IRLANDÉS IN THE AMERICAS: IRISH THEMES AND AFFINITIES IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH AMERICAN NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

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Doctoral Committee Advisory Chair: Hortensia Morell

This dissertation examines Irish characters, themes and literary affinities in modern and contemporary Spanish American literature (1944-2011), focusing on novels and short stories by eight authors: *El otro Joyce* by Roberto Ferro, "Dublín al sur" by Isidoro Blaisten, *El sueño del celta* by Mario Vargas Llosa, selections from *Ficciones* by Jorge Luis Borges, *Entre gringos y criollos* and *Quema su memoria* by Eduardo Cormick, selected stories by Viviana O'Connell, *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* by Luis Rafael Sánchez, and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz. As the above list of authors suggests, Irish themes, characters, and intertextualities are present throughout the region's Spanish-language literature, from some of its most celebrated writers like Borges and Vargas Llosa to contemporary authors such as O'Connell and Cormick.

The prologue introduces the historical context of the Irish in Latin America as well as a theoretical framework to support the analyses in subsequent chapters. Each chapter is then dedicated to a different facet of the Irish-Latin American literary connection. Chapter 1 explores the translation of James Joyce into Spanish and the way in which contemporary Argentine writers dialogue with Joyce, problematizing the act of

translation. Chapter 2 focuses on the ambiguous nature of Irish characters in Borges's *Ficciones* and Vargas Llosa's historical fiction *El sueño del celta.* Chapter 3 is dedicated to Latin American writers of direct Irish descendance and their expression of Irishness in the Americas. Finally, Chapter 4 analyzes echoes of Oscar Wilde in Caribbean Latino literature.

The central question is how and why these Irish connections manifest themselves in contemporary Spanish American narrative. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that Irish characters and themes present a broader, more hybrid vision of Latin American identity, recognizing the multiplicity of languages, narratives, and selves.

DEDICATION

For my friend and mentor Betsy Kiddy (1957-2014)

Seu encorajamento e seu espírito sempre estarão comigo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

IRLANDÉS IN THE AMERICAS

This study examines Irish characters, themes and literary affinities in contemporary Spanish American literature (1944-2011), focusing on novels and short stories by eight authors: *El otro Joyce* by Roberto Ferro, "Dublín al sur" by Isidoro Blaisten, *El sueño del celta* by Mario Vargas Llosa, selections from *Ficciones* by Jorge Luis Borges, *Entre gringos y criollos* and *Quema su memoria* by Eduardo Cormick, selected stories by Viviana O´Connell, *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* by Luis Rafael Sánchez, and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz. The intention here is not to carry out a comparative study between Irish and Spanish American literatures, but rather to explore how and why Irishness has served Spanish American narratives.

Part of the recent trend in transatlantic studies, Irish culture in Latin America is beginning to receive attention both in popular culture and in academic circles. Most contributions to Irish Latin American Studies have focused on the histories of Irish migration to the region (Davis 2002, Murray 2006, Fernández 2007), presenting a more diverse picture of Latin America's ethnic heritage. Literary studies have been few, and the majority has focused on English language writers in the Caribbean with ties to Ireland, such as Derek Walcott.[i] However, as the above list of authors suggests, Irish themes, characters, and intertextualities are present throughout the region's Spanish-language literature, from some of its most celebrated writers like Borges and Vargas

[i] The one exception to this scarcity is in studies related to the influence of James Joyce in Spanish American literature, which I will explore shortly in the prologue, and again in Chapter 1.

Llosa to contemporary authors such as O'Connell and Cormick. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how and why these Irish connections manifest themselves in contemporary Spanish American narrative. As we shall see, these manifestations range from direct family ties, such as the writing of Irish Argentines, to literary relationships of correspondence and dialogue between Spanish American and Irish writers such as Joyce, Wilde, and Yeats.

The writers included in this study represent, to a certain extent, the geography of Irish-Latin American connections. The Irish-Argentine axis is one of the strongest, as Argentina has been the locus of strong literary connections to Irish writers (Chapter 1), and is also home to Latin America's largest Irish population (Chapter 3). Peru also received some Irish immigrants, but perhaps its most famous connection to Ireland is Irish patriot Roger Casement, whose journey through the Peruvian Amazon was recently fictionalized in Mario Vargas Llosa's 2010 novel, *El sueño del celta* (Chapter 2). The Caribbean traces its Irish roots to various sources—the colonizing presence of Great Britain in the region, which also brought Irish settlers; the large concentration of *gallegos*, with their ancient Celtic roots; shared Atlantic plantation/Big House cultures; and literary influence, particularly from Oscar Wilde (Chapter 4).

My interest in this topic stems from both my own Irish heritage and my academic interest in Spanish American literature. The 2010 publication of Vargas Llosa's *El sueño del celta* drew more attention to Irish themes in Latin America, although a group of interdisciplinary scholars from Ireland and Argentina had already formed the Society of Irish Latin American Studies several years prior, in 2003. Although this academic interest is fairly recent, historical and literary ties between Ireland and the Hispanic world are far-

reaching. These ties encompass direct relationships of literary dialogue and Spanish American writers of Irish heritage as well as more subtle affinities, such as shared themes of exile, memory and post-colonialism. Irish surnames are scattered across the history books of Latin America, and several prominent national heroes figure among their ranks. Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842), Chilean independence leader; William ("Guillermo") Brown (1777-1857), Argentine Admiral of the Wars for Independence; and Ramón Power y Giralt (1775-1813), of Puerto Rico, who fought for Puerto Rico's equal representation in Spanish Parliament, were all sons of Irish immigrants. These Irish surnames in Latin American independence movements suggest the early presence of the Irish in the region. As Rene Chartrand has pointed out, Irish soldiers known as "Wild Geese" fought for the Spanish (and other European) armies during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the eighteenth century in particular, the Irlanda regiment of the Spanish army served in Cuba, Mexico and Honduras (Chartrand 17).

The Irish arrived in the New World not only with the Spanish army and colonists, but also with the British. Since Ireland was a colony of Great Britain, it follows that regions of heavy British influence in the Americas (particularly the Caribbean and the River Plate) also received their fair share of Irish immigrants. Since the Irish arrived sometimes as exiles and indentured servants, and other times as landowners, their legacy is rife with ambiguity. Michael Malouf points out that there are two competing narratives of the Irish in the Caribbean—one of shared colonial struggle and another related to oppressive Irish landowners (Malouf 1). The former expresses solidarity with the approximately 50,000 Irish who emigrated or were exiled by Cromwell to the islands,

mostly Barbados, in the seventeenth century—although historian Richard Dunn notes that there were a significant number of Irish laborers in the Americas even before Cromwell, as early as 1636 (Malouf 1). The latter narrative is best exemplified in the history of Montserrat, an island where the Irish played the role of adventurous colonizers who either emigrated from failed plantations in the southern U.S. or escaped from indentured servitude on other islands (2). Here, on what is now known as "the other Emerald Isle," the Irish became landowners as well as slave owners. Montserratians around the world celebrate St. Patrick´s Day each year on March 17th, not to commemorate the Catholic saint who allegedly drove the snakes out of Ireland, but in remembrance of the African slaves who first rose up against their Irish landowners on March 17, 1768.

If we consider Galicia's Gaelic roots and the mass emigration of Gallegos to the New World, we could form an even broader picture of Celtic culture in the Hispanic world.[ii] Whether they came from Galicia, Great Britain, or Spain, hints of the Gaels and the Irish are still present in Latin American food, music, culture and literature, stretching from the Caribbean all the way down to Patagonia. These cultural manifestations are as diverse as the histories which connect them: a Celtic music festival celebrated each year in la Vieja Habana, Cuba; Gaelic stout brewed in El Bariloche, Argentina; and an Irish dancing competition in Mexico are just a few examples. It is even rumored that an Irishman in the Spanish colony of California inspired the iconic character of "El Zorro".[iii]

[ii] Emilia Pardo Bazán was particularly interested in Galicia's Celtic heritage. See her *Folk-lore gallego, miscellanea* (1884).

[iii] See Fabio Troncarelli, "The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro: William Lamport of Wexford" (2001) and Jaime Fogarty, "The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro" (2005).

Aside from the direct influence of Irish immigrants in the Americas, the two regions often find common ground in religion, in their geographic relation to the Atlantic Ocean, their shared histories of colonization, and in many of the cultural themes and social issues related to post-colonialism. In her introduction to *Distant Relations,* based on an exhibition of artists from Ireland, Mexico, California, and England, Lucy Lippard offers her interpretation of the affinities between Chicano, Mexican, and Irish culture:

> […] the combination of indigenous and Roman Catholic spirituality; a preoccupation with death and rebirth; a poor but vital rural culture that has changed and is changing; resistance politics fueled by occupation of traditional homelands; the memory of inconclusive revolutions […] (16)

Catholicism, the dominant religion in both Ireland and Latin America, may have served as one of the primary pull factors for Irish emigrants to the Americas. It is also rumored to be one reason why, during the Mexican American War, Irish soldiers now known as the *San Patricio* brigade deserted the U.S. army and fought with Mexican troops (Butler 832).[iv]

Although Catholicism may unite Ireland and Latin America, it is important to note its political and historical differences in the two regions: Catholicism was imposed on Latin America by European colonizers, whereas in Ireland it was threatened by Protestant British colonizers. Nevertheless, the two regions share cultural traits associated with the religion, such as devotion to the Virgin Mary and a strong belief in miracles. In both cultures, Catholicism mixes with indigenous and Celtic beliefs in surprising and

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[iv] Regarding the San Patricio Brigade, Butler writes: "It is disputed whether their principal motivation in deserting and fighting against their former comrades was to defend fellow Roman Catholics from conquest by a Protestant power and as a consequence of the nativism of their own officers, or was because of the prospects of better pay, rank, land, and citizenship offered to deserters by the numerically stronger Mexican Army" (832).

novel ways. Combined with their positions as marginalized people under colonial regimes, this aspect created fertile ground in both regions for magical realist and fantastic narratives. Another common theme, also related to literature, is the problem of language. The majority of Irish authors have written in English, not Irish—just as most Spanish American authors write in Spanish, the language of the colonizer. Added to this dilemma is the tension between oral and written narratives; like the indigenous cultures that preceded European settlement in Latin America, Celtic culture also has a long oral tradition which has been perpetuated by storytellers such as the tinkers. Lippard adds, "But the real common ground is the retention of a mixed, still-powerful, and often romanticized identity that is layered beneath the surfaces of modernity and internationalism—an identity manipulated as often in popular as in 'high' culture" (16).

In *Washed by the Gulf Stream: The Historic and Geographic Relation of Irish and Caribbean Literature*, Maria McGarrity proposes that the prevalent bond between Ireland and the Caribbean is not historic but geographic: the Gulf Stream "connects the seemingly disparate, the islands and streams of the Caribbean Sea with those throughout the North Atlantic, the Irish islands particularly" (9). McGarrity focuses less on influence and more on the notion of correspondence between Irish and Caribbean cultures, pointing to the three affiliated themes of sanctuary, wandering and exile in the literatures of the two regions. It is important to note that most scholars of Irish Latin American connections in literature have focused on English language writers; however, McGarrity includes a comparison between Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* with plantation or "big house" novels of Jean Rhys, E. Somerville and Martin Ross, and John Banville (51).

Perhaps most importantly, Ireland and Latin America have a shared history of colonization, and they often find affinities in stories of colonial resistance, revolutionary movements, and exile. McGarrity notes that both Ireland and nations of the Caribbean (and, by extension, Latin America) struggle with the weight of their colonial pasts. Both national and regional discourses overflow with studies of empire and its effects, although "[s]tudies on colonialism have far too often relied on the national characteristics of the respective imperial powers to configure their analysis" (18). However, more recent scholarship on Latin American history has recognized its parallels with Ireland. For example, Oscar Guardiola-Rivera notes that Cromwell's army debated, in the Putney Debates, whether or not the law of God legitimated the reduction of considerable parts of the population at almost the same time as the Spanish debated in Valladolid (1550) whether or not the natives of the Americas had souls (43). Ireland and Latin America, says Guardiola-Rivera, are two examples of loss and denied history (43).

It is worth noting that, as a result of these struggles, Ireland and Latin America have two of the largest diasporic populations in the world. Ireland's diaspora outnumbers its population on the island many times over, and a significant portion of that diaspora resides in Latin America. Many Latin American nations—namely Cuba, Mexico, and the nations of Central America—also have large diasporic populations residing in the United States and Europe.[v] This might explain why Junot Díaz, a U.S. Latino writer, begins his

[v] In both cases, large numbers of emigrants flocked to the United States. Although current discussions of immigration in the U.S. often focus on Latin American migrants, the Irish represent the second largest diasporic population in the country (after the Germans). See http://www.diasporaalliance.org/americas-largest-diaspora-populations/.

novel on a Dominican American family with a poem by Saint Lucian Derek Walcott. Even where there are not direct ties between diasporas, there is often affinity.

The study of diasporas leads to issues related to migration, identity, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. In "Migrations, Diasporas and Borders," Susan Stanford Friedman provides a preliminary mapping of the field and explores these topics in literary theory and criticism, although she recognizes that each tends to be particularized in reference to the languages, national literatures and particular geographies under study (261). Although these themes are not new to literary theory, Stanford Friedman notes they have attracted more attention due to increased globalization—and although the phenomenon is not new, the naming is new, "indicating heightened awareness of what has been there all along" (261). This observation is particularly relevant to Irish Latin American Studies; although the Irish have "been there all along," there has been a recent surge of interest both in academic circles and in Latin American society at large. The texts analyzed in this dissertation suggest that Irishness may serve as a vehicle to explore larger issues of cultural hybridity, transnational identity, and ambiguous borders—not just between nations, but also between gender, political and ethnic identities.

In her pioneering study *Narrativas de la diáspora irlandesa bajo la Cruz del Sur,* Laura Patricia Zuntini de Izarra considers the formation of Irish diasporic identity in Latin America. Along with her colleague Munira Mutrán, she coordinates the Cátedra de Estudios Irlandeses W.B. Yeats at the University of San Pablo, Brazil. Zuntini de Izarra notes that the concept of diaspora allows us to problematize the tensions which exist in the construction of hybrid identities:

> Los estudios de las diásporas se sitúan dentro de los estudios poscoloniales y de las teorías de la crítica cultural y se han convertido en un emblema de lo multilocal, la posnacionalidad y la no linealidad de los desplazamientos, sean espaciales o temporales, ambos influenciando simultáneamente la subjetividad del sujeto *diaspórico*. (31).

Her study analyzes works in English, written by early Irish settlers in Latin America: *You'll Never Go Back* (1949) by Kathleen Nevin, *Tales of the Pampas* (1900) by William Bulfin, and articles printed in Anglo newspapers such as *The Southern Cross* in Argentina and *The Anglo-Brazilian Times.* One of the concepts which unites these works is the concept of cosmopolitanism, which helps subjects to inhabit lands and cultures in transition. Zuntini de Izarra notes, "Una política cosmopolita alienta a las personas a tener múltiples filiaciones: a ser múltiples sujetos" (222). The Irish Argentine writers examined in Chapter 3 represent a younger generation, the children or grandchildren of those earlier settlers. However, the idea of diversity—both within society and within oneself—is still very present in their narratives.

In reference to Great Britain, Stanford Friedman notes that the literatures of migration hold the potential to challenge the ambiguous classifications of "national" literature at a time when British literature is increasingly micronational (e.g. Scottish, Welsh, English), multicultural, multiracial, and even multilingual (267). The same could be said of Latin America; many of its most celebrated writers have spent a significant part of their lives in Europe or the United States, were influenced by writers of outside nations writing in other languages, and Latino writers now challenge the boundaries between American and Latin American literature. These exiled and migrant writers

present new notions of travel and cosmopolitanism, and push the boundaries of their imagined communities.[vi]

For this reason, Stanford Friedman connects migration studies to modernity studies, as does sociologist Nikos Papastergiadis in *The Turbulence of Migration.* Papastergiadis argues that "the dynamic of displacement is intrinsic to migration and modernity" (12), pointing out that "the metaphor of the journey, the figure of the stranger and the experience of displacement have been at the centre of many of the cultural representations of modernity" (11), as in the work of James Joyce. Thus, this dissertation recognizes Joyce as an important link between Ireland and Latin America. It begins with an examination of the presence of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses* in two contemporary Argentine writers, and the second chapter relates the journey of *Ulysses* to Roger Casement's voyages of (self) discovery in Vargas Llosa's *El sueño del celta*.

Joyce is arguably the most influential of all the Irish writers who made a mark on Latin American writers. A great deal of scholarship already exists on this topic, particularly in relation to Joyce's *Ulysses* as it influenced writers in Latin America (Martin, Masiello, Fiddian, Levine, Salgado). Morton B. Levitt observes that Joyce appears intertextually in several of Carlos Fuentes's texts; in *La región más transparente,* for example, he notes links between Mexico City and Dublin. The connection is even more direct in Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres,* "in which the self-exiled Cuban novelist puns constantly on Joycean puns" (Levitt 390). Arturo García Ramos also

[vi] I refer here to Benedict Anderson's theory on the nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 6). However, I also suggest that the authors and works studied here push these boundaries, creating more inclusive, transnational identities.

notes Cabrera Infante's ties to Joyce, pointing out that the Cuban author translated Joyce's *Dubliners* in 1970. However, their affinity extends far beyond translation: García Ramos suggests that Cabrera Infante could have related to the Irish author in terms of exile, the fundamental role of music in both authors' lives, the censure of their work, linguistic play, and eroticism (85). Although one could also identify influential elements of *Finnegans Wake* in Cabrera Infante's work, he is more often associated with *Ulysses.* Levitt draws comparison to *Tres tristes tigres* in its references to Bloomsday, the "megaesoteric J'aime Joyce," and political analogies. García Ramos notes that Cabrera Infante attempts to capture the essence of La Havana through his depiction of nocturnal life in that city in the same sense that Joyce eternalizes Dublin in *Ulysses:* "Cabrera Infante lleva a cabo […] una obra de evidentes similitudes, en la que intenta captar una imagen esencial de Cuba a través de la *sandunga* habanera" (85). However, for Levitt, the more striking comparison is in the language itself: "It is not so much the political analogy between Castro-era Havana and Dublin under the English that activates Cabrera as the parallels between Joyce's Irish English and the vitality and flexibility of '*el habla de los cubanos,*' the idiom of Havana even under dictatorship" (390-91). While this study acknowledges these Joycean elements in the work of Cabrera Infante, it also recognizes that this topic has been studied at length. For this reason, I attempt to explore a different facet of Joyce in Spanish American narrative, focusing on the translation of *Ulysses* into Spanish and the way in which two contemporary Argentine authors problematize that process.

In her critical article "Joyce in Buenos Aires," Francine Masiello explores the trope of the secret in Joyce and Argentine writers, linking secrets to sexuality and

translation. She first addresses this problem in Joyce's *Ulysses* and then examines its elaboration by three recent Argentine writers (Puig's *Buenos Aires Affair*, María Moreno's *El Affair Skeffington*, and Sylvia Molloy's *El común olvido*). Taking off from this point, my first chapter provides a brief discussion of the literary presence of Joyce in Latin America and particularly in Argentina—a presence also tied to translation, as the first Spanish translation of *Ulysses* (the last page of it, at least) was published by Borges in 1925 (Moure). I analyze the way two contemporary Argentine writers dialogue with Joyce—Isidoro Blaisten in his short story "Dublín al sur" (1980), and Roberto Ferro in his detective novel *El otro Joyce* (2011). Both works explore the problems and processes of translation as they explore the literary relationship between Joyce and Argentina.

Isidoro Blaisten (originally spelled Blaistein) was born in 1933 in Concordia, Argentina and died in 2004. His family was among the many Jews who migrated to Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century. The majority of his published works are short story collections: *La felicidad* (1969), *La salvación* (1972), *El mago* (1974), *Dublín al sur* (1980), *Cerrado por melancolía* (1982), *Cuentos anteriores* (1982), *A mí nunca me dejaban hablar* (1985), *Carroza y reina* (1986), *Al acecho* (1995), and *Antología personal* (1997). He also published a novel entitled *Voces en la noche* (2004), a poetry collection, *Sucedió en la lluvia* (1965), and several essays. Many of his narratives are humoristic and absurd. Thomas E. Case observes that his stories have in common the violence and deception of contemporary life (366), and David William Foster compares him to Cortázar "in his use of a slyly ironic tone, in the almost geometric plotting of his texts, and in his concentration on features of daily life in urban Buenos Aires" (249).

In "Dublín al sur," a narrator by the name of Esteban Dedales describes his absurd relationship to Joyce's *Ulysses,* which he has been reading for nearly ten years. He admits, "En realidad, yo al *Ulises* nunca lo entendí del todo. Mejor dicho, todavía hay partes que no las entiendo; mejor dicho, casi no entendía nada" (180). Yet, the names of all of his family members correspond to the novel, and the first time he held the novel in his hands, he felt that it would change his life. It does: after eight years of reading and re-reading *Ulises,* Dedales signs up for a television game show which asks contestants about the life and work of James Joyce. A year later, he takes home the pot of a thousand pesos. Dedales recounts this bizarre story from the Irish castle he purchased with his prize money. He has fulfilled his dream of living in a castle and going to bed with a different adolescent girl each night, although in the end the only one to capture his heart is the one who brings him the Argentine translation of *Ulises* and puts a picture of Carlos Gardel on the mantel next to Parnell. In short, "Dublín al sur" is the story of a man in Argentina dreaming of Ireland, and the same man in Ireland, dreaming of Argentina. With a shrewd sense of humor and irony, Blaisten calls attention to the strange affinity between Ireland and Argentina, exemplified by the country's obsession with Joyce. Esteban Dedales doesn't understand *Ulysses,* but continues reading in search of some secret to his life, which seems like a confusion of the characters' identities. Roberto Ferro's *El otro Joyce* focuses on a different work, *Finnegans Wake,* but his protagonist is also in search of a secret.

Roberto Augusto Ferro was born in Buenos Aires in 1944. He is currently a professor of Latin American literature at the National University of Buenos Aires and has published various essays on literary theory as well as individual poems in literary

magazines. His works on literary criticism include essays on Cortázar and Onetti, as well as several theoretical explorations of Jacques Derrida. He has also published two poetry collections: *Trazos* (1978) and *Grabados* (1996). *El otro Joyce,* published in 2011, was his first novel—although its structure reveals Ferro's academic pursuits. Much like *Finnegans Wake,* it is a highly self-conscious narrative teeming with digressions and literary allusions. Its protagonist, Jorge Cáceres, runs a small business researching patents, missing books, and missing persons. The novel's plot follows him as he works to solve two mysteries: one related to the search for a first edition of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* annotated by Jorge Luis Borges, and the second related to the suspicious death of Marcos Almeida, a prominent financier. His work is constantly hindered and confused by the appearance of doubles. Rather than finding a first edition of Joyce, Cáceres first comes across a notebook written by one William Joyce—an American born Irish-British fascist who worked with the Germans during World War II and was eventually convicted as a traitor. Later, Cáceres and his partner find not one but two "original" editions of *Finnegans Wake* with identical annotations in Borges's handwriting. William Joyce is confused with James Joyce, and James Joyce is confused with Borges. The search for Almeida also results in the discovery of a double. This theme of the double relates to the act of translation, which is present throughout the novel. Borges translated Joyce, and Cáceres works to translate William Joyce's notebook while he searches for Borges's copy of *Finnegans.*

Blaisten's "Dublín al sur" and Ferro's *El otro Joyce* provide interesting intersections with Masiello's "Joyce in Buenos Aires." In her analysis of three Argentine authors (Puig, Moreno, and Molloy), Masiello attempts to link secrets and translation,

and secrets and sexuality (55). As a starting point, she posits that "High modernism works through the secret. The midpoint between intelligibility and blankness, it is part of the strategy of 'difficult' writing that elevates the value of the modernist puzzle[…]" (55). *Ulysses,* arguably the central novel of modernism, is "governed by secrets": the contents of Bloom's pockets, the obscure corners of the text that resist interpretation (Masiello 56). According to Masiello, there is also a secret implicit in the art of writing itself—in the double movements between the surface of words and what lies beneath them (56). Joyce's characters are in search of revelation through language (56), and the same could be said of Blaisten's and Ferro's protagonists. Esteban Dedales seeks, in the difficult language of *Ulyssses,* the key to his life and wildest fantasies. Meanwhile, Jorge Cáceres observes, "Escribir sobre el secreto es no poder dejar de escribir" (50). Essentially, the entire novel is just that—a narrative about a secret which is unable to stop itself, as the secrets continue to multiply. Both works acknowledge an intimate but unusual relationship between Joyce and Argentine writers, one rooted in translation.

While Masiello focuses narrowly on Argentine writers' relationship with Joyce, Gerald Martin provides a broader examination of the influence of *Ulysses* in the development of the so-called "Boom" writers. In his critical work *Journeys through the Labyrinth,* Martin views the Latin American New Novel of the 1960s as part of the post-Joycean Modernist New Wave. Martin underlines the importance of the Ulyssean quest for identity, proposing that the labyrinth serves as Latin America's master narrative, which represents the journey through life, history, or fiction itself. He focuses on novels such as *Hombres de maíz, Los pasos perdidos, Pedro Páramo, Rayuela, La Casa Verde,* and *Cien años de soledad*—all novels in which the symbolism of national (within

international) history is fused with the symbolism of individual (within universal) myth (Martin 169). This new vision was possible, according to Martin, because *Ulysses* traveled to Europe and came back "other;" in other words, the writers of this generation were able to see their own nations through international perspectives (169).

While Martin's theory may be problematic, it provides an interesting framework, in Chapter 2, for analyzing Vargas Llosa's *El sueño del celta* (2010). Vargas Llosa's novel tells a fictionalized version of the life of the historical figure Roger Casement. Casement, born in Ireland to a Protestant father and Catholic mother, identified more with Great Britain than with Ireland during the earlier years of his life. He worked for the British foreign office and was eventually named consul. During his career, he traveled first to the Congo and later to the Peruvian Amazon, charged with investigating abuses of local workers by British companies. In the process, he comes to understand Ireland's (and his own) repressed identity and colonial struggle, becomes an Irish patriot, and plays an important role in the famous Easter Uprising of 1916. Casement's place in Irish and world history has been polemical, not only for his mixed loyalties (he turned to the Germans during World War I to train Irish soldiers), but also due to questions regarding his sexuality. During his imprisonment and trial, the British published Casement's now famous *Black Diaries,* which described in detail his homosexual encounters with young men and boys. Some historians insist that the diaries were fabricated, while others find them to be authentic. In *El sueño del celta,* Vargas Llosa includes entries from the black diaries but implies them to represent Casement's fantasies more than his acts, explaining in his epilogue "Mi propia impresión […] es que Roger Casement escribió los famosos diarios pero no los vivió, no por lo menos integralmente, que hay en ellos mucho de

exageración y ficción, que escribió ciertas cosas porque hubiera querido pero no pudo vivirlas" (449). Casement is ambiguous not only in his sexual identity, but also in his national identity and national loyalty. This theme is not new to Latin American literature, and it seems likely that Vargas Llosa drew on the Irish characters of Borges's *Ficciones* in order to develop Casement's character.

Borges, a voracious reader of world literature, expresses in numerous essays and stories an affinity with Irish writers—Joyce, Wilde, Yeats and Shaw, among others, in his epigraphs and critical essays, as well as in textual allusions present in his *Ficciones.* Daniel Balderston has explored his relationship to Yeats in "The Rag-and-Bone Shop: On Borges, Yeats and Ireland," and Suzanne Jill Levine traces his affinities to Joyce in "Notes to Borges's Notes on Joyce: Infinite Affinities." Borges's first literary act, at the age of nine, was a translation of Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince" (Levine 347). Levine parallels this event with Joyce's achievement, also at the age of nine, in publishing an elegiacal pamphlet on the heroic Irish leader Charles Stewart Parnell (347). Parnell's name then appears in Borges's "La forma de la espada," "one of several 'Irish' tales by Borges about a hero who, torn between the idealism of revolution and the compromises of politics and cowardice, is also a traitor" (347). Irish themes and characters also appear in "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," "Tema del traidor y del héroe," and "La muerte y la brújula." [vii] Levine notes that these stories are full of identification and rivalry, but I will argue that their most common element is ambiguous identities—

[vii] Carlos Fuentes also includes an Irish character, Lorenzo "Larry" O'Shea, in his short story "Amantes del teatro," part of the collection entitled *Inquieta compañía* (2003).

particularly between heroes and traitors. Roger Casement, too, is viewed as both a traitor and a hero in Irish and world history.

