the dead are denied influence, value, reverence, or even basic remembrance; Mulligan's concern for Stephen's mother is limited only to her living moments, and evaporates at the moment of death, when the subject transforms quite literally into what Avelar might call another piece of the past for sale.

This general commodification of death is highlighted in the "Hades" episode (the decent into the underworld), wherein Stephen's co-protagonist Leopold Bloom idly observes of a ship being loaded, "For Liverpool, probably. Roast beef for old England. They buy up all the juicy ones…Dead meat trade" (97-98). One can potentially read in "They buy up all the juicy ones" a veiled reference to the Famine, when the Irish cattle were still being raised and exported from Ireland for sale on the global market—for "they" and not "us"—even as the multitudes starved at

home. The Irish dead are by association (like Mary Dedalus) dehumanized as part of "Dead meat trade," scarcely one step removed from the cannibalism prophetically satirized by Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Though the memory of the Great Hunger is largely erased from Bloom's conscious thought, nevertheless it has not been eradicated completely, as the sight of the beef for export still cannot help but carry the spectral trace of the Famine. It remains important to highlight these traces because, as Terry Eagleton asks, "Where is the Famine in the literature of the Revival? Where is it in Joyce?" Eagleton speculates that, "If the Famine stirred some to angry rhetoric, it would seem to have traumatized others into muteness. The event strains at the limit of the articulable, and is truly in this sense an Irish Auschwitz" (Ulin 20). Eagleton suggests that such was the horror of the Famine that it became inexpressible, inarticulable, only representable by absence.

However, as Julianne Ulin argues, that reading of the Famine's absence in Joyce only works if one excludes *Ulysses*. Ulin notes "the shriveled potato Bloom carries in his pocket" (Ulin 21), the "images of the barren wasteland, the government that sows hunger, the potato, and the sign of the cross, all of which invoke the iconography present in nineteenth-century popular histories of the Irish Famine" (Ulin 23). These discreet Famine allusions scattered across *Ulysses* carry with them traces of the influence of the dead; *Ulysses*, she claims, is "a memory book not only for Joyce (writing about 1904, from outside of Ireland) but for Ireland in its textual incorporation of the Famine" (Ulin 22). The memory of the Famine may be erased by market concerns from the conscious minds of the characters, but it remains engraved into the memory of the dead pages of the book itself, as it is into the memory of the dead proper. If the references to the Famine are never explicit, the Famine is nevertheless still there within those very absences;

Ulysses omits and thereby emphatically calls attention as much as any given Borges story. As Gibbons observes,

> The Famine may have dealt a fatal blow to the folk culture that supported the ghost, but, as Sir William Wilde observed, the cataclysm produced its own modern ghosts, "the remnant of the hardiest and most stalwart of the people crawl about, listless spectres, unable or willing to rise out of their despair". The cultural collapse was such that burial rites themselves fell victim to the plague, leaving corpses, in effect, "undead," ready to walk the land. (Gibbons 15)

As Žižek might add, "they were not properly buried" as a result of the Famine, and thus return to collect "some unpaid symbolic debt." Gibbons also argues that "few see *Ulysses* as a response to the request made to Stephen Dedalus in the classroom at Dalkey: 'Tell us a story sir.—O, do, sir. A ghoststory'" (Gibbons 1). *Ulysses* thus becomes that ghost story, wherein the silenced specters of the Famine haunt the peripheries of the narrative, all the more emphatically present for being absent. The legacy and persistent memory of the dead are persistently foregrounded throughout *Ulysses*, from Dignam's funeral, to the endless allusions to and discussions of King Hamlet's ghost, and the continual references to fallen Parnell, of whom, remarks Bloom, "Some say he is not in that grave at all. That the coffin is filled with stones. That one day he will come again" (112). The implication of the text is that he really did; *Ulysses* was composed in the aftermath of the Easter Rising and serialized during the Anglo-Irish civil wars, and hence serves as its own self-fulfilling prophecy of how the cause of Parnell has returned with a vengeance, which forewarnings Joyce inserts into 16 June 1904 with the benefit of hindsight. The novel sets the stage for the return of the usurped (like the title's namesake Odysseus, who also returns from

the land of the dead to wreak vengeance upon the usurpers). The dead will *have* to return, for the only thing that can possibly overwhelm a globalized economic system so massive that it can produce and contain the genocide of a million, is by means of the massive hosts of the dead that are more numerous still.

But first Stephen must become aware of the dead before he can access such an infinity. Such becomes his arc over the course of *Ulysses*. In the first chapter, he has a premonition of sorts, wherein he beholds:

> In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath bent over him with mute secret words…Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone. The ghostcandle to light her agony, rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. (10)

In vain does Stephen insist, "No mother. Let me be and let me live" (10), for what he has yet to comprehend (which Gabriel Conroy only does at the end of "The Dead") is that the dead are still with us, still present, that they can no more let us be than history can—it is a nightmare from which he still cannot awake—and that it is high time that he addresses his unpaid symbolic debts to those whom he has improperly buried. The ghost of Stephen's mother reminds him of this fact directly, in the colossal "Circe" episode, wherein he beholds her in a drunken haze; from beneath a pub's floorboards, she,

> *emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould…She fixes her bluecircled hollow eyesockets on Stephen and opens her toothless mouth uttering a silent word.* (579) (italics in the original)

Approaching the inebriated and horrified Stephen, she announces, "All must go through it, Stephen…You too. Time will come" (580). Stephen continues his protests of "*non servium*" uselessly, his declaratives now another frame of authority that must be undermined by the speech of the dead. She mocks and parodies his desire for her to remain silent, as "*her toothless mouth utter(s) a silent word*." Her "*silent word*" joins the chorus of fragmented discourse that undermines linguistic frames of authority, and calls attention to all the dead that have been left out. The irony is that young Stephen still does not yet recognize that his "*non servium*" is also his mother's, as it is also Mother Ireland's.

Similarly, Leopold Bloom, that non-practicing Hungarian Jew and Dublin adman, is met this same episode by his father Rudolph, which apparition castigates him with: "Have you no soul?...Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob?" (437). Like Stephen, he is forced to acknowledge the dead parent he had tacitly disavowed. Borges in "The Argentine Writer and Tradition" had analogized the Irish to the Jews—both wanderers, irreverent appropriators of the European tradition, persecuted minorities in search of an elusive homeland—a comparison this scene foregrounds explicitly. The apparition of Rudolph Bloom forces a remembrance of forgotten legacies and atrocities; the Jews, after all, are the archetype for pogroms, diasporas, oppressions, and historical trauma. It is a history and a legacy that Bloom, as an adman fully enmeshed in and complicit with the dissemination of larger market forces invested in historical forgetfulness, has himself attempted to erase and silence from his own memory. But this characterization is not intended to vilify Bloom by any means; it is only to call attention to Bloom as representative of the colonial subject, subject to a mess of broader modernizing forces that he at once participates within and quietly resists.

This silenced history is again referenced shortly after these apparitions of the dead, when a drunken Stephen has a run-in with a pair of English soldiers who accuse him of insulting the Queen. In response, he declares, "Let my country die for me. Up to the present it has done so" (591). And indeed, his country had been dying up till present; the Famine was then only the most recent and dramatic episode of mass death and trauma in a long history replete with them. But Stephen's glib "Let my country die for me" does not just articulate a repressed history that the English soldiers failed to acknowledge in their defense of the Queen; it also indicates a strategy for survival, wherein a nation dies in order to ensure its return. When Joyce claimed of *Ulysses* that, "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book," he presupposed the destruction of the city in the first place. *Ulysses* does not speak for a community that has already been decimated, but anticipating the destruction—Dublin in this text is lying on its deathbed, like Malone or Artemio Cruz, preparing to engrave itself into the nothingness. Joyce in his claim is not only looking forward to the death of his community, but also to the return of the dead after the anticipated catastrophic trauma. There is something eschatological in Joyce's statement, an anticipation of Dublin returning from the destruction like some sort of messianic New Jerusalem after the apocalypse—and given the pre-eminence of Jewish Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, the Jerusalem comparison is not unwarranted.

Joyce's apocalyptic reclamation project is also alluded to in Borges's 1975 story "The Mirror and the Mask" ("El espejo y la mascara"), which, significantly, takes place in Ireland. In the tale, an ancient Irish King commissions a court poet to compose an epic poem in commemoration of a recent military victory. The King complements the first version of the epic with, "If the whole of the literature of Ireland should—*omen absit*—be lost, well might it all be

reconstructed, without loss, from your classic ode"[73] (Borges 452). This hyperbolic statement once more recalls Joyce's haughty boast of *Ulysses* and Dublin. But Borges's same critique against *Ulysses* appears in the mouth of the King: "All that is well, and yet nothing has happened. In our veins the blood has beat no faster"[74] (452). As Borges similarly complained of Joyce's novel, though the description is exhaustive, all one has really read is a catalogue; one may know all the exact positions of everything, so to speak, but one has not really gotten to know the things themselves. So the Poet returns one year later with a revised and much more truncated version of the poem, to which the King enthuses, "They were not the description of the battle, they were the battle. In the warlike chaos of the lines there stirred the God Who Is Three Yet One, the pagan noumena of Ireland"[75] (452). By his omissions, the poet calls all the more attention to the events he has left out, thus rendering them all the more present; already his shortened poem begins to access infinity and invoke God, encompassing the mystery of the Trinity itself, and even resurrecting "the pagan noumena," the deity of pre-Christian Ireland. Pleased by this praise, the poet works to shorten his masterpiece further; he returns again one year later, but this time the poem is only one line long,[76] and "His eyes seemed to stare far into the distance, or to have been rendered blind" (453). Like Homer (and Joyce and Borges, for that

[73] "Si se perdiera toda la literatura de Irlanda -*omen absit*- podría reconstruirse sin pérdida con tu clásica oda."
[74] "Todo está bien y sin embargo nada ha pasado. En los pulsos no corre más a prisa la sangre."
[75] "No era una descripción de la batalla, era la batalla. En su desorden bélico se agitaban el Dios que es Tres y es Uno, los númenes paganos de Irlanda."
[76] A single infinite line labyrinth is also found at the end of Borges's 1942 story "La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass"), a murder mystery wherein a detective attempts to solve a series of ritual killings, which appear to conform to a Kabbalah-based pattern overlaid upon the grid of the city (like Joyce, Borges cannot resist integrating in Jewish apocalyptic elements). However, the pattern turns out to be an elaborate trap set by an old enemy, intended to lure the detective to his death. Caught, the detective tells his killer, "There are three lines too many in your labyrinth…I know of a Greek labyrinth that is but one straight line," and then requests that "When you hunt me down in another avatar of our lives," to set the trap not according to a diamond, but a straight line, which has far greater connotations of infinity. The killer responds, "The next time I kill you…I promise you the labyrinth consists of a single straight line that is invisible and endless (incessant)" (156). This infinite line is possibly the closest Borges ever gets to mimicking the closing/opening line of *Finnegans Wake*.

matter), blindness has struck the bard. The King hears the one-lined poem, but instead of praising it, declares, "The sin the two of us now share…The sin of having known Beauty, which is a gift forbidden mankind"; the narrator goes on to inform us that, "Of the poet, we know that he killed himself when he left the palace; of the king, that he is a beggar who wanders the roads of Ireland, which once was his kingdom, and that he has never spoken the poem again"[77] (454). Another cryptic Borgesian ending.

Nevertheless, I cannot help but read within it a kind of latent apology to Joyce, wherein Borges tacitly confesses that his radical concision can be just as monstrous as Joyce's radical expansionism. The poem of the poet became too short, it omitted too much, and thus called far too much attention to the infinite number of things that were left out. This invocation of the infinite blinds the Bard and overwhelms the King, who forsakes his Kingdom now that he understands how infinitesimal it is—or how simultaneously infinite it is, for his kingdom is a part of infinity, indistinguishable from it, and therefore far too massive for him to rule. Moreover, the entirety of the literature of Ireland could have been reconstructed from the poem in its initial draft; the poet's cuts have now erased far too much of Ireland in its concision, leaving the King without Kingdom altogether. Ireland is thereby destroyed in the truncated poem that would contain it—which is where Ireland is now also preserved, within the very absences of infinity itself. Joyce's *Ulysses* likewise sought to preserve Dublin and Ireland entirely within the text's own excessive fragmentation, encompassing these communities within the silences and absences to which the text relentlessly calls attention. Not only does Joyce use

[77] "El que ahora compartimos los dos…El de haber conocido la Belleza, que es un don vedado a los hombres…Del poeta sabemos que se dio muerte al salir del palacio; del Rey, que es un mendigo que recorre los caminos de Irlanda, que fue su reino, y que no ha repetido nunca el poema."

omission as much as Borges, but Borges also maximizes as much as Joyce; Borges maximizes the silences themselves, expanding the concision until the text resides almost wholly within the nothingness—where it will paradoxically be all the better preserved within the infinity of silence, where all things and all places are still possible. Ironically and paradoxically then, the silence itself is what ends up totalizing. The silence in this model encompasses and liberates all possibilities and permutations, conjuring forth the infinite ghosts of those who have been, that are, that could ever possibly be and who could still be again, effecting an emancipation of all of them together at once, upon all the living and the dead.

Chapter 3

The Swift and the Dead: The *Gulliver's Travels* Séance in Modern Ireland and South America

James Joyce is not the only Irishman to weave his way through the labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges; any extensive survey of the Argentine's work reveals his infatuation with the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irishman Jonathan Swift. Like Borges, Swift was an intellectual possessed of a deep distrust of both authoritarian elites and mass populism alike. Swift, in fact, was one of Borges's first points of reference in his early review of *Ulysses*: "Jonathan Swift acted like a corrosive acid on the elation of human hope" (*Non-Fictions* 12). This corrosive acid Borges then attributes to Joyce's magnum opus, which Borges at the time believed worked within the same tradition as Swift. When Borges later became far more ambivalent about Joyce, Swift again became one of his primary touchstones; e.g. in "Funes, The Memorious," Borges writes: "Swift wrote that the emperor of Lilliput could perceive the movement of the minute hand of a clock; Funes could continually perceive the quiet advances of corruption, of tooth decay, of weariness"[78] (Borges 136). Given how Funes, as I discussed in the previous chapter, was an explicit parody and critique of the ideal Joycean reader (and given how the Lilliputians are frequently read as parodies of the pettiness of humanity), it is not hard to read in this passage a biting commentary on the purported pettiness of Joyce's own catalogues and minutiae, which can only record the advances of corruption, decay, and weariness. The Swiftian corrosive acid he once attributed to Joyce he now splashes onto Joyce directly.

The previous chapter argued that Borges's ambivalence about Joyce was rooted in his resistance against totalizing systems generally; there is in Borges's own repeated citations of

[78] "Refiere Swift que el emperador de Lilliput discernía el movimiento del minutero; Funes discernía continuamente los tranquilos avances de la corrupción, de las caries, de la fatiga" (Borges 137).

Swift a similar through-thread of resistance against totalitarianism and imperialism. Certainly Swift himself was openly critical of the same. As Swift famously polemicizes in the conclusion to his 1726 novel *Gulliver's Travels*:

> [T]hey go on shore to rob and plunder, they see a harmless people, are entertained with kindness; they give the country a new name; they take formal possession of it for their king; they set up a rotten plank, or a stone, for a memorial; they murder two or three dozen of the natives, bring away a couple more, by force, for a sample; return home, and get their pardon. Here commences a new dominion acquired with a title by divine right. Ships are sent with the first opportunity; the natives driven out or destroyed; their princes tortured to discover gold; a free license given to all acts of inhumanity and lust, the earth reeking with the blood of its inhabitants: and this execrable crew of butchers, employed in so pious an expedition, is a modern colony, sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous people!" (Swift)

"Rob," "plunder," "murder," destruction of natives, and "pious" hypocrisy, is how Swift describes the process of European colonization. Borges once wrote in a book review that "to think about Swift is to think about the collapse of empire" (*Non-Fictions* 438), and Borges—from the remnants of future civilization in "A Weary Man's Utopia" where *Gulliver's Travels* is one of the only books left, to his missionary among the Yahoos in "Brodie's Report"—thinks about Swift and the collapse of empire a lot. Annette Leddy also discusses how Swift's (and by extensions Borges's) critiques of Empire are both rooted in a nascent, far-sighted understanding of how colonial exploitation was rooted in capitalistic production economies:

> Swift foresaw the consequences of a capitalistic society freed from the demands of objective reason; his detailing of social manipulation of the body awaited Foucault and

> other contemporary philosophers to be fully understood. In parallel form, Borges' predictions in "Tlön" about post-World War II society, where difference will be slowly eliminated and the individual rendered incapable of critical thought, already seem prophetic. (Leddy 114).

According to Leddy, the hegemonizing and homogenizing effects of the capitalist system was foreseen by Swift and observed by Borges. Borges was living, in his own conflicted way, with the consequences of a modern market economy that Swift bitterly beheld emerging. When Borges thought of Swift as a mode by which to think about the collapse of empire, that was not necessarily regretfully.

Borges not only looks to Swift to critique imperialism, but as an early example for how invoking the dead can intrinsically destabilize authority. Part III of *Gulliver's Travels* features a scene explicitly centered upon the influence of the dead: Gulliver's encounter with the Necromancer, one of the lesser-known episodes in the novel (in comparison to the Lilliputans, giants, floating islands, immortals, and talking horses), one that only occasionally appears in the novel's various media adaptations.[79] The scene in question occurs when Gulliver stays for a short respite with a local governor who is also a magician, of whom Gulliver learns that, "By his skill in necromancy he has a power of calling whom he pleases from the dead, and commanding their service for twenty-four hours" (Swift 165). Gulliver is intrigued, and agrees to take part in a séance, during which, "the governor ordered me to call up whatever persons I would choose to name, and in whatever numbers, among all the dead from the beginning of the world to the present time, and command them to answer any questions I should think fit to ask" (Swift 166).

[79] A rare version that does is the 1996 NBC Made-for-TV film starring Ted Danson.