In *El sueño del celta*, a European (or pseudo-European, for Ireland has always held a marginal place on the continent) travels to Latin America, sees himself and his country through the perspective of colonialism, and embarks on a journey of self-discovery. If the Ulyssean journey that Martin describes is characteristic of the Boom, Vargas Llosa turns that journey around. This, to me, is one of many signs that Vargas Llosa has moved past the "Boom," and perhaps he is suggesting that Latin America has done the same. We might also look at *El sueño del celta* in light of Donald Shaw's *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction* in that it deals with the themes of exile and sexuality, has a more reader-accessible plot than some of his earlier, more experimental novels, and advocates a socio-political commitment. In fact, most of the works discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 follow Shaw's guidelines of the post-boom. This might help to explain why the Irish theme resonates in contemporary Latin America: it serves as a vehicle to explore ambiguous, hybrid identities, both in terms of nationality and sexuality.

Irish-Argentine writers provide another lens to view concepts of nationality and otherness. Argentina received more Irish immigrants than any other Latin American nation, and a number of its prominent writers are of Irish heritage: Benito Lynch (1885-1951), Adolfo Bioy Casares (1914-99), María Elena Walsh, (1930-2011) and Rodolfo Walsh (1927) are just a few examples. Several important historical figures in Argentina also came from Irish roots, such as revolutionary Ernesto Guevara and naval hero Admiral William Brown. Chapter 3 analyzes the works of two contemporary Irish

Argentine writers, Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell. Although both writers are inspired and influenced by Irish culture in Argentina, they approach the Irish theme from very different angles: Cormick places Irish characters in distinctly Argentine landscapes and historical moments, while O'Connell uses popular Irish mythology to craft short stories about women and children, which are often fantastic in nature. I argue that, albeit in very different ways, both writers create a more inclusive vision of Argentine national identity—one in which Irish culture is not foreign or "other" but, rather, one of many immigrant cultures which finds itself at home in Argentina.

Eduardo Cormick was born in the Junín province of Buenos Aires in 1956 and is an award-winning author of novels and short stories: *Quema su memoria* (2004), *Entre gringos y criollos* (2006), and *El primer viaje* (2010). Andrés Romera notes, "His family roots go back to a long line of Irish migrants, mainly from Co. Westmeath and Longford, who emigrated to Argentina throughout the nineteenth-century (par 1). Cormick's novels and short stories are historical fiction, much of which relates to the history of Junín province and, more generally, to the Irish Argentine community. *Quema su memoria* tells a fictionalized account of the life—and existential doubts—of William "Guillermo" Brown, an Irish born Admiral considered the founder of the Argentine Navy. Various stories in *Entre gringos y criollos* also feature Irish Argentine characters, most of whom are simply trying to survive and find a place for themselves in a harsh physical and social environment. As the title suggests, they are not quite *gringos,* but not quite *criollos,* either.

For example, "Las posibilidades del ser" is set on the 17th of March, and townspeople have gathered to celebrate *el día de San Patricio* with a barbecue, a game of

bocce ball, and a mass. The flags of both Argentina and Ireland are displayed proudly and the wine is flowing, provoking a drunken conversation among the participants about Irish identity. The characters' attempt to define the Irish follows the same rhythm as the game of bocce, suggesting that Irish identity, like the bocce balls, is in a state of constant movement. Much like Vargas Llosa's depiction of Roger Casement and the Irish characters of Borges's *Ficciones,* Cormick's Irish Argentine characters highlight the ambiguity of being *irlandés*.

Viviana O'Connell currently resides in Rosario, Argentina. She is a writer and journalist, director of the magazine *The Shamrock,* and member of the Círculo Celta del Rosario. She has published various stories for the online journal *Sitio al Margen,* some of which have been included in *Cuentos de hadas irlandeses* (2006), a collection of Celtic legends selected by Roberto Rosaspini Reynolds. Like Cormick, O'Connell is also active in the Irish Argentine community and creatively inspired by Irish themes; however, her stories are more fantastic than Cormick's historical fictions, as her narrative frequently combines elements of the fantastic with Celtic myth and legend. In "La niebla," a dead woman recalls the events leading to her passing—learning of the death of her unfaithful husband, getting into the car and driving through the fog in the early morning hours. Just before she crashes, she sees a woman in a white tunic and recognizes her (in retrospect, at least) as a banshee—according to Celtic legend, a mythical protector of the clan or family. Interspersed with this narrative is another, more fantastic sequence where the spirit of the deceased woman wanders through the forest in preparation for the festival of Samhain. Rosaspini Reynolds explains in the glossary of the collection that Samhain is a "festividad que anuncia la desaparición de las fronteras entre el mundo de los vivos y

Annwun, el Inframundo o Mundo Inferior" (125). The two narratives, one where the dead woman remembers and one where she (or her spirit) walks through the forest to dance between the trees, find each other at the end of the story, just as the woman is united with her spiritual clan.

In her essay "Cuando nombramos, qué nombramos," O'Connell explains how and why she became interested in Celtic myth and storytelling, emphasizing her position as a female writer. She notes that, in the town where she was raised, there was always a strong awareness among the townspeople of each person's cultural identity, be it *gallego, irlandés,* or *criollo*. "Cada uno interactuaba, coexistía, compartía espacios, y a la vez actuaba en compartimentos estancos, con el temor de perder su identidad, de perder esa historia que funcionaba como un anclaje, un espacio de identificación cultural" (par.2). O'Connell's two main inspirations for storytelling were her grandfathers, and she associates each of them with a particular kind of narrative: her Irish/Basque grandfather would tell her fairytales each night at bedtime, while her Italian grandfather talked to her about war and politics. The women in her house did not tell stories, but O'Connell broke with that tradition: "Quizá por falta de competencia masculina me convertí en receptora de relatos, recipiente apto para la mixtura y de algún modo en ese lugar del mundo el patriarcado se fracturó" (3). In this sense, O'Connell envisions storytelling as a connection to her roots—particularly the Irish side of the family, as her stories focus on Celtic myth. However, as a female writer, she adds something new to those narratives: "La voz que podía manifestarse públicamente, seducir, relacionar, relatar, se mudó al cuerpo de fémina e incorporó nuevos sonidos y discursos" (4). Thus, O'Connell also

approaches the theme of diversity in Argentina, but she includes a gendered perspective which we do not necessarily see in Cormick's narrative.

O'Connell's stories juxtapose modern situations, protagonized by women, with fantastic narratives rooted in Celtic myth. Her approach is radically different from Cormick's; however, both of these Irish Argentine writers deal with issues related to diversity—Cormick's Irish characters attempt to find their place and identity in Argentine society amidst competing ethnic groups, while O'Connell's protagonists suffer from marital infidelity, abuse and loss rooted in the marginalization of women, ultimately finding themselves in Celtic mysticism. While Cormick's characters communicate a cultural ambiguity ("entre gringos y criollos") and ultimately prove their worth as individuals in Argentine society, O'Connell's female characters identify women as individuals "y no como objetos de las transacciones masculinas" (5). While she holds fast to the Irish culture she perceives among her cultural roots, she also challenges the patriarchy inherent in those narratives.

As we have seen in O'Connell's approach to female narratives through Celtic myth, and through the character of Roger Casement as portrayed by Vargas Llosa, the blurring of national identity often goes hand-in-hand with the blurring of sexual identity. If Ireland represents ambiguity (European and non-European, colonizer and colonized, hero and traitor), Oscar Wilde as both writer and individual personifies that ambiguity both in his confused national identities and in his sexual ambiguity. Next to Joyce, he might be the second most influential Irish author in Latin America. Chapter 4 provides a reading of Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* (1988) and Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) through the lens of Oscar

Wilde. Both titles allude to Oscar Wilde, involve sexually ambiguous characters and include multiple border-crossings. Sexual and political ambiguity are closely linked, if not inseparable. In this sense, these works also demonstrate intersections of Wilde and Joyce in terms of sexuality and language in movement. I argue that here, too, Irish and Latin American cultures find common ground in their condition as "nomads living through the postcolonial experience," in the words of Masiello (68).

Luis Rafael Sánchez was born in 1936 in Humacao, Puerto Rico. He is a celebrated playwright, essayist, novelist and short-story author. Perhaps his best-known play is *La pasión según Antígona Pérez* (1968), a distinctly Latin American interpretation of Sophocles' *Antigone.* Among his other plays are *Los ángeles se han fatigado* (1960), *Farsa del amor compradito* (1960), *La hiel nuestra de cada día* (1960), *Sol 13, interior* (1961), and *Quíntuples* (1985). He has published a collection of short stories, *En cuerpo de camisa* (1966) and several novels: *La guaracha del Macho Camacho* (1976), *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* (1988), and *Indiscreciones de un perro gringo* (2007). Sánchez was born and raised in Puerto Rico, but has also spent considerable time living and traveling in New York, Europe, and Latin America. His work, like his life, often "crosses borders"—between nations, genres, genders, and between high and low culture.

La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos is a "novela bolero" which incorporates elements of documentary, testimony and oral history in an attempt to explore the legend of Daniel Santos—and, in the process, Latin American pop culture. The title itself is an allusion to Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a work which was originally perceived as lighthearted, harmless, and even a failure (Kennedy

110), but which others interpret as a play of masks, double identities, verbal complexities and inverse gender roles (Martino 145). Waldrep notes, "*Earnest* is a performance about performance, as it is only by performing a gender—or sexuality—via the use of masks and language that one can begin to manipulate and change the status quo" (Waldrep 59). *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* also emphasizes performance and sexuality, with its focus on Santos's "prestigio aturdidor de macho" (Sánchez 9) and its fascination with "el ceremonial de vivir en varón" (5). Wilde's life and texts highlight the performative nature of culture and sexuality; like Santos, perhaps, these elements contribute to his legend.

Wilde's legacy has evolved into a source of fascination for various reasons, although Terry Eagleton points primarily to his Irishness and his anticipation of present-day theory—factors which are closely interrelated, according to Eagleton. "If, like Wilde, your history has been one of colonial oppression, you are less likely to be enamoured of stable representational forms […]. You will find yourself a parodist and a parasite, bereft of any imposingly continuous cultural tradition […]"(Eagleton viii). *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* is anything but stable, as its narrative moves constantly between countries and between genres. The narrator explains, in his introduction, "Más allá de los textos que demarca la preceptiva, más acá de los textos que se confían a la tradición, se asientan los subgéneros, los posgéneros, los géneros híbridos y fronterizos, los géneros mestizos" (Sánchez 5). Eagleton notes, in reference to Wilde, that those who write in "the tongue of the colonial oppressor" are likely to demonstrate intense verbal self-consciousness (viii). Again, this statement could easily be applied to Sánchez's highly self-conscious narrative which includes reflections on culture, language and modernity.

Other aspects of Sánchez's text suggest Wilde's influence, as well: in particular, Sánchez's emphasis on fabulation, on melodrama, and on ambiguous identities. Perhaps most importantly, the reader of *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* never actually meets Santos as a character; rather, Santos is constructed through "los tejidos del rumor, la persistencia del mito, la servidumbre de la fama" (Sánchez 5). In a similar fashion, the fame and legacy of Oscar Wilde depend as much on rumor and myth as on his actual work. Much of the gossip and rumors which surrounded Wilde, in his lifetime, revolved around his identity as a *dandy* and his sexual behavior. However, it becomes difficult to separate his sexual ambiguity from his political status as an Irishman, a colonial subject, living within and mimicking English high culture. As José Quiroga notes in *Tropics of Desire*, foreignness often appears as a metaphor for homosexuality: "Culture bears the mask of the social shame produced by homosexualities, and this shame places gays and lesbians always in the realm of exile" (Quiroga 20). Eagleton also focuses on Wilde's seemingly contradictory nature, stating "[E]verything about him was double, hybrid, ambivalent" (*Introduction* xi). As a romantic singer turned political figure [viii] in Puerto Rico, commonwealth of the United States, Daniel Santos could certainly identify with the intertwining of sexual and political ambiguity, and I will argue that it is precisely this connection with Wilde which serves as a lens for readers of *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos.*

Ambiguity is not solely the experience of the Irish and the Puerto Ricans, of course; Susan Stanford Friedman notes that, in general, studies of migrations, diasporas

[viii] Santos was active in the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and spoke out for prisoners in various countries.

and borders have led to a greater understanding of the porousness of cultural borders and identities, and of how interconnected and mutually constitutive the cultures of the world have always been (262). This transnational shift helps us to connect literatures which may have been separated previously into distinct categories, such as Caribbean and US Latino literature. As such, Junot Díaz, an English language writer, may seem like an unlikely comparison to the Puerto Rican, Spanish language writer Luis Rafael Sánchez; however, their work intersects in a number of ways. Although their primary languages are different, both writers (and their works) frequently move between New York and the Caribbean, a movement which is also apparent in their use of language: Sánchez incorporates English words and American cultural references, while Díaz often mixes Spanish words into his English narrative and includes frequent references to Dominican culture. Stanford Friedman notes that studies on migration, diaspora, and borders are often linked by underlying questions of identity in motion on a transnational landscape—a theme apparent in the work of both Díaz and Sánchez. Most importantly for this study, both writers explore (and often embrace) the ambiguity implicit in national and sexual identities.

Junot Díaz is a Dominican American writer, born in Santo Domingo in 1968 and raised in New Jersey from 1974. His short stories have appeared in *The New Yorker* in addition to literary journals and anthologies. He has published short story collections, *Drown* (1996) and *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012) and a Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). Edwidge Danticat calls *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* epic, "not only in its historical rendering of heart-breaking violence, of a cross-generational, exiled family, but in its language: a courageous patois

from the streets of New Jersey, via the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, flying right up and into the face—and the canon—of great literature" (first paragraph). Although Díaz writes primarily in English, his writing almost always includes Spanish words and phrases. Like Sánchez, Díaz also intertwines popular culture, politics and gender. Characters in *Oscar Wao* are constantly crossing back and forth between New Jersey and Santo Domingo, as they are also pushing and blurring the lines of gender expectations.

Like Sánchez's novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* also references Oscar Wilde in its title, a reference to an episode in the novel in which the protagonist, Oscar, is taunted by other young men. They say he looks like Oscar *Wao,* a mispronunciation of Oscar Wilde. Díaz explains in an interview that he was inspired when he overheard someone mispronounce Wilde's name "with a Chilango accent" at a party in Mexico City (Charney). He then blended the name to the title of Hemingway's short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" to create his title. Reviews and criticism of the novel have not explored the Wilde connection—or, more generally, the Irish connection—beyond this brief reference. However, as in Sánchez's novel, Wilde provides a useful lens to examine gender ambiguity, transnational identities, and fabulation in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.*

Like Sánchez, Díaz also explores *machismo* as cultural expectation and performance. Oscar—an overweight, awkward, comic-book-reading virgin—struggles throughout the novel with his inability to fulfill the expectations of his family and Dominican society as a whole. Meanwhile, his sister Lola constantly challenges the traditional female gender role, cutting her hair short, disrespecting her mother and losing her virginity as a teenager. Again, sexual identities are tightly intertwined with political

and cultural ambiguity; Oscar doesn't fit into Dominican society because of his physical appearance and his "nerdiness," but he is also out of place in mainstream American society—in fact, his neighborhood is so segregated that he barely has access to it. The characters, like their language, are constantly in motion; they move back and forth from New Jersey to Santo Domingo, and are never quite able to escape the curse of colonialism (embodied in the *fukú* curse, which follows Oscar's family). Yunior, the narrator of most of the novel, is the stereotypical Dominican *macho*; however, he also struggles with both his culture and his masculinity. In the end, he turns to storytelling in an attempt to avoid the *fukú.*

Here, to employ the terminology of Paul Gilroy (1993), we see the struggle between *roots* and *routes*. James Clifford also develops this idea, beginning with the assumption that "Everyone's on the move, and has been for centuries" (2). Clifford posits that "travels and contacts are crucial sites for an unfinished modernity" (2). However, his definition of travel is more inclusive, and takes into consideration the notion that travel includes not only "Westerners" traveling to developing countries, but also the reverse. This second kind of traveler follows the trajectory of "a different cosmopolitanism," says Clifford (5). Stanford Friedman adds to this point that cosmopolitanism is no longer the privilege of elite travelers, but is now understood to include migrants, those who move in search of a better life (261). Wilde also considers the notion of cosmopolitanism in his critical essays, particularly in his theory of individualism in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." According to Margaret Kennedy, Wilde's cosmopolitanism does not imply a reduction of cultures, but coexistence, "a conjunction of the local and the global" (Kennedy 93). Kennedy proposes that Wilde's plays, his primary legacy, promote open-

mindedness, tolerance and good-will—"elements of Wilde's cosmopolitanism and demonstrative of his ethical aestheticism" (103). Although critics have considered plays such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* as light-hearted and frivolous, Kennedy suggests that his eccentric characters provoke the audience to reconsider their social viewpoints—something which the eccentric Oscar may well achieve in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.* In short, Kennedy's discussion of Wilde's cosmopolitanism as a mediation between local and global (111-112) has many implications for Díaz's work as well as Luis Rafael Sánchez's.

There are many reasons why the Irish theme resonates in contemporary Latin American literature: its cosmopolitanism and universality, its connections to diasporic cultures, and, most of all, its ambiguity—which, in turn, creates space for more hybrid cultural identities in increasingly global societies. If, as Stanford Friedman points out, diasporas are also imagined communities, we might consider the previously mentioned texts as the foundational fictions of a transnational society. Irish characters, presented as foreigners, force readers to confront the others in their society as well as the others within themselves.

CHAPTER 1
SEARCHING FOR JOYCE: SECRETS, DOUBLES, AND TRANSLATION IN ISIDORO BLAISTEN'S "DUBLÍN AL SUR" AND ROBERTO FERRO'S *EL OTRO JOYCE*

> "El *Ulises* es, con toda probabilidad, la novela extranjera que más ha influido en nuestra narrativa, y por momentos se siente tan nuestra como si la hubiéramos escrito aquí. De hecho, no hemos dejado de hacerlo."
> Carlos Gamerro

James Joyce is often considered the most influential author of the twentieth century, an Irishman in exile who left his mark on writers worldwide. Latin America is no exception; Joycean language and narrative techniques reverberate through its literature, and critics continue to explore the nature and depth of Joyce's effect on the region's authors. This connection is particularly strong in Argentina. As Carlos Gamerro notes in the above quote, many Argentines feel a deep affinity with Joyce's work—as if it had been written in Argentina itself ("A cien años"). In a way, it was: two of the first valiant writers to attempt a Spanish translation of *Ulysses* were Argentine, and employed Argentine dialects in their translations. Francine Masiello explores the Joyce-Argentina connection in her article "Joyce in Buenos Aires (Talking Sexuality through Translation)," tracing Joyce's treatment of secrets, translation and sexuality through the works of three Argentine writers.[1] Building on that work, this chapter will examine the presence of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses* in the works of two contemporary Argentine authors. Both "Dublín al sur," by Isidoro Blaisten, and *El otro Joyce*, by Roberto Ferro, use doubles and translation in an attempt to unlock the secret connection

[1] Masiello analyzes Puig's *The Buenos Aires Affair* (2010), María Moreno's *El Affair Skeffington* (1992), and Sylvia Molloy's *El común olvido* (2002). This essay attempts to build on her theories on secrets and translation in Argentine authors and their relation to Joyce by analyzing these themes in two additional Argentine works.

between Ireland and Argentina. A closer look at these works will reveal not only the continuing presence of Joyce in Argentine literature, but also the history of his reception and translation in the Hispanic world.

As a starting point, it is important to note that Latin America has a long, rich tradition of multilingual writers. Although the academic study of literature tends to follow the boundaries of language and nationality, intertextuality and literary debt rarely do. By the late nineteenth century, Modernist writers such as José Martí and Rubén Darío were fluent in French and English, not only reading in other languages but also translating European and American texts and experimenting with their styles and techniques. Many Latin American authors began to take on more cosmopolitan identities, drawing on multiple languages and styles to create their own narratives. This tradition would continue well into the Boom and beyond, with Irish writers figuring prominently among those whose work Latin American authors translated and considered in the formation of their literary styles and identities. David Vela affirms, “Irish authors in the twentieth century have had an invaluable, though less recognized, influence on Latin American authors. Their works have helped to change the language to describe culture, history, politics and writing itself” (“Irish Mexican, Latino Irlandés"). These literary relationships might be partly explained by the quality and quantity of literary production in Ireland, along with the vanguard tendencies of its writers: Vela points out that Jonathan Swift and William Butler Yeats changed the idioms of prose, poetry and the essay, while Samuel Beckett, Brian O’Nuallain (Flann O’Brien) and James Joyce blended the genres (“Irish Mexican, Latino Irlandés").

Of these, James Joyce is arguably the most significant Irish writer to leave his mark on Latin American letters. Literary scholars have long acknowledged his presence in Fuentes's *La región más transparente* (1958), Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres* (1965), and numerous other Boom and post-Boom narratives.[2] More recently, César Salgado, Brian L. Price and John Pedro Schwartz published *TransLatin Joyce* (2014), a collection of essays about Joyce's role in shaping transatlantic modernism in Iberia and the Americas.[3] Vela notes that Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, and Carlos Fuentes were all readers of Joyce during their formative years as writers, and "at least one of them was reading Joyce in English before the rest of the English-speaking world could, because of the obscenity charge against his book: Jorge Luis Borges, in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, received from France the original text of *Ulysses,* and by 1925 had written his now famous essay 'El *Ulises* de Joyce'" ("Irish Mexican, Latino Irlandés"). In that essay, Borges included his Spanish translation of the final page of *Ulysses,* introducing Joyce to much of the Spanish-speaking world.[4]

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[2] In Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres* Joyce appears in constant puns, reference to Bloomsday, the "megaesoteric J'aime Joys," political analogies and linguistic analogies between Joyce's Irish English and Guillermo Cabrera Infante's Cuban Spanish (Levitt 390). Levitt points out that Joyce appears intertextually in several of Fuentes's works—in *La región más transparente*, for example, "paralysis" links Mexico City to Dublin (Levitt 390). Vela also discusses this point in his article "Irish Mexican, Latino Irlandes." Masiello asserts that Joyce paved the way for the Latin American neobarroco, such as Sarduy's *De donde son los cantantes* and *Cobra* (58).

[3] The introduction to *TransLatin Joyce* includes an extensive list of Iberian and Latin American authors who use Joyce as a key reference point in their writings.

[4] Borges's translation was not quite the first. Just a few months earlier, in November of 1924, Spanish literary critic Antonio Marichalar had published an essay entitled "James Joyce en su laberinto" in the *Revista de Occidente,* which included his translations of some sections of the final chapters of *Ulysses* (Conde-Parrilla 1).

Critics theorize that Borges was drawn to Joyce by his extraordinary use of language, his condition as an exile, his universality, and even the fact that both writers suffered from blindness. Vela suggests that Joyce introduced Latin American authors to high Modernism in epic poetry and in the novel, showing them how to make Spanish a more flexible and extensive language and, paradoxically, one of greater concision ("The Voice of James Joyce"). In reference to Borges's relationship with Joyce, Levine calls attention to his "ambivalent mode of admiration," noting that while Borges was fascinated with the ways in which Joyce stretched the limits of language and the novel, he also questioned Joyce's excessive demands on the reader (344). As Levine and other critics have noted, Borges may have admired Joyce's experimental language but he chose not to mimic it—perhaps because such language did not fit with his concise style, or simply because Spanish does not allow for the same kind of linguistic play as English. Vela notes that Joyce haunted Borges with his use of language, and that Borges praised the Irish writer in other ways such as parody, quotation and *negative* influence—that is, by *not* writing like him ("The Voice of James Joyce"). In this sense, Borges might be considered as a kind of narrative counterpoint to Joyce.

Despite their differences, Borges pays homage to Joyce in several essays[5] and poems. In his poem entitled "Invocación a Joyce," originally published in *Elogio de la sombra* in 1969, he seems to acknowledge that, although he will never write like Joyce (and probably doesn't want to), his writing exists because of him: "Yo soy los otros. Yo soy todos aquellos/ que ha rescatado tu obstinado rigor./ Soy los que no conoces y los que

[5] See Levine's "Notes to Borges's Notes on Joyce: Infinite Affinities" for further discussion of Borges's essays on Joyce.

salvas" (*Selected Poems* 288). As stated by Morton P. Levitt, "For Borges, as for all those who follow him […] Joyce the Modernist remains the inevitable starting point" (391). Levitt notes that Joyce enabled us to perceive the universal potential within each of our lives, which Borges expresses in his 1968 poem "James Joyce:" "En un día del hombre están los días/ del tiempo […]" (*Selected Poems* 273).

Beyond literary affinities, Borges also drew more general comparisons between Ireland and Argentina. In his essay "El escritor argentino y la tradición," he proposes that Argentina relates to the West in much the same way that Ireland relates to English culture. He notes that, for many illustrious Irish writers, the feeling of being Irish and distinct from the English (even if they were, themselves, descendants of English) allowed them to innovate within English culture. The Argentine, and South Americans in general, find themselves in a similar situation: "[P]odemos manejar todos los temas europeos, manejarlos sin supersticiones, con una irreverencia que puede tener, y ya tiene, consecuencias afortunadas" (*Discusión* 161). Levine describes the two writers as "third world brothers" in European clothing; both were exiles who found their home on the written page (346). These affinities appear in many of Borges's short stories, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Although Borges achieved fame for his writings, Efraín Kristal notes that he considered himself as a translator first and foremost (xi). In his introduction to *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation,* Kristal argues,

> Indeed, translation played a major role in every one of [Borges's] literary endeavors, and it was his conviction that some of the most cherished pleasures of literature became available only after a work has passed through many hands and undergone many changes. In his presentation of himself as a translator, one senses the reserved pride of a powerful literary

> mind able to appropriate and transform what is presumably already present without seemingly changing anything." (xiii)

For Borges, translation forms a natural part of a collective creative process and, as Kristal argues, this concept is central to his literary contributions. However, his philosophy of translation was not without its polemics: "Borges affirmed, in earnest, that an original can be unfaithful to a translation" (Kristal 1). In other words, he saw writing as a collective enterprise whereby a translation is capable of improving and surpassing the original text. He affirmed that one of the most fertile of all literary experiences is a comparative survey of the versions of a work, and often performs this exercise in his critical essays (Kristal 1-2). The Argentine writer admired T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and Kristal suggests that his views on translation can be read as a compliment to Eliot's ideas on the depersonalization of literature (10).

It is no surprise, then, that Borges also plays a role in the story of Joyce's translation into Spanish. In addition to having translated the last page of *Ulysses* for his 1925 review of the novel, he was invited to participate in a commission of Anglo-literary scholars who planned to work on translating *Ulysses* in its entirety during the early 1940s; however, their work was interrupted in 1945 by the appearance of José Salas Subirat's version, published in Buenos Aires by Rueda under the direction of Max Dickmann (Conde-Parrilla 2). Salas Subirat (1890-1975), a compatriot of Borges and the author of two novels and various self-help books, may have seemed an unlikely choice to translate Joyce's literary masterpiece. Salas Subirat's version is generally seen as less "academic" than later translations; however, Saer proposes that the world of *Ulysses* probably resembles more that of Salas Subirat than that of the intellectuals who followed him. Furthermore, he notes, "[S]us libros de autoayuda y su tratado sobre la venta de

seguros no resultan ni risibles ni indiferentes para quien ha leído a Joyce: Leopold Bloom hubiese podido escribirlos" (Saer).

Another controversial point is Salas Subirat's use of the Argentine dialect in his translation of *Ulysses*; however, Borges also used an Argentine dialect in his translation of the final page, "resultando muy marcado y particularmente reivindicativo el voceo de Molly, rasgo que sin duda proporciona mayor intimidad a sus pensamientos y credibilidad a su voz" (Conde-Parilla 9). Saer notes that subsequent translators would remove the *localismos* of Buenos Aires from the Spanish version, "como si un inglés de Londres pretendiese traducir los localismos populares de Dublín que figuran a granel en el original de Joyce al habla de Oxford" (Saer). In other words, Saer finds the use of local Spanish from the periphery an apt choice, given that Joyce wrote his master work in the everyday language of Dublin—not in the "proper" English of London.

As Conde-Parilla and Saer have pointed out, Salas Subirat's version was polemical but continues to be important—not only because it highlights the colossal challenge of translating a work like *Ulysses*, but also because it was the only Spanish version of the novel in existence until 1976 (Conde-Parilla 12). Conde-Parrilla explains that in spite of the 1976 translation by the Spanish José María Valverde, an edited version of the Salas Subirat translation appeared again in 1991 with illustrations by Julian Ríos and Eduardo Arroyo, and again in 1996 "aunque en este caso con drásticas revisiones y profusas anotaciones a cargo de Eduardo Chamorro (Barcelona, Planeta)" (2). Finally, Cátedra released a third Spanish translation by Francisco García Tortosa and María Luisa Venegas in 1999. Although critics differ in their assessments of the three translations, most recognize that Salas Subirat took an important first step in the translation of a nearly

impossible novel. Saer notes that, during subsequent decades, Salas Subirat's name appeared frequently in conversations between young Argentine writers—many of whom learned various narrative techniques through that particular translation of *Ulysses* (Saer). More recently, Salas Subirat and his famous translation captured the imagination of Argentine writer Lucas Petersen, who published a biography of the writer entitled *El traductor del Ulises* in 2016. In his introduction, Petersen acknowledges the controversy surrounding Salas Subirat's work but insists: "A esta altura no importa si la traducción de Salas Subirat es la mejor o no. Su trascendencia en nuestra cultura ya es otra" (v).

The story of *Ulysses*'s many translations and editions is epic in and of itself, and in many ways becomes a metaphor for the acts of reading and translation. The process of translating Joyce's work into Spanish has been the subject of numerous essays written by the likes of Rodríguez Monegal, Juan José Saer, Torrente Ballestar, Carlos Gamerro, and others. Eduardo Lago, who provides one of the most detailed studies of Joyce's work and its various translations into Spanish, was recognized with the Bartolomé March Prize for Literary Criticism in 2001. The title of his article "El íncubo de lo imposible," borrows the words of José Ortega y Gasset's 1948 *Esplendor y miseria de la traducción* in which Ortega characterizes the act of translation as the incubus of the impossible, thus highlighting the paradoxical nature of the translator's mission. Although all translations present difficult issues—such as the eternal dispute between literal and literary translation, or the delicate balance of aesthetics versus fidelity to the original text—*Ulysses* serves as the epitome of this difficult task. Lago points out that, so monumental was the challenge, that Joyce provided a map of his novel to Italian translator Carlos Linati (Lago). The map, which contained notes on the nine systems of reference within

each chapter, underscores the idea of translation as the ultimate act of reading—and as a process of discovery through which the reader/translator unlocks the secrets of a text.

If *Ulysses* revolutionized the literary world in 1922 with its use of everyday plot and language, its multiple systems of reference and unconventional narration, *Finnegans Wake* (1939) took experimentalism and linguistic play to new extremes. Humberto Eco notes that *Finnegans Wake* is a story which, though invented by an artist, inspired the minds of physicists and cosmologists. Interestingly, he relates Joyce's novel to Borges's future work, noting:

> Joyce did not dream up a possible library: he simply put into practice what Borges would later suggest. He used the twenty-six alphabetical symbols of English to produce a forest of nonexistent words with multiple meanings, he certainly put forward his book as a model of the universe, and he definitely intended that the reading of it should be endless and recurrent, so much so that he wished for "an ideal reader affected by an ideal insomnia." (110)

In *Finnegans,* Joyce reassembles and disintegrates language into what Eco calls "a whirlwind of new lexical monstrosities" (111). Eco notes that experimentation with language can take place on the side of signifier or signified, which he suggests is the key which links Borges and Joyce. Although both writers choose universal culture as their playground, "Joyce played with words, Borges with ideas" (113). Perhaps for this reason, the work of both writers continues to engage readers and writers worldwide.

"Dublín al sur" and *El otro Joyce* share in common their use of Joycean works—*Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake,* respectively—to epitomize the act of textual interpretation whereby the reader unlocks a secret. According to Masiello, "High modernism works through the secret. The midpoint between intelligibility and blankness, it is part of the strategy of 'difficult' writing that elevates the value of the modernist puzzle and

perpetuates its claim on institutional power" (55). Secrets imply a particular kind of drama—covering up, maintaining, or revealing hidden truths—and Masiello notes that this drama is enacted through language: "The secret thus renders visible, for some, the obvious paths towards knowledge and leaves others as outsiders to meaning" (55). If secrets are linked to language, the translator plays a key role of looking for hidden meanings—but also in concealing the identity of the original text, still inaccessible to the reader of the translated work (55). Masiello points out that these notions of secrets, language and translation are ever present in Joyce's *Ulysses,* widely considered the central novel of modernism—and the same could easily be said of *Finnegans Wake.*

On a textual level, there are secrets in Joyce's use of language, in the double movements between the surface of words and what lies beneath them (Masiello 56). There are also secrets which, originally, were only accessible to the novels' translators. Lago notes that Joyce's map of *Ulysses,* which he provided to Carlo Linati, included the *secret titles* of its chapters (Lago). He also highlights the fact that Joyce chose to hide the nine systems of reference from the reader so that they might manifest themselves latently. Thus, just as many of Joyce's characters are in search of revelations through language, readers of the novel also attempt to unlock the obscure corners of the text which resist interpretation (Masiello 56). On a more superficial level, the novel's characters keep and reveal secrets; Masiello notes that even the contents of Bloom's pockets are a mystery (56). Translation comes into play in Joyce's obsession with foreign languages, which form part of his constant play on language. Lago observes that this constant play between languages presents a unique challenge to its translators. For example, the phrase "Muchibus thankibus" has been translated as "Gracias muchibus" (Salas Subirat),

"Muchibus gracibus" (Jose Maria Valverde), and "Gracibus muchibus" (Tortosa and Venegas); for his part, Lago suggests that the most appropriate translation might be to maintain the original but add accents: "Múchibus thánkibus" (Lago).

Masiello notes, "Joyce decouples meaning from any single language while he also lays bare the deceptive linguistic proposals that might anchor a law of fixed equivalences between language, home and nation" (56). The same could be said of Isidoro Blaisten's and Roberto Ferro's protagonists, who seek revelation through language and translation and, in the process, blur the lines between both nations and genres. In very different ways, both works highlight the point that translation works as a key element of the Irish-Argentine connection, and to literary relationships in general. Furthermore, we shall see that Blaisten and Ferro expand the idea of translation to encompass not just linguistic but other kinds of transfer, as well.

Both "Dublín al sur" and *El otro Joyce* acknowledge that part of Joyce's attraction lies in the enormous challenge (or, as Ferro proposes in *El otro Joyce*, near impossibility) of translating his work. Since both works problematize translation on various levels—plot, theme, and discourse—they could be considered what Waïl Hassan has called "translational literature:"

> In the space between translators and translated, there are texts that straddle two languages, at once foregrounding, performing, and problematizing the act of translation; they participate in the construction of cultural identities from that in-between space and raise many of the questions that preoccupy contemporary translation theory. ("Agency" 754)

The works to be examined in this chapter explore different definitions of translation as well as some of its central questions—literal versus literary translation, originals and

copies, stereotyped identities that may arise from a translated work, and perhaps most importantly, translation as the ultimate act of interpretation.

In Blaisten's "Dublín al sur" (1980), a narrator by the name of Esteban Dedales describes his absurd relationship to Joyce's *Ulysses,* which he has been reading for nearly ten years. He admits, "En realidad, yo al *Ulises* nunca lo entendí del todo. Mejor dicho, todavía hay partes que no las entiendo; mejor dicho, casi no entendía nada. Pero me emperré. Porque la primera vez que tuve el libro en mis manos intuí que se trataba de algo muy importante, que iba a cambiar el rumbo de mi vida" (180). Esteban struggles with the difficult, opaque language of Joyce's text but, like a translator, he works tirelessly to find meaning behind the text. Part of Esteban's motivation lies in his perception that his life has always mirrored the novel, beginning with his own name and the names of his family members and friends—although, interestingly, these mirror the controversial first Spanish translation of *Ulysses* by José Salas Subirat in 1945. Salas Subirat's edition allegedly contains multiple errors and inconsistencies, not least of which was his use of names. Conde-Parrilla notes,

> Con respecto a los nombres propios, Salas Subirat los traduce conforme a la convención de la época ('Leopoldo Bloom', 'Esteban Dedales', 'Juan Enrique Menton'), a diferencia de los apodos más usados, que deja en inglés ('Buck Mulligan', 'Blazes Boylan', 'Nosey Flynn'); pero no sólo es inconsistente en la aplicación de esta técnica […] sino que incluso ofrece un mismo nombre en dos idiomas ('Molly'/'Maruja Bloom'; 'Malachi'/'Malaquías Mulligan', 'Jack'/'Juancito Power'). (8)

As such, Blaisten's protagonist is named Esteban Dedales, and his Argentine wife is named Maruja, corresponding with Salas Subirat's decision to translate Molly as Maruja. Maruja's father is Leopoldo Bulnes, "muy parecido a Leopoldo Bloom" (Blaisten 181). Naturally, Esteban and Maruja name their daughter Molly. Esteban's boss at the bank

where he works is Juan Matías Henríquez, like Juan Enrique Menton of Salas Subirat's *Ulises*, and Esteban's friend and mentor from the television show is Jota Jota, Salas Subirat's version of J.J. O'Molloy. Masiello also notes the importance of names in *Ulysses,* reminiscent of Murphy's question "What's in a name?" She notes, "The name reminds us of the ongoing tension between disclosure and misrepresentation" (57). In "Dublín al sur," characters' names also point to the difference between languages, and the sometimes blurry line between reality and fiction.

Aside from the names of his loved ones, Esteban also has a more selfish and rather superficial motivation to decode the novel: an escapist fantasy to live in an Irish castle and go to bed with adolescent girls. He confesses:

> Mi sueño dorado consistía en abandonar a mi familia, escaparme a Irlanda, comprarme un castillo, leer el Ulises sentado junto al fuego, tener dos perros irlandeses para que me lamiesen las botas mientras leía, emborracharme una vez por mes en la taberna, agarrarme a trompadas como hacía Hemingway cuando iba a beber con el maestro y cumplir mi programa anual de una adolescente por noche. (Blaisten 171)

In other words, Esteban not only wants to understand the novel; he wants to *live* in it. This second motivation is not entirely unrelated to the first: he sees Joyce's *Ulysses* as corresponding not only to the life he lives, but also to the life he desires. As absurd as it may seem, his fantasy is just another attempt to translate the fictional novel into reality, albeit a stereotypical one.

The fact that Esteban fails to understand the text only adds to his desire. His wife Maruja shakes her head at his stubborn efforts, telling him "'Bestia. No te entra nada de lo que leés'" (Blaisten 181)—while at the same time she steals secret glances at his cut-out photo of Joyce, and pages through his copy of *Ulises*. Perhaps she perceives that, for Esteban, the novel is an escape—"'…porque no tengo un castillo en Irlanda, porque soy

un alienado trabajando en el Banco, y porque en vos, Maruja, late una secreta envidia ante el espectáculo maravilloso de mi sublime terquedad'" (181). According to Masiello, the trope of the secret works to balance the relationship between those in the know and those who remain on the margins (55); Maruja perceives that her husband has entered an insider community—the cult of Joyce—and both the photo and the book make her aware of her exclusion. Maruja and Esteban are not alone in the mysterious pull they feel towards the Irish author; Esteban tells the story of how he participates in a television game show called *Vida y obra de James Joyce* every Thursday during an entire year, earning the fame and admiration of family, friends, coworkers, and complete strangers. People recognize him on the street and ask for autographs, local news stations feature him in their reports, and the Irish Argentine Cultural Institute honors him with a cocktail party on March 17th, feast day of the patron saint of Ireland.

Throughout the story, Esteban interprets the events of his life in Joycean terms, relating his loved ones to Ulyssean characters and often using narrative techniques commonly employed by Joyce to describe his relationships and reactions. For example, he describes his friendship with the show's host, Jota Jota, as a flow of consciousness (173). As his fantasy becomes more elaborate, he becomes preoccupied with the time-space continuum, deciding that each adolescent girl should be re-named after the saint whose feast day corresponds with her birthday, which will also determine which night of the year each girl will spend with him. When Esteban and Jota Jota go out for drinks after the show each week, Esteban tells his friend about his plans to live in Ireland with the adolescent girls and Jota Jota responds "pero fijate vos como parcializás: únicamente pensás en la noche. ¿Y el día? ¿El día no existe para vos?" (179). Jota Jota seems to be

wondering how Esteban can forget about the daytime, when the entire action of *Ulysses* occurs during one day. At home, Maruja continues to pester him, but he stops answering her because, as he explains it, he had entered into a kind of interior monologue (181).

Esteban perceives that *Ulysses* will change his life, and it does—at the end of 1975, exactly one year into the game show, he answers the final question of *Vida y obra de James Joyce* and, to the elation of the show's host and fans, takes home the jackpot of a billion pesos. Thus, he tells his story from the vantage point of his Irish castle, having abandoned his family and his entire life in Argentina to live out his Joycean life. He purchases his castle and fills it with 365 adolescent girls, whom he re-names to correspond with their namesake saints. He finds an Irish teacher named Keogh Kilkenny so that he may insult locals and provoke fights during his monthly visits to the pub, and Kilkenny then brings him hats from Belfast, a harp for the girls to play, and two dogs to lick his boots. However, nothing turns out quite as he had planned, as he falls in love with one of the girls, Patricia, on March 17th. Patricia, an excellent administrator, then takes charge of firing Keogh Kilkenny, sending the other 364 girls home, putting an end to Esteban's monthly tavern fights, and selling the dogs (who, Esteban admits, he never could get to lick his boots).

What is most telling is the way in which Patricia manages to steal Esteban's heart. Esteban recounts that he was sitting in bed, consulting his agenda to see which adolescent girl was on duty that evening, when Patricia came in and handed him a copy of *Ulysses*—and not just any *Ulysses*, because he had already scoured the bookstores of Europe and had, in his collection, every existing copy of the novel in English.

> Pero cuando vi en las manos de Patricia mi *Ulises*, la traducción argentina de Salas Subirat, Santiago Rueda Editor, la única que existe en castellano, cuando vi

> en sus manos mi vieja, querida, ajada y subrayada traducción de *Ulises* que traje como único equipo de mi Buenos Aires querido, que estoy mirando ahora sobre la mesa, lloré. Yo, que no soy un tipo fácil para las lágrimas, lloré como una mujer. (Blaisten 184)

The following morning, Patricia adds another detail: on the mantle, next to the portrait of Irish nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell, she has placed a photograph of the Argentine tango singer Carlos Gardel. Just as Esteban prefers Salas Subirat's Spanish translation of *Ulysses*, he also prefers his life in Ireland with a touch of Argentine culture.

"Dublín al sur" is the name of the story, and also the name that Esteban has given to his castle—"en homenaje a Buenos Aires, que nunca olvido" (Blaisten 182). In the beginning, we see Esteban in Argentina dreaming of Ireland, but by the end of the story we find the same man in Ireland, dreaming of Argentina. Just as he needs the Argentine *Ulises* and an image of Gardel, he is left missing his daughter Molly and his wife´s *pororó*. In the words of the master: "Think you're escaping and run into yourself. Longest way round is the shortest way home" (*Ulysses* 344). On one level, then, "Dublín al sur" is a story about desire and longing for a place on the other side of the Atlantic, and nostalgia for the place from whence one came. Blaisten's story speaks to the strange affinities between Argentina and Ireland and, since these are difficult to explain in any rational way, he employs humor and the absurd to communicate this connection.[6] On another, perhaps deeper level, "Dublín al sur" is the story of an Argentine who is more enamored with the universal, than with the local.

"Dublín al sur" forms part of a collection by the same title published in 1996. Although it is the only story which makes reference to Ireland, or to Joyce in particular, it

[6] Chapter 3 will further explore connections between Argentina and Ireland.

relates to other stories in the collection in its shared themes of longing and nostalgia. Esteban's longing and nostalgia is also firmly rooted in a puzzling text, and on a deeper level "Dublín al sur" functions as a metaphor for the acts of reading and translation. If we consider the story within the framework of translational literature, Blaisten uses both the characters and the plot of his story to explore the process and the final product of translation. His use of names such as Maruja and Molly, along with a reference to the original Argentine translation, point to Salas Subirat and his controversial techniques, such as translating characters' names and employing an Argentine dialect. On a larger scale, the story of Esteban Dedales demonstrates the many ways in which translation transforms a text. Is *Ulysses* difficult for Esteban because of its language and experimental form, or because the original English text is inaccessible to him as a Spanish reader? Either way, Esteban adopts the text to his own reality, merging the Irish with the Argentine. Blaisten plays with an alternate definition of translation—translating ideas into action—and takes it to the extreme. The story also seems to be poking fun at one of the dangers of translation—that of translation resulting in stereotype. This is certainly the case in Esteban's translation of *Ulysses,* where he ends up living in an Irish castle full of adolescent girls.

Roberto Ferro also makes reference to James Joyce (in addition to an "other Joyce," as the title of his novel suggests) and, in the process, experiments with various definitions of translation. *El otro Joyce* is a highly self-conscious detective novel about someone who begins looking for a book and ends up involved in a crime. Above all, it is a reflection on the problematic of language and translation, and the confusion of identities implicit in all translations. The novel's protagonist, Jorge Cáceres, runs a small business

researching patents, missing books, and missing persons. The novel's plot follows him as he works to solve two mysteries: one related to the search for a first edition of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* annotated by Jorge Luis Borges, and the second related to the suspicious death of Marcos Almeida, a prominent financier, just before the collapse of his business.

It is important to note that all of this takes place within the historical setting of Carlos Menem's presidency (1989-99). In an interview with Teresa Gatto, Ferro describes this time period as "el carnaval menemista," which also brings to mind a play of masks and disguises. Menem, who had campaigned as a traditional Peronist, soon transformed his policy into one which differed radically from the Peronist vision of Argentina. As historian David Sheinin notes, "By April 1990, Menem had decided to discard decades of Peronist anti-American rhetoric and to align his nation's economic, financial, and strategic policies with the United States" (196). In particular, he initiated massive privatizations and foreign investment, affording greater opportunities to foreign multinationals (197). In other words, Menem attempted to maintain the public appearance of a Peronist nationalist while his behavior behind the scenes was quite the opposite. Although some associate his presidential terms with economic stability, Menem was forced to step down in 1999 amid allegations of rampant corruption. Several years later, the façade of economic prosperity would come crashing down with the political and economic collapses of 2001 and widespread national protests. In *El otro Joyce,* Cáceres is living these moments of economic uncertainty and political distrust as he attempts to solve a mystery which involves both financial scandal and public deception.

Cáceres takes notes as he works to unravel the two mysteries of Joyce and Almeida, and the notes become the novel itself. However, as the reader discovers at the end of the book, Cáceres is not the only author; in fact, he might not be the author at all. He ends up turning the manuscript over to his colleague Miguel Vieytes, who explains in his "epílogo provisional" that he has made some (unspecified) corrections, and has also submitted the text to a professional editor to reconcile some stylistic differences. This is only one of many confused identities throughout the book: Cáceres's work is constantly hindered and confused by the appearance of doubles. Rather than finding a first edition of Joyce, Cáceres first comes across a notebook written by *William* Joyce—an American born Irish-British fascist who worked with the Germans during World War II and was eventually convicted as a traitor.[7] Later, Cáceres and his associate find not one but two "original" editions of *Finnegans Wake* with identical annotations in Borges's handwriting. William Joyce is confused with James Joyce, James Joyce is confused with Borges, and Cáceres frequently refers to himself as a "double agent." The search for Almeida also results in the discovery of a double. In addition to this dizzying array of characters, both historic and fictional, the novel has multiple geographic reference points—Buenos Aires, Florence, Italy, Ireland, and Germany.

Critics of the novel have focused on a key detail of Cáceres's appearance—within the opening pages of the novel, the reader learns that he is cross-eyed: "Opté por el silencio y el refugio tras los lentes oscuros que ocultaban pudorosamente el estrabismo de mi ojo izquierdo, que perseveraba desde mi nacimiento en ocupar el ángulo superior del

[7] William Joyce (1906-1946), also known by his nickname Lord Haw Haw, was an actual historical character. In this sense, Ferro employs a classic Borgesian strategy of combining historical characters with invented ones.

glóbulo ocular, produciendo en los demás […] una mezla indefinida de rechazo y placer" (*El otro Joyce* 8). In an interview with the author, Teresa Gatto asks whether *El otro Joyce* requires a cross-eyed reader, as well. Ferro is hesitant to dictate a process for his readers, but notes that when he began to write the novel, he felt it was necessary to give the character a different angle of vision (Gatto). Ana Abregu affirms, "El protagonista, Cáceres y su particular estrabismo son puestas en escena de una forma de presentación y también de búsquedas, hay una sugerencia de dos formas de ver esta historia, dos miradas, dos narradores" (Abregu). Julieta Montalbano relates Cáceres's *estrabismo* to the way in which the novel breaks the mold and diverges from the typical path of a detective narrative—there is more than one crime, and *El otro Joyce* is much more than a detective novel. "La construcción del policial está hecha con herramientas diferentes. La disertación sobre la misma literatura, sobre, incluso, el mismo género pone en abismo a quien se atreva a entrar en la trama" (Montalbano). Abregu calls it a "novela inclasificable," noting that the book moves in two directions—the search for a book, and the search for meaning (Abregu).

Regardless of its specific classification, *El otro Joyce* is undeniably a "narcissistic narrative," as Linda Hutcheon has described the poetics of postmodernism. If there is a covert self-consciousness in Ferro's use of a detective narrative, it becomes overt in Cáceres's explicit comments, throughout the narrative, on both the power and inadequacy of language. In one sense, then, *El otro Joyce* functions as a detective story—unsurprisingly, also one of Borges's preferred narrative styles. Cáceres works as a private detective to uncover two mysteries, and in this sense the novel follows strong conventions of order and logic as the reader also attempts to solve the mystery. "It is this

very store of infinitely reworkable conventions that is acknowledged and exploited, 're-contextualized,' by metafictionists such as Robbe-Grillet and Borges" (Hutcheon 72). Hutcheon notes that the active participation of the reader in a detective story—the act of interpretation, of following clues—is a process emblematic of reading any novel (72).

In an interview with Tania Temoche, Ferro sheds some light on his interest in detective narrative:

> Yo hago crítica literaria porque me gusta lo policial. Hay ciertas simetrías entre la crítica literaria y el relato policial […] Cuando el crítico busca objetos como inéditos, manuscritos, cartas, testimonios, allí la trama policial es muy pertinente para comprender las pujas que hay en ese campo. Donde son frecuentes las falsificaciones, las estafas, los plagios, las complicidades que tienen una notable correspondencia con lo policial. (Temoche)

Ferro first became familiar with this process during the military dictatorship (1974-1983), when he worked as a phantom writer, "una especie de escritor negro de guiones de historieta" (Temoche). He notes that he wrote about a half dozen of these a week which, when they were published, often appeared in totally different form than how he had submitted them. This experience taught him to follow the tracks of his own work: "me imponía la necesidad de componer historias y seguirlas hasta el final sin abandonarlas" (Temuche). Literary criticism is, for Ferro, a search for meaning.

It is no accident that Cáceres also happens to be a fan of mystery stories, and references crime and detective fiction throughout his narrative: Raymond Chandler (*El otro Joyce* 132), a British-American author of detective stories in the 1930s; Piglia (143), Argentine author of crime and new historical fiction; Borges's detective stories such as "La muerte y la brújula" (263) and, most tellingly, Cortázar's short story "Instrucciones para John Howell" (142). In Cortázar's story, a man named Rice attends a play, becomes involved in it against his will, and ultimately becomes caught in a confusion of realities

and identities. At its core, *El otro Joyce* tells a similar story: that of a man named Cáceres who accepts a job to take pictures, gets drawn in as a participant in the act he had been hired to witness, and ultimately finds himself in a web of political fiction and historical realities. At a very dramatic moment in the novel, Cáceres sees one of the images he has photographed, which has been plagiarized and presented in a different context, on the front page of the newspaper. As he realizes that he is part of a larger financial and human drama, he writes, "Recuerdo a John Howell" (142). Multiple references to Onetti throughout Cáceres's narrative also suggests the crossing of fiction and reality.

Given the backdrop of Menem's presidency and rampant financial corruption in Argentina, *El otro Joyce* also functions as a type of historical metafiction. Again, the novel participates in a self-referential process by alluding to classic works of historical fiction. At one point, Cáceres tells of a former case where a missing person's library revealed her location. He notes that the subject was a reader of the new historical novel, all of which he recognized—from canonical works such as García Márquez's *El otoño del patriarca,* Roa Bastos's *Yo el supremo* to lesser-known works by Alfonso del Paso, Homero Aridjis, Tomás de Mattos and Julio Escoto. The key novel—that which helps him discover her current whereabouts—is a first edition of *Operación Masacre* (1957), a nonfiction work of investigative journalism written by well-known Argentine author Rodolfo Walsh (*El otro Joyce* 157). Walsh used crime narrative to denounce state violence and criminal activity during the Dirty War, and this otherwise tangential chapter in the novel points to the way in which *El otro Joyce* functions as a crime narrative: one which un-masks state crimes which have continued into the next generation, this time in the private sector.

As Cáceres's journalist friend observes, "Vos sabés que la historia es una cuestión de géneros, cada época impone un tipo de relato y se niega sistemáticamente a dejarse narrar por otras modalidades" (52). Hutcheon describes historiographic metafiction as a relatively new mode in her most recent edition of *Narcissistic Narrative,* noting that what is most significant about this form "is that the hard-won textual autonomy of fiction is challenged, paradoxically, by self-referentiality itself" (xiv). She adds, "If language, as these texts suggest, constitutes reality (rather than merely reflecting it), readers become the actualizing link between history and fiction" (xiv). And if the reader can be lured into participating in the creation of the novelistic universe, Hutcheon suggests that the power of metafiction lies in its potential to also seduce the reader into political action. *El otro Joyce* works to situate itself firmly in the history of political and financial corruption of Menem's Argentina, compelling the reader to make sense of the nation's financial and political chaos just as Cáceres attempts to do in his work as detective.

The fiction Hutcheon describes is self-referring and auto-representational; it provides a commentary on its own status of fiction and as language, and on its own processes of production and reception. *El otro Joyce* certainly achieves this commentary in its reflections on language and translation, its explicit search for a book, and the questions it presents on the authorship of Cáceres's manuscript. Throughout the novel, double identities are linked to the acts of writing and translation. Cáceres's officemate (and, as the reader ultimately learns, co-author of the manuscript), Miguel Vieytes, makes his living by writing papers for university students. Cáceres describes his writing as a paradox: Vieytes is able to imitate others in his writing, "pegándose cuidadosamente a sus giros, aludiendo con breves modificaciones a su significación, componiendo pastiches

casi inigualables," but he has never been able to publish his own ideas (49). Here, again, an intertextual reference provides a clue: a mention, in the final pages of the manuscript, to *Budapeste* by Chico Buarque: a novel about a ghost writer.

Cáceres often muses over the hidden connections between individuals, between texts, and between texts and individuals. For example, William Joyce's manuscript includes a letter from James Joyce, which leads Cáceres to conjecture about the relation between the two Joyces: "[…] ahora estaba frente a la posibilidad de descubrir una intriga secreta e ignorada que vinculaba al escritor del *Finnegans* con otro Joyce" (62). One theory that arises is the different use of language in James Joyce's literary writings as opposed to the writing in his notes and letters—something which Caceres's professor describes as "un contravalor joyceano," a point of contact between two different notions of language (93).[8] Cáceres then begins to translate William Joyce's manuscript, but finds himself unable to go on: "Releí mi transcripción, me preocupa la extensión de las frases, la sintaxis que había elegido era algo diferente a la de Joyce, alargaba innecesariamente la mayoría de ellas, estableciendo conexiones donde había puntos que cortaban la ilación de su discurso" (124). In the act of translation, Cáceres realizes that he is unable to produce a satisfactory imitation of William Joyce's syntax. Similarly, when he discovers Borges's annotated versions of *Finnegans,* he theorizes that Borges found himself unable to produce a satisfactory imitation of James Joyce's syntax. In spite of their failure to produce exact copies, however, translation plays a role in both Borges's and Cáceres's creative processes.