In short order, Gulliver begins communing with the spirits of the dead; it is the one sequence within *Gulliver's Travels* wherein Swift does not invent some fantastic, strange new world by which to parody humanity obliquely and generally, but rather attacks lived human history directly.

The scene sets about puncturing the pretensions of the "Great Men" upon which Western written history has often glorified the imperialist project. For example, of the idolized ur-conqueror Alexander the Great, Gulliver learns, "He assured me upon his honour 'that he was not poisoned, but died of a bad fever by excessive drinking'" (167), deflating the aura of the warrior-king, rendering him less a divinity than a drunkard. Of the Roman Imperial Senate, he finds them all a pack "of pedlars, pick-pockets, highwayman, and bullies" (167), with Europe the implicit heirs of that ignoble legacy. Of the contemporary aristocracy, he discovers "how cruelty, falsehood, and cowardice, grew to be characteristic by which certain families are distinguished as much as by their coats of arms" (170), how in fact "the royal throne could not be supported without corruption" (171). No virtue or honor is found to justify the existence of the genteel classes. Overall, Gulliver finds that:

> …having strictly examined all the persons of greatest name in the courts of princes, for a hundred years past, I found how the world has been misled by prostitute writers, to ascribe the greatest exploits in war, to cowards; the wisest counsel, to fools; sincerity, to flatterers; Roman virtue, to betrayers of their country; piety, to atheists; chastity, to sodomites; truth, to informers. (170)

Gulliver's various contacts with the dead, as with the other authors examined thus far, directly attack the validity of established and accepted histories, the trustworthiness of biographers and commentators, and the immutability of hierarchies. Swift does not simply destabilize networks

of power, but highlights how they have been already destabilized all along. Nor is Swift's simply a project of substituting the "false" histories with the hidden "true" ones: Gulliver nowhere actually *gives* the reader the specifics of any of these alternate histories; they remain the sole province and property of the dead, which no official discourses may have access to. It is perhaps noteworthy that the printed text of *Gulliver's Travels* only goes into detailed depth upon *fictional, fantastic* worlds, as though to imply that all history presented as such is inherently a fiction (a very Borgesian idea indeed), that all historical accounts fail to communicate what "really" happened. The reader is not privy to the specifics of Gulliver's catalogue of "roguery and ignorance" because his printed book, by its very nature, cannot accurately communicate them. Furthermore, these various revelations remain *oral* conversations, discovered not by hidden manuscripts but from the dead themselves, utterances that are thus by definition *not* accessible to printed media. Far from any mere narrative concision on Swift's part, the various historical revelations of Gulliver establish a clear privileging of the oral over the printed, as part of a strategy for challenging and delegitimizing the "official" print media privileged by state authority.

Just to ensure that these anti-authoritarian attacks are lost on no one, Gulliver saves his sole praises of the dead for those who overthrew dictators: "I chiefly fed mine eyes with beholding the destroyers of tyrants and usurpers, and the restorers of liberty to oppressed and injured nations" (168). Concerning Caesar's assassin Brutus, Gulliver gushes, "I…could easily discover the most consummate virtue, the greatest intrepidity and firmness of mind, the truest love of country, and general benevolence for mankind, in every lineament of his countenance" (167). So wonderful is Gulliver's vision of Brutus, that even "Caesar freely confessed to me, 'that the greatest actions of his own life were not equal, by many degrees, to the glory of taking it

away'" (167). Brutus's is the legacy and influence that Swift wishes to claim for himself, even as he rejects that of Caesar and Alexander.

A sort of Bloomian anxiety of influence hangs over these séances, a desire to both create, displace, and swerve[80] free of one's own antecedents. Borges had a similar relationship with Joyce, an anxiety to both respect yet also exceed the master who had so influenced him. His many literary engagements with the dead—from "Funes" to "The Garden of Forking Paths"—was how he had also negotiated his anxiety of influence, a strategy that Swift first pilots here. But Gulliver's séance not only swerves literary influence, but imperial influence as well. In the Introduction, I note that Dane Kennedy discusses the ways in which empire has a tendency to reassert itself upon decolonial states. This séance has been used by postcolonial writers as a mode by which to resist the influence of both literary forbears and of empire. Such in fact is precisely what we find in that other famed Anglo-Irishman William Butlers Yeats, who performs Swift's séance in his 1934 play "The Words Upon the Window-Pane."

A brief one-act play, "Window-Pane" was produced nearly two decades after the Easter Rising and just three years before the Irish Free State attained full autonomy from the United Kingdom. It dramatizes one of the many séances that Yeats participated in throughout his lifetime. Yeats, as is well-known, was an ardent Spiritualist, which renders it all the more curious that this play was the only occasion he only ever attempted to dramatize a séance, and that long after the movement's *fin-de-siècle* peak, and well after his Nobel Prize had rendered his playwright career financially unnecessary. What's more, the play never actually attempts to evangelize or proselyte the Spiritualist movement (the drama's resident skeptic, a young doctoral

[80] Swerve is Harold Bloom's word.

candidate named John Corbet, remains as casually unconvinced by the play's end as he was at the beginning). Rather, the purpose of the play is to grapple with the historical weight of none other than Jonathan Swift himself, the Spirit who is channeled during the séance in question.

There is a curious dearth of criticism concerning "Window-Pane" (despite the fact that it regularly gets anthologized in popular Yeats readers). Those few critics who do engage with the play, such as Emanuela Zirzotti, have argued over how to read it, whether as "an act of 'crashing snobbery', as some scholars assume," or rather as "Yeats's attempt to fight against the ignorance and intellectual shallowness he associates with the Irish Catholic middle-class of his days" (Zirzotti 49). Yet to assume this play as either an expression of solidarity with the failing Anglo-Protestant Ascendancy, or as a fight against some Irish-Catholic "intellectual shallowness," is to miss the fact that this plays betrays Yeats's deep ambivalence about Swift altogether. Whereas Borges enjoyed a rather amiable relationship with Swift, separated as he was by a comfortable remove of centuries and an ocean, Yeats felt very keenly the overbearing influence of Swift upon his imagination. As Yeats himself states bluntly in his introduction to "Window-Pane":

> **S**wift haunts me; he is always just round the next corner. Sometimes it is a thought of my great-great-grandmother, a friend of that Archbishop King who sent him to England about the first-fruits, sometimes it is St. Patrick's, where I have gone to wander and meditate, that brings him to mind, sometimes I remember something hard or harsh in O'Leary or in Taylor, or in the public speech of our statesmen, that reminds me by its style of his verse or prose. Did he not speak, perhaps, with just such an intonation? This instinct for what is near and yet hidden is in reality a return to the sources of our power, and therefore a claim made upon the future. Thought seems more true, emotion more deep, spoken by someone who touches my pride, who seems to claim me of his kindred, who seems to make me a part of some national

> mythology, nor is mythology mere ostentation, mere vanity if it draws me onward to the unknown; another turn of the gyre and myth is wisdom, pride, discipline. I remember the shudder in my spine when Mrs. Patrick Campbell said, speaking words Hofmannsthal put into the mouth of Electra, "I too am of that ancient race." (Yeats 158)

Deceptively laudatory, Yeats here refers to Swift as a "source of our power," and initially appears flattered by the idea that Swift "seems to claim me of his kindred, who seems to make me a part of some national mythology." However, the fact that Yeats also refers to Swift as "haunt(ing)," as something that sends a "shudder in my spine," indicates that Yeats is not entirely comfortable with the outsized influence Swift wields over himself and his nation. Certainly Yeats felt a great need to resist Swift, whose influence looms even larger in the career of Yeats than it did that of Borges. Yeats is on record as calling Swift's 18th century "that one Irish century that escaped from darkness and confusion" (Zirzotti 49), and Swift a toweringly important figure within that century. Moreover, by the 1930s, Swift had become part of the historical heritage that the Irish Free State often drew upon to legitimize its own intellectual tradition, free of Great Britain. Swift, then, is important for the modernization of independent Ireland—which Yeats must simultaneously participate with and resist. The danger for Yeats is that leaning so hard upon an *Anglo*-Irish thinker—one who is equally important to the English literary canon—will allow British Empire to re-assert itself over Ireland's cultural matrixes, a constant danger in newly independent states. Yeats, then, must figure out how to simultaneously honor Swift's legacy while simultaneously holding him at arm's length. His solution, in this play, is to honor Swift by using his own séance against him.

Yeats's play, then, not only performs a séance, but functions as one as well, inasmuch as it channels in Swift as a kindred spirit, one who by his very presence can still destabilize

hegemony. Likewise, the very nature of the genre—a play—functions as a sort of séance in and of itself, inasmuch as the medium, Mrs. Henderson, inhabits the roles of the spirits that gets channeled, as the actors also do their characters. The implication is that Ireland has been possessed by the spirit of Swift, enacting and performing his intellectual tradition, a performance from which Yeats is attempting to liberate himself from—or at least take ownership of Swift's voice for himself, instead of allow himself to be ventriloquized by Swift. Yeats needed to undermine Swift in order to save him, so that Swift's own anti-authoritarian legacy might be recovered and continued into post-revolutionary Ireland.

As the play opens, the characters preparing the séance complain about how the last two times were "spoiled" by "the ugly one," a spirit who monopolizes the proceedings and selfishly prevents any other spirits from being channeled—the twist of course being that Jonathan Swift is the ugly one. However, far from feeling honored by the presence of this illustrious spirit, they instead wish he would just leave them alone. This Swift constantly commandeers and colonizes the ritual for himself, in a manner reminiscent of how Yeats believed Swift monopolized Anglo-Irish letters. The play's séance takes place in an antique eighteenth-century house reportedly once inhabited by Swift himself; as reports the lead Spiritualist Dr. Trench, "I do know that this house was in the early part of the eighteenth century belonged to friends of Jonathan Swift, or rather to Stella. Swift chaffed her in the *Journal to Stella* because of certain small sums of money she lost at cards probably in this very room" (160). The aforementioned skeptic in attendance at this séance, John Corbet, is a young PhD candidate specializing in Swift studies. He declares,

> I am writing an essay on Swift and Stella for my doctorate at Cambridge. I hope to prove that in Swift's day men of intellect reached the height of their power—the greatest

> position they ever attained in society and the State, that everything great in Ireland and our character, in what remains of our architecture, comes from that day; that we have kept its seal longer than England. (161)

Here, Corbet at first glance appears to be Yeats's mouthpiece in praise of Swift. Corbet perhaps does not convert to Spiritualism by the play's end because he does not need to: he is already channeling the voices of the dead, in order to lay claim for Ireland an intellectual heritage superior to that of England. However, Corbet's association with English Cambridge, his Anglo-Saxon given name and Franco-Norman surname, and his desire to canonize first and foremost an *Anglo*-Irishman from the "Age of Enlightenment" complicates the picture, as he is still covertly engaged in the colonial project of anglicizing Ireland. His skepticism is likewise of a kind with the Anglo-Protestant denial of the dead I have previously detailed; he does not believe in the persistence of the dead and therefore cannot access them, no matter how they appear before his eyes. He may sincerely desire to elevate the Irish intellectual heritage above that of England, but still only within a strictly English framework that privileges English structures and English thought. The subtle, implicit project of Yeats here is to flip Corbet's project on its head, to use Swift to dismantle these various English frameworks and structures by dismantling Swift himself.

The séance's Medium, Mrs. Henderson, explains the parameters of the ritual: "Some spirits are earth-bound—they think they are still living and go over and over some action of their past lives, just as we go over and over some painful thought, except that where they are thought is reality" (162). The particular painful episode relived by Swift in this séance, which is the centerpiece of this short play, is a conversation between him and his erstwhile lover Vanessa (née Esther Vanhomrigh), wherein they relive an old argument they had long ago, concerning

why Swift refuses to have children. Mrs. Henderson performs both sides of the argument as she channels these spirits: "I have something in my blood that no child must inherit" (166), Swift protests to Vanessa. "If you had children Jonathan, my blood would make them healthy" (166) Vanessa counters, misinterpreting his objection as a purely physiological one. "What do I care if it be healthy?" he rejoins, "What do I care if it could make mine healthy? Am I to add another to the healthy rascaldom and knavery of the world?" (167). Swift's aversion to procreation here is not some proto-eugenicist objection to passing forth inferior bloodlines, but against the continuance of the human race itself, which he considers "rascoldom and knavery." This moment is reminiscent of a scene from Part IV of *Gulliver's Travels*, wherein Gulliver is sexually assaulted by the female Yahoo, about which trauma he muses, "And when I began to consider that, by copulating with one of the Yahoo species I had become a parent of more, it struck me with the utmost shame, confusion, and horror" (Swift 253). Rather than indulge in love and fellowship, Swift in this play voluntarily chooses to become "an old miserable childless man" (Yeats 167). Overall, Swift comes across in this play as not only profoundly misanthropic, but peevish, petulant, degenerate, and thoroughly unpleasant—hardly a shining portrait. Yeats's Swift is himself aware of his own innate human corruption, and so consequently craves his own personal extinction. "O God, hear the prayer of Jonathan Swift," he bellows self-importantly, "that afflicted man, and grant that he may leave to posterity nothing but his intellect that came to him from Heaven" (Yeats 167). Implicitly within the play, the prayer is answered: the intellect of Swift continued to dominate the thinking of Ireland, even if never in physical presence through progeny. That is, Swift wishes to be a ghost, an immaterial specter that continues to splash his corrosive acid upon human optimism. That is the same ghost that Yeats seeks to

summon in this play, to return the favor, and splash that corrosive acid right back in an act of simultaneous reverence and mockery.

After the séance's conclusion, John Corbet declares himself satisfied and lays down a pound, far more than the customary ten shillings, over Mrs. Henderson's protests that the séance was once again a failure thanks to Swift. But Corbet replies:

> When I say I am satisfied I do not mean that I am convinced it was the work of spirits. I prefer to think that you created it all, that you are an accomplished actress and scholar. In my essay for my Cambridge doctorate I examine all the explanations of Swift's celibacy offered by his biographers and prove that the explanation you selected was the only plausible one. But there is something I must ask you. Swift was the chief representative of the intellect of his epoch, that arrogant intellect free at last from superstition. He foresaw its collapse. He foresaw Democracy, he must have dreaded the future. Did he refuse to beget children because of that dread? Was Swift mad? Or was it the intellect itself that was mad? (Yeats 170).

To these pressing questions, neither Mrs. Henderson nor the play itself proffer any resolution; Henderson, in fact, claims only ignorance that the spirit was Swift at all, whom she neither recognizes nor remembers. In the final tally, Swift is presented as forgettable and unrecognizable, senile and misanthropic, mad and unwelcome. The play finishes open-ended, refusing to validate an Enlightenment logic that demands closed answers, because the whole point of the dead is to short-circuit closed systems, to keep all resolutions permanently unresolved and open. "Was Swift mad? Or was it the intellect itself that was mad?" asks Corbet, with the implication that the Enlightenment ideal of intellect—which arose co-existent with the

European age of conquest and was often utilized in its rationalization—is itself a form of madness.

Attributing madness to one's predecessors is another crucial element of this Swiftian séance, especially as the next generation of Irish post-war writers turn against their Modernist forebears. The Swiftian séance is next re-enacted in Flann O'Brien's[81] 1964 final novel *The Dalkey Archive*, wherein no less than the spirit of St. Augustine become the targets of mockery and parody (this comparison between *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Dalkey Archive* has been previously unattended by critics). In this comedic text, Mick and Hasckett, a pair of local Dubliners, happen one day upon a mad scientist named De Selby, who reveals he has developed a gas that can remove all nitrogen from the atmosphere. The substance, which he names D.M.P., has the potential to kill all life—yet can also, in small, isolated quantities, summon forth the spirits of the dead. But before revealing this gas's necromantic properties, De Selby announces his full intention to deploy D.M.P. on a global scale, and his reasoning is eminently Swiftian:

> [The human race] merits destruction. Its history and prehistory, even its present, is a foul record of pestilence, famine, war, devastation and misery so terrible and multifarious that its depth and horror are unknown to any one man. Rottenness is universally endemic, disease is paramount. The human race is finally debauched and aborted…The relation is loathsome and abominable, and total extinction could not be worse. (19-20)

Swift himself could have written similarly in *Gulliver's Travels*. What's more, De Selby cuts a similar figure as the magician Gulliver meets in Part III: a sorcerer of sorts, a practitioner of

[81] Pen-name of Brian O'Nolan, 1911-1966.

many disciplines. His multifaceted dabbling in theology, philosophy, and chemistry indicate a disdain for specialization and mastery. As M. Keith Booker argues,

> That De Selby's denial of life is in fact a general property of human systems of mastery and not just of science is emphasized by the fact that De Selby's arcane researches extend into the realms of philosophy and theology as well. De Selby himself emphasizes the multi-disciplinary nature of his work: "Call me a theologian or a physicist as you will," he tells Mick and Hackett, "but I am serious and truthful." (271)

This critique of mastery is crucial, for Booker has detailed how *The Dalkey Archive* technical and artistic mastery is not so disassociated from political or authoritarian mastery. The destabilization of all forms of mastery becomes O'Brien's specific project with the novel. As Booker further explains:

> In a letter to Timothy O'Keefe (15 November 1963), Flann O'Brien explained of *The Dalkey Archive*: "The book is not meant to be a novel or anything of the kind but a study in derision, various writers with their styles, and sundry modes, attitudes and cults being rats in the cage…Indeed, *The Dalkey Archive* can be read as an extended assault on monologism, mastery and authoritarianism. (Booker 269).

The specific modes of *The Dalkey Archive*'s "extended assault on monologism, mastery and authoritarianism" takes the form (though Booker doesn't emphasize this) of meetings with the dead. De Selby, like the necromancer in *Gulliver's Travels*, invites the protagonists to join him in calling forth the spirits of the dead in order to interrogate them. The pair, despite their initial skepticism, cannot resist such a demonstration anymore than Gulliver could, and so don some

diving gear and join De Selby in an underwater cavern near Dalkey, Ireland (the titular Dalkey archive), wherein he deploys D.M.P. and summons the spirit of St. Augustine.