[8] The possibility of a counterpoint to Joyce also points back to Borges.

The novel's title refers to this "other [William] Joyce" at the same time that it presents Borges as another Joyce. Abregu notes that the title is undoubtedly an homage to Borges, and serves as a leit motiv of a novel which takes duplications to the extreme (Abregu). We see this as Cáceres and his associate, Sarquis, continue to search for the first edition of *Finnegans Wake*[9] with Borges's annotations. Cáceres suspects the value of the text lies in what it could reveal about Borges's readings and re-readings of Joyce over many years, and the ways in which his perspective had changed with each new reading:

> La idea me sedujo, revelaba una secreta construcción simétrica, Joyce había escrito el *Finnegans* durante casi diecisiete años, me fascinó pensar en un lector como Borges que durante mucho tiempo, llegaba a calcular un lapso que abarcaba casi quince años, haya buscado penetrar en los defiladeros del sentido, insistiendo, variando y recomponiendo una y otra vez el texto y sus márgenes…[C]omencé a pensar en el ejemplar de *Finnegans* como un nuevo Aleph. (*El otro Joyce* 22-23)

From the beginning, Cáceres seeks a symmetrical connection between the two writers. He also describes reading in much the same way that one might describe translation—trying to penetrate meaning, persisting and recomposing again and again the text and its margins. However, when he and his associate discover the annotated text, they are surprised by the nature and the abundance of the annotations—every available blank space in the margins is occupied with Borges's handwriting in pencil and in various colors of ink, and they are not notes on *Finnegans* as they had expected, but transcriptions of Borges's own texts. Among this marginalia, Cáceres finds fragments of "Las versiones homéricas," a quote from "El tiempo circular," complete transcriptions of "El inverosímil impostor Tom Castro" and "Vindicación de Bovard y Pécuchet," the first

[9] Here Cáceres is referring to the first U.S. edition printed by Viking Press (New York) in 1939. Faber & Faber (under T.S. Eliot) also published an edition that year in the United Kingdom, some of which were sold in the U.S. (Peter Harrington).

part of "Los traductores de las 1001 Noches," "El capitán Burton," and the last of "El escritor argentino y la tradición."

Given that Ferro himself is a literary critic well versed in Borges's work and biography, readers cannot ignore this strategic chain of references—all of which relate to concepts of translation, variation and multiple versions. "Las versiones homéricas" (1932) was among the first essays where Borges would philosophize about translation and, as Levine notes, "resituate the translator's activity at the center of literary discussion" (1134). In this early essay, Borges denies the assumption that a translation is necessarily inferior to its original, praising the "riqueza heterogénea y hasta contradictoria de múltiples traducciones" (*Discusión* 107). In "Las versiones homéricas" he reaches the conclusion that the most literal translation is not necessarily the one which is truest to the original (112).

In "El tiempo circular," first published in *Historia de la eternidad* (1936), Borges contemplates the infinity of variations as imagined by Nietzsche. Although Cáceres only mentions an unspecified quote from "El tiempo circular" in the novel, an earlier story by Roberto Ferro includes greater detail. The story, written in 2009 and entitled "Heterónimos III: Borges y Joyce en la biblioteca de un autodidacta" appears to be an earlier manifestation of Cáceres's story, at least the part about his search for the rare copy of *Finnegans.* Although this story does not include anything related to Almeida or the financial collapse, "Heterónimos III" does mention that, on the lower part of the interior cover, the found version of *Finnegans Wake* includes this quote from "El tiempo circular:" "...en la historia decimal que ideó Condorcet, en Francis Bacon y en Uspensky; en Gerald Herat, en Spengler y en Vico..." with the final word circled in red ink. Vico, in

turn, evokes a theory of fluidity: "Nothing endures for Vico in a definitive shape, and he will chart the internal fluidity of each social structure through which all nations in history run their courses" (Mazzota 163).

Borges's annotated copy of *Finnegans* also includes, according to Cáceres's findings, a transcription of "El inverosímil impostor Tom Castro," a story of imitation and confused identities. Here, a questionable character named Bogle invents a plot to fake the identity of a sailor lost at sea, by sending Arthur Orton (alias Tom Castro) to present himself as a prodigal son to a desperately grieving mother. "Bogle sabía que un facsímil perfecto del anhelado Roger Charles Tichborne era de imposible obtención. Sabía también que todas las similitudes logradas no harían otra cosa que destacar ciertas diferencias inevitables. Renunció, pues, a todo parecido" ("Tom Castro")." In other words, the genius of Bogle and Orton's plan is not that they produced an exact copy, but that they produced a convincing copy. Also along the lines of copies, "Vindicación de Bouvard y Pécuchet" tells the story of two copyists and ultimately reflects upon the death of the novel.

In "El Capitán Burton," the first section of his essay "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," Borges evaluates the multiple versions and elaborations of *The Thousand and One Nights.* Burton is presented as one more in a long line of translators; however, according to Borges, each translator leaves his mark on the narrative and becomes a part of its history: "Lane tradujo contra Galland, Burton contra Lane; para entender a Burton hay que entender esa dinastía enemiga" ("Los traductores"). To this, Borges adds another very important point: some of the most famous tributes and acclaims of *The Thousand and One Nights*—Coleridge, Tomás de Quincey, Stendhal, Tennyson and Edgar Allen

Poe—came from readers of Galland's controversial translation. In this sense "El Capitán Burton" resembles somewhat the story of José Salas Subirat's *Ulysses:* a translation which, in spite of its polemics, left its mark on a generation or more of Argentine writers.

The final annotation, as described by Cáceres, is the final section of "El escritor argentino y la tradición" in which Borges urges Argentine writers to consider the universe, not just Argentina, as their patrimony: "ensayar todos los temas, y no podemos concretarnos a lo argentino para ser argentinos: porque o ser argentino es una fatalidad y en ese caso lo seremos de cualquier modo, o ser argentino es una mera afectación, una máscara" (*Discusión* 162). In this same essay, Borges points to an affinity between the Argentines and the Irish, as he considered Joyce a prime example of a creator of universal literature.

Cáceres and Sarquis develop two different theories regarding the transcriptions. Cáceres begins his explanation with the Tower of Babel, the confusion of multiple languages, and the necessary but impossible task of translation.[10] Since all of the texts transcribed in *Finnegans* allude either directly or indirectly to translation, he suggests a Borgesian theory on translation. According to Cáceres, Borges conceived of translation as a reciprocal debt between the original and the translated text—in other words, translation as supplement (*El otro Joyce* 135). As Borges develops in his critical essays on translation and in his own work as translator, "La traducción […] se transforma a su vez en el acontecimiento de un nuevo texto" (135). In this process of transformation, the

[10] The reference to the Tower of Babel also points to one of Ferro's critical essays, "Un chino perdido en la biblioteca de Babel," in which Ferro reflects on the experience of tutoring a Chinese professor on the life and work of Borges. The professor, Lin Yiang, later translated Borges's stories and essays to Chinese.

translator works as both a reader and a writer to highlight and restore, as Cáceres explains it, the original text's idiomatic resistance (135).

By emphasizing the supplement in his speculations, Cáceres circles back to another foundational theorist: Jacques Derrida. Ferro has already demonstrated a strong interest on this topic in his critical work *Escritura y desconstrucción: Lectura (h)errada con Jacques Derrida* (1995), a didactic text on the history and development of Derridean thought. As he points out in this study, the key points of self, repetition and death in Derrida's *Voice and Phenomenon* (1967) intersect with another major Derridean theme—the indiscernible borders between reading and writing (*Escritura* 33):

> La paradoja de la expresividad pura, a la que se privilegia en el análisis de Husserl, es que es inexpresiva. La contradicción aparece cuando se señala el punto de máxima claridad que se trastorna en el más confuso: si 'la voz es la consciencia, una voz sin escritura es absolutamente viva y absolutamente muerta.' (*Escritura* 38)

According to the theory of writing as supplement, its addition responds to an absence; it is "added" to speech in order to carry out the ideal object (*Escritura* 40). At the same time that it is an addition, the supplement also compensates for a lack in the original speech. As Jonathan Culler explains, "Writing can be compensatory, a supplement to speech, only because speech is already marked by the qualities generally predicated of writing: absence and misunderstanding" (103). The endless chain of supplements which Derrida identifies in Rousseau translate, in Borgesian theory, to "Los traductores de *Las Mil y una noches,*" where, over time, it becomes impossible to identify the original text. Translation and marginalia in *El otro Joyce* serve as prime examples of this supplementarity. Rather than helping the reader to discover the *real* meaning of *Finnegans Wake*, the transcriptions take us one step farther away from it.

Finnegans Wake (much like *Ulysses*) presents a complex problem of language: "cómo traducir un texto escrito en varias lenguas a la vez, cómo restituir el efecto de esa pluralidad" (136). Faced with the impossibility of translating the plurality of Joyce's novel, Cáceres proposes that Borges opted for the extreme gesture which points to a possible reconciliation between original and copy:

> Lo que hace Borges aquí en secreto es confesar que no hay traducciones fieles o infieles, pues ambos casos son estrictamente imposibles. Entonces asume, yo creo que asume, frente al *Finnegans* un riesgo planteando la tarea de traductor como necesaria e imposible, es decir, alude diagonalmente al inacabamiento de la interpretación. (*El otro Joyce* 136)

His own texts, added excessively as supplement to Joyce's, work directly against the idea of the translator as invisible, and affirm that translation is the most genuine test of the act of interpretation, in which every reader participates to some degree (136). Thus, the edition of *Finnegans* that they´ve discovered, according to Cáceres, represents a double paradox: "Por una parte, la traducción suprime las diferencias entre dos lenguas; por otra, las exhibe desaforadamente. […E]n un extremo el mundo se nos presenta como una superposición de textos, cada uno ligeramente distinto del anterior, es decir, traducciones de traducciones de traducciones" (137). According to Cáceres's interpretation, Borges's transcriptions point to the paradox of language and translation—highlighting the multiplicity of language and proposing a vision of every text as both unique and a copy of a previous text. Outside of the novel, other literary critics have proposed similar relationships between Borges and Joyce. Cáceres's theory is reminiscent of Levine's observation regarding the ambivalent relationship between the two writers:

> Newness or perhaps *originality* is the key to this ambivalence and to the particular confrontation between Joyce and Borges. Borges would ultimately translate Joyce's efforts to write the simultaneity of perceived reality into his own terms by going beyond verbal language's limitations

> as a successive medium and transcending the temporal linearity of texts through the inscription of circular readings. (Levine 345)

Of course, a key work on translation is missing from those transcriptions—"Pierre Menard"—but Cáceres suggests that its exclusion is an allusion to Ts'ui Pen of "El jardin de senderos que se bifurcan," who never uses the word time in his novel about time (138). In short, Cáceres proposes that Borges was experimenting with a possible translation of *Finnegans,* one which would conserve the poetics of both writer and translator by "adding" his own writing as a supplement to Joyce.

Sarquis's theory differs from his associate's, although the two are not entirely incompatible. He proposes that Borges's transcriptions represent an obsessive search for a way to preserve the absolute secret of meaning:

> Este objetivo que tiene carácter mítico, desemboca en una contradicción que no se puede resolver, para que haya secreto absoluto el falsificador debe copiar tan perfectamente que anule cualquier otra alternativa de desciframiento que no sea considerar lo falso como verdadero, por lo tanto desaparece la diferencia y se complica la idea de identidad. (139)

According to Sarquis, Borges functions as a double agent, as both reader and writer of the texts which fill the blank spaces in Joyce's novel. He falsifies his own texts as a writer, and reconstructs his interpretation in a way which is impossible to falsify. Like his associate, Sarquis also sees Borges's *Finnegans* as a hidden message related to originals and copies, but he conceives of translation as an act of falsification which copies an original text and makes it impossible to distinguish between the two versions: "[L]a falsificación absoluta anula la idea de copia" (*El otro Joyce* 140). In this sense, Sarquis conjectures that Borges has taken on a task akin to that of Pierre Menard; "hace desaparecer el mediador, el que transcribe es el que lee lo que él mismo ha escrito, como repetición y como diferencia" (140). The value of his annotated copy of *Finnegans Wake,*

then, is the impossibility of distinguishing between true and false—an assessment which Cáceres's theory would also support.

The search for missing books becomes more dramatic when a second copy of the novel turns up—like the other which they had already discovered, a first edition by Viking Press of *Finnegans Wake* with identical annotations. Even the different colors of ink are the same; however, in this version, the dedication appears in English instead of Spanish. Sarquis wonders whether there might be a Scharlach behind this mystery—a logic which suggests that a *third* version may eventually appear. Cáceres considers the possibility that Borges "forged" a second version because he had lost the first to an old girlfriend—a love affair which Cáceres unearths during his investigation. He notes, "la supuesta copia facsimilar podría formar parte de una venganza por despecho pergeñada por Borges, con lo que la idea de la falsificación se derrumba, no hay impostor porque no hay máscara que lo encubra, pero liquida a su vez toda pretensión de distinguir un original entre las dos versiones" (*El otro Joyce* 263). Both ideas seem to reinforce their prior theories regarding the annotations: texts as multiple copies (translations of translations of translations, as Cáceres had mused earlier on)[11], and the impossibility of distinguishing between originals and copies.

Throughout the entire process of tracking down *Finnegans Wake* and translating William Joyce, Cáceres becomes entangled in a second assignment. A Buenos Aires law firm pays him an extraordinary sum of money to photograph Marcos Almeida, an Argentine financier, with his lover in Florence. At first glance, this second mystery seems

[11] " […E]n un extremo el mundo [la traducción] se nos presenta como una superposición de textos, cada uno ligeramente distinto del anterior, es decir, traducciones de traducciones de traducciones" (*El otro Joyce* 137).

completely unrelated to the first. Readers of the detective genre may wonder whether it is simply a distraction from the search for *Finnegans*, although this leads to a second possibility: perhaps *this* is the real enigma, and the search for *Finnegans* is a red herring. *El otro Joyce* is a text which moves both its detective and its readers in circles, and it soon becomes clear that *both* searches are key to the novel. When, on his first day on the Almeida job, Cáceres decides to purchase a second camera, which he keeps in a separate pocket and without the knowledge of his employer, a keen reader connects Cáceres's double vision and his preoccupation with translations and copies with his need to view the Almeida job through different lenses.

The operation turns dark when Almeida and his lover are killed in a supposed car crash, and Cáceres is sent to identify the remains so they can be repatriated to Argentina. All of this happens just before Almeida's businesses collapse, and the Italian authorities suspect that Cáceres has unknowingly participated in a conspiracy. They approach him for answers, hoping he might be willing to serve as a double agent—that is, continuing to cooperate with the law firm that hired him and guarding his silence, while also investigating the people and events surrounding Almeida's death.

The narrator wonders at the coincidence that both Sarquis's theory on Borges's *Finnegans* and the Italian detective's theory on the Almeida conspiracy involve double agents (178), and searches for the secret link between the two cases he is working to resolve. His desire to discover this secret is the motivation for his writing: "[L]o único que parece sostener el deseo de la escritura es una cierta tensión en torno de la idea de secreto, en la que se entrecruzan dos urdimbres, la del *Finnegans* de Borges y la de la muerte de Almeida" (*El otro Joyce* 188). Though the two cases seem unrelated at first

glance, they do share some elements in common. Although it is never explicitly mentioned in the novel, it is worth noting that another word for the transfer of an object (such as human remains) from one place to another is "translation." Throughout the novel, Ferro plays with language and with different notions of translation, problematizing the relation between originals and copies. The translation of Almeida's remains, much like the translation of *Finnegans Wake*, leads to a vertiginous confusion of identities. Cáceres eventually discovers that Almeida was not the man who died in the crash. A former actor and small-scale politician from Buenos Aires named "Pippo," who just happened to look exactly like Almeida, had been secretly hired to go to Florence in his place. The conspirators were able to "translate" the remains to Argentina precisely because Cáceres was unable to distinguish the original from the copy.

Almeida and Pippo, William Joyce and James Joyce, James Joyce and Borges, Cáceres and Vieytes are the most obvious examples of the doubles which abound and multiply in *El otro Joyce.* In the end, Cáceres describes his manuscript as "una especie de estremecimiento progresivo que se fue construyendo en un proceso complejo que conduce simultáneamente a una red de desdoblamientos y traducciones incesantes" (240-41). On the other hand, he notes that it is a process of discovering a conspiracy, "una adhesión entrampada en avances y retrocesos defensivos e ilusionistas para descubrir una conspiración y poder producir un interrogante, al menos una vez" (241). Throughout the novel, the process of translation is represented as the persistent attempt to interpret and uncover a secret—which may also symbolize the act of reading itself. This self-consciousness is present covertly in the detective story, and overtly at the thematic level. Perhaps its ultimate manifestation is that the reader is left uncertain that this is Cáceres's

manuscript at all; in the end, we are left wondering whether it has been written by Cáceres, Vieytes, or the unnamed editor. As Ferro explains in an article about one of his more recent publications, *Textos y mundos* (2015):

> [C]ada texto es un entramado con múltiples cabezas de lecturas para otros textos, una deriva de convergencia de operaciones de desplazamiento y proliferación en las que no sólo desaparece el origen, el origen ni siquiera ha desaparecido: nunca ha quedado constituido. En el injerto textual, condición de posibilidad del texto, la lectura y la escritura tejen mutualmente un doble suplementario, vacilante e inestable. ("La pasión crítica")

El otro Joyce, published four years earlier, certainly demonstrates these ideas at work. Cáceres's search for *Finnegans Wake* takes him (and the reader) in circles from William Joyce to James Joyce to Borges to Derrida—a circle which Ferro himself joins, as a literary critic of Borges and Derrida. The absence of authorship in what is supposedly Cáceres's manuscript remains ambiguous in the end as one final reminder that it is impossible to identify the true origin of any text.

There may be a larger political message at play in *El otro Joyce*, as well. There is a certain betrayal implicit in the act of translation, as expressed in the Italian phrase *traduttore traditore*. Cáceres often uses the word "traición" in reference to the language of William Joyce as he works to translate his manuscript. Eventually, he gives up on the translation as he accepts that William Joyce will not lead him to James Joyce:

> El artificio radica en haber intentado montar un teatro de la fascinación construido sobre la convergencia de falsos espejos, como ventrílocuo aficionado he elegido dos personajes para armar una farsa y he creído que podría mover mi escritura tratando de revelar el secreto de un diálogo imposible. La palabra traición es un núcleo resistente que impide todo traslado, es el exceso que impide toda forma de contacto entre los dos Joyce […] (*El otro Joyce* 163)

In fact, William Joyce was tried and convicted as a traitor, having shared secrets with Germany during World War II. Almeida is also a traitor of sorts, having falsified his own death in order to avoid responsibility for the financial crisis he has provoked in Argentina. In addition to its exploration of translation, *El otro Joyce* points to the danger of secrets, and to the opaqueness of both literature and politics in the modern age. Almeida's motivation is obviously capitalistic in nature, although so is Cáceres's—the only reason he accepted the job in the first place was to supplement a dwindling income and pay off his debts. In *El otro Joyce,* as in "Dublín al sur," there is a tension between the material and the abstract. Due to the nature of their work, both Cáceres and Sarquis are preoccupied with the material value of books; however, in their search for *Finnegans Wake*, they also consider and appreciate the intellectual value of that first edition. Similar forces are at work in "Dublín al sur"—if Esteban is initially attracted to *Ulysses* by the intellectual challenge it presents to him as a reader, he eventually gives in to the commercialization of the text when he participates in a game show, answers superficial questions about the novel's characters and plot, and wins a billion pesos for doing so.

Both *El otro Joyce* and "Dublín al sur" showcase Argentina's intimate, though unusual, relationship with Joyce—one which is tied to the challenges of modernism and the desire to unlock secrets. Ferro and Blaisten's characters contemplate the issues of translation, whether consciously or unconsciously, as they constantly confuse originals and copies. In "Dublín al sur," we see Esteban's two lives, real and fantastic, contemplate each other to the point where it becomes difficult to distinguish one from the other. In *El otro Joyce,* Cáceres searches for secret connections between Joyce and Borges, and between James and William Joyce, only to realize that his other case is also a play of

double identities. Both works involve multiple definitions of translation, as well—translation as the transfer from one language to another, as the translation of an idea, and as movement from one place to another.

Along with the play of identities between originals and copies, reader and writer merge in the form of the translator. Salas Subirat states, in the prologue to his *Ulises*, "Traducir es el modo más atento de leer, y en realidad el deseo de leer atentamente es el responsable de la presente versión" (Salas Subirat ix). He notes that part of the book's charm is that each new reading offers new discoveries (xiv); both works discussed in this chapter emphasize the process of reading and re-reading as a muddled, circular activity which yields different results each time. They also poke fun at the popular obsession with Joyce as it compares to the actual number of people who manage to read his works. Esteban Dedales admits that he never really understood *Ulysses,* and Cáceres is unsurprised when he finds an untouched version of *Finnegans,* "al igual que muchos otros textos de culto el *Finnegans* era más citado que leído" (*El otro Joyce* 24). In fact, Borges himself admitted that he had never read *Ulysses* in its entirety, remembering his first encounter with the novel: "I did my best to leaf through it. I failed, of course" (Kearney 338). Gamerro asserts that Borges's repeated admission of not having read *Ulysses* in its entirety was a methodological statement: "*Ulysses* should be read as one might walk through a city, making up an itinerary, sometimes retracing one's steps on the same streets and completely ignoring others" ("Joyce's *Ulysses*"). This theory would shed light on how Esteban spent ten years reading the novel, and on Borges's multiple readings. Sergio Dahbar points out the paradoxical nature of Joyce's work: "Pocos libros en la historia han sido más incomprendidos que el *Ulises.* Y sin embargo casi todo el

mundo conoce su leyenda de libro difícil, extenso, prohibido en una época […]" (Dahbar). As Masiello seems to suggest, the near impossibility of reading Joyce's texts only adds to their enigmatic attraction.

Like Joyce, Roberto Ferro and Isidoro Blaisten also experiment both covertly and overtly with self-conscious forms. Although it does not necessarily fit into any one of Hutcheon's categories, Ferro's novel blends elements of historical metafiction, detective fiction, and intertextuality to create a textually self-conscious work which requires the reader to be mindful of her active role as reader, and perhaps even as citizen. *El otro Joyce* subverts detective narrative, breaking many classic rules of the genre at the same time that its characters pay homage to the tradition. Moreover, it overtly explores the underlying issues of Joyce's translation and influence while it employs classically Joycean narrative strategies, such as digression and variation in narrative voices. "Dublín al sur" is perhaps less self-conscious than *El otro Joyce,* but still contemplates the effects of literature and the way it seeps into reality. Dahbar notes that Blaisten's story deserves to be read "para entender cómo se puede jugar con la literatura desde la literatura, y de qué manera los mitos crean raíces entre seres humanos que sueñan con castillos en Irlanda" (Dahbar). Indeed, Ferro and Blaisten make it clear that Joyce's work has deep roots in the creative tradition of Argentina.

For his difficult texts, his experimentation with language and form, Joyce's literary presence was and continues to be strong throughout the world. Argentines found special affinities with the Irish writer for his use of language, his condition as an exile, and his universality, because they were guided to him by their compatriots—Jorge Luis Borges, the self-proclaimed first explorer of *Ulysses* from the Hispanic world, and José

Salas Subirat, first official Spanish translator of the novel. While their translations of Joyce may not have been exact copies, they contributed to the formation of generations of Argentine readers and writers, sometimes in very surprising ways. This is the heart of Blaisten's "Dublín al sur" and Ferro's *El otro Joyce*, where characters search for the secret of these texts and, in the process, reveal that the Irish-Argentine connection is not only rooted in literature, but also in translation.

CHAPTER 2
THE THEME OF THE TRAITOR AND THE HERO IN BORGES AND VARGAS LLOSA'S *EL SUEÑO DEL CELTA*

"Come speak your bit in public
That some amends be made
To this most gallant gentleman
That is in quicklime laid."
W.B. Yeats, *Roger Casement*

In addition to translating several Irish writers and expressing an affinity with them in his epigraphs and critical essays, Jorge Luis Borges also created Irish characters in his *Ficciones*: Captain Richard Madden in "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan;" a scar-faced storyteller in "La forma de la espada;" and perhaps most notably, Fergus Kilpatrick in "Tema del traidor y del héroe." Although each story is unique, the unifying factor in all of Borges's Irish characters is their ambiguity; each one plays the role of both hero and traitor, and oftentimes their identities are mixed up with the English who colonized them. The same could be said of Roger Casement, the protagonist of Mario Vargas Llosa's 2010 novel *El sueño del celta*. This historical fiction explores both the physical and emotional journeys of Casement (1864-1916), an Irish diplomat-turned-revolutionary who was hanged as a traitor to England for his role in the Easter Uprising of 1916. Much like Fergus Kilpatrick in Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe," Casement has an ambiguous historical legacy. In this case, however, both political and sexual allegiances are blurred and questioned. Through Roger Casement, Vargas Llosa not only reinvents the theme of the traitor and the hero but also highlights affinities between Irish and Latin American cultures, both in their universality and in their ambiguity.

Latin American authors have a long tradition of exploring the region's complex cultural and historical identities. In *Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American*

Fiction in the Twentieth Century (1989), Gerald Martin analyzes the recurring themes of journeys and labyrinths in Latin American literature. He begins his study with the premise that "[t]he oscillation between a nationalist, continentalist or Americanist impulse and a Europeanist, cosmopolitan or universalist impulse is the single most important phenomenon in Latin American cultural history […]" (4). According to Martin's assessment, cultural myths help to weave these two impulses together. Latin America's cultural transformation took place "at the conjunctive moment of modernity itself, when Western culture as a whole was subjecting itself to a new gaze—the 'Joycean' or 'Ulyssean' moment" (8). Of course, Joyce's *Ulysses* is just one version of the master narratives of Western history, most of which are based on the Bible and *The Odyssey;* however, Martin proposes that it was this "Joycean" moment when Latin America's myth of discovery and conquest, liberation struggles, solitude and identity became internalized through folk memory and art (9). This myth appears in themes of solitude and of duality (civilization/barbarism, America/Europe, speech/writing): "To all of which the Latin American responded with the quest for identity and the struggle for liberation; only to find that even the horizon was a mirage and that his journey, inescapably, was destined to take him through an apparently endless labyrinth" (Martin 18).

Not surprisingly, the journey plays a key role in Latin America's Ulyssean literature. Martin first examines the 1920s regionalist novels, which integrated the country and the city within one nationhood. Latin American *modernistas* initiated the process of identifying Latin America's place in world culture, often depicting capital cities; however, Martin notes that the cities depicted in novels of that period were not so

much conceived as part of the American interior as they were enclaves of European civilization. For that reason, he asserts that many writers found "individual identity […] could only be established at the continental level" (125). Numerous Latin American writers would either take or signal similar trajectories from small towns to provincial capitals, to national capitals, to an international metropolis such as Paris (125):

> [T]o the chain from capital to village is added the journey from there back again to the capital and across the seas to Europe—and then back again to the village, with all that newly acquired knowledge inside the consciousness of the writer. This indeed is the fundamental explanation of what I would call 'Ulyssean' writer and the growth of the 'Ulyssean novel,' inaugurated and given definitive form by perhaps the greatest of all Modernist writers, James Joyce. (Martin 126)

In other words, the so-called Boom writers discovered their identities by traveling to Europe and back again. This journey is, for Martin, a Ulyssean experience—one which many Latin American writers would associate with Joyce.