De Selby claims that he jokingly named his gas D.M.P. purely on a lark, which Mick and Hackett cannot help but note is the same acronym as the Dublin Metropolitan Police. The implication is that the state power apparatus that the D.M.P. personify is likewise a fundamentally destructive force, which would be consistent with O'Brien's attacks on mastery and authority. Furthermore, one cannot discuss *The Dalkey Archive*'s without observing that the police sections were recycled from O'Brien's earlier, repeatedly rejected manuscript *The Third Policeman*. Specifically, O'Brien recycles a comedic conversation wherein a country Policeman propounds his theory that the more people ride bicycles, the more their molecules intermix with the metal, thus causing people to slowly transform into bikes and bikes into people. This outlandish theory is utilized by the Policeman to justify his constant theft of bicycles, to protect the populace—which, though farcical, nonetheless expresses a conception of police power wherein institutional theft by the state is justified in the name of protection. And protection from whom? A note of xenophobia enters the Policeman's explanations, as he warns: "You would have bicycles demanding votes, and they would look for seats on the County Council to make the roads far worse than they are for their own ulterior motivation" (O'Brien 86). One can hear in this warning a similar fear as was expressed against Irish immigrants themselves throughout the 19th century (as well as against Mexican immigrants in the contemporary U.S.). As is so often the case, this Policeman's outlandish paranoia is nonetheless rooted in a very real feeling of economic insecurity, a fear that these new, purportedly inhuman citizens will disrupt both local government and the local economy, a fear that allows him to rationalize the most radical and extreme overreach of the state power apparatus. This conversation circles back to the

destabilizing influence of the dead, as the officer explains that it is not just bikes and people whose molecules intermix: "When a man dies they say he returns to clay funereally but too much walking fills you up with clay far sooner (or buries bits of you along the road) and brings your death half-way to meet you" (O'Brien 86). In this one image, the Policeman's molecular theory establishes its relevance to this novel of séances: for in this theory, intermixture with the dirt ushers in one's death sooner, yet also ensures that one continues to persist on all the more permanently in the dirt. (In an almost eerie parallel, *Third Policeman*'s bicycle sequence, which found second life in *Dalkey Archive* before being revived again in a posthumous novel, enacts this very intermixture of the living and dead.) The same ideas are present in De Selby's use of D.M.P.—it can destroy all life on earth, yes, but it also can reveal how present the dead really are, how much they still speak, as we behold in De Selby's conversation with St. Augustine.

The whole of Chapter 3 is given over to a dialogue between De Selby and the summoned spirit of the Catholic Church Father, whose mastery and influence De Selby promptly proceeds to cross-examine. Augustine, however, is equal to the contest, and challenges De Selby's mastery and influence as well, for this text's project is not merely to undermine Catholic mastery, but *all* forms of mastery, no matter their source. For example, early in their conversation, De Selby interrogates Augustine with, "You admit you were a debauched and abandoned young man?" to which the ghost of Augustine responds, in a curiously proper Dublin accent, "*For a pagan I wasn't the worst. Besides, maybe it was the Irish in me*" (italics in the original). "The Irish in you?" "*Yes. My father's name was Patrick. And he was a proper gobshite*" (34). The implication that the North African Augustine was part Irish can be read in several interesting manners: for starters, this association between Ireland and Africa recalls how in the 19th century the Irish were characterized by much of the Anglo world (the U.S. as well the

U.K.) by the inherently absurd epitaph of "white negroes" (Cheng 27). Augustine, then, could simply be turning the insult around on De Selby, reminding him of how *his* purported race has historically been characterized, and that relatively recently. Augustine's African heritage also recalls the fact that the Irish often intermingled with African slaves in the Caribbean and Latin America early in their history; the Irish are not just metaphorically, but in some cases literally part African, and the African part Irish. This messy relationship is indicated when De Selby rather crudely asks "Are you a Nigger?" to which Augustine quips back, "*I am a Roman*" (43). Augustine's response, moreover, associates the Roman Catholic Irish with a founding Church Father—which in turn recalls Catholicism's own imperial Roman roots, as well as Ireland's own history as a bastion for early Christianity, with Ireland's early missionaries playing an important role in spreading Christianity's hegemony across continental Europe. In the image of Irish Augustine, Ireland is both colonized and colonizing, oppressed and oppressor, African and northern European. The séance inherently destabilizes official narratives, as it both white-washes Augustine as Irish while in turn rendering the Irish indirectly African. O'Brien here does not simply reverse the polarities, but keeps the whole state of Augustine's identity in permanent flux, which in turn does the same to the predominantly (though by no means exclusively) Catholic Irish.

De Selby and Augustine's conversation likewise engages in the deathly task of undermining the reliability and authority of language itself, as for example when they discuss the accuracy of Augustine's *Confessions*. Augustine declares, "*I reprobate concupiscence, whether fortuitous or contrived.*" De Selby then accuses Augustine of hypocrisy: "You do *now*, you post-gnostic! You must have a red face to recall your earlier nasty gymnastiness, considering you're now a Father of the Church." This accusation is waved away by Augustine with, "*Rubbish. I*

invented obscene feats out of bravado, lest I be thought innocent or cowardly…When I was in Carthage I carried about with me a cauldron of unrealized debauchery. God in his majesty was tempting me. But Book Two of my Confessions is all shocking exaggeration" (35). This denigration of this venerated text functions as a two-fronted assault on the authority of textuality altogether: De Selby by attacking the motivations of the author, Augustine deflecting the charge by dismissing the accuracy of his own most renowned work. O'Brien gives no clear textual clues one way or the other as to how this conversation should be read, nor with whom our sympathies as readers should be placed at any given moment, if with anyone. Again, the purpose of these conversations is not to place one person over another (which would merely reverse yet still preserve the binaries), but to demolish the hierarchies altogether.

In an exchange that might have delighted Borges, De Selby asks, "What does it feel like to be in heaven for all eternity?" to which Augustine fires back, "*For* all *eternity? Do you then think there are fractional or temporary eternities?*" (O'Brien 43). This repartee in particular is important, because, as Booker notes:

> Augustine anticipates De Selby's view of time as human illusion when in Book XI of his Confessions he suggests that the past exists merely as a product of human memory, while the future exists merely as a product of human expectation. From the point of view of God, all times exist simultaneously, precisely the situation produced by De Selby's D.M.P. (Booker 273).

De Selby's chemical manner of proving time an illusion in fact confirms Augustine's own thinking on the topic. Augustine and De Selby, though apparently antagonists in this dialogue, turn out to be flip sides of the same coin, partaking of the same logic, implicating and entangling each other together. Similar to Borges and Joyce, De Selby and Augustine together establish an

eternity wherein all moments, and all possible variations of those moments, are co-present, and can therefore render irrelevant the very concept of hierarchy.

I do not cite Borges and Joyce capriciously, because O'Brien also has a bone to pick with the Dublin master. It is not incidental that De Selby in the novel lives on Vico road, a direct call-back to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as well as the philosopher of cyclical history that so influenced Joyce's conception of time in *Finnegans Wake*. Dalkey, for that matter, is also where Stephen Dedalus teaches class in the opening chapters of *Ulysses*. These allusions are all relevant because St. Augustine is not the only famous dead man summoned within *Dalkey Archive*: midway through the novel, Mick learns that James Joyce is still alive, having faked his death, ended his exile and returned to Ireland under an assumed name, and is now living in Skerries, "a small, pretty watering-place twenty miles north of Dublin" (175). Mick is initially excited to meet the legendary writer, and seeks him out immediately, but the meeting does not go as resplendently as he hoped. In an exchange that might also have delighted Borges, this aged Joyce does not even remember having written *Finnegans Wake*. Of his magnum opus *Ulysses* he explains: "I took the idea be a sort of practical joke but didn't know enough about it to suspect it might seriously injure my name" (175-6). As O'Brien's Joyce tells the farcical tale, Sylvia Beach's "plot was to have this thing named *Ulysses* concocted, secretly circulated and have the authorship ascribed to me" (176), which composition he self-righteously attributes to "(m)uck-rakers, obscene poets, carnal pimps, sodomous sycophants, pedlars of the coloured lusts of fallen humanity" (193)—a sordid concoction far from the mythos of the sexually-liberated, singularly immense genius of Joyce. Like Gulliver, Mick encounters the ghosts of famous men only in mockingly degraded form.

O'Brien even denies his Joyce the sole glory of *Dubliners*; as the latter explains: "Oliver Gogarty and I, when we were in touch, worked together on some short stories. Simple stories: Dublin characterizations you might call them" (174), and that "At the last moment Gogarty wouldn't let his name go on the title page" (175). The co-authorship of Gogarty is especially provocative, since Oliver was the real-life Joyce's model for Buck Mulligan, Stephen Dedalus's pompous roommate and antagonist. Mulligan becomes the unsung genius behind *Dubliners*, embarrassing the Artist as a Young Man further. As the conversation continues, Joyce becomes more and more derivative, and thereby less and less impressive, as O'Brien seeks to tarnish his omniscient mastery. O'Brien's Joyce is also far from the irreligious agnostic of literary fame, as he now spends his time composing "mostly pamphlets for the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland" (192), and desires to join the Jesuits. It was not enough for O'Brien to simply poke fun at Catholicism, he had to also mock the sacred cow of Irish modernism itself, James Joyce, and that towards the same purpose—to undermine the very concepts of mastery and authority, particularly those of printed text. These assaults on the sanctity of the written word—first against the Holy Writ represented by Augustine, and now against the Holy Writ of James Joyce—are further exasperated when O'Brien's Joyce describes his composition thusly: "Writing is not quite the word. Assembly, perhaps, is better, or accretion" (145). Writing here is no longer an act of pure *ex nihilo* creation (whether expressed by the sheer genius of the author or the divine inspiration of the Church Father), revealing "shapeless, formless things" (*Ulysses* 211), but something almost mechanical, like a factory assembly, conforming to, rather than transcending, the industrialized market economy. O'Brien joins Borges in critiquing Joyce's mastery and totalizing tendencies, reframing his ground-breaking oeuvre as just another manufactured production.

Of course, as I discussed in the chapter previous, Joyce was likewise engaged in such skewering of authority. In fact, the problem is that he did so too well—it is Joyce's very mastery itself that must likewise be undermined for O'Brien, who especially chafed against Joyce's long influence. He expressed his desire to get out of Joyce's shadow by means of *The Dalkey Archive* in a letter to a friend: "Ignorant reviewers have messed me up with another man, to my intense embarrassment and disgust, and he will be another character. I mean James Joyce. I'm going to get my own back on that bugger" (Harriman 93). Perhaps part of O'Brien's resentment was that he owed his career in part to Joyce, ever since Joyce gave O'Brien's debut novel *At Swim-Two-Birds* (and thus every subsequent novel) its most used pull-quote: "A real writer, with the true comic spirit." One senses an almost oedipal resentment from O'Brien against Joyce's praise, a desire to swerve free of his most direct antecedent. As Stephen Abblitt likewise observes:

> O'Brien recognizes his dependence on Joyce as indispensable antecedent and modernism as chosen style of literary production, and yet continually expresses his ferocious desire to symbolically murder the Father, decrying his life's work as obscure, elitist and masturbatory. (Abblitt 56)

But O'Brien's gleeful mockery of Joyce is not just rooted in mere resentment—there is for O'Brien a sense of Joyce haunting Irish modernism the same way Swift once haunted Yeats. As Abblitt himself states, "I prefer the metaphor of the ghost. Ontologically uncertain, disturbing both sensory perception and intellectual intuition, the ghost is difficult to grasp…Joyce's placement in *The Dalkey Archive* is wholly spectral, hauntological even" (Abblitt 57). O'Brien's project in summoning the ghost of Joyce into his text is not categorically different from De Selby's summoning of Augustine, nor from Yeats's with Swift.

This senile old Joyce is further skewered when Mick actually does try to help him join the Jesuits, only to be offered, by the dull priest, a position laundering their underwear. This final insult against Joyce likewise mocks the priest himself, who not only fails to appreciate the famed genius sitting before him, but more scatologically, reveals the Jesuits' utter failure to *ever* launder their knickers (foolishly considering it the work of women they will never have intercourse with in *any* sense of the word), and as such have become irredeemably soiled and filled with holes. (One can't help but wonder if there is a foul pun here on the word "Holy"). The authorities of Joyce and the Church, commonly held to be in opposition to each other, are here finally made ridiculous together, for again, O'Brien's purpose is not to merely switch the binaries, but to upset the spectrum altogether. In a perverse sort of manner, O'Brien's mockery of Joyce is in the end a salute to Joyce's own destabilizing aesthetic, as Yeats had done with Swift.

Mick spends much of the second half of the novel conspiring (and, predictably, failing) to get Joyce and De Selby to meet; one can even speculate on what would happen were this Joyce to meet one of the "Early Fathers". There could be some fireworks, as Joyce had already railed to Mick how "Those ancient disputants, rhetoricians, theologizers who are collectively called the Early Fathers were buggers for getting ideas into their heads and then assuming God directly inspired those ideas" (181). But that presupposes that Joyce would even be meeting the real Augustine directly—"We should remember that that might not have been the genuine Augustine at all" (45), Mick warns Hasckett—or that this is even the real Joyce, as Mick lets himself wonder, "Was this James Joyce, the Dublin writer of international name? Or was it somebody masquerading, possibly genuinely deranged through suffering?" (174). Serious doubts are off-handedly raised about some of the central players in this novel, which O'Brien never even

bothers to try to resolve. For all of his gleeful mockery of his antecedents, O'Brien always keeps his eye on the ball: his project, like Yeats and Swift before him, is to undermine the mastery and authority of the text, and that includes that of his own novel.

Overall, none are exempt from these attacks on all forms of mastery; and for all the relentless skewering of Augustine, Joyce, and the Police, in the end it is Mick himself who gets the worst of it. As Booker catalogues Mick's numerous failing over the course of the text:

> Unfortunately, all of Mick's illusions of mastery turn out to be just that. He steals De Selby's supply of D.M.P. and deposits it in the Bank of Ireland, only to find that he has thereby saved the dangerous substance from destruction in a subsequent fire at De Selby's residence. His efforts to recuperate Joyce result only in Joyce's humiliation at the hands of the crude Father Cobble. And his project of escaping from physicality into the ideal spiritual world of the priesthood comes crashing down when he learns that Mary is considering a marriage with Hackett, whereupon Mick becomes jealous and decides to marry her himself. Mary accepts his proposal, and the book ends as she informs him that she is pregnant. (Booker 281-282)

Every attempt to master a situation by Mick is met by failure. D.M.P. continues to sit menacingly in the Bank of Ireland, an imperial institution representative of the global economic order, ever threatening to wipe out humanity in more ways than one. His attempts to assist Joyce turn to farce in this Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man. The paternity of Mary's child is disputed (she had, after all, been dating Hackett during their brief break-up), rendering Mick's relationship with his fiancée all the more uncertain. These relentless encounters with the dead intrinsically destabilize everything they touch.

As for De Selby: his fate following towards the end of this novel is of particular interest. As Jack Fennell notes:

> The threatened apocalypse, however, does not happen. Mick and Sergeant Fottrel manage to steal DMP from De Selby's house under cover of darkness…only for Mick to learn later that night that the scientist has had a change of heart, leaving a message with Hackett to say, "I will make a most unambiguous retraction of my error. I will make an end of my experiments and return as a peaceable citizen to Buenos Aires, where my good patient wife is waiting for me" (Fennell 45).

Besides the fact that *everything* fails in this novel, including the apocalypse (arguably even the novel itself; as Booker astutely notes, it is hardly O'Brien's most polished), what is interesting is that De Selby's abrupt repentance sends him to Latin America—specifically, to Buenos Aires. De Selby follows the same route that Joyce's Eveline was once offered to escape the stagnation of Dublin. In this subtle allusion to *Dubliners*, one can read a sort of winking boast on O'Brien's part, that he has at last exceeded Joyce by succesfully sending a character to Buenos Aires. But then again, if everything fails in this novel, then implicitly so does Buenos Aires, where De Selby is no more likely to find peace than he could in Dublin. Argentina, as noted in the previous chapter, was a land of promise to many Irish emigrants, but it was also a treacherous one. These emigrants did not escape the labyrinths of Ireland, but only entangled themselves with those of South America.

This entanglement between Ireland and South America appears in the Swiftian séance that is Gabriel García Márquez's 1989 novel *El general en su laberinto (The General In His Labyrinth)*. It is a text that summons the spirit of the Simón Bolívar himself, and that prominently features a pair of Irish aides-de-camp in its character study of the Great Liberator.

The novel presents a speculative account of the final two weeks in the life of the General in 1830, a period upon which there remains a surprising paucity of information. While there is not an explicit séance *per se* featured in this novel, I argue that the text itself nonetheless functions much like that of Swift, in how it invokes, only to desanctify, a mythic national figure who continues to dominate the contemporary political landscape.[82] Certainly García Márquez felt a need to do so by the late 1980s. The book came out at the end of the "Lost Decade," a period of stagnant economic development across Latin America after the initial boom of the 1960s and 1970s as debt, inflation, IMF neoliberal restructuring, and a consequent drop in international lending, resulted in a decade (in some countries, even longer) of negative growth. Neocolonialism had reasserted itself in countries that had once so proudly declared their independence under Bolívar. García Márquez consequently felt the need to reassert the process of decolonization, which in turn required him to revisit the heritage of Bolívar. This novel is part of a larger reevaluation of Latin American history and identity. Controversial at the time of its publication, "The author was accused by some of anti-Santanderismo and by others of disrespecting the greatness of the sacred figure of 'The Liberator'"[83] (Ríos 71-72). In what might be considered the equivalent of a hatchet job against George Washington in the United States, García Márquez's *El general* presents the reader with a Bolívar who is:

> sick…nostalgic, impotent, contradictory, with serious digestive problems, who suffers from insomnia and is poorly-spoken...there is so much disarray about the hero, both

[82] Hugo Chávez's "Bolivarian Revolution" in Venezuela is but the most recent example of the same.
[83] "El autor fue acusado, por unos, de anti-santanderista y, por otros, de irrespetar la magnimidad de la figura sagrada del 'Libertador'". The translation is my own.

> physically and emotionally…we are faced with a tenacious questioning of the traditional figure of the Father of the Homeland. (Ríos 72)[84]

By implication, there is something similarly "sick…impotent, contradictory…disarray(ed)" about the nations which claim him as antecedent. This novel engages in the Swiftian project of invoking the specter of a revered figure in order to interrogate not only him, but the authority, legitimacy, and legacy of the regimes upon which he is based. Though García Márquez was not necessarily indebted to Swift, he is working within a similar vein, and towards similar purposes.

Helene Weldt-Basson further outlines how García Márquez's portrait is intended to take a more critical examination of the Great Liberator. She explains:

> The publication of Gabriel Garcia Mirquez's *El general en su laberinto* (1989), based on the life of Simón Bolivar, breaks with the previous tradition of the Latin American historical novel. According to Daniel Balderston, most of these (historical) novels focus on ambiguous historical figures, as opposed to those whose role in such events as the conquest, the fight for independence, and national organization was relatively clear, thus suggesting that the purpose of the historical novel is to elucidate the role of controversial figures of Latin American history…these examples bring to mind and confirm Roberto Gonzalez-Echeverría's assertion that one of García Márquez's purposes in writing the novel and using historical material is to "desacralize" a patriotic idol of Latin America. (Weldt-Basson 99)

[84] "Esta novela dibuja a un Bolívar enfermo en los últimos meses de su vida: nostálgico , impotente , contradictorio, con serios problemas digestivos , que sufre de insomnio y es muy mal hablado . En una primera lectura efectivamente son muchos los desarreglos del héroe , tanto físicos como emocionales…nos estamos enfrentando a un tenaz cuestionamiento de la figura tradicional del Padre de la Patria." My translation.

This desacralization process, however, is not immediately obvious. At first blush, *El general en su laberinto* appears to take a primarily sympathetic approach towards the final days of Bolívar, recounting his dejection, rejection, and despair after being forced from the Presidency. "Let us sit upon the ground, and tell sad stories of the death of kings" (*Richard II*) appears to be the tone of the text. Yet García Márquez had also earlier warned readers of his 1985 novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* that "you have to be careful not to fall into my trap" (Booker 181), as his apparently sentimental tale on the enduring power of true love causes many a naïve reader to sympathize with a character who is, by all textual evidence, a sexual predator. García Márquez clearly enjoys manipulating his readers into identifying with the monsters, and I suspect *El general* continues the same game; for García Márquez makes no bones about the fact that Bolívar sought to set himself up as dictator-for-life of Grand Columbia, "invested with triple power as President of Bolivia and Colombia and Dictator of Perú" (31), and "invested with dictatorial powers by Congress" [85] (150). As García Márquez presents this history, the rebels who attempted to take Bolívar's life were not completely out of line when they declaimed "the extraordinary powers of obvious dictatorial intent that the General had assumed three months before in order to thwart the Santanderist victory at the Ocaña Convention. The vice-presidency of the Republic…was abolished"[86] (53). The text does not deny these charges, nor does it present these developments as mere expedients with mitigating circumstances. Similarly:

> Students from the Academy of San Bartolomé had assaulted and seized the offices of the Supreme Court in order to force a public trial of the General…They accused him of being

[85] "…investido con el triple poder de president de Bolivia y Colombia y dictador de Perú…investido con poderes dictatorial del congreso" (39). Translation by Edith Grossman.
[86] "Los facciosos habían de justificar el atentado por las facultades extaordinarias de claro espíritu dictatorial que el general había asumido tres meses antes, para contrarrestar la Victoria de los santanderistas en la Convención de Ocaña. La vicepresidencia de la república…fue suprimida" (61).

> the secret instigator of the military uprising in a belated effort to regain the power he had exercised for twelve uninterrupted years and that the Congress had taken away from him by unanimous vote. They accused him of wanting to be president for life.[87] 12-13)

Though this was an accusation only, perhaps, it was one rooted in recent experience with the Great Liberator. The text also declares that "when the Republic was already established and [Bolívar] criticized this same Santander for the misuse of the press, he responded with exquisite sarcasm: 'We had a good teacher, Excellency,'" to which charge Bolívar does not protest or refute President Santander, but simply rejoins with, "A bad teacher…for you must remember that the news we invented was turned against us"[88] (114). So indistinguishable are the actions of Bolívar and Santander in this text that they becomes interchangeable; so when the former is informed by the rector of San Pedro "that Josefa Sagrario and her family were living in exile in Italy for conspiring against the security of the state," the General responds "More of Santander's shit, of course," only to be told, "No, General…You exiled them yourself without realizing it after the troubles of '28"[89] (115). The purported dictatorial legacy that Bolívar bequeathed to South America is further foregrounded when the text observes of one military uprising: "It was the first coup d'etat in the Republic of Colombia, and the first of the forty-nine civil wars we would suffer in what remained of the century"[90] (199); the implication is that these many Colombian civil wars proceeded forth not from the country's rejection of Bolívar's legacy, but

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[87] "Los estudiantes del colegio de San Bartolomé se habían tomado por es alto las oficinas de la corte suprema de justicia para forzar un juicio público contra el general…Lo acusaban de ser el promotor oculto de la desobediencia military, en un intento tardío de recuperar el poder que el congreso le había quitado por voto unánime al cabo de doce años de ejercicio continuo. Lo acusaban de quiere la presidencia vitalicia" (20-21).

[88] Tuvimos un buen maestro, Excelencia." "Un mal maestro…pues usted recordará que las noticias que inventamos se volvieron contra nosotros" (122).

[89] "Josefa Sagrario vivía desterrada en Italia por conspirer contra la seguridad del estado. 'Vainas de Santander, por supuesto…' 'No, general…Los desterró usted mismo sin darse cuenta por las peloteras del año de veintiocho'" (123).

[90] "Era el primer golpe de estado en la república de Colombia, y la primera de las cuarenta y nueve guerras civiles de habíamos de sufrir en lo que faltaba del siglo" (203).

ironically by its embrasure. It is also not in spite but because of Bolívar's efforts, implies the narrative, that "Sixteen million Americans who had just begun their life of freedom were at the mercy of local tyrants"[91] (18). Bolívar's life may be a tragedy of epic proportions, García Márquez seems to indicate, but part of that tragedy was self-inflicted—as was the mess of caudillos who followed in his wake.

Now, unlike the previous two works I have considered, there is no necromancer in this novel beyond that of the author—but there *are* Irish archivists cataloguing their conversations with famous men, antecedents to De Selby and descendants of Swift. It is almost too appropriate in this novel that the Irish become the General's chief archivists: the fictional Robert Wilson and the real-life Daniel O'Leary wend their ways prominently throughout the narrative. As the text itself declares of Wilson and O'Leary:

> Both names would be forever linked to the General's. Wilson would later be British chargé d'affaires in Lima, and then in Caracas, and would continue his frontline participation in the political and military affairs of both countries. O'Leary would move to Kingston and later to Santa Fe de Bogotá, there he would serve as his nation's consul for many years and die at the age of fifty-one, having collected in thirty-four volumes, an enormous testimony of his life with the General of the Americas.[92] (259)

As represented by O'Leary, the Irish become the central archivists that record and call forth the ghosts of the departed. The Irish are utilized perhaps because they alone, among all the other

[91] "Dieciséis millones de americanos iniciados apenas en la vida libre quedaban al albedrío de sus caudillos locales" (26).

[92] "Ambos nombres quesarían vinculados para siempre al del general. Wilson sería más tarde escargado de negocios de Gran Bretaña en Lima, y después en Caracas, y seguiría participando en primera línea en los asuntos políticos y militares de los dos países. O'Leary había de radicarse en Kingston, y más tarde en Santa Fe, donde fue murió a la edad de cincuenta y un años, habiendo recogido en treinta y cuatro volúmenes un testimonio colossal de su vida junto al general de las Américas" (260-261).

European peoples disparaged in this novel, appear to intuit the instability and impossibility of the archive as clearly as do the Latin Americans. The Irish are the closest García Márquez can find to kindred spirits with his Grand Colombians.

The fact that Wilson is an invented character—one who even feels rather superfluous, since O'Leary already exists, in violation of the Law of Conservation of Characters—further underscores the inherent unreliability of the text. As with *Gulliver's Travels*, García Márquez presents us with a historical-*esque* novel that continually calls attention to the fact that it is in no way historical. Nor does O'Leary's documented historicity ensure his reliability. As the General states, "O'Leary is a great man, a great soldier, and a faithful friend, but he takes notes on everything…And there's nothing more dangerous than a written memoir"[93] (García Márquez 154). This point is integral; written records are certainly dangerous, but not necessarily because of the threat the educated purportedly pose to the powerful.[94] Rather, text is dangerous because it is treacherous, inasmuch as it inherently fails to correspond to the reality of whatever actually happened. As the General states near the novel's conclusion, "O'Leary will write something if he doesn't change his mind…but it will be different"[95] (265)—or *distinct* in the original Spanish, discrete from the original. Of course it will be: What is written is by nature different from what actually happened; graphemes on the page are not the events themselves. As Randolph Pope writes, "While history is literature, it is not fiction. The story, of course, being numbers and words, images and monuments, is not identical with what happened either"[96] (Pope 37). The text

[93] "O'Leary es un gran hombre, un gran soldado y un amigo fiel, pero toma notas de todo…Y no hay nada más peligroso que la memoria escrita" (162).
[94] The Spanish general Pablo Morillo had naively supposed the same when he had "eliminated by the simple formula of hanging every man who could read and write" (78).
[95] "O'Leary exribirá algo si persevere en sus deseos…Pero será distinto" (266-267).
[96] "Si bien la historia es literature, no es ficción. La historia, por supuesto, siendo números y palabras, imágenes y monumentos, tampoco es idéntica con lo ocurrido." The translation is my own.

of *El general* consciously blurs the lines between fiction *and* fact, in a manner that calls both into question.

For another textual element of *El general* that pairs well with Swift is how this novel about a dying man repeatedly undermines the reliability and authority of printed language. By way of comparison, Swift rather facetiously concludes *Gulliver's Travels* with:

> I could heartily wish a law was enacted, that every traveler, before he were permitted to publish his voyages, should be obliged to make oath before the Lord High Chancellor, that all he intended to print was absolutely true to the best of his knowledge; for then the world would no longer be deceived, as it usually is, while some writers, to make their works pass the better upon the public, impose the grossest falsities on the unwary reader. (Swift 255).

The dry joke here is that *Gulliver's Travels* itself is utterly untrustworthy as a travel history, being itself a work of pure fiction, which in turn calls attention to the untrustworthiness of other official documents. *El general* similarly interrogates the trustworthiness of official documents; as Avelar Borland argues: "The idea that all written history can be subjective is articulated frequently throughout the story…Not only does Bolívar favor unwritten, reports over official news, but he also exhibits angry resentment towards the written word" (Borland 443). Significantly, Borland emphasizes that there is no record at all of the last fourteen days of Bolivar's life. That is, García Márquez is documenting an unknown, inaccessible portion of the General's existence. But then, that is a fair description of the rest of the General's life, as well. Later in the text there appears the following anecdote:

> Colonel Wilson related this incident to a chronicler of the time, who did not take the trouble to record it. "The poor General's case is closed," he said. That was the fundamental belief of all who saw him on his final journey, and perhaps that was why no one left a written record. Indeed, in the opinion of some of his companions, the General would have no place in history.[97] (García Márquez 125)

Two important elements are noteworthy in this passage: this incident was not recorded in Colonel Wilson's chronicles, but in spoken conversation, calling attention to all that has been left out of the official records; second, that there had arisen a belief at the time of his death that "the General would have no place in history." Such an assumption may also help to explain just why it was that there remains such a paucity of information on the General's final two weeks of life—as well as to why García Márquez chose this particular time-frame in which to set his novel. As critic Carlos J. Alonso has written,

> one could ask in any event why this period is indeed the least detailed one of Bolivar's biography. It could be argued that the very nature of the *Libertador's* fluvial journey during his last months must have hindered the selection of facts, anecdotes, conversations, etc., that have otherwise been skillfully woven together by his biographers to make possible the minute recreation of his existence up to that moment. It seems to me, nonetheless, that the answer is given to us by the very events narrated by Garcia Marquez in his novel: and it is that by that point in his life, Bolívar had already begun to die to Spanish American history. (Alonso 255)

[97] "El coronel Wilson le refirió este episodio a un cronista de la época, que no se tomó la molestia de recordarlo. 'El pobre general es un caso acabado,' dijo. En el fondo, ésa era la certidumbre de cuantos lo vieron en su ultimo viaje, y tal vez fue pore so que nadie dejó un testimonio escrito. Incluso, para algunos de sus acompañantes, el general no pasaría a la historia" (132-133).

In an ironic sense, that final statement, "Bolívar had already begun to die to Spanish American history," is correct; no matter how he is lionized and mythologized across South America today, no one knows the General's real history. The text cannot hope to communicate what actually happened those last fourteen days—but nor can it, for that matter, communicate what happened during the whole rest of his prior life, either. Again, history is not literature, but nor is it necessarily fact.

The General himself consistently undermines the trustworthiness of print. The text declares of the General that "He had been a reader of imperturbable voracity…but a reader without order or method"[98] (92), implying that any information he may have gotten from the books were likewise without order or method. That is, even when the printed record is ostensibly accurate, that by no means signifies that the *reader* is, further undermining the reliability of the text. The novel also declares of the General:

> He was never able to read all the books he owned. When he moved to another city he left them in the care of his most trustworthy friends, although he never heard anything about them again, and his life of fighting obliged him to leave behind a trail of books and papers stretching over four hundred leagues from Bolivia to Venezuela.[99] (93)

The General's reading remains forever incomplete, inconsistent, and impossible; he not only never finishes his books, but never gets to keep them, either. Ultimately, it is his own impending

[98] "Había sido un lector de una voracidad imperturbable, lo mismo en las treguas de las batallas que en los reposos del amor, pero sin orden ni método" (100).
[99] "Nunca alcanzó a leer tantos como tenía. Cuando cambiaba de ciudad los dejaba al cuidado de los amigos de más confianza, aunque nunca volviera a saber de ellos, y la vida de Guerra lo obligó a dejar un rastro de más de cuatrocientas leguas de libros y papeles desde Bolivia hasta Venezuela" (101).

death that becomes the single biggest impediment to his readings. But then, death generally possess the uncanny knack to disrupt the efficacy of language.

Not just the General's history, but his identity—particularly where race is involved—is destabilized by the text. As the novel notes of the General: "He had a strain of African blood through a paternal great-great-grandfather…But as his glory increased, the painters began to idealize him, washing his blood, mythologizing him, until they established him in official memory with the Roman profile of his statues"[100] (180). The painters' erasure of the General's blackness from his body ironically presages the erasure of blackness from participation in the body politic of Grand Colombia; as the text explicitly states, this political marginalization of the massive black, mulatto, and creole populations is part of what ensures the failure of Bolívar's signature ambition, the political unification of Spanish-speaking South America. This white-washing of the General is further complicated by the fact that the Irishman O'Leary is by contrast described as "tall and blond and had an elegant appearance, enhanced by his Florentine uniforms"[101] (162). Those Italian "Florentine uniforms" anticipate the "Roman profile" of the General's statues; yet this subtle racial linkage between Bolívar and O'Leary also recalls how, as I discussed with O'Brien, the Irish were once classified by much of the U.K. and U.S. as "white negroes," wherein their whiteness in effect did not count. The General is whitened by his artists and biographers, even while García Márquez associates the General with a specific form of Irish whiteness that was in turn classified by North American and British nativists as African. The Irish return attention to Bolívar's African blood in the very moment the artists erase it. As with Augustine in *Dalkey Archive*, wherein Africans are Romans and thus the Roman Catholic Irish

[100] "Tenía una línea de sangre Africana, por un tatarabuelo paterno…Pero a medida que su gloria aumentaba, los pintores iban idealizándolo, lavándole la sangre, mitificándolo, hasta que lo implantaron en la memoria oficial con el perfil romano de sus estatuas" (186).
[101] "rubio, alto, con una pinta gallarda, favorecida por sus uniformes florentinos" (170).

are by the transitive property Africans, race overall becomes radically unstable. In this roundabout model, whiteness itself is rendered fatally unreliable and unreal; it no longer carries any intrinsic meaning nor immutable privilege, least of all for the deposed General.

This Bolívar expresses sentiments similar to those of Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*, couched in some of his more famous statements:

> he began dictating…a series of somewhat disordered notes that did not express his desires so much as his disillusionment: America is ungovernable, the man who serves a revolution plows the sea, this nation will fall inevitably into the hands of the unruly mob and then will pass into the hands of almost indistinguishable petty tyrants of every color and race.[102] (García Márquez 257).

Here Bolívar evinces a Swift-like contempt for both rulers and the ruled, against both "petty tyrants" and "unruly mobs," perceived here to be less opposed than complicit with each other. García Márquez's classification of these famed utterances as "disordered"—"pocos descocidas," or unstitched or torn—does not exactly indicate a ringing endorsement of the General's most famous utterances. The General is likewise "pocos descocido" to the reader, torn at the seams and coming apart like his dream of a united Grand Colombia. In place of his vision, he foresees a far different order come to impose itself across the disunited region, the same one that García Márquez grapples with at the end of the 1980s. Rather anachronistically the General warns a friend, "And don't go with your family to the United States. It's omnipotent and terrible, and its

[102] "…empezó por dictarle…una serie de notas un poco descosidas que no expresaban tanto sus deseos como sus desengaños: la América es ingobernable, el que sirve una revolución ara en el mar, este país caerá sin remedio en manos de la multitud desengrenada para después pasar a tiranuelos casi imperceptibles de todos los colores y razas" (259).

tale of liberty will end in a plague of miseries for us all"[103] (García Márquez 223). The United States in 1830 was still quite far from the global superpower it is today (although the Monroe doctrine, and all interventions it would later be used to justify, had already been formulated by 1823). Yet it is also a moment where fiction becomes the lie that tells the truth, for with the benefit of hindsight, García Márquez in 1989 can give the General real foresight into where his true legacy of caudillos and dictators and tyrants will end up: in the neocolonial grasp of the United States, and the economic stagnation that plagued Latin America throughout the 1980s. As Gulliver had called forth the spirits of dead kings and rulers to explain the misery of Europe, García Márquez performs the same for South America by invoking the figure of Bolívar. The allusions to a "Roman profile" in the General's portraits are perhaps not incidental, for he is as Caesar—the Liberator turned fallen Tyrant—that Gulliver likewise spoke to through the Looking Glass.