Emir Rodríguez Monegal once described *Ulysses* as the "invisible but central model of the new Latin American narrative" (41). According to Martin, this legacy is present not only in linguistic exploration and the incorporation of myth, but also in the theme of the journey and the search of the European consciousness for the Other (130-133). Joyce's assimilation in Latin America can be attributed to several factors: the popularity of English as a second language, cosmopolitanism, shared experiences of exile, religious affinities between Catholic nations, and questions of language[12] (134-35). Martin names Borges among his quartet of Joycean writers, as his early poems "demonstrate that he, too, was at the time torn between the cosmopolitan lure of Europe

[12] Whether Gaelic versus English, or indigenous languages versus Spanish, writers in both regions must choose between native languages and the language of European colonizers.

and travel on the one hand, and nostalgia for the local and the picturesque on the other" (153). Although Martin does not explore Borges's Irish characters, their presence in his works demonstrate that same ambiguity.

In Borges's "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," Richard Madden is an Irishman working in the service of the English. Although the story's narrator Yu Tsun is fleeing from Madden, he understands his position: "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 […]" (*Ficciones* 82). Yu Tsun is in a similarly delicate situation, a Chinese man working for the Germans—not because he agrees with their ideology, but because he feels the need to demonstrate his worth: "Yo quería probarle [al Jefe] que un amarillo podía salvar a sus ejércitos" (84). Both Madden and Tsun find themselves working in the service of imperialist governments which hold their people (the Irish and the Chinese, respectively) in disdain; however, rather than challenging that system, they aim to prove their worth and make strange alliances during times of war—something which we will also see in the story of Roger Casement. In fact, it is possible that Borges had Casement and his compatriots in mind when he wrote this story, which is set just months after the Easter Uprising of 1916. The narrator's description of Madden could easily apply to Roger Casement or one of his fellow conspirators—all of whom faced charges of high treason following the failed revolt.

"La forma de la espada" (1942) is also a wartime story, auspiciously told to the story's narrator by a landowner known as *el Inglés de la Colorada.* However, confused identities are present from the story's beginning. When the narrator spends a night in the remote northern provinces and stays at *La Colorada,* he discovers that the scar-faced man

is not English but, rather, Irish. The Irishman then agrees to tell the narrator the story of the scar covering half of his face. According to his account, he was one of the many patriots who conspired for independence, as he waxes poetically of Ireland's politics and mythical past:

> Éramos republicanos, católicos; éramos, lo sospecho, románticos. Irlanda no sólo era para nosotros el porvenir utópico y el intolerable presente; era una amarga y cariñosa mitología, era las torres circulares y las ciénagas rojas, era el repudio de Parnell y las enormes epopeyas que cantan el robo de toros que en otra encarnación fueron héroes y en otras peces y montañas… (*Ficciones* 115)

However, the appearance of a new comrade named John Vincent Moon would dramatically alter the rebel's fate. According to the scar-faced man's tale, Moon was injured during the fighting and was taken in by his group. He describes Moon as abominable and cowardly, again contemplating questions of identity: "Me abochornaba ese hombre con miedo, como si yo fuera el cobarde, no Vincent Moon. Lo que hace un hombre es como si lo hicieran todos los hombres. […] Acaso Schopenhauer tiene razón: yo soy los otros, cualquier hombre es todos los hombres […]" (*Ficciones* 117). His description suggests that he detested Moon not because he was a coward, but because he could see himself in this Other.

The reason for these mix-ups, and for the innkeeper's reticence, becomes clear at the end of his story when he explains that Moon turned on the very people who had taken him in. One night the caretaker hears Moon speaking over the phone and giving away his comrades. He pursues him but only manages to cut his face: "De una de las panoplias del general arranqué un alfanje; con esa media luna de acero le rubriqué en la cara, para siempre, una media luna de sangre" (119). Finally, it becomes clear that the scar-faced man is Vincent Moon, the traitor who escaped to South America, and that his infamous

scar is the half-moon of blood which was given to him by the man he betrayed. Afraid that his interlocutor would not listen to the end unless he disguised his true identity, he has told the story from the point-of-view of the man he turned in: "Yo he denunciado al hombre que me amparó: yo soy Vincent Moon. Ahora despréciame" (119).

In "El jardín de senderos que se birfurcan" and "La forma de la espada," narrative may confuse identities but ultimately plays a key role in the way that characters conceive of themselves. As narrative psychologist Dan McAdams has stated, "We are all storytellers, and we are the stories we tell" (McAdams et al 3). Narrative psychology, a field that has grown in recent years, focuses on the storied nature of the self. According to this approach, people construct and tell stories about themselves to define who they are for themselves and for others (4). However, one of the major debates in this field is the extent to which narrative identities espouse unity or multiplicity (4). While McAdams argues that evolving life stories function to organize around one coherent notion of self, others have posited that life stories express different, multiple aspects of the self (Gergen 1991, Hermans 1996). We will return to this point in the story of Roger Casement; however, it is important to note that Yu Tsun and Vincent Moon both use narrative as a way to make sense of conflictive selves and actions.

Appropriately, "La forma de la espada" is followed in *Ficciones* by "Tema del traidor y del héroe" (1944)—another tale of heroes, traitors, and identities which have been purposefully confused over time through a well-crafted narrative. As Robin Fiddian points out, the criticism of this story has developed mainly around two narrative aspects. The first is the paradox, announced in the title and developed through the plot: Fergus Kilpatrick allegedly served as both hero and traitor in a movement to free Ireland from

English colonial rule in the early nineteenth century. The second approach focuses on the tiered narrative structure, which encompasses various narrators: the first-person, authorial figure who introduces the subject as the seed of a story which he may perhaps write one day; the story of Kilpatrick and the enigmatic events leading to his death; the biography undertaken a century later by Kilpatrick's great-grandson, Ryan; the third person narrative of Ryan's reconstruction of his great-grandfather's life and death; and, finally, the master plot which he discovers, supposedly authored by one of Kilpatrick's fellow conspirators, James Alexander Nolan.

Fiddian is more preoccupied with the geographical spaces and historical moments suggested in the story's opening lines. Even before the reader learns of the paradox of Fergus Kilpatrick, the first person narrator introduces several additional layers of narrative ambiguity. He begins:

> Bajo el notorio influjo de Chesterton […], he imaginado este argumento, que escribiré tal vez y que de algún modo me justifica, en las tardes inútiles. Faltan pormenores, rectificaciones, ajustes; hay zonas de la historia que no me fueron reveladas aún; hoy, 3 de enero de 1944, la vislumbro así. (*Ficciones* 122)

Thus, the narrative is presented not as a finished story but, rather, as the seed of a tale yet to be written. The narrator then notes that the action takes place in a tenacious and oppressed country, which he casually notes could be one of many—Poland, Ireland, the Republic of Venice, some South American or Balkan state—and occurs more or less at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "digamos 1824" (123). Many critics had previously ignored these references, given the nonchalant tone of the authorial figure. Fiddian's study, "Borges on Location: Narration and Historical Truths in 'Tema del

traidor y del héroe,'" examines this space-time connection in an attempt to decode what he describes as the "thematic labyrinth" of the story.

Fiddian notes that a common thread for the locations of Poland, Ireland, Venice and Greece in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is the rebellion against colonialism and the formation of national identities: "Essentially, this is the backcloth of 'romantic nationalism,' involving patriotic resistance against the colonial presence of overlords who, in the terms of Borges's story, are the English, the Russians, the French and the Austrians (in the case of Venice), and the Turks" (752). Fiddian goes on to note that all but one of those conflicts resulted in the birth of new, independent nations whose resistance was championed, at the time, by writers such as Mickiewitz, Byron, and Hugo—all of whom are referenced in the story. However, the most important geographic/historical point, according to Fiddian, is "algún estado sudamericano"—a reference which points toward a local reading of a story that, at first glance, seems quite universal (752). Furthermore, of all possible dates, Borges chooses 6 August 1824 as the day when Fergus Kilpatrick, hero and traitor, was put to death. This is the same date of the famous Battle of Junín, a key battle in the South American Wars for Independence against Spain: "The date chosen by Borges for the final act in the life of a hero-turned-traitor could not be more evocative or more intriguing" (Fiddian 753). As Fiddian points out, this could not have been lost on Borges, who on other occasions wrote about the valor of his own great grandfather, Colonel Isidoro Suárez, leader of the Argentine forces that day in Junín.

According to this interpretation, Ireland (among other places) serves as a mirror to South America from the point of view of its evolution toward modern statehood, and

Borges's story of the hero-traitor holds an "iconoclastic implication that heroism and betrayal were inseparable at the birth of not just one but all of the nation states where 'Tema del traidor y del héroe' could have been set" (753). Fiddian suggests that this multivalent narrative design allowed Borges to distance himself from a subject that was perhaps too close to home (753), and this was particularly true at the time when he wrote the story. In 1943, just one year prior to its publication, a military junta took power and imposed a strong *nacionalista* ideology on artists and intellectuals, condemning those who did not create works with historical themes:

> Within a couple of months, Borges would start work on "Tema del traidor y del héroe," in which it is difficult not to see a two-fingered riposte to the *nacionalista* agenda: answering the call to treat a historical theme, for sure, but doing so ironically, in disregard of the monolithic myths affirming the noble origins of the nation and in defiance of the junta's cultural politics. (Fiddian 750)

Furthermore, in a repressive political climate, Fiddian notes that Borges must have been sensitive to the contrast between the heroism of his great-grandfather's generation and the contemporary collapse that he was witnessing.

Building on Fiddian's analysis, my own reading of this story is centered on the ambiguity of both individuals and historical narratives. In putting forth the possibility that a national hero could have been, either instead or at the same time, a traitor to the cause, Borges shows a distrust in the master narrative of History, which explains why he is often linked to postmodernism.[13] On the other hand, he seems to remain on the side of modernism in creating a character—Kilpatrick's great grandson, Ryan—who opts to protect and preserve national identity. In the final paragraph of the story, which Borges

[13] This is also true of "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," as Yu Tsun's story presents a re-writing of history.

only added in his second version, Ryan suspects that the author of the master plot had left clues in the text so that someone in the future, perhaps Ryan himself, would be able to decode the mystery. However, "[a]l cabo de tenaces cavilaciones, resuelve silenciar el descubrimiento. Publica un libro dedicado a la gloria del héroe; también eso, tal vez, estaba previsto" (*Ficciones* 126). Faced with the consequences of re-writing history in a way that might call into question the identity of a relatively new, fragile nation state, Ryan opts to preserve what is, at best a flawed historical legend and at worst a complete fabrication.

According to Armando Zubizarreta's analysis of the original story and its corrections, Borges purposefully added ambiguity to the story, making it impossible for Ryan—and the reader—to know whether Kilpatrick had indeed been a traitor. Zubizarreta notes that, in the second version, Kilpatrick did not admit his crime; he simply signed the sentence. Furthermore, he did not ask that his punishment serve the motherland, simply that it would not hurt it: "[E]s claro que en la última versión el reconocimiento de la culpabilidad ha sido reemplazado con un mero acto formal y que la voluntad de prestar colaboración para preservar el éxito de la causa revolucionaria ha sido expresada con un cierto tono de humildad" (4). Given these details, Zubizarreta concludes that there is no concrete evidence of Kilpatrick's guilt. In fact, he suggests an alternative reading of the story where Nolan was the true traitor:

> […] Nolan, no satisfecho con eliminar sólo físicamente al envidiado Kilpatrick, se había propuesto destruir también la noble imagen moral del héroe, envidiada imagen que, precisamente por virtud del teatral encubrimiento del inmerecido castigo, iba a quedar salvada para la posteridad. Es por eso que el biógrafo Ryan optó por mantener invulnerada la personalidad ética del héroe y, al mismo tiempo, optó por condenar al silencio la infame traición del líder irlandés Nolan para no mancillar […] la causa irlandesa. (Zubizarreta 12)

Since Borges never describes in detail Ryan's "tenaces cavilaciones," Zubizarreta proposes that the reader must calculate how and why he reached his decision, a process which requires a truly active reader—just like Kilpatrick's great-grandson, Ryan (13).

Most important for the current discussion is that decisive moment, at the story's conclusion, when Ryan must decide which story to tell, and how to tell it. When Ryan discovers inconsistencies in the history of his great-grandfather, he must recognize that, ultimately, the story of his nation's past is just that—a story. As a biographer, he may choose to perpetuate historical narrative or re-write it, a process with wide-ranging consequences. Although Ryan ultimately decides not to do so, the reader of "Tema del traidor y del héroe" is left to contemplate the idea that reality is often more chaotic than the neatly woven narrative of history: "Unlike Ryan, […] Borges in 'Tema del traidor y del héroe' creates a complex and flexible narrative framework within which to manoeuver and to express a view of Argentina's past and present which is at odds with *nacionalista* ideology: all of this while remaining loyal to a forebear who was an out-and-out hero at Junín" (Fiddian 758).

In short, Borges's *Ficciones* present Irish characters who re-tell their stories. They are often not who they first seem, suggesting that heroism and betrayal were inseparable in the founding of modern nation states. Furthermore, each one of the three stories features a confused or mistaken narrative, leaving open the possibility that History may be (and should be) edited and re-written over time. In *El sueño del celta,* Mario Vargas Llosa also re-visits the life and death of a hero-traitor, and achieves what Ryan does not: he recognizes the complexity of a historical character who very well may have been both a hero and a traitor, presenting him as a human being with all of the corresponding flaws

and doubts. The importance of this concept is evident from the novel's epigraph, a quote from José Enrique Rodó's "Motivos de Proteo" (1909): "Cada uno de nosotros es, sucesivamente, no *uno,* sino *muchos*. Y estas personalidades sucesivas, que emergen las unas de las otras, suelen ofrecer entre sí los más raros y asombrosos contrastes" (*El sueño* 9). Throughout the novel, the reader encounters many versions of Roger Casement, each of which is profoundly moved and shaped by his journeys from Europe to Africa, to Peru, and back again. While Borges may have used Ireland to reflect similar issues in South America, Vargas Llosa holds South America up as a mirror to Ireland. In doing so, he creates a provocative manifestation of the Ulyssean journey—a "first world" character who discovers a "third world" identity and solidarity in the Congo and the Peruvian Amazon.

El sueño del celta is structured in three parts, each of which corresponds to Casement's main historical legacies.[14] The first section, "El Congo" (11-138) focuses on Casement's diplomatic work in Africa, in the service of Great Britain, investigating the abuse of native peoples by the rubber industry in the Belgian Congo under Leopold II. "La Amazonía" (139-340) recounts his journeys to the Amazon, about a decade later, from which he would again produce scathing reports on the abuses of native peoples—this time by British rubber companies operating in the Putumayo region of Peru. Finally, "Irlanda" (341-446) follows his personal and political transformation as he discovers, vis-à-vis his experiences in the Congo and Peru, the colonial realities of his own homeland, Ireland. This last mission would ultimately lead to his downfall, as British forces

[14] To distinguish between the historical figure and Vargas Llosa's re-creation of him, I will use "Casement" to reference the historical figure and his antecedents, and "Roger" to reference the fictional character as he is developed in *El sueño del celta.*

captured and tried him for aligning himself with the Germans during World War I. Throughout the three sections, every other chapter takes the reader to Roger's prison cell, where he awaits judgement on his case and, in the final chapter, is put to death for high treason.

Casement's story had already achieved fame before Vargas Llosa's novel, and numerous historians and biographers have documented his polemical life and work. However, from the opening lines of the novel, it seems that Vargas Llosa is attempting to shed new light on this historical figure: "Cuando abrieron la puerta de la celda, con el chorro de luz y un golpe de viento entró también el ruido de la calle que los muros de piedra apagaban y Roger se despertó, asustado" (*El sueño* 13). Immediately, the novel begins with an image of Roger awakening as the light enters his cell. It creates, for the reader, a very human picture of a figure who has reached legendary dimensions; instead of depicting Roger first in one of the roles that made him famous—such as diplomat or revolutionary—Vargas Llosa presents him first as a tired man who is vulnerable and afraid.

Although the life story of an Irish patriot might seem, at first glance, a strange subject choice for this Peruvian author, early criticism of the novel has pointed out the presence of many recurring themes in his work. David Wiseman notes in his review of the novel, "Familiar Vargasllosian themes—such as civilization and barbarism, revolutionary action, fanatical idealism, eroticism (in this case, homosexual fantasy), and the power of writing—abound in [*El sueño del celta*]" (777). Historian Angus Mitchell, who interviewed Vargas Llosa about his work on the novel, also signals the presence of

themes and tropes from his earlier works: the jungle, insurgency, (trans)nationality, and the excess of power, among others (Mitchell 137).

Just as Borges's *Ficciones* often involve characters who are writing and re-writing narratives, storytelling and narrative are present throughout *El sueño del celta.* In the initial chapter, Roger is taken to see his lawyer's assistant, who has come to inform him that British authorities have discovered—and publicized—his personal diaries. His case for clemency has now become difficult, if not impossible. The famous *Black Diaries,* as they have been called, stand in stark contrast to Casement's official writings. His reports on the Congo and the Amazon elevated him to world fame as a champion of human rights and a staunch critic of the abuses of colonialism and capitalism. However, the *Black Diaries,* whose authenticity has been highly questioned, cast a dark shadow over his character and his historical legacy. Throughout the novel, the reader observes Roger writing in various forms—drafting and writing his reports, scribbling down his fantasies and sexual acts in his personal diaries, and writing letters to his sister, friends, and political contacts in Ireland. He also takes photographic evidence of his travels and desires.

Vargas Llosa made use of all of these historical records in constructing a narrative of Casement's life and self, which could be described as an artful blend of history and fiction. Laura Izarra begins her review of the novel by reflecting: "To write a novel based on history is like a chess game between truth and fiction" (Izarra 149). She points out that Vargas Llosa's narrative is located in the liminal space between literary journalism and fiction:

> Using the literary strategy of appropriation, [Vargas Llosa] rewrites parts of *The Amazon Journal*, reassessing discourses of displacement,

> metaphors of movement and representations of cultural differences from a new rhetorical viewpoint. Crude realistic details are explored and even invented to represent Casement's real and imaginary journeys. (Izarra 150)

Alexis Márquez Rodríguez remarks that *El sueño del celta* might be Vargas Llosa's least novelesque work, as it demonstrates a marked influence of the writer's journalistic background. However, Márquez Rodríguez also recognizes that Casement's life was, in and of itself, novelesque: "Se trata, en efecto, de la biografía novelada de un personaje que no sólo es histórico, en razón de la importancia histórica de sus actuaciones en la vida real, sino que su vida fue, además, realmente novelesca" (309).

Casement interacted personally with celebrated and highly influential writers such as Joseph Conrad, William Butler Yeats and George Bernard Shaw. In fact, Vargas Llosa admits, in an interview with Mitchell, that he first encountered Casement because of his admiration for Joseph Conrad: "[W]hen I discovered that Roger Casement had played a very important role in the experiences of Conrad in the Congo and that probably without the help that he received from Casement he wouldn't have written *Heart of Darkness* as he wrote it, I became very curious to know about Roger Casement" (138). Prompted by Mitchell, the Peruvian author also acknowledges some similarities between his own life and Casement's. Mitchell mentions that Vargas Llosa was brought up in diplomatic circles, like Casement, and in the 1980s led a commission to investigate the atrocity of journalists at Uchuraccay. Reflecting on that mission compared to Casement's investigations of the Congo and the Putumayo region of Peru, Vargas Llosa responds:

> I discovered another dimension of my own country which I knew nothing about and, I suppose, this kind of experience, to be suddenly immersed in a very different cultural world and cultural environment and to discover the tremendous social, political, cultural problems, so different from the world in which I had been living before. This made me very sensitive to

> the kind of problems which Roger Casement faced in part of his life. (Mitchell 138)

In short, *El sueño del celta* offers Vargas Llosa the chance to explore common themes in his own life and work, competing historical narratives of Casement, and the literary narratives which Casement influenced, either directly or indirectly. As a narrative about journeys and identity, *El sueño* is also fundamentally a Ulyssean narrative.

In the first part of the novel, Roger's flashbacks to his childhood highlight the power of storytelling in his life. He recalls the stories that captivated him as a boy and led him in his adult life—tales of journeys to exotic lands:

> Lo que de veras le interesaba […] eran las historias que, cuando estaba de buen ánimo, les contaba el capitán Casement a él y a sus hermanos. Historias de la India y Afganistán, sobre todo sus batallas contra los afganos y los sijs. Aquellos nombres y paisajes exóticos, aquellos viajes cruzando selvas y montañas que escondían tesoros, fieras, alimañas, pueblos antiquísimos de extrañas costumbres, dioses bárbaros, disparaban su imaginación. (*El sueño* 19)

Roger remembers feeling drawn to this idea of adventure and journey, of landscapes previously undiscovered by whites, and of the struggle of man against nature (*El sueño* 20). Later on, as a young man, he would hear the Scottish doctor and evangelist Dr. Livingstone speak of his record-breaking journeys through Africa; Livingstone was the first European to cross the African continent from coast to coast, the first to explore the Kalahari Desert, and a popular hero to many members of the British Empire: "Roger soñaba con él, leía los folletos que describían sus proezas y ansiaba formar parte de sus expediciones, enfrentar a su lado los peligros, ayudarlo en llevar la religión cristiana a esos paganos que no habían salido de la Edad de Piedra" (*El sueño* 24). He would later idealize Henry Morton Stanley, the legendary explorer who found Dr. Livingstone when he disappeared in Africa. All three men—his father Captain Casement, Dr. Livingstone,

and Henry Morton Stanley—represent for young Roger not only an adventurous life but also what he perceives as Europe's noble, civilizing mission in barbarous lands. As he prepares to follow their example, he diligently reads the publications on maritime commerce between the British Empire and Western Africa, convinced that this commercial exchange will bring modernity and progress to people living in prehistoric conditions:

> Llevar al África los productos europeos e importar las materias primas que el suelo africano producía era, más que una operación mercantil, una empresa a favor del progreso de pueblos detenidos en la prehistoria, sumidos en el canibalismo y la trata de esclavos. El comercio llevaba allá la religión, la moral, la ley, los valores de la Europa moderna, culta, libre y demócrata, un progreso que acabaría por transformar a los desdichados de las tribus en hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo. (*El sueño* 26)

These narratives eventually lead to his decision, at age twenty, to travel to Africa in search of his own adventures.

Even as Vargas Llosa presents the influence of Captain Casement and the corresponding narrative of the European civilizing mission in Africa, he also suggests a lack of harmony in Roger's family and personal identity. Although Roger was born in Dublin, his father constantly reminded him that his true home was in Ulster—a pro-British, Protestant county of Ireland. Roger was raised in the Church of Ireland, but he senses early on that something is off: "[I]ntuyó que en materia de religión no todo en su familia era tan armonioso como en lo demás" (18). His mother, Anne Jephson, had converted to Protestantism but continued to practice Catholicism in secret: "[Y], en el más celoso de secretos, él mismo había sido bautizado como católico al cumplir cuatro años […]" (18). The suppressed influence of his Irish Catholic mother serves as a counter to his pro-British, Anglican father. Although Anne Jephson died when Roger was only

nine years old, she appears to him throughout the novel in dreams. In contrast, there is very little mention of Roger's father beyond his childhood years, and Roger never feels completely at home with his paternal relatives (23).

When Roger travels to Africa, he comes to question the adventure stories that inspired his travels in the first place. The narrative jumps from those early childhood inspirations and parental conflicts to the year 1903, when Roger, now a British consul, is preparing his expedition to the Belgian Congo. Throughout the fourth chapter, Vargas Llosa puts into stark contrast Roger's first journey to the Congo in 1884 with this later expedition, nearly twenty years later. Here, Roger is not only suffering the physical consequences of his adventures—hit with a third bout of malaria and forced to postpone the expedition—but also the cynicism and emotional trauma of having witnessed the darker side of European colonization. With bitterness, Roger reflects back on his naiveté when, in 1884, he had joined the expedition forces of his hero, Henry Morton Stanley. Under the guise of a humanitarian mission, Stanley's forces were charged with preparing the communities of the lower, middle and upper Congo for the arrival of European commerce:

> Stanley y sus acompañantes debían explicar a esos caciques semidesnudos, tatuados y emplumados […] las intenciones benévolas de los europeos: vendrían a ayudarlos a mejorar sus condiciones de vida, librarlos de plagas […], educarlos y abrirles los ojos sobre las verdades de este mundo y el otro, gracias a lo cual sus hijos y nietos alcanzarían una vida decente, justa y libre. (*El sueño* 39)

Within a few years Roger's opinion of Stanley would change entirely, as he realizes that those caciques were forced to sign contracts, written in a language they did not understand, unknowingly committing themselves to provide labor, food and lodging to European officials: "Con los años […] Roger Casement llegó a la conclusión de que el

héroe de su infancia y juventud era uno de los pícaros más inescrupulosos que había excretado el Occidente sobre el continente africano" (40). When he eventually confronts Stanley with his concerns about the wellbeing of the natives and the expeditionary forces' treatment of them, Stanley accuses Roger of weakness, explaining that the natives' mental state "está más cerca del cocodrilo o el hipopótamo que de usted o de mí" (43).

Interestingly, part of the reason why Roger is able to remember these conversations so many years later, as he sits in a prison cell, is because he had written them down in his diaries. The moment when he begins to construct a narrative of his own is also the beginning of his personal transformation, and his conversation with Stanley serves as a key moment in that process. Roger asks himself, "¿Fue aquella noche cuando comenzó a hacerse trizas su santísima trinidad personal de las tres 'C'? Hasta entonces creía que el colonialismo se justificaba con ellas: cristianismo, civilización y comercio" (43). In this younger stage, Roger struggles to equate the stories and idealized images of Henry Morton Stanley with the real man: "El aventurero galés sólo había visto en el África un pretexto para las hazañas deportivas y el botín personal. ¿Pero cómo negar que era uno de esos seres de los mitos y las leyendas, que a fuerza de temeridad, desprecio a la muerte y ambición, parecían haber roto los límites de lo humano?" (46). These reflections are an early hint—for Roger and for the reader—that heroes and legends are far more complex in reality than on paper. During the rest of his life, Roger regrets having served as a chess piece in a political and commercial strategy that he had believed to be philanthropic.

It is important to keep in mind that, although the narrative of Roger's life appears in the third person, what we are actually reading are Roger's memories and flashbacks to

earlier times as he sits in a cell at Pentonville Prison. Vargas Llosa reminds readers of this fact by alternating, every other chapter, with a scene from the jail. Thus, what we are actually reading is Roger's narrative reconstruction of his life—the thoughts and memories which he has chosen to construct his identity. Like Marlow in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* he is re-writing his life story and, in the process, creating a new self.

As with the stories of his father's adventures or the legend of Dr. Livingstone, Roger also associates each stage of his life with the narratives which influenced his formation. Following the chapter where he becomes disillusioned with colonization is a scene from the prison where Roger receives a visit from Alice Stopford Green, and the two of them recall Joseph Conrad and other writer friends. This literary conversation signals a key shift in the narrative of his life: the point where he stops believing blindly in other people's stories, begins to construct his own narrative of the Congo and, eventually, of his own origins.

An Irish historian and nationalist, Alice Stopford Green (1847-1929) authored *The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing (1200-1600),* first published in 1908, and *The Old Irish World* (1912). Her initial prison visit, portrayed in Chapter Five, is the first revelation of what is happening, in the novel's present, outside of the prison walls. Alice and Roger speak in hushed tones of the Easter Uprising and its repercussions, such as executions and home searches. It also becomes clear that Alice has played a key role in Roger's formation as an Irish nationalist, as he tells her "Te debo tantas cosas […] Tú me enseñaste a amar el pasado y la cultura de Irlanda" (69). This comment is only a hint at Part 3 of the novel, which focuses on Roger's relationship with Ireland. More important for the first part of the novel, Roger tells Alice how he first met Joseph Conrad (then

Konrad Korzeniowski) when the latter served as captain of a commercial steamship in the Congo. When Konrad first arrived to the Congo, Roger would serve informally as his guide:

> [S]obre todo, conversaron mucho […] de lo que ocurría en ese flamante Estado Independiente del Congo que Konrad acababa de pisar y donde Roger llevaba ya seis años. A los pocos días de amistad el marino polaco se había hecho una idea muy distinta de la que traía sobre el lugar donde venía a trabajar. (*El sueño* 73)

Years later, when Roger met with Conrad in England and congratulated him on his famous novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899), the writer would tell him that he should have been considered a co-author of the book: "Usted me quitó las legañas de los ojos. Sobre el África, sobre el Estado Independiente del Congo. Y sobre la fiera humana" (*El sueño* 74).