The anachronistic allusion to the United States in this novel gestures to another element of *El General* oft-cited by critics: the irony that the Liberator's dream of a united Spanish America was only possibly in García Márquez's own present moment. As Alonso argues:

> Bolivar's dream—García Márquez seems to imply—would have only been feasible in our present era, in which the ideological pressures of nineteenth-century nationalism that put in check Bolivar's unifying project have been de-legitimized, and in which the means communication and transportation could indeed allow one to imagine the creation of a collectivity of continental proportions. By underscoring implicitly the discrepancy between Bolivar's Enlightenment rhetoric and the material and economic circumstances

[103] "Ni tampoco se vaya con su familia para los Estados Unidos, que son omnipotentes y terribles, y con el cuento de la libertad terminarán por plagarnos a todos de miserias" (227).

> of his moment, García Márquez brings to light the unavoidable dead-end, the inevitable melancholy relationship with modernity that has marked Spanish American discourse from its very beginnings in the nineteenth century. (Alonso 261)

García Márquez's Bolívar is a man out of time, born far too early to effect the sort of continental unification that only technological modernity is capable of granting. Though he foretells having to resist the modernity of the North American 20th century, he would also gladly participate in the possibilities proffered by modernity if only it were accessible to him. As Randolph Pope likewise suggests, "The continental unity that was dreamed by Bolívar but splintered repeatedly by reality seems conquered and easy in the gratuitousness of García Márquez. The telephone, the fax and the airplane advantageously replace the long drawn-out letters and the slow course of an unhealthy river"[104] (Pope 37). *El General*, then, is not just a historical novel, but a conscious attempt to summon the Liberator into the present moment, a séance whereby the reader is invited to contemplate the impossible, of how Bolívar would speak to the present moment. But of course, Bolívar *does* continue to speak to the present moment; his legacy and influence are still not ended.

It is perhaps, then, not speculated last words, but a statement of fact, that García Márquez has the General utter at the novel's end, "Damn it…How will I ever get out of this labyrinth!"[105] (267). South America, implies the novel, is still caught in the same labyrinth that Bolívar felt trapped in, one that entangles Ireland as well, and webs across the whole world. Like Malone and Artemio Cruz, his body had been imprinted with his nation's traumas—many of which he

[104] "La unidad continental soñado por Bolívar pero astillado repetidamente por la realidad parece conquistada y fácil en las gratitudes de García Márquez. El teléfono, el telex y el avión reemplazan con ventaja las demoradas cartas antaño y el lento curso de un río malsano." The translation is my own.
[105] "Carajos…¡Cómo voy a salir de este laberinto!" (269).

perpetrated himself, many which had been perpetrated on himself. The final line of the novel reads: "he saw the diamond of Venus in the sky that was dying forever, the eternal snows, the new vine whose yellow bellflowers he would not see bloom on the following Saturday in the house closed in mourning, the final brilliance of a life that would never, through all eternity, be repeated again"[106] (268). Though his singular life would never be repeated again, his influence persists. His ghost still haunts. Like Borges, García Márquez is anti-Nietzschean, rejecting the dogma of the eternal returns; yet unlike Borges, the reason García Márquez does not perceive any repetitions possible in infinity (no matter the eternal snows) is because Bolívar's life does not *need* to repeat. The singularity that was Bolívar continues to wreck its havoc today; the effects of his life and influence still have not ended. The spirits with whom Gulliver communed were not to repeat their appearance either, and for perhaps the same reason: One cannot repeat that which has still not finished.

García Márquez, like Swift, Borges, Yeats, and O'Brien before him, comes not to praise the dead, but not to bury them, either, for they are still not fully buried. They continue to effect the destinies of their respective nations. Throughout the texts examined in this chapter, a series of Irish archivists converse with famous dead man in order to desacralize them, in a decolonizing project intended to arrest their antecedent's oversized influence and with it the reassertion of empire. Swift's séance also illustrates once more the web of historical and literary connections between the various postcolonial states of Ireland and Latin America. They illuminate together the grave need to engage directly with the haunting legacy of one's predecessors. Caesar still speaks, and Caesar still needs someone to kill him.

[106] "…vio por la ventana el diamante de Venus en el cielo que se iba para siempre, las nieves eternas, la enredadera nueva cuyas campánulas amarillas no vería florecer el sábado siguiente en la casa cerrada por el duelo, los últimos fulgores de la vida que nunca más, por los siglos de los siglos, volvería a repetirse" (269).

Chapter 4

"The Waters and the Wild": William Butler Yeats, Julia de Burgos, and Romantic Resurrection

"We were the last romantics." So declared William Butler Yeats in "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931." But what *sort* of romantic was he? The long critical tendency has been to assume Yeats referred primarily to the historical English romanticism of Wordsworth and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats.[107] Such an approach is certainly sensible, especially given Yeats' well-documented indebtedness to Blake and Coleridge, not to mention his ardent Irish nationalism, so reminiscent of the radical politics of Percy Shelley, or of Lord Byron fighting for Greek independence. However, this approach belies the intrinsically lopsided power imbalance between imperial England and colonized Ireland; "How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine!" writes Joyce, and we might add "*Romance*" to that list of English words whose valiances subtly shift in the mouth of a colonized Irish speaker like Yeats (*A Portrait* 170). As Stephen Regan observes as recently as 2006, "The standard account is one that sees Yeats, the late romantic, the admirer of Blake and Shelley…until fairly recently it was common practice in British universities for the poetry of W.B. Yeats to be taught with a blithe disregard for the long and troubled history of Anglo-Irish relations" (87). Nor is this observation novel; as Edward Sa'id similarly claimed clear back in 1988, "Yeats is a poet who belongs to a tradition not usually considered his, that of the colonial world ruled by European imperialism" (5). The English Romantics, whatever else their virtues, still approached their politic activism

[107] For example, in 1984 Douglas Archibald tested Yeats' romantic bona fides through a comparison of his poem "A Prayer for My Daughter" against Coleridge's similar "Frost at Midnight", in a book chapter significantly entitled "The Last Romantic: Yeats and Coleridge." Much more recently in 2010, A.V.C. Schmidt writes "Texture and Meaning in Shelley, Keats, and Yeats" to embed Yeats in the English Romantic tradition, while in 2012 David Toh Kusi performs an engaging ecocritical comparison between Yeats and Wordsworth in "Traditional Pieties and Transcendental Realities in William Wordsworth and W. B. Yeats: An Eco-Spiritual and Cultural Revaluation."

from dominant positions of imperial privilege, for whom rights of political self-determination were theirs to grant; meanwhile, an Irish Romantic—even a member of the Anglo-Protestant ascendancy like Yeats—must necessarily approach politics from the position of the occupied, and hence Yeats's poetry must position itself differently in order to lay hold of the political self-determination that had long eluded his island.

His contemporaries apparently rated his position similarly; as his erstwhile lover Maud Gonne claimed, "Without Yeats there would have been no Literary Revival in Ireland. Without the inspiration of that Revival and the glorification of beauty and heroic virtue, I doubt there would have been an Easter Week" (Cullingford 88). Yeats himself, near the end of his life, openly wondered of his works, "Did that play of mine send out/Certain men the English shot?" (Yeats 345). These claims may sound to us grandiose and self-serving; yet as Colmán Ó'Hare notes,

> One could dismiss Yeats's query as mere hyperbole, but the question was not rhetorical. Amazingly, it parallels an observation Pearse once made: "When I was a child I believed that there was actually a woman called Erin, and had Mr. Yeats' 'Kathleen Ni Houlihan' been then written I should have taken it not as an allegory, but as a representation". (Ó'Hare 94)

Pearse's centrality to the Easter Uprising especially invites a closer consideration of Yeats's poetic influence on the revolutionary. Ó'Hare continues on to note that, "It is important to recall that the events in Dublin that April morning were set in motion by men who were dreamers more than political strategists or soldiers" (94). Pearse was often critical of Yeats, as either by turns too tepid, too Anglo, or insufficiently committed to the revival of Irish Gaelic—that is, as we outlined in the previous chapter, Pearse as a poet felt the weight and Anxiety of Influence of his

immediate predecessor Yeats. As Bloom might argue, the only manner by which he felt he could swerve free of his antecedent was to exceed him—to actually fulfill Yeats's revolutionary poetic project by his strength of arms. Likewise, as Elizabeth Cullingford argues in her classic *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism*, "before dismissing [Yeats'] viewpoint as impossibly romantic, one must remember that Irish freedom was won not through parliamentary negotiation, but by the unsuccessful poets' rebellion of 1916" (6-7). Of these dreamers and poet-rebels, Cullingford argues, "Pearse, MacDonagh, and Plunkett…were heirs of the tradition of romantic nationalism which Yeats himself espoused" (88), a claim we will interrogate more closely. This particular "impossibly romantic nationalism" that so motivated the revolutionaries took a different form than that of the English, as Yeats himself made clear when he declared that English and Irish poetry "could not differ more if they were divided from each other by a half score of centuries" (Cleary 39), a statement that explicitly invites us to face Yeats away from the English Romantics.

Even the seemingly harmless pastoral infatuations of that arch-Romantic Wordsworth were specifically critiqued by Yeats, who claimed of him, "[like] most English poets, he finds his image in every lake and puddle. He has to burden the skylark with his cares before he can celebrate it" (Cullingford 24). For Yeats, the English poets burden nature with their own image, as England had burdened Ireland historically. Yeats, romantic though he may claim to be, takes a conspicuously different approach towards nature and wilderness, one that seeks nature not as a mirror of himself or repository of his own "cares," but as a site for counter-imperial activity and a potential ally in his anti-imperial enterprises (an ecocritical awareness that we will shortly explore in this essay). Overall, judging an Irish Romantic against English Romanticism is as problematic as judging a Puerto Rican literary tradition against an Anglo-American one.

In fact, it is the contention of this chapter that Yeats's form of Romanticism is more profitably compared not with the English, but to a contemporaneous Puerto Rican poet of comparable local status: Julia de Burgos, the national-poet of Puerto Rico. Such are the fiercely nationalistic connotations associated with the name of Burgos that across San Juan and Puerto Rican conclaves in the U.S., there are numerous schools, centers and bridges named for her. Burgos it was whom Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez singled out for praise with, "She was the best there was in Puerto Rico as a poet" (Agüeros xxxix). Her break-out poem "Río Grande de Loíza" was correctly prophesied by one contemporary to be "one of those poems that are born destined to figure in anthologies" (Agüeros xix)—not to mention Puerto Rican grade school syllabi to this day. Such was the influence of this poem that, at age twenty-two Burgos was already being invited to keynote pro-independence rallies, despite having published at that point only a handful of poems. Her youthful activism in the nascent Puerto Rican independentista movement came from a comparably nonprivileged position as the Irish. Hence, she and Yeats may usefully illuminate certain of each other's poetic moves, as will be demonstrated through a comparison of their first published poems, "The Stolen Child" and "Río Grande de Loíza," and again between two of their later-period poems, "Easter 1916" and "23 de septiembre."

Ireland and Puerto Rico correspond on the larger spectrum of Irish/Latin American revolutionary activity—one that often included Yeats as well. Edward Sa'id for example notes with some surprise that Pablo Neruda in his memoirs:

> …speaks of a writer's Congress in Madrid held in 1937 in defense of the Republic. "Priceless replies" to the invitation "poured in from all over." One was from Yeats, Ireland's national poet…Neruda takes him as a national poet who represents the Irish nation in its war against tyranny and, according to Neruda, Yeats responded positively to

> that unmistakable anti-fascist call, despite his frequently cited dispositions towards European fascism. (Sa'id 19)

Sa'id then goes on to compare Neruda's *Plenos poderes* against Yeats's *The Fisherman* in a manner reminiscent of the more prominent critical trend of situating Yeats amidst the English Romantics. This chapter, among other goals, proposes to include and better foreground Puerto Rico within this Irish/Latin American conversation that has, up till recently, focused mostly upon Mexico, Cuba, and South America.

Yet even independent of this larger and important Irish/Latin American conversation, the parallels between Ireland and Puerto Rico alone are striking: They are both, after all, predominantly Catholic islands with significant Protestant minorities that have served as the impoverished colonial possessions of neighboring, nominally democratic, Anglo-dominant superpowers. Historically, both islands have seen their ecological environments become the sites of ruthless appropriation, from the common-land enclosures and potato monocropping that led to the Famine, to the deforestation that razed the refuges of the native Taínos and cleared a way for slave labor on the sugar plantations of Puerto Rico. Both populations have suffered systematic extermination attempts, from the English massacres of the Irish to the U.S. forced-sterilization of Puerto Rican women in the 1960s and 1970s. They both feature significant diasporic populations abroad, ones that live less in exile than in a broader web of communities interconnected with the mythologized homeland (including both in New York, Boston, and Chicago). As in Cuba, many Puerto Ricans possess at least partial Irish ancestry; in fact, some prominent Irish-Puerto Ricans were instrumental in helping repel the 1797 English invasion of Puerto Rico (Chinea 171-81). That is, Ireland and Puerto Rico have long histories of resisting Anglo-imperialism, often together at the same time. As such, Yeats' poetic moves towards a

decolonizing, eco-aware variant of Romanticism may serve as a useful model by which to examine and understand his distant cousins in Puerto Rico—who may in turn help us to illuminate Yeats in novel ways.

Yet before proceeding, the significant differences between these two poets must also be acknowledged: William Butler Yeats was male, Anglo, Protestant, and, though his family's fortunes had largely fallen by the time of his birth, aristocratic. Julia de Burgos by contrast was feminist, Creole, a social radical, and raised in abject rural poverty. If the power imbalances between Yeats and the English Romantics are striking, they are even more pronounced between Yeats and Burgos. For Yeats came from at least some privilege; Burgos, from none. Moreover, Yeats, as an Anglo-Protestant, could choose to be Irish, and still saw his reputation spread across the Anglosphere; Burgos by contrast would never be allowed to be anything but Puerto Rican, and has rarely seen her poetic fame spread beyond the Spanish-Caribbean, despite her significant years in the U.S. and strong connections to the Puerto Rican diaspora in New York. Post World War I, his sympathies leaned uncomfortably towards the fascists, hers towards the Bolsheviks.

Her full name was Julia Constanza de Burgos García, but as Burgos scholar Jack Agüeros notes, her pen name of "Julia de Burgos…technically makes no sense in the Spanish form. But…Julia has literally made a defiant announcement. She will henceforth be of herself, for signing Julia de Burgos is like signing Julia who belongs to herself" (Agüeros xv). In contrast to the landed aristocracy of Yeats' ancestors, which could claim title to estates in the County Sligo where his first poem "The Stolen Child" takes place, Burgos can lay claim to nothing but herself. When she was asked of her publisher, "'Where did you come from?' she thundered a lesson:

'Like you, from nothing'"[108] (Agüeros xxv).[109] Her progressive feminism features in this statement, as she identifies as a child of the "*nada*," the Nothing of not only the dust of the Earth, but of the empty womb as well, leveling and equalizing all humanity to the level of the same uterine nothing. This anecdote is illustrative of her radical world citizenship and humanism, one that situates her within the broad swath of humanity rather than marginalized in the local, even as she still strove ardently for localized independence. Unlike Yeats, she was burdened by no aristocratic entitlement that could cause her to forget her common kinship with others, nor warp her nationalism into fascist sympathies—and she would deny others the same sanctuary. She neither pretended to privilege, nor allowed others to hide behind theirs.

In fact, if one wishes to compare Irish and Puerto Rican nationalist poets, one could argue that Burgos holds much closer affinities with Patrick Pearse, who in his best known poem "The Rebel" likewise glories in his obscure background: "My mother bore me in bondage, in bondage my mother was born/I am of the blood of serfs" (68). Burgos's late-period polemical poetry often draws closer to Pearse than Yeats; his fiery "I say to my people's masters: Beware/Beware of the thing that is coming, beware of the risen people/Who shall take what ye would not give...Tyrants… hypocrites… liars!" (68-70) finds easy camaraderie with Burgos's "Noble peasant/your tragedy has but one response:/sharpen your hoe/whet your machete/and temper your soul"[110] (405), and "We are no longer slaves!/Announce the new battlecry/We are closed fists!"[111] (447). Burgos is, like Pearse, the sort of poet who agitates for revolutions, rather than Yeats, whose "commitment to Irish nationalism and Celtic culture was deep" but nevertheless

[108] "'¿De dónde sale usted?' Me restalló una lección: 'Como usted; de la nada'",
[109] Note: I am utilizing the 1996 Gareth Price translations of Burgos' works, as featured in the sole bilingual edition of her collected works, *Song of the Simple Truth: Obra poética completa/the complete poems of Julia de Burgos*.
[110] "Campesino noble/tu tragedia tiene solo una respueta:/afila tu azada/afeita el machete/y temple tu alma".
[111] "¡Ya no somos esclavos!/Anunciemos el grito del presente/ ¡Somos puñas cerrados!"

whose "first priority was to have a rich and rejuvenated Irish culture rather than political freedom, unless that comes through political dialogue" (Khan 43), as Jalal Uddin Khan claims. Pearse is an especially fascinating figure to constellate in this Yeats/Burgos comparison due to his own commitments to political Romanticism, as is evident in his oft-pronounced indebtedness to Yeats (despite their many personal differences), his commitment to Yeats's conception of a Romantic Ireland that will rise from the dead, and his self-consciously Christ-like martyrdom in the Easter Uprising that causes Yeats such consternation in "Easter 1916." As Declan Kiberd claims in *Inventing Ireland*, Pearse's own life becomes the work of art that Yeats could only write.

But still Yeats had first to write it. As did Burgos, who, like Yeats, had to be content to be the sort of poet who lays the Romantic groundwork for uprisings, not perform them. Hence, though Burgos perhaps draws closer to Pearse in background, politics, and polemics, she draws closest to Yeats in her poetry's specific deployment of Romantic structures to critique and resist power, as a strategy to construct a potential space for future revolutionary activity. Their Romantic structure is of a kind with what Northrop Frye once described in *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Literary Realism, claims Frye, contains "a strongly conservative element at the core of realism, an acceptance of society in its present structure" (164), especially in how it utilizes a "hence" narrative that connects episodes logically and plausibly with each other. Romance, by contrast, strings together episodes in an "and then" narrative that resists any attempts to impose a logical sequence of causality. As Rothenberg and Robinson claim in *Poems for the Millennium*, "Romanticism… assumes the world to be a domain as turbulent and susceptible to change as the mind encountering it" (Rothenberg and Robinson 9). Indeed, the irony is that reality is likewise ever turbulent and susceptible to

change; it rarely if ever functions as "Realism," as a logical, plausible sequence of events. "If it happened in a book, no one would believe it" is a cliché Frye himself cites (52). It is not Realism but *Romanticism* that is most realistic in structure, for Romance is that which embraces "the conception of human life itself as much more a series of 'and thens' than a continuous narrative" (52). Romance, then, is not an *escape from* reality, but rather a *return to* the unpredictable, disconnected surprises of *actual* reality. Romance, in this conception, allows for the possibility of revolution.

This revolutionary potential of Romance is present in Yeats and Burgos from the inception of their young poetic careers, when they were both far more idealistic in their militancy, long before middleage had jaded them both. Yeats's "The Stolen Child", the 1886 poem that launched his career at the tender age of twenty-one, attempts to deploy Romance in just such a disruptive manner. The poem is narrated from the perspective of certain faeries leading away a human boy to their sanctuary upon a "leafy island" (l. 3) on a lake in County Sligo, Ireland. The poem is structured into four stanzas of eight to ten lines of rhyming quatrains; in most versions, each stanza finishes with a chorus that instructs the child to:

> Come away, oh human child
>
> To the waters and the wild
>
> With a faerie hand in hand
>
> For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

By poem's end, the child has complied, as he goes "Away with us...solemn-eyed" (ll. 42-43), sober and wide awake, implying that (contrary to numerous critics) this gentle abduction is consensual; he has heard enough of this "world more full of weeping" and has deliberately

turned his back on it before he ever has to understand it. The solemn consent of the child is important, because so often in these Irish faerie tales, the faeries are presented as malevolent trickster figures, ones who seduce, fool, or even kidnap the poor mortals that cross their paths. But the child here is not presented by Yeats as kidnapped, nor seduced, nor even fooled: the faeries warning of "a world more full of weeping" is a gravely accurate summation of the world indeed, and the "solemn-eyed" child's decision to take his chances with the faeries instead is a dearly sober and sobering one. The child's choice to consciously join the tricksters is a very political gesture of renunciation against an unjust world.

As for the poem's formal elements: The verse-chorus song structure is reminiscent of Yeats's "own desire to write poetry in the folk tradition" (Foster 31), as well as Yeats's belief, as Ó'Hare has argued, that his most nationalistic poems "would someday be sung by the common people" (Ó'Hare 100). There is a *music* to Yeats's poetry, and to this one in particular. In this regard, Ó'Hare considers it "no accident" that "Easter 1916" refers to itself as a "Song"—nor, we might add, that "The Stolen Child" is itself structured like a song. The song-like structure of "The Stolen Child" situates it (despite its printed nature) within an oral tradition, capable of being passed from person to person independent of official channels. It is an orality wherein poetry is not just recited but *sung*, which singing in turn help self-consciously position Yeats as an Irish bard, a title with distinctively political connotations. As Katie Trumpener argues in *Bardic Nationalism*, "Irish nationalists conceived a new national literary history under the sign of the bard, a figure who represents the resistance of vernacular oral traditions to the historical pressures of English imperialism" (Trumpener 33). All political registers are therefore already implicit within the musical, oral formal elements within "The Stolen Child."

Similarly, "Río Grande de Loíza", the 1935 poem that dramatically launched young Burgos' poetic career, involves a small child drawn towards a mysterious body of water, narrated not by the faeries but the child herself. Her poem is far more formally adventurous than Yeats's, with stanzas that vary in size from two to six turbulent lines, in no apparent pattern (much like the river currents themselves—or as in a Romance). There are incidental internal rhymes in the original Spanish, but these are not arranged according to any sort of set structure or meter; like the poem's narrator, the poem's formal elements crave liberation and unpredictability—that is, the Romantic possibility of an absolute event.

Though these two poems on their surface appear antithetical in their approaches towards formal poetic structure, nevertheless the same fundamental logic of Romance undergirds both, as they each feature children wandering away from carefully-regulated colonized spaces into separated Romantic realms, ones not charted on the official maps. "The Stolen Child" commences with a description of "Where dips the rocky highland/Of Sleuth Wood in the lake" (l.1-2), emphasizing that this setting is not someplace nearby or easily accessible, but separate, different, a space where one can become lost, beyond the limits of established law and civilization. "Río Grande" likewise launches with Burgos's desire to "let my soul lose itself in your rivulets"[112] (l. 2), and thereby also be lost from imperial jurisdiction. Burgos' imagination also apparently populated her Río Grande with similarly supernatural beings; one anecdote from Burgos' childhood records: "Young Julia wanted to put the body of one of her dead siblings on a raft with flowers and float it down the river where the water spirits would welcome the body, a ritual far more beautiful than sticking the body of the child in the ground, according to Julia" (Agüeros xi). For Burgos, interring a body keeps it imprisoned within grounds governed by

[112] "deja que mi alma se pierda en tus riachuelos".

empire, while entrusting a lost child to "the water spirits" liberates and preserves the child inside a Romantic space. Though no water spirits openly inhabit the poem itself, their same atmosphere of magic and Romance, amidst a wilderness that can speak and converse and behave with extra-human agency, permeates the text.

The water spirits of both the Río Grande and County Sligo appear to function as preservers and guardians of colonized children, and are common archetypes in both Irish and Puerto Rican folklore. In Ireland, Kathleen A. Heininge argues that the faeries, or Sidhe as they sometimes referred to in Celtic folklore, are nationalistically Irish in nature. These Sidhe, like the colonized Irish, "have had to find a niche for themselves within a hierarchy of souls that makes no provision for them" (Heininge 103). Like the colonial subject, it is never very clear just how the Sidhe are to be accounted for: "The Sidhe might be the spirits of the dead, or the ancient gods 'in a degraded form,' or 'a folk-memory of a very ancient race of mortals'" (102). Dominant theologies, after failing to eliminate from the island (much like the Celts themselves), instead attempted to appropriate the Sidhe into their own framework: "In Yeats's time, the Christian understanding of this tradition was that so many angels chose to leave heaven with Lucifer that God was in danger of being left alone." That is, there is a theme of rebellion and revolt associated with these Sidhe, again like the Irish; "[God] therefore ordered the gates of heaven and hell to be shut simultaneously. Those who had already fallen as far as hell became devils; those who had not fallen at all remained angels; while those who were caught in between became fairies" (102). These faeries then, like the Irish, occupy a sort of constant purgatorial condition, neither completely independent nor completely subjugated, denied an official voice or clear paths towards self-determination (which, we may here note, is a fairly good description of Puerto Rico's present political status as well). As fellow fallen rebels, ones oft stereotyped as

malevolent, shifty tricksters to be similarly shunned, the secretive Sidhe for Yeats become natural allies to the Irish against the English. They hide in "the waters and the wilds," in magical Romantic spaces that the English do not acknowledge as possible and therefore cannot access.

The trope of faeries stealing away children for their own good makes appearances in Burgos' Puerto Rico, as well. Ecocritic Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert records an old colonial Puerto Rican legend wherein:

> ...a child had been lost in the woods, "which in that part of the island are most dense and frightfully steep," and when found reported "that a woman had given her to eat during all that time, pampering and caressing her like a mother, whom we understood to be Our Lady of Montserat, to whom her father was devoted." (Paravisini-Gebert 104)

Much like the Irish Sidhe, this Puerto Rican legend is appropriated and transmutes into a Catholic tale of faith, yet the basic pieces remain the same: a child is led away by some mysterious, supernatural entity into a wild, uncolonized forest, where the child is protected and cared for. Both the Irish Celts and the native Taínos read in the forest not just a potential avenue of escape, but as a conscious entity capable of actively interceding on their behalf; for Yeats, this consciousness is personified by the faeries, while for Burgos it is expressed in her personification of the river itself. Indeed, in "Río Grande de Loíza," the river itself becomes an actanct imbued with its own power and agency to behave in just such an anti-imperial manner.

Of the term "actant," ecocritic Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter* explains: "The term is Bruno Latour's: an actant is a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can *do* things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events" (67). This is not to claim some sort of mystical, metaphysical quality

within the "wild" that behaves with what we might term a "human" type consciousness (as though no other type were possible); rather, actants such as "nature," ecosystems, landscapes, plants, rocks, "the waters and the wild," and other nonhuman agents are alive, ever moving, ever changing, ever flowing, chemically reacting and able to "produce effects, alter the course of events." The symbol of the faery in "The Stolen Child" and the river itself in "Río Grande" literalizes the "waters and the wilds" as an actanct, one imbued with a power to move, in its own way, alongside the colonized against the colonizer, as surely as the global ecosystem is already reacting against human over-industrialization in its escalating droughts and superstorms. The "waters and the wilds" on both islands thus become living forces imbued with agency.

This conception of an actant wild identifies Ireland far closer to Puerto Rico than to the Romantics of neighboring England. Paravisini-Gebert makes a similar distinction between Caribbean and English Romantics: "unlike the white settler culture of nature writing, Caribbean writers refuse to depict the natural world in terms that erase the relationship between landscape and power" (Paravisini-Gebert 100). Yeats likewise refuses to erase "the relationship between landscape and power," and sees a wild land as integral to a liberated land. Part of each poets' Romantic projects, then, is to "re-naturalize" their respective islands, to render them "wild" once more. They therefore do not differentiate between reclamation of wilderness and reclamation of national sovereignty from colonial powers. As Paravisini-Gebert explains, such was the comparable project of many Caribbean writers, who, like Yeats with his return to the faeries of Irish mythology,

> return...to old notions of the forest as the mysterious environment for...spirits...this "naturalization" was in the service of identifying the developing national character with notions of the indigenous or autochthonous in which the "primeval" forest stands for a

> precolonial space of "national" authenticity...The importance of the forests in the discourse of national and cultural formation in the Caribbean is most clearly seen in the twentieth century, as the islands begin to articulate the parameters of their postindependence identities. (Paravisini-Gebert 109)

Swap out the word "Caribbean" for "Ireland" in this passage, and all the same could be said of Yeats's "The Stolen Child": in the both Sleuth Wood and the Río Grande, spirits are invoked "in the service of identifying the developing national character...in which the 'primeval' forest stands for a precolonial space of 'national' authenticity." As such, the "wild" can serve as both a symbolic space and a very *literal* space for formulating a new, anti-colonial, independent national identity—and conversely, the loss of such wilderness can signify the loss of such nationalistic potential. "As treeless as Portugal we'll be soon" (*Ulysses* 326) complains a home ruler in *Ulysses*, who later in the same conversation warns that "there would soon be as few Irish in Ireland as red-skins in America" (*Ulysses* 329), drawing an explicit link between the preservation of wilderness and of indigenous population as necessary towards any sort of proto-nationalistic formulation. As in nearby Cuba, wherein the wilderness of *el monte* came to represent not only the forest but the sacred space of the African divinities whereby the slave could escape for sanctuary and forge a new national identity,[113] the wilderness in Puerto Rico and Ireland becomes a place of both escape and nationalistic self-determination. Paravisini-Gebert explicitly identifies such natural spaces as Romantic:

> Throughout the nineteenth century, the idealization of the diminishing forest environment [we might here add the diminishing common-lands of Ireland to British Enclosure] in the

[113] As in Miguel Barnet's *Biografía de un cimarrón*.

> emerging literatures of the Caribbean responds to Romantic sensibilities and the adaptation of European models that turned the forests into highly symbolic spaces. Romanticism was linked—especially in Haiti and the Hispanic Caribbean—to processes of national definition in islands that had already gained their independence in the early nineteenth century and were, literally, postcolonial...or were engaged in protracted ideological battles against continued colonial control and functioned as pre-independent political spaces (such as Cuba and Puerto Rico). In the literatures of these islands, the celebration of the forests as significant national spaces acknowledges their symbolic role in preserving the integrity of the nation (or proto-nation), a role based on an acknowledgment of scientific notions of climate change and land preservation. (Paravisini-Gebert 108-109)

Again, what is said here of Puerto Rico can be said of Ireland as well, that the preservation of the forest specifically as a wild, uncultivated space, unclaimed and unclaimable by empire, is both symbolically and quite literally a preservation of a proto-national independent political space. These poets then, rather than "burden" their own image onto the wild (as Yeats accused of Wordsworth), instead *join with* the wild: "I was yours a thousand times"[114] (l. 21) declares Burgos to the Río Grande de Loiza, electing to give herself to the wild rather than colonize it with her own image and cares. The wilds in turn reciprocate by providing children escape from the "world more full of weeping than you can understand."

Strikingly, the wilds of both Sleuth Wood's lake and the Río Grande are supposed to provide these children with sanctuary from unending tears specifically. Yeats's faeries warn the

[114] "fui tuya mil veces".

child of a "world more full of weeping than you can understand" (l. 12), while Burgos calls the greatest of her island's tears "those that come from my eyes/of my soul for my enslaved people"[115] (l. 43-44). These Romantic spaces serve as refuges from the silenced cries of the subjugated. Yet interestingly, both these watery refuges from the world's weeping are *themselves* filled with tears: in "The Stolen Child," the "wandering water" (l. 28) and "young streams" (l. 37) are places where the "ferns…drop their tears" (l. 36), while Burgos' Río Grande is explicitly called "Great flood of tears/The greatest of all our island's tears"[116] (l. 41-42). These twin refuges *from* tears are also filled *with* tears because the protesting tears of the subjugated are excluded from the dominant discourse that will suffer no such castigation. But here in these separated Romantic spaces, the colonized are free to give their weeping full expression, safe from reprisal. These Romantic spaces, then, are not only refuges from, but also censures against, the dominant imperial apparatus.

The fact that these poems focus upon "the waters" as sites of escape—and not land-masses—is likewise significant. Vanessa Pérez-Rosario argues in *Becoming Julia de Burgos* that Burgos' poetry was an attempt to progress beyond the jíbaro poetic movement of Puerto Rico that immediately antedated her; said movement idealized the landed farm life of rural Puerto Rican peasants, and was vital towards the formation of a Puerto Rican nationalist and anti-U.S.-imperialist character. However, Pérez-Rosario makes the provocative argument that the jíbaros were also often paternalistic, Eurocentric (with its focus upon Spain as the honored "motherland"), and inadvertently conservative. Moreover, the jíbaros' focus upon land resulted, argues Lopez Rosario, in a largely static nationalistic formulation. Burgos's privileging of

[115] "el que de mí se sale/por los ojos del alma para mi esclavo pueblo".
[116] "Llanto grande/El más grande de todos nuestros llantos isleños".

waters over land, argues Lopez Rosario, is an attempt to progress beyond jíbaros nationalistic ideations, to formulate a more fluid and radical identity that could flow in, around, and through imperial jurisdiction. As Lopez Rosario argues: "With her imagery of waterways, routes, and pathways, Burgos creates a dynamic subject that could not be fixed or contained, placing her among the historical *vanguardias*. She attempts to create escape routes as a liberatory strategy" (3). For Burgos, the waters in and around Puerto Rico—rivers, lakes, and oceans—with their opaque depths and ever shifting tides, levels, and currents, resist rigid imperial mapping much more effectively than land, and thus provide a more susceptible space for preserving Romantic possibilities.

Like Yeats who sets his poem on the lake of Sleuth Wood, "Burgos focuses on the river, using it to create a nomadic subject that, like water, cannot be contained" (Lopez Rosario 18). She less attempts to establish a new identity by means of fluidity than to establish fluidity *as* her identity. As Ivette López similarly argues, Burgos' poetic project "is the construction of a space wherein distance is a fundamental co-ordinance…Her poetry is also a transit from one world to another, a flow that represents a confluence of the river/ocean metaphors"[117] (207). Burgos personifies the river because the river personifies *her*—or at least, the part of her that cannot be contained or colonized. López claims of her poetry: "In this context, the ocean is a part of an extensive homeland"[118] (208). For Burgos, the surest way to claim a new homeland is to keep it flowing, hidden in the waters, where it can never be pinned down or contained. This is a homeland that can spread beyond the strict physical and political boundaries of the island itself

[117] "Parte de esa búsqueda es la construcción de un espacio en el que la distancia es coordenada fundamental. No olvidemos que Burgos es una escritora en tránsito de una isla a otra, que recala finalmente en Manhattan. Su poesía es también ese transitar de un mundo a otro, fluir que se representa en la confluencia de las metáforas río/mar." Ivette López's essay is currently only available in Spanish; these translations are my own.
[118] "En ese contexto el mar es parte de la patria dilatada." Again, the translation is my own.

to seep across the seas into other lands, including those of the colonizer itself, as demonstrated by the significant Puerto Rican communities in New York, New England, and Florida. These same waters flow out across the sea to touch upon Ireland as well, as this same impulse towards flowing waters likewise undergirds Yeats's "The Stolen Child."