While Joseph Conrad chose to fictionalize his experiences in the Congo, Roger Casement published his observations in an official report, *Informe sobre el Congo* (1904, known as *The Casement Report* in the English-speaking world). Alice and Roger's conversation frames these two texts, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Casement Report*, as two alternate visions of colonialism. In Alice's words: "Esa novela es una parábola según la cual África vuelve bárbaros a los civilizados europeos que van allá. Tu *Informe sobre el Congo* mostró lo contrario, más bien. Que fuimos los europeos los que llevamos allá las peores barbaries" (76). She notes that Roger spent many years in the Congo without becoming barbaric; on the contrary, his experiences there humanized him (76).

In spite of the difference between the two texts, it is significant that Roger associates this stage of his life with writers. After his time in the Congo, he also begins to write his own narrative of colonialism and civilization. From the scraps and notes that

form his official reports, to the sexual acts and fantasies he scribbles in his diaries, Roger is writing and re-writing his self in all of its different forms throughout the novel. This process is closely tied to encounters with the Other, in that his encounters with natives of the Congo and of the Amazon drive both his humanitarian mission to write down what he has witnessed, but also in the sense that these same natives often drive his sexual desires. What is perhaps most interesting is that his own writing sometimes presents him with a sense of other, as well. When he is first confronted with the reality that his *Black Diaries* have been discovered and circulated to the press, Roger remains silent: "Tenía, otra vez, esa extraña sensación […]. [N]o se trataba de él, era otro de quién hablaban, otro a quien le ocurrían estas cosas" (16).

Roger is not just creating a narrative of his self throughout the novel; he is faced with multiple selves as he attempts to find peace before death. According to some theorists of narrative psychology, this is a common dilemma in societies that emphasize a unity of self. Peter T.F. Raggatt asks, "Can one's narrative identity be captured in a single, grand, synthesizing story?" (15). Critical of the phrase "life story" which "presupposes a narrative that is linear, integrated, and coherent" (15), Raggatt argues instead that what we call the life story is "more like a *conversation of narrators,* or perhaps a *war of historians* in your head" (16).[15] He draws inspiration from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, who posited the "I" not as a stable point of consciousness but as a product of dialogical relations in a field of I-positions (18). One of Raggatt's main

[15] This is certainly applicable to Borges, writer of "Borges y yo" (1960). It is also relevant to some of Vargas Llosa's earlier work with multiple narrators, such as *Los cachorros* (1967).

theoretical assumptions is that "identity is dispersed in a moral landscape defined by often conflicting narratives" (21).

Tova Hartman Halbertal and Irit Koren also examine the notion of multiple self-narratives, although they are more focused on the role of religious authority structures in identity formation. In their studies of Orthodox Jewish gays and lesbians, the narrative psychologists found that a majority experienced their identities in dualistic terms throughout their lives—a finding which contrasts with theories that assume all self-narratives as moving toward synthesis: "The picture that emerges is rather of two mutually exclusive selves that, following formative periods of intense conflict and struggle, manage ultimately to achieve a working coexistence within the same body and mind" (40). Halbertal and Koren are not the only ones to challenge the premise that identity conflict must move inexorably toward synthesis. Various authors have coined their own descriptive terms for such phenomena: "the dialogical self" (Hermans, Kempen & van Loon, 1992), "the mutable self" (Cote, 1996), and "the protean self" (Lifton, 1993). However, Halbertal and Koren's study is particularly relevant to Roger's morally conflicted character, who may attempt to reconcile his private identity with his public image, but never truly does so.

Vargas Llosa has also explored this dilemma in his essay "El pecado nefando," where he criticizes the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality. Referring to the 2003 scandal in Boston, where the city's bishop covered up sexual abuse by five Catholic priests, he notes:

> El caso, particularmente doloroso, del obispo de Boston sirvió para ilustrar mejor que ningún argumento racional la insensatez de imponer una ortodoxia sexual sin tener en cuenta *la infinita variedad de matices de la personalidad individual* y la manera tortuosa y trágica en que la naturaleza

> humana se rebela contra esas camisas de fuerza causando verdaderos estragos en su vecindad y, claro está, en la propia persona del victimario/víctima. (*Obras completas* 428, my emphasis)

He goes on to conclude that these issues deal with a fundamental truth about human beings and sexual identity: "Concierne una verdad sobre el ser humano en general y a la identidad sexual de las personas, una identidad mucho menos rígida y unidimensional de lo que enseñaba la doctrina" (430). At least seven years before the publication of *El sueño del celta,* Vargas Llosa was concerned with religions and societies which do not recognize the multidimensional self.

In presenting readers with not one but many Roger Casements, *El sueño del celta* captures the complexity of the ever-changing self, the conflicts inherent in public versus private life, and in religious and national identity. Roger himself recognizes this when he laments, from his prison cell, "que su vida había sido una contradicción permanente, una sucesión de confusiones y enredos truculentos, donde la verdad de sus intenciones y comportamientos quedaba siempre, por obra del azar o de su propia torpeza, oscurecida, distorsionada, trastocada en mentira" (265). At various points, he wonders how he could be, at one moment, an honored functionary of the British government and, at others, an Irishman plotting Ireland's independence from that same government. As his friend Alice notes to him, "Nada es blanco y negro, querido" (354). Alice is referring to the failed Easter Uprising; however, Roger identifies with her statement as he thinks to himself, "¿No era él un ejemplo viviente de esas ambigüedades?" (355).

According to David Gallagher, it is precisely this complexity which appeals to Vargas Llosa:

> This protean character, who managed to lead many lives simultaneously, would attract a novelist who has always been interested in what separates

> the image we project from what we really are and do. […] He finds in Casement one of those quixotic heroes he has always admired: men who are deeply flawed, dizzyingly complex, probably mad, yet moved by deep conviction, and nobler than most of their contemporaries. (418)

Of course, part of what made Roger Casement so flawed, at least to his contemporaries, was his supposed homosexuality—demonstrating that what society considers flawed or even treacherous is entirely relative. At the time of their release, many supporters of Roger Casement claimed that British authorities had forged the *Black Diaries* in order to sabotage his campaign for clemency. Since then, various historians and graphologists have examined the journals to determine their authenticity. Surely, this relativity—which Angus Mitchell notes is more about the textual than about the sexual (141)—also drew Vargas Llosa to Casement's character. Dieter Ingenschay notes in "Mario Vargas Llosa y el pecado nefando" that the author has defended the rights of homosexuals in numerous articles and essays, but rarely touches on the theme in his fictional work.[16] However, *El sueño del celta* is a notable exception. Vargas Llosa noted to Angus Mitchell that while it may still be possible to debate the authenticity of the *Black Diaries*, he believes that Roger Casement was a homosexual: "This is another very dramatic, tragic aspect of his life if you place homosexuality in the context of the prejudices and persecution of homosexuals" (Mitchell 141).

Until the release of the *Black Diaries*, Roger and his supporters held great hopes in the petition for clemency. However, as his attorney, the sheriff, and even his friends note throughout their conversations, that option becomes an impossibility once his

[16] Ingenschay notes that homosexual themes appear only in *Historia de Mayta* and *El sueño del celta*. However, they are also present in *La casa verde* and *El paraíso en la otra esquina.*

reputation is tarnished by rumors of his sexual delinquency. All of this begs the question: was Casement executed because he was a traitor to the British Crown, or because he was gay? Who was he: social activist or sexual delinquent? Vargas Llosa addresses this topic in the novel's Epilogue, which begins with a description of the medical examination following Casement's execution. British authorities demanded that a medical expert inspect Casement's anal cavity for proof of his "perverse tendencies" (*El sueño* 447). This fact again signals that Casement's verdict of treason and subsequent execution were just as much a result of his alleged sexual tendencies as they were of his political actions. By recognizing his sexuality as part of Casement's struggle, Vargas Llosa creates a space for homosexuals in the narrative of heroes, as well as in the narrative of nations. Nevertheless, he opts for an interpretation that still leaves room for ambiguity. As he explains in the Epilogue, "Mi propia impresión—la de un novelista, claro está—es que Roger Casement escribió los famosos diarios pero no los vivió, no por lo menos integralmente, que hay en ellos mucho de exageración y ficción, que escribió ciertas cosas porque hubiera querido pero no pudo vivirlas" (*El sueño* 449). Rather than opt for a solution to the controversies surrounding Casement's sexuality, Vargas Llosa chooses to represent it in the same way he represents the overall character: laden with enigma and ambiguity.

On a national and global level, Vargas Llosa offers commentary on the universality of human experience and about false notions of superiority. If the Boom novels were about Latin Americans discovering themselves in Europe, this post-Boom narrative reminds us that Europe also discovered and re-invented itself (for better or for

worse) in the Americas. Here, the author walks a fine line between patriotism and universality—as does Roger in the novel. Laura Izarra notes:

> There is a relationship of proximity in *difference* and *similarity* between Casement's country, the countries he lived in, and the writer's imagination. The relationship of proximity reveals the nationalist dilemma faced by Casement and the way it was fictionalised. Witnessing violence in foreign lands checkmated the coherence of his principles and enabled him to see the similarity between conditions in Ireland and in the Amazon. (Izarra 151)

During his first expedition to Peru, Roger reflects that the Congo and the Amazon are "unidos por un cordón umbilical" (158). According to Vargas Llosa's narrative, this global champion of human rights appears to be Roger Casement at his best. This is the Roger Casement which W.B. Yeats once called "el irlandés más universal" (*El sueño* 359).

This same idealism leads Roger back to his own native Ireland: "His idealism made him turn to the past, to Irish tradition, in order to make his dream of an independent Ireland come true" (Izarra 151). Just as he connected colonial abuses in the Congo to those in the Amazon, he would later write an article for *The Irish Independent* titled "The Irish Putumayo" (*El sueño* 386). As he begins to recover from the traumatic violence and cruelty he witnessed in the Putumayo region, he turns his attention toward the liberation of a people whom he has now come to see as the indigenous of Europe: "Ahora debía ocuparse de otros indígenas, los de Irlanda" (378). This is a fascinating connection which points to a postcolonial affinity between Ireland and Latin America. Just as many Latin American rebels have drawn inspiration from tales of indigenous resistance, Ireland's Celtic past—which the English would attempt to erase both culturally and linguistically—holds an appeal for Roger that is both mystical and political. During this

stage, he is inspired by his readings of Alice Stopford Green, and in 1913 we see him reading *The Old Irish World*:

> […] la historia, la mitología, la leyenda y las tradiciones se mezclaban para retratar una sociedad de aventura y de fantasía, de conflictos y creatividad, en la que un pueblo luchador y generoso se crecía ante una naturaleza difícil y hacía gala de coraje e inventiva con sus canciones, sus danzas, sus juegos arriesgados, sus ritos y sus costumbres: todo un patrimonio que la ocupación inglesa vino a tronchar y a tratar de aniquilar, sin conseguirlo del todo. (*El sueño* 379)

According to Vargas Llosa's reconstruction of his life, Roger is only able to make this connection to Ireland's past when he encounters indigenous peoples in Africa and South America.

Ultimately, however, Roger's weakest moments are when he takes his nationalist cause to extremes. In the third part of the novel, we see him plagued by anxiety and self-doubt as he works for various causes related to Irish independence. He begins to lose his most beloved friends due to differences in politics. Herbert Ward tells him, only partially joking, that he has turned into an extremist: "Herbert había tenido siempre una actitud tolerante y algo risueña con el nacionalismo de Roger. Pero esa noche acusó a su amigo de abrazar la idea nacionalista de una manera demasiado exaltada, poco racional, casi fanática" (387). He also makes new friendships with some of the most celebrated leaders of Irish independence, Patrick Pearse and Eoin MacNeill among them. Their ideas intrigue and frighten Roger: "Había oído y leído que la política, como todo lo que se vincula al poder, saca a veces a la luz lo mejor del ser humano—el idealismo, el heroísmo, el sacrificio, la generosidad—, pero, también, lo peor, la crueldad, la envidia, el resentimiento, la soberbia. Comprobó que era cierto" (391). Although Roger has moral doubts about Pearse's vision of Irish rebels as martyrs for the cause, he ultimately

contributes to the martyrdom of hundreds in his alliance with the Germans and preparations for the Easter Uprising of 1916.

In Germany, Roger's mission is to recruit Irish prisoners, captured by German forces in the Great War, to form an Irish Brigade which would fight "along with, but not within" German forces against their mutual enemy, England (406). These are dark days for Roger. On January 5, 1915, when he addresses the Irish soldiers in Limburg and speaks passionately about their great mission and sacrifice, German soldiers have to escort him out of the prison for his own safety: "En esta ocasión, los prisioneros no se contentaron con ponerle malas caras y mostrar su disgusto con gestos y ademanes. Lo silbaron e insultaron. '¿Cuánto te ha pagado Alemania?' era el grito más frecuente. […] Nunca se recobró de aquella experiencia" (413). Days later, he realizes that his companion and love interest, the Norwegian Eivind Adler Christensen, had actually been working as a spy for the British. He feels he is living in duplicity, and suffers both physical and mental decline (417, 425). At the same time that he assures the few Irish soldiers who joined his brigade that their families back in Ireland will be taken care of, he is tortured with the knowledge that they most likely will not (425). His internal struggle takes external form in the two characters who accompany him during his time in Munich: the Catholic priest, Father Crotty and Irish captain Robert Monteith. Roger reflects: "El religioso y el militar eran muy distintos y, sin embargo, se dijo Roger muchas veces, ambos encarnaban dos prototipos de irlandeses: el santo y el guerrero" (426).

Of course, the reader already knows that Roger's nationalist project will lead him to a prison cell; the following (and final) chapter depicts the day of his execution. Nevertheless, Vargas Llosa makes it easy to see the appeal of nationalist politics for

Roger. In 1913, when he gives a speech at a Home Rule protest in Belfast, he receives applause when he calls for "union in diversity" (392)—a cause which was just as relevant, at the time of the novel's publication (2010), as it was in Roger Casement's lifetime. In fact, the concept applies to various aspects of Casement's struggle: diverse selves in one person, diverse peoples in one nation. Perhaps this is why the Peruvian author decided to write about an Irish patriot. Like Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe," *El sueño del celta* crosses international borders while telling a story which is at once local and global. Márquez Rodríguez affirms:

> La manera que Vargas Llosa enfoca la vida y acción de Casement permite observar que, paralelamente con la denuncia por este de las atrocidades del colonialismo y de la explotación de los negros africanos y los indígenas del Perú, la misma novela se erige hoy día como una nueva denuncia de aquellos hechos, válida en tanto que, si bien la realidad actual no es idéntica a la que se muestra en la novela, de todos modos las circunstancias no han variado radicalmente, y aún se practican métodos de explotación cercanos a la más abominable esclavitud" (310).

Casement's story resonates today for various reasons connected to politics, economics and sexuality: the abuses and excesses of capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the discrimination against the LGBTQ community, among others. In his interview with Mitchell, Vargas Llosa concurs that "Casement's report on the Congo is still very valid […]" (139). Although power is less centralized than it was during Casement's time, the author notes that when he visited the Congo—the land that traumatized and inspired figures like Casement and Conrad—he found the same brutality and exploitation described by those writers (139). In the same interview, he takes these global issues and relates them back to his own native Peru: "[W]e are talking about internal colonialism of the westernised Peru against the primitive Peru. [Casement] denounced this in the same way that he denounced the Belgians against the Congolese. He denounced the

colonialism of the westernized *blancos* and *mestizos* against the Indians of the Amazon region […]" (141).

Perhaps Roger Casement and his contemporaries were not able to make the connection between the abuses of colonialism and the repression of homosexuals; however, Vargas Llosa makes this connection in several of his essays. In a 2002 piece entitled "Los hombres-mujeres del Pacífico," for example, he documents the historical presence of the *mahu*, a type of indigenous transsexual identity, in Tahiti. He hesitates to translate the *mahu* as homosexual, noting that such a term is charged with discrimination and prejudice which did not exist in Polynesian society. He makes clear that it was European colonialism, along with its restrictive definitions of gender and sexual identity, which presented a threat to *mahu* individuals:

> Nada de [discriminación] existía entre los polinesios antes de que la Europa cristiana viniera a inyectar una carga de malicia y censura sobre una institución que, hasta la llegada de los europeos, tenía perfecto derecho de ciudad y era universalmente respetada y admitida como una variante legítima de la diversidad humana. (*Obras completas* 256-57)

Several years later, in a 2005 essay entitled "El matrimonio gay," Vargas Llosa celebrates the legalization of gay marriage in Spain as an extraordinary advance in human rights—making clear that, for the author of *El sueño del celta,* LGBTQ rights are human rights (*Obras completas* 706).

Vargas Llosa notes to Mitchell that what most interests him about literature is its expression of the human condition: "Not the local or regional characteristics, but […] something that transcends these limitations or conditions, let's say *Ulysses*, something that can be understood by people of very different cultures" (142). Perhaps inspired by Borges's "El escritor argentino y la tradición," he recognizes the universality of Irish

literature (Mitchell 142). Vargas Llosa seems drawn to Casement less for his observations of Peru or the Congo, than for his orientation around lofty social, political, and cultural goals as a humanitarian who was victim to religious, political and sexual prejudices (143). Similarly to Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe," it seems that Casement's story could have taken place in a number of times and places.

Vargas Llosa demonstrates that Latin American writers do not always have to choose between nationalist and universalist impulses, as Gerald Martin once observed. Roger Casement managed to live both impulses, at once a champion of human rights and of Irish nationalism. By breaking down these dualities and creating a more complex character, Vargas Llosa places himself firmly in the post-Boom era. As Donald Shaw has noted, the post-Boom is, to some degree, a reaction in the name of pluralism and heterogeneity, one which presents a challenge to "master narratives" (Shaw 35). *El sueño del celta* achieves all of the above in creating a character who identified with various cultures without fitting neatly into any one of them; in turn, Roger is a protagonist who speaks not only to the upper-echelons of white Latin American society but also to indigenous and African readers, and the gay community. Wiseman notes, "Vargas Llosa's choice to delve deeply into the internal struggles of one man's pursuit of human dignity and freedom (both political and sexual) makes *El sueño del celta* at once intimate and universal" (777). Because of his multi-faceted selves, Casement was able to empathize with people of many nations and ethnicities.

Laura Izarra notes that in *El sueño del celta*, "Concepts of plurality and historical, geographical and psychological displacement are reconfigured in multi-dimensional images of re-presentations of the past to show that the totality of a human being can never

be captured" (Izarra 152). Through Roger Casement, Vargas Llosa reinvents Borges's theme of the hero and the traitor, highlighting the affinities between Ireland and Latin America—both in their ambiguity and in their universality. Rather than presenting a Manichaean Casement, he explores the more realistic possibility of a character with a multi-faceted, multivalent identity. In the writer's own words: "I think he is much more human than the usual heroes. […] In other cases, because of the stereotypes, the hero becomes so attached to the idea of a hero that he is dehumanized" (Mitchell 140). In exploring a character with an ambiguous legend and allowing him to exist as multiple selves, Vargas Llosa presents a broader, more complex view of personal identity and of history. Roger's story demonstrates personal identity not as fixed and stable, but as a multi-faceted and ever changing process.

CHAPTER 3
ENTRE GRINGOS Y CRIOLLOS: IRISH-ARGENTINE NARRATIVES

"Narrative […] is where the text of imagination
interweaves with the context of history."
Richard Kearney,
Navigations: Collected Irish Essay, 1976-2006

Many Latin American writers have been drawn to Ireland due to postcolonial solidarity, translations, cultural affinities, or simply an attraction to its universality; however, the two regions' ties go beyond the literary. Irish memory, culture and identity are also present in Latin Americans of Irish descent—some of whom have served as key political figures and influential authors. Peruvian writer Ciro Alegría, Cuban American novelist Carlos Eire, Mexican historian Edmundo O'Gorman, and the Argentines Benito Lynch, Rodolfo Walsh and Adolfo Bioy Casares are just a few Irish Latin Americans who have left their mark on the region's cultural history. Even the iconic Ernesto "Che" Guevara was the grandchild of Irish immigrants. As noted in Chapter 1, the Irish-Argentine connection is particularly strong—in part because of the literary affinities previously described, but also because, as Edmundo Murray notes in *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina (1844-1912),* Argentina received the greatest number of Irish immigrants in Latin America.

In recent years, Argentina has seen a resurgence of Irish culture. Irish step dance, hurling clubs, and Saint Patrick's Day parades have become a way for Irish Argentines to understand and re-connect with their roots. A well-established Irish Argentine press, such as *The Southern Cross,* helps keep Argentines engaged with these events.[17] In an attempt

[17] The Dublin-born brothers Michael G. and Edward T. Mulhall launched the first English-language daily paper in South America, *The Buenos Ayres Standard,* in 1861. Shortly thereafter, in 1875, Father Patrick J. Dillon founded *The Southern Cross*, which is

to better understand how and why Irishness has served Argentine literature and culture, this chapter explores the use of Irish history and myth in the work of two contemporary Irish-Argentine writers, Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell. Although both Cormick and O'Connell incorporate Irish culture into their narratives, they approach the theme from very different angles: Cormick places Irish characters in distinctly Argentine landscapes and historical moments, while O'Connell uses popular Irish mythology to craft short stories about women and children, which are often fantastic in nature. Albeit in very different ways, both writers re-tell and re-shape cultural and historical narratives to create a more inclusive vision of Argentine identity.

In *Becoming Irlandés,* Edmundo Murray estimates that Argentina and Uruguay received between 40,000-50,000 Irish emigrants between 1830 and 1930. This migration was not always linear; rather, many of these emigrants would later return home or re-emigrate to other countries (7). Those who remained in the River Plate area would, like other residents there, suffer from disease epidemics (cholera in 1868, yellow fever in 1871) and other conditions, reducing survivors to about 10,000 (Murray 7). The title of Murray's study reflects his careful choice of the word *becoming:* "a performative verb that expresses the continuum implied by human identification and identity, in particular during migrations in time and space" (5). Irish Argentine identity has never been static, but rather a process of evolution—one which Murray describes, at least initially, as an evolution from colonized to colonizers (6). He notes that, "Irish immigrants became *ingleses* when they made the transatlantic journey and arrived in Argentina, an informal

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still in print today. The *Irish-Argentine* followed in 1888, led by Father Bernard Feeney (*Ireland and the Americas* xxv-xxviii).

colony of the British empire in which everything, except probably meat and hide, came from the British Isles" (6). It was not until the nineteenth century independence movements when Irish members of the Argentine governing classes began to become Argentines: "Aligning their values with *Guachesca* conventions, they shed their English identity and dressed in chiripa, boots made from the hind-legs of a colt, and gaucho gear" (Murray 6). However, in the middle to late nineteenth century, when Argentine independence and identity were well-established, this evolution took another step: "The emigrants from Ireland who became English and then became Argentines, eventually became Irish" (6). In other words, while Irish emigrants focused initially on social integration and acculturation, later generations had the luxury and the hindsight to remember their Irish roots and create a conscious ethnic identity. According to Murray, this process is closely linked to discourse. After all, the act of remembering involves narrative and figuration (Stanford Friedman 278).

As Susan Stanford Friedman explains, memory and desire are constant themes in the literature of diasporas: "Diaspora is migration plus loss, desire, and widely scattered communities held together by memory and a sense of history over a long period of time" (268). Diasporas are imagined communities, and Stanford Friedman notes that their continuation is dependent not on the fate of the nation-state but to a diasporic consciousness, "an imagined community of the scattered held together by their shared sense of a distinct history and culture as a people and by obstacles to full assimilation in diverse host countries" (268). If Doris Sommer read Latin American nineteenth century romance novels as the foundational fictions of newly formed nations, we might consider

diasporic literature as the foundational fiction of transnationalism—one which imagines a more inclusive, global society whose identity is not static but constantly evolving.

The emergence of transnationalism and globalization in literary studies lends new significance to concepts of migration, diaspora, and borders: "What brings together the three areas of interest in this field is underlying questions about identity in motion on a transnational landscape—not only identity as it is changed by the journey […] but also identity as it is in a continual process of (re)formation in relation to changing spaces and times" (Stanford Friedan 263). In *Transatlantic Solidarities*, Michael Malouf notes the existence of two conflicting stories about the Irish in the Caribbean: one of a people oppressed by British colonial power and sent to the New World as laborers; and another of colonized turned colonizers and landowners, as exemplified in Montserrat. However, Malouf offers a third vision "in terms of the dialectical relation between nationalism and transnationalism evoked in these immigrant cultures reinventing their national cultures abroad" (3). As he points out in his study of solidarities with Irish nationalism as performed by Caribbean writers Marcus Garvey, Claude McKay and Derek Walcott, discourses of nationalism and transnationalism have a complex interdependency. Avtar Brah also points out that diasporas often encompass conflicting narratives—envisioning "home" as a mythical place of desire, but also as the lived experience of a locality (270). In their work, Irish-Argentine writers Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell demonstrate these complex and sometimes conflicting narratives. While Cormick's historical fictions focus more on the lived experience of a locality and processes of transculturation, O'Connell's work speaks more to an imagined, mythical homeland which serves as a place of desire.

In the Prologue to *Entre gringos y criollos* (2006), Eduardo Cormick notes that the stories in his collection may be based on history, but have been distorted and re-invented over time: "Las historias familiares se mezclan en la historia general de las ciudades, crecen, se distorsionan, y cuando se cuentan, ya no son la historia original, ni son verdad, pero son una versión de la verdad" (7). Cormick's stories center around immigrant families in Argentina's Junín province. The author also comes from this region; Cormick was born in Junín in 1956, although his family originated from Wesmeath and Longford Counties in Ireland (Romera). The collection's title, *Entre gringos y criollos*, signals an ambiguity which many English and Irish immigrants likely experienced—a feeling of existing "in between" cultures. They were no longer *gringos*, nor did they fit completely with the classic image of Argentine nationality, *criollos* of Spanish origin. Andrés Romera points out the double meaning of the collection's title: these are stories about "gringos" (of Irish descent) or criollos (native people). However, the title also conveys a process of transculturation:

> For Cormick, Irish immigrants maintained their own traditions and public image (religion, food, family conventions and physical appearance), which identified them as gringos, but at the same time they adopted traditions and customs of the country where they lived, mainly those of the gauchos (such as dress, horse riding, the ability to work a type of terrain that was different to those of their native land), which in a way certainly converted them into criollos. (Romera)

In this sense, Romera notes that *Entre gringos y criollos* could either be stories about gringos and criollos living in Argentina, or stories of Argentinians who are part gringo and part criollo (Romera). I will argue that both tendencies are present in the collection.

Cormick's stories highlight the historical presence of the English and Irish in Argentina, demonstrating that these immigrants have long played an important role in the

nation's politics and culture. The first story in the collection, "Vuelvo y no fui," might at first seem a strange fit with the remaining stories in the volume; however, it introduces several important ideas which then flow through the collection. The story begins by presenting two key figures in Argentine political struggles: Coronel Manuel Dorrego (1787-1828) and a young military official named Luis Borges, father of Lieutenant Francisco Borges (1835-74) and great grandfather of writer Jorge Luis Borges. In the first narrative sequence, Dorrego's troops have already been defeated by Lavalle, and he and Luis Borges are riding in search of La Oriental in Junín Province, where Dorrego hopes to take refuge. As they ride, the young official sings *cielitos*, musical rhymes typical of the Pampas. He is making them up as he goes, singing about the current predicament he and Dorrego face: "Ay, cielo de mis paisanos / lo persiguen a Dorrego / Atentos los federales / pa' defender este suelo" (10). Dorrego asks him if he likes to improvise *cielitos,* to which he responds, "Sí, mi coronel, y cifras, coplas para acompañarme, para ayudarme a saber quién soy en este lugar del mundo, en estos tiempos" (11). This statement is significant from a family with English roots; the young official notes that he creates narrative in order to locate himself in the world. It foreshadows the story's main theme of imagining place, while also alluding to events outside of the story—for example, his family's penchant towards language and literary creation, and the great grandson who would go on to become a literary treasure of Argentina.

The story's narrative then jumps to Francisco Borges as he also tries to make his way to La Oriental: "Recordó el relato de su padre sobre una frustrada fuga de Dorrego hacia ese lugar con el que soñaba sin haber conocido" (12). His father had told him how Dorrego had drawn a map in the dusty ground of the lake, the river, and the fort called

"Federación" which Dorrego had hoped to establish there. As Lieutenant Francisco Borges remembers his father's story, he finds himself in a similar situation. Having escaped after his troops' defeat at the Battle of La Verde (1874), he is waiting for sunrise to enter the town of Junín, which he believes to be occupied by friendly forces under the command of Bartolomé Mitre (13). However, at sun-up, Francisco is doubly disillusioned: "Entonces advirtió que el pueblo no estaba donde su padre le contó que Dorrego lo había imaginado, sino algo más al norte" (13). Before he can reach the town across the plains, he is surrounded by the National Guard. This section of the story ends brusquely: "Murió sin conocer Junín."

Finally, the narrative jumps two generations to the grandson, Jorge Luis Borges, as he also makes his way to Junín. It is clear that Borges is an older man here, as he is blind and occasionally asks his assistant to describe what he is seeing. In spite of his blindness, Borges is able to imagine the places surrounding him based on the memory of his grandfather: "Sólo como una curiosidad lo llevaron a caminar sobre el empedrado de la calle Coronel Francisco Borges, donde el niño Jorge Luis le hizo recordar desde el fondo de su alma al maestro la figura recia de su abuelo en traje militar" (14). The memory brings him to tears, as a journalist from the local newspaper *La Verdad* asks him to reflect on his first visit to the city. The story ends with his reflection: "Vuelvo a Junín, donde nunca estuve."

"Vuelvo y no fui" is one of the few tales in *Entre gringos y criollos* which does not feature Irish Argentine characters. However, keeping in mind that the Borges family had English roots and that Irish and English immigrants were often grouped together as *ingleses,* it does fit with the overarching theme of the immigrant experience in Junín

province. By placing a well-known British Argentine family in two key moments of Argentine history—the War for Independence (1810-1818) and the Civil War of 1859—this story highlights, as Cormick's writing often does, the participation of non-criollo Argentines in the country's national formation. The story's title, which character Jorge Luis Borges utters as the tale's closing words, is also significant: it reflects nostalgia for a place one has never been, a place which exists only in memories created by the narratives passed on through generations.

While "Vuelvo y no fui" establishes the historical importance of Junín—and of locality, in general—the remaining stories in Cormick's collection deal with the everyday lives of Junín's residents during the early twentieth century. In some, Irish-Argentine characters figure prominently as the protagonists of their own difficult lives in the countryside; in others, the Irish presence is subtly hinted in references to food, language and religion. "El Padre Víctor da batalla" tells the story of an Irish Catholic priest who visits an Irish-Argentine family on their estancia on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Family names immediately signal their Irish heritage: Pat and Maggie are the parents of Billy, Micky and Ruth. Maggie's mother Mary also lives with them, as does the foreman of the estancia, Manuel Costa.

Throughout the story, an interesting dynamic plays out between Father Víctor, the family and Manuel Costa. Upon his arrival from Buenos Aires, Father Víctor greets Pat, Maggie and their children in English. Manuel Costa, the administrator of the estancia, is also present. "Para él el saludo es otro; en castellano con acento criollo, quitándose el sombrero y extendiendo la mano abierta, le pregunta—¿Qué cuenta, paisano?" (*Entre gringos y criollos* 15). Manuel is criollo; however, the administrator of the hacienda had

recommended him to the family when they first arrived in Argentina to settle their land and they trusted the administrator because he was “irlandés, como ellos” (16). The language difference is always present, although they communicate with each other. Pat and Maggie speak mostly English with Father Víctor, while Manuel follows along but responds in Spanish: “Hablan todos en inglés, excepto Manuel Costa que sigue la conversación y acota, afirma o desmiente, pregunta, en español” (19). Although Manuel’s presence in the story signals a divide between gringo and criollo cultures, it may also hint at the process of transculturation which this family is inevitably experiencing.

For Romera, transculturation is present in “El Padre Víctor da batalla” not only at the linguistic level, but also in the family’s food and drink, farm labor practices, “and the interface between the Irish diaspora and Argentine gaucho” (Romera). The family eats stuffed chicken and drinks tea, characteristic of Irish and British culture. However, they also mention *mate*, and Maggie offers the Father Víctor a shot of *caña* while he waits for his tea. While the priest performs Mass on Sunday, in English, Manuel is following along in the background, roasting lamb over an open fire in typical gaucho style.

The battle of Father Víctor, as suggested in the story’s title, is a battle with the devil. The family has asked him to perform an exorcism on their son, Micky, who groans at night and throws fits while the sound of rattling chains can be heard on the roof of the house. Romera points out that this is Cormick’s own version of a story which is told in many places, and is one version of the truth (as the prologue suggests). Citing studies by Tim Pat Coogan and Patrick McKenna, he notes the importance of Irish priests during that period in maintaining a separate identity for Irish-Argentines but also in controlling that population. Both studies document the history of Father Fahy, who was sent from

Ireland as chaplain to Irish immigrants in the Buenos Aires region: "Fahy saw his duty as 'protecting' his congregation from the influence of the 'natives', whose way of life did not conform to the Irish Catholic ethos of the nineteenth century" (McKenna 189). Romera's focus is primarily historical, as he points out elements of Eduardo Cormick's writing which reveal the lifestyle and mentality of everyday people in the Irish diaspora. However, his observations on the perceived duty of Catholic priests to "protect" Irish-Argentines from the natives and maintain a distinct ethnic identity leave an important question unanswered about this story's narrative: what exactly is the "devil" which Father Víctor is trying to battle? Perhaps it is the criollo culture which is slowly but surely taking hold in the family, threatening to erase their Irish memory and identity.

"Lluvia de cenizas" introduces another family to the narrative. Delia is a matriarch living on a remote estancia, dealing with a different phenomenon: a rain of ashes. Above all, this story emphasizes the harsh physical and emotional landscape of these estancias. Several times it has rained ashes on the property, threatening the only sustenance that Delia and her family have: their sheep. Faced with economic uncertainly and circumstances beyond her control, Delia finds comfort in the rituals of Catholicism. First she prays novenas, explaining to her children, "alguien tiene que mostrar la cara y pedirle disculpas a Dios por todos los desastres que estamos viendo en el mundo" (*Entre gringos y criollos* 25). Finally, when nothing seems to work, Delia decides she must seek the intercession of Saint Anthony, "para no quedar aislados del mundo" (26). Delia turns to Saint Anthony because she feels isolated in the world. Although the reader is left wondering whether the ash will continue to fall, the story ends on a hopeful note: the

figure of her brother, Claudio, on the horizon, as he approaches the house and embraces her. It is a story about separation and about coming home, harsh as that home may be.

Claudio appears in other stories, as well. Two more stories deal with the same townspeople, albeit in a more festive tone. "Tormenta de verano" takes place during Carnaval in Junín. The story begins with the words of negro Prati's mother: "Júntate con esos muchachos, que están tan bien educados" (29). Prati's mother has confidence in the moral upbringing which Mamagrande, "católica e inglesa," has imparted on her children (29). This assumption hints perhaps at the hierarchies of race and class in Junín, while also demonstrating the community between them. Ultimately, Cormick's story pokes fun at these assumptions. Mamagrande and negro Prati's mother pray together, before Carnaval begins, "para que las tentaciones del mundo no nos llevaran por el camino del pecado" (29). Meanwhile, negro Prati follows his mother's advice and gets together with Mamagrande's four boys, who together decide to improvise a float for the grand parade down Rivadavia Avenue. They give themselves the artistic name, "Tormenta de verano" and design their float which depicts a typical country scene of some criollos sitting on a bench, shaded from the imaginary sun. However, their float has a burlesque surprise:

> El recitado de la cuarta parada terminó con el chaparrón propio de una tormenta de verano, y tal como en ocasiones se ha visto, el agua vino acompañada de lluvia de sapos que surgieron de uno de los tachos por su propio impulso y por la ayuda de los recitadores, inundaron los alrededores del carro y comenzaron a entreverarse con el público […] (33)

When the police arrive at the scene, they find "cinco criollos tomando cerveza sin ningún disimulo y recitando cada uno su propio poema de Espronceda o Hernández" (33). At the story's end, negro Prati returns home to a worried mother, drinking mate on the porch while she waits for her son. He reminds her of her earlier advice: "Estuve con los hijos de

Mamagrande, como me aconsejaste" (34). While the mothers of both families are praying for their sons to maintain their cultural values and not mix with the locals, in the end all of the boys—negro Prati and the Irish sons of Mamagrande—are all becoming "criollos."

"Las posibilidades del ser" depicts another important celebration in Junín: Saint Patrick's Day. Here, Cormick very artfully captures the transculturation of the region's everyday people, and their state of living "entre gringos y criollos." The story begins on a note of ambiguity, stating "Es y no es. Todo es así en este mundo. En especial si se lo mira desde este lado de la cancha de bochas, donde todos esperan el veredicto de Sharry" (35). The characters have spent the day celebrating the feast of Ireland's patron saint in a way that probably only Irish-Argentines would: an early morning Mass followed by a bocce tournament and a barbecue. This combination of festivities immediately points to the diversity of immigrants in Argentina. Although the townspeople are celebrating the feast of the patron saint of Ireland, they are playing a game which originated in Italy and grilling meat in a traditional Argentine, criollo style. The Doyles, a local family who assisted in the preparations, has painted each one of the bocce planks with the colors of Argentina and Ireland. Rather than drinking beer, as is characteristic of Saint Patrick's Day celebrations around the world, participants drink wine out of barrels, also decorated with Irish and Argentine colors: "Para amenizar esos partidos se abría la primera damajuana de vino clarete refrescado en agua y hielo dentro de unos tambores prolijamente pintados con los colores de las dos patrias celebradas" (36). The narrator casually notes the family names of those in attendance: the Doyles, Sharry, Mary McCormick, McLoughlin, and Kiernan are just a few.

Sharry's long-awaited verdict, hinted at in the story's opening lines, refers to the "filosóficas discusiones de borrachos" which take place during the bocce game (36). At the entrance to the Club where everyone has gathered, a cement sign reads: "Los irlandeses son una raza" (36). This prompts the participants of the day's festivities to muse over Irish identity, and the story simultaneously follows the progress of the bocce game and the debate over Irishness. Are the Irish a race? If so, some of the townspeople find it problematic to be grouped together with the English: "Pero entonces, ¿los irlandeses son británicos, como sus vecinos los ingleses que son siempre, acá y allá, sus patrones?" (36) Others relate the question to the railroads, which have recently been nationalized: "Todas las líneas de ferrocarril eran de propietarios ingleses y todos, o casi todos, los que están jugando a las bochas eran obreros o empleados ferroviarios" (36). Given the unequal historical relationship between English railroad owners and Irish workers, it is understandable that these Irish-Argentines may not consider themselves to be the same as the English. Other participants then wonder how they might relate to North Americans: "Los irlandeses son como los norteamericanos, por eso ahora algunos hijos de irlandeses trabajan en empresas norteamericanas, no sólo inglesas" (37). To this, another character responds, "Al revés, los norteamericanos son como los irlandeses, pero expandidos por la geografía de América del Norte" (37). Again, this part of the discussion connects ethnic identity to relationships of work and power.

Who is the authentic Irishman? Someone asks: Is it the one who sings "God Save Ireland," fights with the Republicans in Spain and curses the bloody English? Or is it the one who fights against the Nazis and Fascists in the imperial army? (37). As the bocce tournament continues into a third round to break a tie, players and spectators continue to

toss around their ideas—all of which point to the varied dimensions of Irish identity around the world. One gentleman remembers that his son spoke to him of a literary character named Leopold Bloom, musing: "Es un irlandés que es judío. ¿Puede ser irlandés si es judío?" (37). This question provokes a response from el Negro Meehan, who has an Irish surname and Mapuche grandparents: "Es como decir que un negro puede ser irlandés," he says laughing (37). As power structures, race and religion are dismissed as determining factors, the bocce players then consider food. Leopold Bloom did eat lamb kidneys fried in lard, says the father of the Joyce reader. Many agree that one must eat lamb to be Irish, until someone adds: "Sí. Y hay que tomar cerveza, en vez de vino clarete" (38). Here lies the problem: how can these Irish-Argentines, celebrating their Irish heritage with wine, barbecue and bocce, define Irishness?

At this point, the bocce tournament has become close and Leonard is about to throw the last ball. Its landing point will determine whether Leonard and his team take the victory, or whether the players will have to wait until the next tournament, more than two months away, to continue the match. However, the participants are now more interested in the conversation than they are in the game: "[E]l tema candente parecía ser el carácter de los irlandeses, su personalidad diferenciada de los ingleses y los norteamericanos" (39). Everyone turns to Francisco Sharry, who is known for his decisive opinions—"para eso está Sharry: para decir cómo son las cosas" (39). Kiernan asks whether the Irishman is a revolutionary or a comfortable bourgeois, whether he is British or his own race, returning to the original question: "¿Los irlandeses son una raza?" (39).

Here, the narrator contrasts the difficulty of defining the results of a game versus defining a people: “Definir si una bocha es o no es la ganadora es una cosa. Otra cosa es decir si un irlandés, por serlo, debe considerarse un británico. O si, por irlandés, debe oponerse a todo lo que sea británico” (39). As the ball from the final throw flies through the air, Sharry announces his verdict: “Es y no es” (39). Throughout the story, the back and forth of bocce balls mirrors the exchange of conversation and debate among the participants and spectators. Appropriately, then, the answer to the grand question is found in the game—a ball in mid-air. Irishness is and is not its own race. And the Irish-Argentines who contemplate the game as well as these questions of identity belong and do not belong, at the same time. Like the ball, moving from one point to another, their identity is in a constant state of motion. In the end, no one remembers the final position of Leonard’s bocce ball. However, the narrator notes that everyone who was present that day remembered Sharry’s definition of Irishness. “[Y]a nada pareció tan importante como esa definición de lo irlandés, que marcó a los jóvenes y a los niños presentes, volvió banal el dilema de Shakespeare, y trascendió en la cultura de las siguientes generaciones” (39).

The stories in *Entre gringos y criollos* explore the place of immigrants, particularly Irish-Argentines, at the individual, community and national levels. It is also worth considering Cormick’s novella, *Quema su memoria* (2004), which depicts the final days and recollections of William Brown, also known as Guillermo Bruno, an Irish-Argentine considered the founder of Argentine naval forces. Themes and tropes typical of Irish identity appear throughout the novella. As the title suggests, the narrative centers on memory—the historical memory of “Don Guillermo Brown” in Argentina, as well as

Guillermo's personal memories (or those of his character, as recreated by Cormick). In his final days, Guillermo struggles to make sense of his life, particularly his leadership over Argentine forces under the command of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Much like Roger Casement, Brown's legacy is highly ambiguous—a hero to some, and a traitor to others. The same ambiguity can be found in his personal identity, as he seems to exist between nations; he has only vague memories of Ireland and the United States, where his family lived for a brief time, but many Argentines of his time considered him an outsider.

Quema su memoria spans one weekend, the final weekend, in the life of Guillermo Brown. The narrative is divided into five chapters: Viernes, Sábado, Sábado a la noche (junto al fuego), Domingo, and Domingo a la tarde. In each segment, the reader delves deeper into the many dimensions of Brown's identity and his past. First, Cormick includes the recollections of Guillermo Enrique Hudson (1841-1922), an Argentine writer of Irish and English heritage. Hudson sees a tired old man standing next to the canons at a historical monument. Struck by the old man's blue eyes and his commanding presence, he asks around until someone is able to tell him the man's identity: "Me dijo que el viejo que yo había visto era el almirante Brown, un inglés que muchos años antes se había puesto al servicio de Rosas, mientras Rosas estaba en guerra con la vecina República del Uruguay, y que había llevado a cabo el sitio de la ciudad de Montevideo" (*Quema su memoria* 7). This first account seems to communicate a general knowledge of this historical figure—but a knowledge which is flawed, as we know that Brown was not *inglés* but *irlandés.* And if we have learned from Cormick's "Las posibilidades de ser," the English and the Irish are not quite the same thing. His association with Rosas also leads to a mixed legacy, as Rosas has gone down in history as one of Argentina's most

ruthless leaders. The fact that Brown first appears standing next to canons also hints at his role in Argentina's naval battles.

Following Hudson's recollections, the reader encounters another historical text—this one from Bartolomé Mitre's "Discurso fúnebre." Bartolomé Mitre belonged to the generation of political leaders following Rosas and Brown. Here, almost one year after Brown's death, Mitre remembers with flowery, poetic language his meeting with the old admiral just days before his passing:

> Paseábamos en su jardín y hablábame él de sus campañas marítimas, de sus árboles y sus flores, de sus compañeros de armas, de los sentimientos elevados de patriotismo que le animaban, y de las memorias de su vida, que se ocupaba en escribir. […] [M]e inclinaba con respeto ante aquel monumento vivo de nuestras glorias navales, y encontraba sublime de majestad aquella noble figura que se levantaba plácida y serena después de tantas borrascas que la habían agitado. (*Quema su memoria* 9-10)

Mitre goes on to emphasize the serenity of Brown's soul and his desire to finish his memoirs before making the journey through death's dark waters. However, the next narrative sequence takes us to don Guillermo, as he is commonly referred in a third person narrative, on the Friday before his death. Here we see a very different, more human picture of this historical figure: a tired old man whose soul is conflicted with self-doubt about his role in history, his personal losses, and his homeland(s). The novel follows don Guillermo and Mitre during these final days, telling a more nuanced story about both men. In the process, the reader comes to question the previously noted historical accounts by Hudson and Mitre, while characters tackle existential questions related to identity, historical legacy, liberty, and definitions of place and home. Like Fergus Kilpatrick in Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe" and Roger Casement in

Vargas Llosa's *El sueño del celta,* Cormick's rendering of Admiral Brown suggests that historical narratives simplify what is often a much more complex reality.

The third person narrative depicts that famous meeting between Mitre and Brown, just days before Brown's passing. However, the story is quite different from don Guillermo's point of view. The reader has access to Guillermo's inner thoughts the day before he meets Mitre, as he aggressively questions why this young political leader is coming to see him: "[A]sí me indagan, me buscan en silencio, me provocan estos inoportunos interrogantes, a mi edad, en mi estado, ¿qué quieren de mí? Este niño, Mitre que vendrá mañana, ¿qué quieren?" (12). At first, there are only subtle hints of Guillermo's sense of discomfort with his historical legacy. He refers to a road nearby which has been named after him, but which he prefers to call by its former name *camin nevu* (12). He feels nostalgia for the sea and for the men who sailed with him, but also remembers the misery of those days, which at the time did not seem even close to historical: "todos marineros temblando de gloria, de frío, de rabia, o de miedo, navegando noches luminosas de luna, días sin razones para hacer nada, imposibles para hacer historia" (13).

When the two men do meet, on Saturday, Mitre's attitude is not the same one of reverence and honor which appears in his "Discurso fúnebre." Rather, "Mitre […] visita a don Guillermo con el mismo ánimo de quien atiende a un anciano estúpido" (17). Mitre approaches the meeting with a slightly accusatory tone, unable to understand how Brown was willing to fight for Rosas:

> Mitre recuerda, y dice, que don Guillermo fue comandante de las fuerzas federales en el Río de la Plata, pero que prefiere olvidar ese episodio. Ofrece con su olvido perdonar al viejo almirante el apoyo que éste dio al que hasta hace poco Buenos Aires conocía como Ilustre Restaurador de las

> Leyes, de quien Mitre habla como sanguinario tirano, cobarde prófugo y otros adjetivos que suenan en los oídos de don Guillermo como una velada acusación a su propio papel en la tragedia […] (17-18)

What Mitre does not understand, the reader gradually learns via Guillermo's inner narrative: he never saw himself as anti-Unitarian, and his memories of those events are nebulous. What he does know is that he had the mission of blocking British imperial forces at sea, and he did. Although he may have fought under the Argentine flag, don Guillermo was more interested in the enemy: "Peleó con los ingleses y […] lo conmovió el saberse sumando otra batalla a la guerra interminable contra el enemigo eterno, el que lo persiguió siempre y conspiró en su contra, se le apareció como fragata en el Caribe y como demonios en su casa: viejos, traidores, cobardes ingleses" (18). This statement, one of many in which Brown expresses his eternal battle against the English, highlights the fallacy in the earlier historical text which describes Brown himself as *inglés.* Far from identifying with the English, Brown led naval forces against the British Crown. And rather than fighting for Rosas, he notes that he fought for revenge: "[…] vengar cada humillación, cada día de cárcel o de lágrima que la Corona Británica supo repartir en el mundo" (19).

Like Vargas Llosa's representation of Roger Casement, Cormick's rendering of Guillermo Brown is one of a complex man plagued with self-doubt regarding his role in national conflicts and history: "Y entonces don Guillermo, que no sabe si todo lo que hizo lo hizo bien, que no está seguro de haber querido hacer todo lo que hizo, sabe que si hay algo que siempre deseó fue correr a los ingleses hasta el infierno, ser el infierno de los ingleses […]" (19). He shares none of these thoughts with Mitre, however, as he considers him incapable of understanding. Rather, he presents him with a simplified

narrative, probably that which Mitre expects: “Por eso dice, como si no hubiera sabido hacer otra cosa, que él cumplió con sus deberes con la Patria” (19). The national narrative, that of being motivated by sentiments of patriotism, is Guillermo’s simplified version of conflicting memories and emotions.

As the novella continues, the narrative switches between third person narratives of don Guillermo’s final days, second person narratives of his memories, and more fragments of historical texts. It is an exploration of those old naval battles which don Guillermo promises to write down for Mitre, but also a revelation of the memories which he chooses not to include in the official narrative. In this process of remembering, don Guillermo also questions notions of homeland, freedom, and Ireland.

During one of their meetings, Mitre marvels to himself about this shadow of a hero, William Brown, “este granjero a quien vería mejor emborrachándose con whisky mal destilado que mareando a capitanes europeos adiestrados” (36). Clearly, one of the main sources of his doubt towards Brown’s historical legacies is related to his otherness. He then asks don Guillermo what brought the son of Irish pastors to the seas of Argentina. Guillermo responds: “Sabrá el señor Mitre […] que el descubridor de este nuevo mundo en el que ha venido a crecer esta república de hombres libres era un genovés hijo de un hilandero judío afincado en la ciudad” (37). Comparing himself to the unlikely “discoverer” Columbus, also a foreigner to these lands, don Guillermo notes that he, too, heard rumors of the sea from his father’s workshop; his uncle had already crossed the sea to go to “the other America,” the United States. He explains that he accompanied his father on a trip to visit his uncle and stayed in Philadelphia until he was enlisted by the Marina Real, which was also headed by a fellow Irishman, Nelson (38).

Although his response to Mitre gives the basic timeline of his arrival to Argentina, he never truly explains how and why he made Argentina his home. However, his internal voice elaborates:

> En los años en los que a él le tocó servir frente al Imperio de Don Pedro, era la guerra contra el que pretendía invadir, imponerse, y todos eran uno en esa empresa. Y antes, cuando él llegó a este río con la sola intención de repartir bienes y personas entre los puertos costeros, y con eso poder vivir lejos de los odios y las guerras que dejó en Europa; cuando llegó a este río y se encontró con un nido de libertad, sintió simpatía por esta gente que parecía dispuesta a repetir, tan lejos y pobres, el triunfo bíblico de David contra Goliat […] (49)

Here, Guillermo expresses the affinity he felt for Argentina and his need to leave Ireland due to hate and wars. As he later states to Father Fahy during the priest's visit to his home, "Usted podrá invitarlos [a los irlandeses], como alguna vez hizo O'Brien, a que elijan vivir acá y no en Boston. Pero ellos saben que hay un lugar donde quieren vivir, y no podrán vivir, y ese lugar es su granja, nuestra Irlanda" (79). For Irish Americans and Irish Argentines, Ireland is a place of loss and desire; the place where they would like to live, but to which they can never return.

In their conversations throughout the novella, Guillermo, Pat, and Father Fahy remember Ireland with nostalgia, but they also remember it as a place without liberty. Pat associates Ireland with the taste of grass which he had in his mouth when English soldiers came to burn their town, and his mother hid the children underground: "Recuerdo el pasto entre las piedras. Este olor de río para mí es el olor del pasto que masticaba para que no se oyera mi llanto" (89). Although he recalls that his father often said *Green Ireland*, his own memories are different: "Ireland es verde porque la soñamos así, aunque sea gris de temores o roja de sangre" (105). Due to the presence of the English, Ireland was not the green, idyllic land their grandfathers remembered; however, the memory of

this loss, and the desire for freedom, is what would ultimately drive Guillermo to other lands, inspired to fight against English ships.

Argentina, the homeland both Guillermo and Pat chose, is also green—although don Guillermo reminds his friend that, in his early days as a sailor, no one thought about homeland, but about liberty:

> Creí que estábamos construyendo una patria. La única que sirve es la libertad, es la única patria que sirve. Lo demás son mentiras que les contamos a nuestros vecinos, a los niños, y los obligamos a creerlas. Genoveses, vascos, yo, algún criollo, armamos buques de la mañana a la tarde y a la noche pedíamos a Dios que no se hundieran por el peso. Con eso inventamos nuestra patria, hicimos la libertad, que es tener un lugar donde te conozcan por lo que amas […] (106)

Returning to a familiar theme from Cormick's short story collection, Pat asks Guillermo: where were the *criollos* in that history? Guillermo responds that *criollos* are simply an invention of the new national narrative: "Hoy hablamos de los criollos. Somos un invento de nuestra tozudez, puedes imaginarte: vascos con irlandeses, buena cruza para aventuras imposibles. Ahora somos criollos, pero lo que entonces queríamos era la libertad […]" (107). According to Guillermo's vision, then, the only concept which binds the nation is freedom—not a particular ethnic identity, which he sees as nothing more than the changing product of a constantly evolving narrative.

Just before Mitre, and the reader, learn of Guillermo Brown's death through an official letter from the chaplain of Irish Catholics in Buenos Aires, don Guillermo spends what will be the final evening of his life contemplating what he included in his memoirs, and what he chose not to include:

> Cada vez que cargo la pluma, en una de esas pausas, líneas en blanco en el papel, aparece lo que no figurará en las Memorias para Mitre: el miedo cuando la fragata queda varada y el enemigo crece, las energías se

> escasean y viene la tarde. ¿Qué historia se escribe con debilidades, si es la historia de los fuertes lo que se escribe? (111)

Don Guillermo's final thoughts are very suggestive, as they very literally point out the doubts which lie between the lines of history. As he reflects earlier, Mitre will be able to tell his story, but historians never manage to explain the why behind individual actions. For Cormick, this seems to be the point where fiction steps in and attempts to fill in those spaces.

Although the plot of *Quema su memoria* centers very much on historical narrative, examining the character of Guillermo Brown and his legacy in Argentina, the heart of the novella contains a journey into Celtic myth. It begins with a flashback to Guillermo's childhood in Ireland, to the moment when his grandfather shows him the sea and tells him, "Más allá está América, Bill" (65). He explains to his grandson that America is the land of eternal youth and freedom. When young Guillermo (then called Bill) asks why they can't go there, his grandfather responds with an old Celtic myth which has been passed down "[d]esde el tiempo de los abuelos de mis abuelos, y quizá desde antes, antes todavía de San Patricio" (65). As the story goes, Ireland was once home to a band of heroes called the Fianna. His father clarifies that he is talking about "Finn y los suyos" (65)—referring to a sequence of Irish folk-tales known as the Fennian Cycle (Castleden 323). The protagonists of these tales are the Fianna, led by Fionn mac Cumhaill, or Finn (323).