For when Yeats's poem was anthologized in 1888's *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland,* Yeats had already amended the chorus to read "Come away oh human child/To the *woods* and waters wild" (emphasis added). This addition of "woods" is a brief retreat away from the waters, as he tries to keep the poem's anti-imperialism grounded upon the land (much like the *jíbaros* of Puerto Rico). Given Yeats's family history as a member of the landed gentry, it perhaps makes sense for Yeats to feel an impulse towards stable land as the future of Ireland. However, this lapse is short-lived, as he appears to have swiftly intuited that liberated identities cannot be based upon the fixed and static, but upon fluidity. As Margaret Mills Harper argues, Yeats's "need or longing is neither for erasure nor exposure, but for change" (66), and few things change as persistently as ever-flowing waters. Hence, when the poem was included in his first collection, 1889's *Wanderings of Oison*, he had returned to the wording to "the waters and the wild," shifting the emphasis back towards the waters that, like Burgos' river, cannot be contained, wherein unknown Romantic possibilities can still flow, hidden, dreamlike.

Dreams are also an important structural feature within both poems' Romantic spaces. The "slumbering trout" (l. 32) of Sleuth Wood's lake receive "unquiet dreams" (l. 34) from the faeries, "While the world is full of troubles/and is anxious in its sleep" (ll. 22-23). Likewise, Burgos pleads with the river to "confuse yourself in the flight of my bird fantasy/And leave a

rose of water in my dreams"[119] (l. 10-11), calling the Río Grande "a river in the poem of my first dreams"[120] (l. 18). This dream infatuation is consistent with these poets' respective Romantic projects, for dreams structurally function as a series of disconnected "and thens;" that is, the Romantic structure of dreams ironically imitates real life much more faithfully than "the illusion of logic" utilized by conservative Realist forms. Dreams follow the logic of Romance, so it is in the dreamlike qualities of the Río Grande and Sleuth Wood's lake that mark them as separated Romantic spaces. Now, one might here object that these dream-like descriptions are overly-romanticized renderings of rivers and lakes, except that romanticizing is the whole point. These places must appear so dreamlike, and hence unreal, so that these places are not commandeered by the official reality these poets find so intolerable in the first place.

For these spaces are dreamscapes *and* verifiably real places. There is in fact a Río Grande de Loíza where Burgos played as a young girl, that runs through El Yunque National Park and municipal Carolina, and drains into the Atlantic along the northeast shores of Puerto Rico; there is in fact a Sleuth Wood with a "lake" (Lough Gill) and "leafy island" (Isle of Innisfree) in County Sligo, Ireland that Yeats explored as a small boy. Romance for these two poets does not invent imaginary fantasy spaces, but rather *reclaims* real places from the colonizer; Sleuth Wood was part of the British Empire, and the Río Grande was part of the Spanish and then U.S. empires, but in the Romances of Yeats and Burgos, these places are separated into an imaginary realm and thus liberated. This nostalgic romanticizing for childhood haunts is itself an urge toward political liberation. Such, in fact, was Sa'id's own reassessment of Yeats's early work, which according to Stephen Regan, "encourages us to think again about

[119] "confúndete en el vuelo de mi ave fantasia/y déjame una rosa de agua en mis ensueños"
[120] "un río en el poema de mis primeros sueños"

the function of the imagination in relation to geography and to reconceptualise homesickness and nostalgia as political desire" (Regan 90-91). These nostalgic yearnings are gestures towards recovering a stolen homeland.

Both poems likewise utilize vocabularies of theft to implicitly foreground and oppose the colonizer's own theft of their land. Right from the first stanza of Yeats's "Stolen Child," the faeries confess to hiding the "reddest stolen cherries" (l. 8). These faeries' thievery—of the cherries, of the child—is necessary in order to steal *back* what was first robbed them. Foreign occupation had long since enclosed and commandeered the best land and resources of Ireland (the effects of which had its extreme expression in the Potato Famine), County Sligo included, so the faeries could only respond in kind. Burgos, similarly, seeks to "hide you [the river] from the world and hide yourself in yourself"[121] (l. 7), so as to ensure that her river, like the faeries' lake, remains a separate space from a thieving world, a refuge from empire. The outside world, declares Burgos to the river, "robbed you as a child" (l. 3)—as the wilderness that flanks the river was razed over to make way for slave plantations, and the river itself irrigated to support this exploitative system—but the "world," according to Burgos, will rob the river no more now that the river has been reclaimed into this other-worldly Romantic space.

Yeats and Burgos' turn towards the wilds is escapist in the literal sense, for they are attempting to escape the intolerability of the state, not ingratiate themselves into it. Rather than convince Plato to allow them into the Republic, so to speak, they have elected Plato's exile. As David Ben-Merre insightfully notes of "The Stolen Child":

[121] "esconderte del mundo y en ti mismo esconderte"

> Yeats's poem…ironically, turns Plato's philosophy/poetry binary around as a matter of ethical ontology: is it more desirable to maintain a poetics of understanding or one of escape? "The Stolen Child" in turn, asks the reader to make a similar choice: whether to live within the republic's walls of understanding or escape to the magical world "outside." (Ben-Merre 96)

Plato we remember had famously banned the poet from his walls, since "he arouses, nourishes, and strengthens this [irrational] part of the soul and so destroys the rational one." Western writers and philosophers throughout the centuries have long agitated in favor of the poets' inclusion. Yet Plato's emphasis upon the "rationale" smacks of Frye's Realism, which demands a "logic of causality," a "hence" narrative that justifies and legitimizes power. Now, it hardly need be repeated that Plato's ideal Republic is in effect a totalitarian police state, run rampant with censorship and thought control. Yeats and Burgos already have far too much experience with such governments. The poets' magical imagination, which for Plato a sign of weakness, is for Yeats and Burgos a source of strength, and a strategy of resistance; Plato declares they must leave, Yeats and Burgos solemnly agree—and they are taking their homelands with them. Like the Taínos who turned to the wilderness to escape the imperialism of European colonizers—as well as the Irish refugees who first fled to Puerto Rico to escape indentured servitude—Yeats and Burgos turn towards the wilds as a form of resistance. Plato had banished the dreamers from his Republic; Yeats and Burgos prefer to join the dreamers in exile, where the dream of Romance is still possible.

Another element of this wilderness impulse among both Yeats and Burgos is their desire to preserve the *beauty* of Sleuth Wood and the Río Grande. Charles Dickens for example made a career of illustrating the grotesquely unhealthy environment, both physically and spiritually,

produced by Industrial Revolution England, particularly upon the poor and the exploited. A beautiful natural environment is worth preserving for its own sake, in no small part because natural beauty is also indicative of a life-sustaining locale fit for healthy human habitation. Thus, Yeats and Burgos spend portions of their respective poems simply dwelling upon the sheer *beauty* of Sleuth Wood and Río Grande. It is perhaps worth considering that part of what renders Yeats's and Burgos' poetry so enduringly popular in their respective traditions is just how strikingly *beautiful* their verse is; and what's more, that this beauty is not secondary to their politics, but rather is integral to their larger anti-colonial project. That is, beauty is not just a strategy by which to shoehorn their political agenda, but is in fact a declaration of allegiance with the beautiful and the life-preserving against the ugly, industrial, colonizing, and destructive.

Or at least Yeats believed whilst still an idealistic young man. By middle age, Yeats's belief in the efficacy of poetry, beauty, and Romance hardly extended beyond wishful thinking anymore. W.H. Auden in his elegy to Yeats wrote that "poetry makes nothing happen," but Yeats already knew that. In his youth Yeats "had absorbed…the idea of the imminence of a new epoch…inaugurated with revolutionary violence and war" (Beaumont 219), of an event ushered in by the sheer power of his poetic imagination, sincerely believing that "We...must never forget that whatever we build in the imagination will accomplish itself in the circumstances of our lives" (Foster 225). However by 1913, his youthful idealism had noticeably given way to middle-aged cynicism. In his poem "September 1913," Yeats declares repeatedly, in a sort of weary mantra, that "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone/it is with O'Leary in his grave" (Yeats 108). Whereas before he believed in the inevitability of the coming revolution, he now complains bitterly: "What was the use of talking about some new revolution putting all things right, when the change must come, if come it did, with astronomical slowness, like the cooling of

the sun, or it may have been like the drying of the moon?" (Beaumont 222). By 1913, Yeats yearned for "Romantic Ireland" only with the conviction that it could not return. And why would it? Ireland was then under the jurisdiction of a global imperial power (the largest history had ever recorded), one administered by a socially-conservative realist narrative, one that excluded the very possibility of any destabilizing "and then" event that could disrupt his society's then-present matrix. Yeats' allegiance to Romance in 1913 was a self-conscious allegiance to futility. In the poem, he laments that "men were born to pray and save," and nothing else; and so they prayed and saved and nothing more, going through these same old pre-programmed motions as predictably as "the wild geese spread/The grey wing upon every tide," every time, without variation, just as surely as his island would remain colonized (Yeats 108). Without Romance, Ireland for Yeats is dead.

Which is why the Easter Uprising comes as such as a surprise to him; it was something new, an absolute event, an "and then" that came out of nowhere to disrupt the "utterly expected, programmed, anticipated, prescribed and modeled," and changed all, "changed utterly" (l. 15). It was an armed rebellion held at the height of World War I to enforce the terms of the 1914 Home Rule Act that had been indefinitely postponed by English Parliament with the outbreak of war. Initially the Uprising was a resounding failure—in fact, some argue it was an *intentional* failure; Amy Stock claimed that "The men who made the rising did so with the clear expectation of defeat'" (Perloff 348) in some overly romanticized Christ-like sacrifice—with the added wrinkle that the sacrifice here actually *worked.*

In short order, the Uprising launched Ireland into a storm of political change and civil war that would result in not only autonomous home rule in 1922, but in the secession of the majority of Ireland from the UK in 1937, ending seven centuries of English rule. Unlike every

other failed revolt before, Easter 1916 "changed all, changed utterly." As R.F. Foster notes, "The contempt WBY had expressed in 'September 1913' rang hollowly now. The 'romantic Ireland' of O'Leary's sacrificial nationalism had returned from the grave" (49). Only three years earlier, "Romantic Ireland [was] dead and gone," but now Romantic Ireland had returned from the grave, an event accomplished by the sacrificial executions of poet-rebels raised on *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and early Yeats; and this uprising could not have been more astounding to Yeats than if an actual dead body had risen from the tomb. A.V.C. Schmidt comments of the poem, "'Easter 1916' bears on its surface the shocked expression of a man who has been shot and doesn't know if he is dead or alive" (328); but it is not just whether Yeats himself is dead or alive, but whether Romance is—and what is most frightening to Yeats is not so much that he might now be dead, but that he might instead be *alive!* This Romantic resurrection of course occurs on Easter; as Ó'Hare notes:

> It is no accident that it was on *Christmas Day* of 1915 that the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood chose *Easter* as the day…Ireland, after all, had endured the great Calvary of the potato blight and the subsequent starvation, so surely Ireland would now be ready for resurrection. (Ó'Hare 97) (emphasis in the original)

For Easter is the holy day that commemorates the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ, an event that rendered even the ancient Apostles "terrified and affrighted" (Luke 24:37 KJV). In Yeats's mind, the Easter uprising is an event as incredible and terrifying as the first Easter. "Easter 1916" expresses Yeats's surprise, his wonderment, his ambivalence, and to some extent his terror, that Romance actually *worked*.

In fact, Yeats spends the majority of "Easter 1916" simply illustrating how unexpected and surprising the revolt was. As self-anointed national bard, Yeats's role had been "The

displacement of political anger into cultural expression" as "a central tenet of [Irish] bardic nationalism from its beginning" (11), as Trumpener formulates it; but now, to Yeats's consternation, the roles have switched, the flows have been reversed, as now Yeats must examine how cultural expression has now instead displaced into political anger. Rather than detailing events, Yeats instead observes how profoundly they surprised him; he confesses of the rebels in his midst, "I have passed with a nod of the head/or polite meaningless words…being certain that they and I/But lived where motley is worn" (l. 5-14). But why would he suspect otherwise? In the endless monotony of Realism, the speaker is certain that nothing more than un-romantic "motley" could perpetuate. For Yeats in pre-uprising Ireland, everyone dutifully performs their programmed roles in this "casual comedy": he catalogs how "This woman's days were spent/In ignorant goodwill" (l. 17-18), while "This other man I had dreamed/A drunken, vainglorious lout" (l. 31-32). Everyone played the part this "casual comedy" demanded, and whether these parts called for being of "ignorant goodwill" or inversely "drunken, vainglorious," mattered less than the fulfillment of their assigned roles. But in the Romance of the Easter Uprising, anything can happen—the utterly programmed can become "changed utterly," so that even this lout "has resigned his part/In the casual comedy/He, too, has been changed in his turn" (l. 36-38). The assigned parts have been abandoned, the script thrown out, the actors have left their roles and exited the stage, because something *real* has happened. The formulaic comedy has suddenly transformed, not just into a tragedy, but a Romance.

The poem's diction itself highlights this shift; as Kahn notes, "The thematic contrast is reflected in the difference between 'vivid faces' and 'grey...houses', 'close of day' and 'fire at the club,' 'mocking tale or a gibe' and 'To please,' 'motley' and 'terrible beauty'" (50). All throughout this text, a "motley" thing is paired together with a Romantic one. Though the

Uprising was initially only seen (in the words of Ezra Pound) as "merely as something to 'give that country another set of anecdotes to keep it going another hundred years'…Out of fury at the government's ineptness, a slow recognition began to stir: that what had happened might be…'the beginning of Ireland'" (Foster 50). It is that "slow recognition" that is the focus of the poem, not the particulars of the absolute event. For Yeats, *what* happened matters less to him than the fact *that something* it happened. This is "a Romanticism not consoling and formally traditional, as it has too often been described, but inherently transgressive" (Rothenberg and Robinson 2), as the "motley" and the expected have been radically disrupted. Yeats implicitly confesses how much larger the Uprising is than his poetic ability to contain it by refusing to recount the events in the content of the poem, as would have been his bardic prerogative. Hence, though the poem in its rhymed-quatrains has both the form and the traditional theme of a bardic poem marking great events, it purposefully lacks the content of a bardic work. As C.D. Blanton argues in *Epic Negation*, this Modernist style of "negation marks a concrete formal problem, a synchronic resolution by which a text strains to evince a field of reference that it cannot name, to which it does not *apparently* refer at all" (10-11). Beyond the vague moniker of "A terrible beauty" and a general allusion to "England may yet keep faith," Yeats's poem likewise strains to evince a field of reference for an event that no mere words of his can properly negotiate, so he calls attention to their frightening portentousness by hardly referring to them at all. Note that, outside a rollcall of the executed leaders in the final stanza, Yeats in "Easter 1916" goes into almost no detail concerning the actual events of the Easter Uprising. "MacDonagh and MacBride/And Connolly and Pearse...are changed, changed utterly" (ll. 75-76, 79-80) is all the depth of detail that Yeats gets into (and their "changed utterly" could not be more macabre, as they literally and irreversibly change from living to dead). Foster and Kiberd argue that these

figures are foregrounded in this poem all throughout: the "woman at while" is Constance Markievic, the "This man had managed a school" is Patrick Pearse, "This other his helper and friend" is Thomas MacDonagh, and the "drunken vainglorious lout" is John MacBride; yet the genius of the poem is that one need not limit its characters to the executed, for the revolutionaries have transcended their limited roles to become potentially *everyone* in this Romance. Not just they, but *we* are the ones who have now resigned our parts in this casual comedy. All are changed, changed utterly.

Instead of a comedy, "A terrible beauty is born" (l. 15-16). The beauty is "terrible" not just because of its awful and bloody violence, but because it was so unexpected—if such a sudden "and then" as the Easter Uprising can occur, then *any*thing can. The dreamlike logic of Romance took these figures with a vengeance, for "We know their dream; enough/to know they dreamed and are dead" (ll. 70-71). They were "bewildered" (l. 41) to death—bewildering being a word that, as Harper notes, shares the same root as "wild" (Harper 64). The "wilds" have been unleashed themselves at last upon the colonizers. A Romance has occurred, a "stone/to trouble the living stream" (l. 44). As Camel Jordan argues of this stone troubling the stream, "The stone appears to represent Ireland herself" (36), for "All the kings of Ireland, both pagan and Christian, were crowned upon this inauguration stone and their destiny was tied in with the magical powers of the stone" (37); that is, ancient, mythologized, Romantic Ireland, formerly dead and gone, is what has risen to trouble the living stream in its decreed, controlled channels (for waters will not be contained), to shatter Realism's "illusion of logic and causality."

Yeats found that Romance, now that it was alive and up close, to be just as threatening to him as it was to anyone. By contrast, thirty years earlier when he first published "The Stolen Child," Yeats had merely hoped Romance would interrupt the dull, unending narrative of the

domestic and quotidian, "the lowing/Of the calves on the warm hillside/Or the kettle on the hob.../Or see the brown mice bob/Round and round the oatmeal chest" (l. 44-49). Partly this was a function of Yeats unsure as to what Romantic Ireland would even look like: as Sa'id argues, "Like all the poets of decolonization Yeats struggles to announce the contours of an 'imagined' or ideal community" (18). Hence, when an actual Romance *did* occur, it did far more than just disrupt the domestic; following the Easter Uprising, all of Ireland was carried away in a current of turbulent political turmoil that continued through the end of the century, as surely as the stolen child was, only far more dramatically and violently than the faeries ever aspired to. The Easter Uprising exceeded all of Yeats's Romantic enterprises.

I suspect that such an event would not have exceeded those of Burgos; her political stances, particularly in relation towards the Puerto Rican independence movement, did certainly become more complex and ambivalent as she grew older. But then, perhaps to compensate for her own ambivalences or shortcomings, it is her later poems that become the most explicitly polemical; and if these are any indication, she probably would not have stood in terrified awe at the "terrible beauty," but cathartically celebrated it. She even has a prototypical occasional poem that provides us with a model of how she might have reacted; for just as Yeats memorialized the Easter Uprising in verse, so too did Burgos the 1868 Lares Uprising (known as "*el grito de Lares*"—the Lares shout) in her late-period Spanish poem, "23 de septiembre." She even deploys a similar Easter vocabulary of resurrection and rebirth to describe it: she writes, "alive in all *the dead alive* and untiring/that each day are *reborn* in *sacred* protests[122]" (l. 17-18; emphasis added), as though the dead had resurrected to life. In fact, she repeats the word "alive" no less than fifteen times in this forty-three-line poem. The line "*alive* in the new man"[123] (l. 9) perhaps

[122] "vivo en todos *los muertos vivos* e inagotables/que cada día *renacen* en *sagradas* protestas"
[123] "vivo en el hombre nuevo".

refers not just to the Bolshevik or Millennial new *kind* of man (as her incessant Marxist vocabulary might suggest), but of one literally dead, reanimated, newly returned to life. Again, like Yeats, what matters to her is less *what* is happening than the fact *that something is* happening. Harris Feinsod notes that this poem was cited specifically by the FBI in their dossier on Burgos (they used it as evidence against her receiving a government civil service job in Washington D.C.), classifying it as a "eulogy" for her contemporary Pedro Albizu Campos, who significantly was influenced by the Irish Republican Movement during his time at Harvard, applying the same model towards Puerto Rican independence. Albizu Campos, then-recently imprisoned for his Puerto Rican independentista activities, carries on in her poem the spirit of the *grito de Lares* into modern times. But Feinsod corrects the FBI's reading of the poem, noting that:

> It calls itself a song, not a eulogy, and rather than dedicate itself to the memory of Albizu Campos, it speaks to him in a repetitive apostrophic address. Instead of commemorating his carceral absence, it insists, through the sonorous compilation of epithets, on the presence he registers withal. (Feinsod 109)

Like Yeats's poetry, hers is "a song," an oral performance part of the nationalistic bardic tradition that Burgos situates herself within. Her poem is not an observance of the dead *a la* "September 1913," but rather a celebration of the living, who against all possibility have resurrected to bring about the same millennial judgment that Yeats in his youth believed was imminent upon the world.

Like Yeats and the Easter rebels (who so influenced Albizu Campos), she renders Christian martyrs out of Puerto Rican militants: "in the five infinite sepulchers of life/which like

pikestaffs rise from the breast of Río Piedras[124]" (l. 21-22). She runs through a similar martyred roll-call as Yeats, writing of "the sublime battle cries of Feliú and Suárez Díaz…in the unburied blood of Beauchamp and Rosado…alive in Albizu Campos, solitary among suns/who walks from himself to the world that awaits him/23rd of September, holy and forever alive"[125]" (l. 19-41). Also like Yeats, she classifies the blood they sacrificed as sacral and redemptive; she refers to them as "all the *sacred martyred* bodies/who fell calling and kissing a star"[126] (l. 27-28; emphasis added). The star imagery is especially significant, as the morning star is another ancient Christian symbol for Christ, who is "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16 KJV) in the apocalyptic book of Revelations. That is, the Lares Uprising has a note of Christian redemption associated with it, and becomes a sort of Second Coming that does not (as in Yeats's poem of the same name) "slouch towards Bethlehem" as "mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (Yeats 187), but instead brings with it a righteous judgment upon the wicked and a deliverance of the Earth to the oppressed. In contrast to "Easter 1916," the focus is less on what *happened*, past tense, than on what *is happening*, present tense; less on the initial *birth* of the Romance ("a terrible beauty is *born*") than on the fact that the birthed Romance is now alive and kicking ("holy and forever *alive*"—"santo y por siempre *vivo*").

However, there is in reality no true equivalent Burgos poem to "Easter 1916," for the simple fact that "23 de septiembre" does not memorialize any contemporaneous absolute event, but a failed uprising from 1868, an occurrence as influential yet ultimately irrelevant to her as

[124] "en los cinco sepulcros infinitos de vida/que cual astas se eleven del pecho Río Piedras".
[125] "los gritos sublimes de Feliú y Suárez Diaz…en la sangre sin tumbas de Beauchamp y Rosada…vivo en Albizu Campos, solitario entre soles/que desde sí camina al mundo que lo espera/23 de septiembre, santo y por siempre vivo".
[126] "todos los *sagrados martirizados* cuerpos/que cayeron llamando y besando a una estrella".

was the failed Fennian Revolt of 1867 to Yeats. Albizu Campos advocated armed revolt against the U.S., but was arrested and imprisoned before anything remotely similar in scope to the Easter Uprising could start. And as Burgos' own sad biography attests, she had likewise become as disillusioned and jaded as Yeats as she aged, as evidence by her even seeking a job in Washington in the first place, as well as her death at age 39 in Spanish Harlem (11 years younger than when Yeats finally wrote "Easter 1916"). Her poetry appears to become all the more explicitly political as she was denied an outlet (and perhaps becomes cynical about the possibility of an outlet) in all other facets of her life. Yet if "Easter 1916" lacks a true equivalent in Burgos' oeuvre, its "terrible beauty" is still anticipated in her self-same "Río Grande de Loíza," which youthful debut eagerly awaits what elderly Yeats is reeling from in "Easter 1916." For even "The Stolen Child" did not foresee the full ramifications of the "terrible beauty"—the stolen child's lake puts one to sleep, what with its "drowsy water-rats" (l. 5) and "slumbering trout" (l. 32); Burgos' Río Grande, by contrast, wakes one up: "in a beautiful romance/you awoke my soul and kissed my body"[127] (l. 22). The Río Grande awoke her specifically because it was a "romance," an "and then" that surprised her. She writes that, "Life surprised me"[128] (l. 19) for as Frye notes, it is not life but only imagination that is "rigidly conventionalized" (36); life itself is what parallels Romance's series of "and thens" that surprise and astonish, like the "astonished voices in the mouth of the wind[129]" (l. 8). Unlike the bardic Yeats who is disconcerted by the Easter Uprising precisely because he is no longer removed from it from a safe bardic distance, Burgos embraces "[t]he radical version and view of Romanticism—often politically as well as poetically radical," that "rejects the idea that poetry stands at a nostalgic

[127] "en un bello romance/me despertaste el alma y me besaste el cuerpo".
[128] "Me sorprendió la vida".
[129] "voces de asombro en la boca del viento".

remove from experience and event" (Rothenberg and Robinson 5). She will not stand at a disconcerted remove from the Romance, but will have herself be swept away in it.

Burgos declares, "My pale desires come down your craggy hills/To find new furrows" (l. 15-16), establishing a theme of renovation, refreshment, and rejuvenation of the "pale" and the "craggy"—as surely as the Easter Uprising renovated the "motley" and the "grey"—through this beautiful romance that leaves behind the status quo to "find new furrows."[130] Through this Romantic unpredictability, Burgos seeks to resurrect Romantic Puerto Rico: "Who knows" she twice asks in this poem, opening up fresh possibilities for the inconceivable, the absolute event. Each of these "who knows" is made in connection to some "far Mediterranean shore" and "far land" (l. 25-27), distant locales ideal for Romantic adventures and endless possibility, far from the oppressive realism of the colonizer.[131] The Romance not only takes her to new places, but helps to *create* new places as well, seeking not just to "find new furrows" but also "spilling to *open* new furrows" (l. 28; emphasis added). [132] The Romance preserved by the wilds are not only secured there, but spill out beyond its borders to transform the world beyond it, to transform and "change all, change utterly." The "waters and the wilds," in the end, are not only a place of escape for Burgos, but a secret platform from which to launch a new revolution.

Now, one could still possibly make the argument that Burgos got a Romance, of sorts. After years of her fanning the flames of the pro-independence movement, in 1948 a pair of Puerto Rican nationalists became inflamed enough to attempt an assassination of Harry S. Truman. Like the Easter revolutionaries, they failed miserably; they never even got close to the

[130] "contigo se bajaron desde las rudas cuestas/a buscar nuevos surcos, mis pálidos anhelos." "pálido." "la ruda." "buscar nuevos surcos."
[131] "Quién sabe." "remoto país mediterráneo." "tierra lejana."

[132] "buscar nuevos surcos." "derramando para *abrir* surcos nuevos."

U.S. President, and were summarily executed. Yet this foiled plot, far from bringing down violent repercussions upon the island, surprisingly had the inverse effect: it set off a series of events that spurred some modest economic development, greater autonomous home rule for the island, and eventually transforming Puerto Rico by century's end from the weakest to the strongest economy in the Caribbean. Puerto Rico may certainly not be wealthy (the island still has less than half the GDP of Mississippi), and emigration and diaspora are still large problems for remaining population; but they (mostly) no longer starve. Yet one could also still argue that after all those initial (and certainly not inconsequential) gains, the island again stalled out, both politically and economically, in its lurches towards political self-determination.

In fact, Puerto Rico today remains arguably about where Ireland was during Yeats's mid-life. It is an island largely paralyzed, with a lackluster and faltering economy, torn politically between the pro-U.S. Unionists of the PNP party, the autonomous home-rule party of the PPD, and a small and increasingly irrelevant cadre of Independendistas. Puerto Rico's "terrible beauty" was conceived but never born; their "casual comedy" is still in play. Likewise Burgos, rather than dying some revolutionary martyr like Pearse, instead passed away in obscurity in New York in 1953. Her friends would later track down her pauper's grave to give her a proper burial in her native Carolina, Puerto Rico, where there is a monument erected to her honor, and a bridge named for her over the Río Grande de Loíza. Yeats also died abroad (in France) in 1939, and his remains were likewise repatriated and buried discreetly in County Sligo, the land of the stolen child. It is significant that both poets at the time of their deaths had flowed beyond the limits of their national homelands, to inhabit diasporic communities that interconnected and webbed across empire and national boundaries—movements that flowed back as inevitably as they flowed out. Yet at the time of his death, there was little doubt concerning his canonical

status, at least in the Anglosphere. Today, entire shelves in U.S. university libraries are filled with Yeats scholarship and commentary. Burgos by contrast, even in the midst of her current critical resurgence, is scarcely celebrated in the Anglophone world outside of Caribbean studies; when she gets anthologized here, it is typically as a "third world feminist of color"—which, while also important, still problematically elides her status as a national poet. The shelves on Burgos, compared to such other Latin American luminaries as García Márquez, Fuentes, Rulfo or Borges, is slight and easily missed. The "greatest there ever was in Puerto Rico" is still regarded by the U.S. as provincial, when she is remembered at all.

Possibly this canonical oversight is a function of the fact that Puerto Rico, unlike literally every other Latin American country, has never enjoyed real independence. Continued colonization maybe keeps their literature subsumed and subaltern. Perhaps if Puerto Rico ever enjoys, say, a Boricua revival on par with the old Celtic revival, then its own poets will receive their due in the Western literary canon. But then, I suspect that Burgos would be suspicious of a canonization that would defang her politically as it often has Yeats. She may still elect to stay outside of Plato's tyrannical Republic. In the meantime Burgos is left still awaiting Yeats's "terrible beauty," for the impossible Romance, an absolute event that feels no more likely to occur in Puerto Rico 2016 than was the Easter Uprising in 1916. She was the last romantic.

Revenants of the Disinherited: A Conclusion

In 1662, there occurred a curious incident in a small town just outside Belfast that is reputedly the only known case on record wherein a ghost provided acceptable testimony within a British courtroom. Known as "The Apparition of James Haddock to Francis Taverner at Michaelmas" according to an 1823 volume of *Accredited Ghost Stories* by T.M. Jarvis, the details are as follows: a local land-owner named James Haddock had passed away in December of 1657 before he could add his son's name to the lease on his farm. His dying request to his wife was to ensure that his son John Haddock receive his inheritance when he came of age at 21, but she reneged on her agreement, and transferred the farm's lease to her new husband's name when she remarried. Incensed, the ghost of James Haddock began appearing to his former-neighbor Francis Taverner, demanding that he rectify this legal oversight. Taverner was reportedly recalcitrant, not least of all because he knew not who would believe him. Nevertheless, the increasingly threatening ghost continued to haunt him, until he was left with little recourse but to take the matter to court. The trial initially proceeded poorly for unfortunate Taverner. In the words of one chronicler:

> The opposing counsel brow-beated and upbraided Taverner for inventing an absurd and malicious story against his neighbour Davis, and ended by tauntingly desiring him to call his witness. The usher of the court, with a sceptical sneer, called upon James Haddock, and at a third repetition of the name, a clap of thunder shook the courthouse to its foundation; a hand was seen upon the witness-table, and a voice was heard saying:—"Is this enough." Of course the terrified jury exclaimed their complete satisfaction, and gave an immediate verdict in favour of young Haddock. (Pinkerton 332)

The purported apparition of James Haddock turned the tone of the courtroom on its head, from mocking laughter to terror, and drove the jury to instantly find in favor of the plaintiff.[133] There are several interesting elements of this tale, and legal commentators have numerous tongue-in-cheek glosses of the incident. For my purposes, it is worth noting that this curious event occurred not in England, but in Ireland—a nation that has likewise often sought to correct its long disinheritance, and that by means of an alliance between the living and the dead. Indeed, neither the living *nor* the dead could afford to neglect each other—nor have many of the nations of Latin America, either.

The intersections between Ireland and Latin America matter now more than ever, particularly given how this relationship is deployed in the current immigration debates. The specific historical moment that helped produce this project included the 2016 U.K. Brexit vote and U.S. Presidential election, which found anti-immigrant rhetoric dramatically spiked to fever-pitch across the broader Anglosphere, as part of a larger trend of xenophobic resurgences across continental Europe and the Anglosphere. In the United States, much of this xenophobic animus centers upon Latin American immigration specifically (in addition to the Muslim world). U.S. allies of these Hispanic populations have often turned towards the historical Irish immigrant experience as analogous, in an attempt to assuage (or at least deflate) some of these more extreme reactions. For example, in the aftermath of the 2012 U.S. Presidential election, conservative talking-head Bill O'Reilly bemoaned how "The demographics are changing...The white establishment is now the minority," particularly given the "degenerating" predominance of Mexican immigration; which in turn prompted liberal talk show host Jon Stewart to remind

[133] As a postscript, when Taverner ventured to ask James Haddock "Are you happy in your present state?" the ghost replied angrily, "'If…you were not the man you are, I would tear you in pieces, for daring to ask such a question.' It then went off in a flash of fire, and Taverner was relieved from its visits from that time" (Pinkerton 332); only legal mysteries were to be revealed that day.

O'Reilly that his own Irish ancestors were once classified by U.S. nativists as "ill-clad and destitute…repulsive to our habits and our tastes…steeped in ignorance and superstition...criminals and paupers" (*Daily Show*). This exchange was neither the first nor the last time the Irish immigrant experience had been deployed in the rhetoric of immigration reform. In fact, it had already been parodied in a 2011 episode of the James Bond satire *Archer*, in a scene wherein the title character interrogates members of the Irish mafia. The latter lambast their Honduran janitors who turned them in with a sneering: "That's what all those dirty **** care about is, taking American jobs"—to which Archer quips, "Well relax Kennedy, it wasn't all that long ago that everybody hated the Irish, for swarming over here in their potato boats and taking all the jobs," the joke being that even a narcissistic buffoon like Sterling Archer can read the rather obvious historical parallels between Ireland and Latin America ("Placebo Effect"). Within this exchange is the reminder that the exploitation of cheap agricultural labor, as well as white working-class fears of job competition and fluctuating labor markets, have all historically influenced the treatment of Irish and Latin American immigrants alike.

But then again, this pop-cultural awareness of Irish-Latin American parallels is still very Anglo-centric in nature, one that presupposes that Ireland and Latin America are relevant to each other only insofar as they are constellated with the United States. Though the U.S. has often been their target of resistance, they have not been dependent upon the U.S. to forge their intranational relationships. Moreover, such an attitude also presupposes that the history of Ireland and the nations of Latin America is fixed—a known quality—static—over. To quote Faulkner once more, "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (Faulkner 73). Nor is the past concluded. Conclusions are odd, especially for a project like this one; conclusions imply finality, a finished thought, a last word, a completed ending—much like death itself. However, if

there has been one single theme threading throughout this dissertation, it is that death is *not* the end, that nothing is *ever* completed, that there is no final word, that the dead are not silent anymore than history is. Mexico continues to grapple with the long legacy of the 1910 Revolution, of Porfirismo, of the French Intervention, the U.S. invasion, and the whole bloody legacy of European imperialism in the Americas dating back to Cortés and Columbus. Nor has the heavy weight of history lifted from Argentina, which is still grappling with the crushing debt it first contracted with Great Britain in their earliest days of independence, up and clear through the austerity of IMF and World Bank restructuring, and their default during the George W. Bush administration. It is a state of affairs that afflicts many other Latin American countries, as well, including most recently and dramatically Puerto Rico, currently combating Greek levels of debt. Across the pond, the Republic of Ireland's 2008 economic crash, as well as the recent revival of IRA activity in Northern Ireland, serves as a reminder that history remains a nightmare from which the island has only fitfully awakened. Despite Ireland's best efforts to lay their long past to rest, the influence and specters of the Famine, the Enclosure Acts, English settlement, decolonization, and the supremacy of the globalized economic order, all continue to be felt across the island. We narrate not from the comfortable remove of a conclusion, but in the midst of the trenches of the tale, *in media res*. Globally, concerns many of us assumed (even hoped) had at last been laid to rest—of colonialism, open racism, xenophobia—keep returning from the grave. Dark ghosts are returning with a vengeance.

But then, to view all ghosts as intrinsically malevolent, as I discussed in the Introduction, is a peculiarly Anglo-centric affect; for other ghosts are at play here, those of populism, mass resistance, attacks on the pillars of the globalized market economy from both the Left and the Right, the likes of which have not seen in a generation. As China Miéville argues in an essay on

the state of contemporary fantasy fiction, "[with] the advent of the neoliberal *There Is No Alternative*, the universe was an ineluctable, inhuman, implacable, Weird, place," with no place for the dead, nor any other economic system save the current neo-liberal order. But, continues Miéville, "More recently…as Eagleton haunto-illiterately points out, the ghosts have come back, in numbers, with the spectral rebuke that there was an alternative, once, so could be again" (Mi̊éville). With the return of the dead, there is again a revitalization of alternatives to the Thatcherian "There is no alternative." The vast hosts of the dead, as Gabriel Conroy learned one Christmas, are much closer and far more numerous than previously suspected, though it may take another Easter to realize it. The silenced again speak, many Terrible Beauties threaten to resurrect, the revenants return to exact their symbolic debts. Like the ghost of James Haddock, they still seek to recover a stolen inheritance.

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