To explain why they cannot go to America, Guillermo's father tells the legend of Oisín, the son of Finn, who fell in love with a woman from the land across the sea. The Fianna knew of this land as "Tirnanoge," or Tir Nan Og. *The Element Encyclopedia of the Celts* describes Tir Nan Og as "the ancient Irish Otherworld, the Celtic heaven,

literally ‘the Land of the Young’ to the far west” (Castleden 288). Guillermo’s grandfather tells him that Oisín fell in love instantly with the woman who rode over the sea on a white horse, and followed her back to Tirnanoge: “Mucho tiempo después nuestros monjes, que recorrían el mundo y todo lo conocían, llegaron a esa tierra y conocieron a los que vivían allá; aunque no dijeron por allá fueran eternos. Después, como llega la plaga, llegaron los ingleses. Pero entonces ya le llamaban América” (67). The grandfather’s tale melds Celtic and modern European history, describing America as a land of freedom and youth, but one which has been plagued by the English. Later, Guillermo tells his grandfather that he understands now why they couldn’t go to America: the English are in charge there, too. His grandfather explains that is no longer the case: “Pasó lo que va a pasar un día en Irlanda: los echaron, como se irán de acá. Muchos irlandeses pelearon, y todavía lo hacen, para que los ingleses no se apoderen de América. Tal vez un día, tal vez pronto, conozcas la tierra de la eterna juventud, la Tirnanoge que conoció Oisín” (68). His grandfather’s prediction would, of course, come true: Guillermo Brown would first travel to America (Philadelphia, precisely) when he was nine years old.

However, the young Guillermo also learns that a journey to America carries a heavy price. His grandfather tells him that Oisín married Niam, the woman on the white horse, and lived happily in Tirnanoge. However, after three years, he succumbed to the sentimentality of the Irish and asked Niam to let him visit Ireland. She acquiesced, but recommended that he not dismount his horse. When he arrives, he is unable to locate his town or his people. Finally, he learns from locals that his father lived hundreds of years ago, and local legend tells that he died of sadness when his son left Ireland forever.

Overwhelmed with sadness, Oisín heads home but stops to help some men on the road to move a large stone. In the process, he falls from the horse and instantly ages hundreds of years. His grandfather concludes: "Todo esto que te cuento se supo porque Oisín pudo contarlo antes de morir, con la bendición de San Patricio" (70).

Although the mythical tone of this chapter is quite different than the rest of *Quema su memoria*, it is an essential part of Cormick's story about Guillermo Brown: a warrior, like Oisín, who crossed the sea to the land of eternal freedom. Although both crossed the sea seeking freedom and fulfillment, they never escape their nostalgia for Ireland. Celtic myth also prevails in the narratives of Viviana O'Connell, who uses it to convey a feeling of otherness and the struggle for freedom. Viviana O'Connell, a writer and journalist from Rosario, Argentina, directs the magazine *The Shamrock* and belongs to the Círculo Celta de Rosario. She has published stories for the online journal *Sitio al Margen*, an online cultural magazine in Argentina. The magazine's title seems particularly relevant to her work: "on the margin" implies both something which is marginalized or on the edge, while at the same time making reference to notes which one makes in the margins to interpret or clarify something. Some of O'Connell's stories have been included in *Cuentos de hadas irlandeses* (2006), a collection of Celtic legends translated and selected by Roberto Rosaspini Reynolds. Like Cormick, O'Connell is also active in the Irish Argentine community and creatively inspired by Irish themes; however, her stories are more supernatural than Cormick's historical fictions, as her narrative frequently combines elements of the fantastic with Celtic myth and legend.

In his introduction to *Cuentos de hadas irlandeses*, Rosaspini Reynolds relates an anecdote from Seamus O'Duilearha's article "The Gaelic Storyteller," about an Irish

"tinker" named O'Hara who was famed for his storytelling technique and repertoire. According to the anecdote, O'Hara had a story so rich and so entertaining that he jealously guarded his audiences, making sure not to share the tale with other storytellers. However, he is outsmarted by another tinker, O'Sullivan, who hides while O'Hara tells the tale, and then comes out and re-tells it with such embellishment and grace that O'Hara never told the story again. Rosaspini Reynolds uses this anecdote to highlight the enormous satisfaction that storytelling afforded both storytellers and audiences in rural Ireland: "[E]l venerable arte de la narración de cuentos constituía el pasatiempo preferido de la gente más humilde de la campiña irlandesa, especialmente en el norte y noroeste del país, donde se había gestado un verdadero culto de la lengua *irish gaël*" (8). The Irish preference for stories involving magic and myth presents a sharp contrast to the rest of Western Europe, where Rosaspini Reynolds notes that such stories were more oriented to children than to adults. Perhaps for this reason, he includes a dedication at the book's opening encouraging the adult imagination: "A todos aquellos espíritus sensibles abiertos a la magia, con el deseo de que la fantasía no los abandone jamás" (7).

Recognizing the importance and value placed on the art of storytelling in old Irish culture, Rosaspini Reynolds then offers a genealogy of Irish storytelling. He traces that tinker tradition further back to "su primigenio origen protocelta"—generations of druids, bards, filidh, and vates who eventually passed their craft on to the *senchaidh*, or tinkers (9). The ancient storytellers (and their art) would come under threat in modern Ireland, due to the arrival of the printing press. While some of the filidh would resist these new tendencies and insist on maintaining oral story traditions, Rosaspini Reynolds notes that the final blow came with the British invasion of Ireland, beginning in the seventeenth

century. The Battle of Kinsale (1601) would lead to the exodus of Gaelic nobility—and with it, Gaelic art and culture: "Como consecuencia, eliminados sus mecenas y protectores, los bardos se vieron obligados a guardar silencio o a reemplazar a su público de nobles y cortesanos por la gente humilde y los campesinos, transformándose en *tinkers* y *senchaidh*, debiendo adoptar una vida nómada para poder ir renovando a los espectadores que ya conocían sus narraciones" (10).

Rosaspini Reynolds begins this collection of written Irish fairytales with an acknowledgement that the written tales which have survived this historical process pale in comparison to the originals, which included not only the words but also a theatrical element. The concept of appropriation is also important here, as exemplified in the anecdote about the storyteller whose tale was "stolen," embellished and passed on in a new form. This is particularly important for *Cuentos de hadas irlandeses*, a collection which has borrowed stories from multiple sources, presenting them in a new language and to a new audience. Rosaspini Reynolds notes: "La intención de este trabajo de recopilación y traducción ha sido la de ofrecer al lector una muestra variada de autores y temáticos dentro de los cuentos de hadas y duendes irlandeses, que pueblan una de las mitologías feéricas más nutridas del género […]" (13). The collection includes stories from Crofton Crocker (1798-1854), Lady Jane Francesca Wilde (1826-1896)[18], Jeremiah Curtin (1835-1906), Sir William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), and Lady Isabella Augusta Persse Gregory (1852-1932). However, he notes that he has also included stories which have been personally narrated to him and other written tales which have been recreated or

[18] Jane Wilde, who wrote under the pen name "Speranza," was the mother of Oscar Wilde—the subject of Chapter 4.

retold by contemporary authors—as in the case of Viviana O'Connell, "cuya narrativa constituye una excelente muestra de la vigencia que la tradición celta sigue teniendo en nuestros días" (14). So, along with stories by nineteenth century writers, most of which date even further back in their original, oral forms, Viviana O'Connell represents a contemporary, Argentine storyteller who continues to cultivate the Irish imagination.

O'Connell's short story "El niño," included in the collection, begins with an epigraph from a Spanish translation of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass:* "Tú que te aproximas, curioso / desvaído, incierto espectro, / ¿me traes la vida o la muerte?" (Rosaspini Reynolds 73). In this way, O'Connell introduces the ghostly tone of the story. The narrator, who never states her home country but is assumedly Argentine, has traveled to Ireland to write an article about the oldest castles in Europe. She explains that since she arrived, she began to receive strange visits from a child, which at the time seemed normal in spite of the boy's strange, floating presence: "La segunda vez noté que no tenía piernas. Esto me sorprendió pero no sé por qué no tuve miedo. Sin embargo no era una situación normal" (73). She often feels his presence as she walks around the nearby excavation site of an old castle, but wonders if it is simply her imagination: "Me parecía entrever una sombra esquiva entre los setos; pero seguramente mi activa imaginación agrandaba un poco las cosas. Siempre fui imaginativa desde muy pequeña" (77).

In the next narrative sequence, the reader flashes back to ancient Celtic times in a third person female narrative. A mother is dealing inconsolably with the loss of a child, as her family was required to sacrifice one of their own to the gods as part of a local tradition: "Los dioses estarían contentos, el pueblo estaba contento. Sólo ella no quería salir de la lluvia y volver a la casa incompleta" (74). She cries herself to sleep and is

visited by a swan which picks her up and flies her to a vision of her own child singing along with others. She awakens with a cry, and her husband attempts to comfort her. She is already familiar with the consolations, which she has heard since she was a child: "Él intercederá por nosotros, está mejor ahora…Es un mensajero" (75). Her only comfort is that the destiny she had always feared—first for herself and her siblings, and later for her own children—has finally been fulfilled. At the very least, a Druid later tells her, her child's crooked legs will no longer hinder him; he will be able to run and play with the other children, wherever he is. She is only slightly comforted by these words: "El druida le habla y ella debe creerle para poder continuar. Ella sabe que lo encontrará en el otro mundo. O en éste, no importa, pero lo encontrará para abrazarlo" (76).

Returning to the story's present, the narrator's colleague, Daniel, excitedly tells her that they have discovered an older structure underneath the castle—at least a thousand years old. Meanwhile, the narrator notes that the child, whom she has named Dennis, watches the excavation with great interest: "Cada vez lo veo más a menudo. A veces trata de decirme algo; pero no puedo oírlo" (75). While she reflects on these ghostly visits, Daniel continues to tell her about the history of these castles, which during the Middle Ages were often built over the ruins of Celtic temples. Later in the story, we learn that one reason for human sacrifice, in antiquity, was related to a building's foundations: "Presumiblemente para aplacar a los dioses del inframundo que pudieran sentirse molestos al remover sus tierras" (76). The victims of these sacrifices were often children, a practice which continued through several centuries.

Finally, the narrator returns to the site of the excavation, where Daniel tells her the workers have found something extraordinary. He is stunned when she guesses, before

he can tell her, that they have discovered the remains of a child with no legs. She now knows why the child has visited her, as the night before he had finally spoken to her in her dream, saying the word *mathair:* "Ahora sé por qué sonaba tan dulce esa palabra. Le pregunté a mi anfitrión si la conocía y me contestó que quiere decir 'mamá' en gaélico. Mi niño está buscando a su madre que desapareció hace varios siglos" (78). At the end of the story, the narrator walks towards the excavation site, where the child is crying "Mathair" to her: "Caigo de rodillas sobre la hierba con los brazos abiertos. Una mujer de varios siglos se desprende de mi cuerpo y corre a consolar a su hijo" (78). As the story's epigraph had announced, "El niño" deals with the near presence of life and death. It is also, much like Whitman's "Song of Myself," a story which blurs the lines between self and others, and between generations past and present.

Another story by O'Connell which appears in *Cuentos de hadas irlandeses*, called "La niebla," also deals with death, spirituality and the afterlife. The narrator of this story is a dead woman, as she tells us in the opening lines: "Estoy muerta. Me fue difícil darme cuenta, pero a esta altura es indudable. No podía reconocer que no era un sueño, que realmente hice este viaje que me olvidó en el camino" (21). The fog relates to various aspects of the narrative, but its most direct connection is the narrator's memory of the day she passed. She recalls receiving a phone call in the early morning hours about her husband, presumably that he had been found dead. She leaves home and drives through the fog of a winter morning: "Era de madrugada. Salí con el auto angustiada, a un lugar desolado y tan lejos de casa. La niebla, no se veía nada. La niebla va cubriendo los campos sembrados. Una mujer con una blanca túnica entre los árboles. El cabello blanco le envuelve los tobillos. Hay hogueras a lo lejos. Es una *banshee*" (22).

The Element Encyclopedia of the Celts notes that the Bean Si or Bean Sidhe, often spelled and pronounced banshee, is a Gaelic fairy woman from the Celtic traditions of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands: "She is known as Bean-Nighe, 'The Little Washer by the Ford,' because she is often seen by the side of the stream, washing the bloodstained clothes of those about to die" (Castleden 211). Banshees are also known as mythical protectors of the clan or family, as Rosaspini Reynolds explains in the collection's glossary (121). Thus, the protagonist's vision in "La niebla" was that of her own imminent death. Now, she fights the fog of her memory as a living person to remember how she got to this point. With bitterness, she remembers the night she picked up the phone and heard her husband speaking to another woman. Later, when he disappeared, she called the police. She flashes back to the frustration she felt when the officer asked if her husband may have had a secret lover: "Cuando logré echarlos se me cayó la soledad encima en un instante. Dos semanas, y aún no hay novedades" (23).

Interspersed with the deceased woman's recollection of the events leading to her death comes another, mythical narrative. Here, a spirit woman from "la Isla Verde" waits in eager anticipation for the festival of Samhaín. Rosaspini Reynolds describes Samhaín as a "[f]estividad que anuncia la desaparición de las fronteras entre el mundo de los vivos y Annwun, el Inframundo o Mundo Inferior" (125). For this reason, the spirit woman waits for night to fall so that she can receive her ancestors by the bonfires. The spirit woman, who eventually names herself as Mairie, is a relative of the deceased woman, and senses the death of one of her people from the other side: "Alguien va a morir, a lo lejos oigo música de hadas. Hay una *banshee.* Pasa bailando entre los árboles al son de

los tambores. Se ríe y me mira traviesa, la reconozco. Esta vez será alguien de mi clan" (22).

While Mairie waits to receive her ancestors with joy, the deceased woman is still trapped in her own regret: "Este accidente estúpido no tenía que pasar. Sólo tenía que reconocer el cuerpo y las cosas. La niebla era tan espesa esa noche" (23). She also places blame on her husband, noting that none of this would have happened had he not betrayed her. Death, and her own memories of it, turn out to be the fog surrounding the narrator. She wonders how many days have passed, noting "El tiempo no existe, sólo la niebla" (24). Finally, she hears distant music and a figure emerges out of the fog, calling her name. The protagonist's earthly sorrows melt away as she follows the spirit woman into the mythical forest. Although she doesn't know the woman, she observes, "Es una mujer joven casi adolescente. [...]Me sonríe, se me parece bastante" (24). The melancholy tone of the story turns to comfort, then, as the narrator realizes that she is crossing back into the spirit land: "Esta es la noche del encuentro" (24).

"El niño" and "La niebla" juxtapose mythical and realistic landscapes which involve the movement of people and spirits between ancient and modern time. Both stories also feature female characters who endure great suffering—the loss of a child, and the betrayal of a lover. Although separated by centuries, both women feel powerless in their situations. The mother is unable to deny the gods (and local druids) their sacrifice, and the betrayed woman was left alone for two weeks to wonder what had become of her husband, only to find out that his car was discovered in a river. Women in both stories connect to their ancient past and, ultimately, find comfort and redemption in Celtic spirituality.

In her essay "Cuando la literatura nos convierte en cómplices," O'Connell notes that myth, legend, and the fantastic have a language of their own, and the author who writes or tells these stories does so with the complicity of the reader. Citing Maria Moliner's definition of myth or legend, she gravitates towards the idea of "cosa inventada por alguien que intenta hacerla pasar por verdad" ("Cómplices"). Just as history is transmitted and passed on through written and spoken word, the narration of fantastic events are passed on through tradition as if they were real historic events. In this sense, Celtic legends are a way of connecting to the past: "vemos en la leyenda el sabor de lo antiguo, de tiempos y lugares maravillosos, contaminado de sabiduría e imagenería populares" ("Cómplices"). Although O'Connell's style and subject matter differ considerably from Eduardo Cormick's, she also proposes reading between the lines, suggesting that a fantastic story allows the reader to read the unwritten text, "el argumento detrás del argumento," awakening the imaginative spirit which makes each person unique ("Cómplices").

O'Connell's vision of identity is also comparable to Cormick's, although she again approaches the topic from a unique angle. In another essay she begins with a reflection on broad terms such as multiculturalism: "Hay palabras grandilocuentes, enormes, omnicomprensivas que cubren espacios de dimensiones imposibles: multiculturalismo, interculturalidad, etnicidad […]" ("Cuando nombramos"). O'Connell's two main inspirations for storytelling were her grandfathers, and she associates each of them with a particular kind of narrative: her Irish/Basque grandfather would tell her fairytales each night at bedtime, while her Italian grandfather talked to her about war and politics. The women in her house did not tell stories, but O'Connell broke

with that tradition: “Quizá por falta de competencia masculina me convertí en receptora de relatos, recipiente apto para la mixtura y de algún modo en ese lugar del mundo el patriarcado se fracturó” (3). In this sense, O’Connell envisions storytelling as a connection to her roots—particularly the Irish side of the family, as her stories focus on Celtic myth. However, as a female writer, she adds something new to those narratives: “La voz que podía manifestarse públicamente, seducir, relacionar, relatar, se mudó al cuerpo de fémina e incorporó nuevos sonidos y discursos” (4). While her narratives represent a continuation of her grandfathers’ stories, they also re-shape them and add something new: feminine representation.

Again citing Maria Moliner, O’Connell defines diversity as “circunstancia de ser distintos o múltiples” (“Cuando nombramos”). For this reason, she asserts that women must be included in Argentina’s discussion of diversity: “a eliminar prejuicios y xenofobia, a empezar a nombrar a las mujeres como individuos y no como objetos de las transacciones masculinas” (“Cuando nombramos”). If prejudice against women persists, she suggests, it is because women have been invisible or unnamed. She concludes that while she appreciates respect for cultural diversity, one cannot leave people aside: “Lo importante quizá sea sólo vencer la invisibilidad y crear un espacio para ser nombradas sólo personas” (“Cuando nombramos”). While Cormick’s work acknowledges cultural diversity and the presence of non-criollos throughout Argentine history, O’Connell presents a gendered perspective which demands that women’s voices also be included in that history and culture. All of the works examined in this chapter emphasize the diversity of society as well as the diversity or multiple versions of the individual. O’Connell and Cormick’s stories present transnational, transcultural narratives which

propose broader definitions of national identity and emphasize freedom as an essential human condition.

As we have seen in other Irish-themed works from Spanish American literature, Cormick and O'Connell's works both attempt to continue—and often re-shape—narratives which have been passed on through generations. Both writers seem to suggest that we have only fragments to piece together into narratives, of both our national heroes and our personal, family heroes—parents and grandparents. In Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe" Fergus Kilpatrick's grandson is trying to solve the puzzle of his grandfather's life, and at the same time of his nation's founding. The same is true of Borges as he appears as a character in Cormick's "Vuelvo y no fui." *Quema de su memoria* and *El sueño del celta* do not mention relatives, but both deal with historical legacies passed on through national heroes. Viviana O'Connell, too, is conscious of the narratives of her grandfathers, but chooses to re-write the narrative in a female voice. National and ethnic identities are exposed as narratives and appear in all of these works as extremely malleable. In each work, progressive generations revise, rethink, and refashion these narratives. In the process, they create more inclusive and more human visions of their heroes, themselves, and their societies.

CHAPTER 4
SEXUAL AND POLITICAL AMBIGUITY: A READING OF LUIS RAFAEL SANCHEZ AND JUNOT DIAZ THROUGH THE LENS OF OSCAR WILDE

"All the great artists have had one foot in and one foot out."
Terry Eagleton, *Saint Oscar*

Ireland and Irishness embody ambiguity in Latin American narrative, as Irish characters—European and non-European, colonized and colonizers, heroes and traitors, at once local and universal—often blur the lines of nation and gender. The narratives examined in previous chapters also tell stories of migration and movement, highlighting the importance of language and storytelling. All of these concepts lead us to Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)—second only to Joyce, perhaps, as an Irish writer whose iconicity and literary mark still reverberate in Latin America. Terry Eagleton notes the deeply contradictory nature of Wilde. He hailed from Dublin, like Joyce, "and everything about him was double, hybrid, ambivalent. He was socialite and sodomite, upper-class and underdog, a Victorian *paterfamilias* who consorted with rent boys, a shameless *bon viveur* who laid claim to the title of socialist" ("Introduction" xi). His literary legacy is matched only by his personal legacy—that of a flamboyant dandy who took fashionable London by storm, only to be later reviled and imprisoned for his deviant sexual behavior ("Introduction" xi). Considering his literary works, essays and larger than life personal legacy, Wilde provides an appropriate lens through which to view narratives of migration, cosmopolitanism and sexuality. Two contemporary Caribbean authors, Puerto Rican Luis Rafael Sánchez and Dominican American Junot Díaz, have written novels whose titles allude to Wilde. Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* alludes to Wilde's comedic play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, while Junot

Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* refers to a mispronunciation of Oscar Wilde. Although criticism of these novels has not drawn any connection to Wilde beyond the titles themselves, I will suggest that both novels relate to Wilde on deeper levels related to cosmopolitanism, gender and individualism.

Much like the protagonists of Sánchez and Díaz's novels, Oscar Wilde is just as famous for what was said and written *about* him as for his own words and actions. Eagleton attributes this fascination to the conflict between Wilde's public identity and his private self: "Wilde lived his life suspended precariously over this growing abyss between outer and inner selves, and was finally to disappear into it altogether" ("Introduction" xii). In his public life, he was a renowned playwright, husband and family man who lived in London during the Victorian era of the late nineteenth century. However, rumors abounded about his private life, and he was eventually sentenced to prison for gross indecency with male lovers. Thus, his literary work begins with essays on aestheticism and lighthearted comedies, but ends with the *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), a long, woeful poem which describes his harsh two years in prison. By that time Wilde was exiled in France, never to return to Ireland or Britain.

In "The Wilde Legacy," Pierpaolo Martino notes that there is a certain religiosity to the author's iconicity. If Wilde portrayed himself as Christ-like in *De Profundis* (published posthumously in 1905), later critics in gay cultural studies would follow this trend in portraying him as a homosexual martyr—hence the title of Eagleton's other work on Wilde, entitled *Saint Oscar* (Martino 145). Martino proposes: "In truth, Wilde's was an attempt to construct an alternative discourse on masculinity, which sharply contrasted with the normative, imperial one so fashionable in Victorian England" (147). In *The*

Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment, Sinfield points out that there was no "queer" paradigm in Victorian England, and Wilde's contemporaries didn't see queerness the way we see it now (3). In his behavior and his writing, however, Wilde would (quite literally) set the stage for this paradigm to emerge. Martino adds that up until Wilde, "effeminacy" did not mean being womanish, but spending too much time with women and not spending time on "manly" pursuits. In his personal life and in his literary characters, Wilde displayed an ironic form of masculinity while also taking an interest in "womanly pursuits" such as fashion and design: "In short, Wilde was displaying and supporting effeminacy in ways potentially threatening to the establishment" (Martino 147).

Wilde also represents, for many observers, conflicted national identity. Eagleton notes: "If he was 'doubled' in his sexuality, as both husband and homosexual lover, he was equally Janus-faced in his nationality" ("Introduction" xii). He was born into an Anglo-Irish family in Dublin, and even his name suggests tension between Ireland and England: "He was christened Oscar after a legendary Irish hero, but 'Wilde' is a notably non-Gaelic surname" (xii). Eagleton describes the condition of a Protestant Irishman as an internal exile, suggesting that Wilde could never fully identify with Ireland, nor with England. Thus, social performance plays an important role in the author's life and work. Martino suggests that Wilde "performed" his identity in adopting Oxford, London, dandy identities (143-44), and Eagleton asserts that masks were important in Wilde's works for this reason: "It is no wonder, then, that he believed so devoutly that surface was all—that reality was just a question of style and pose, that if you stripped off one mask you simply found another" (Introduction xv). One of Wilde's most iconic works, *The Importance of*

Being Earnest (1895), has at its center a confusion of identities, a play of masks, inversion of gender roles and verbal complexities (Martino 145).

Wilde often blurs the line between self and others—not only in the confusion of identities often present in his fictional work, but also in his theories on individualism, socialism and cosmopolitanism. In "The Critic as Artist," when two characters debate the role of the art critic in society, one asserts that individual personality is an element of revelation: "If you wish to understand others you must intensify your own individualism" (Wilde 34). He later states that art springs from personality (35), and that it is the critic's role to show audiences the work of art "in some new relation to our age" (36). Thus, while a work may originate in an artist's personality, it requires an Other to interpret it in new contexts. His 1891 essay "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" also reveals this paradox, as he argues that "[S]ocialism would relieve us from that sordid necessity of living for others which, in the present condition of things, presses so hardly upon almost everybody" (Wilde 389). Although Socialism focuses on the collective, Wilde sees its main value in the elimination of political and economic forces which prohibit people from reaching their individual human potential: "Socialism itself will be of value simply because it will lead to Individualism" (390). In light of these ideas, Wilde's unique character makes perfect sense—the author envisioned a world where, unfettered by national or social conventions, one could simply be. As he famously states in this essay, "One will live. To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all" (395).

For Eagleton, it was precisely Wilde's marginality that provided him with the perspective and insight to parody societal norms and create great comedies: "[C]omedy is

bred, among other things, of an ironic awareness of the arbitrary nature of social conventions, and nobody is better placed to appreciate this 'constructed' nature of social reality than the outsider who has never taken such conventions for granted in the first place" ("Introduction" xv). In fact, much of the major "English" literature of the modern period was the product of exiles and expatriates, signaling a constant tension between the margins and the center (xvi). Here, to employ the terminology of Paul Gilroy (1993), we see the struggle between *roots* and *routes*. In his study on African diaspora, Gilroy argues that national culture does not create or secure identity; rather, he describes identity formation through roots (distinct cultures embedded in particular places) and routes (the circulation of peoples and cultures) (*Black Atlantic* 190). James Clifford applies this idea to notions of travel, observing that all peoples are "on the move" and arguing that "travels and contacts are crucial sites for an unfinished modernity" (2). Clifford's definition of travel is more inclusive, and takes into consideration the notion that travel does not only include "Westerners" traveling to developing countries, but also the reverse, as is the case with migrants, refugees and expatriates. This second kind of traveler follows the trajectory of "a different cosmopolitanism," says Clifford (5). Stanford Friedman adds to this point that cosmopolitanism is no longer the privilege of elite travelers, but now understood to include migrants, those who move in search of a better life (261). Wilde also considers the notion of cosmopolitanism in his critical essays, particularly in his theory of individualism in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." According to Margaret Kennedy, Wilde's cosmopolitanism does not imply a reduction of cultures, but coexistence, "a conjunction of the local and the global" (Kennedy 93). Kennedy proposes that Wilde's plays, his primary legacy, promote open-mindedness, tolerance and good-

will—"elements of Wilde's cosmopolitanism and demonstrative of his ethical aestheticism" (103). Although critics have considered plays such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* as light-hearted and frivolous, Kennedy suggests that his eccentric characters provoke the audience to reconsider their social viewpoints—and the same could be said of the eccentric characters who appear in Sánchez's *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* and Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.*

Not unlike Oscar Wilde, Luis Rafael Sánchez is a writer and intellectual who occupies a place at once in the center (living part-time in New York) and on the margins (in his native Puerto Rico). Sánchez is a cultural and literary critic as well as an artist, often melding art and criticism into one. In fact, his 1988 work, *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos,* does not fit neatly into any one category. In the opening pages, Sánchez as narrator presents his method of discourse as an imagined testimonial or documentary: "Algunas geografías, la letra de las canciones, su nombre, otros nombres populares, integran la verdad racionada del texto a continuación. Todo lo otro es escritura hacia el riesgo adivinador, permiso a los oleajes alucinatorios de mi Caribe natal, invención" (Sánchez 3). He calls his work part documentary, part fantasy—one which travels Latin America in search of the essence of Puerto Rican bolero singer Daniel Santos (1916-1992). *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* fits into a sub-genre called bolero novels, along with Cuban writer Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres* (1967), Argentine Manuel Puig's *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1968), and Pedro Vergés's *Solo cenizas hallarás* (1980), among others. In *Tropics of Desire: Interventions from Queer Latino America,* José Quiroga describes the shared characteristics of bolero novels:

> These works recuperate a mode, a time and a place, they bridge the tangible borders between high and low culture, in order to voice a certain

> dislocation for a time past. If Cabrera Infante had mourned for a lost Cuba by focusing on La Estrella, in Puig or in Sánchez the bolero signals the beginning of a new voice that reappears from the past in order to seduce readers again into a transnational (and even meta-Caribbean) space. (151)

There is a decidedly transnational pull to *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos;* as the narrator claims in his introduction, he followed Santos's tracks "por varios recovecos y puntales de la América amarga, la América descalza, la América en español que lo idolatra" (3). Alluding to José Martí's *Nuestra América,* Sánchez describes his narrative of Daniel Santos (and the narrative voice, which documents Santos) not as Puerto Rican but as cosmopolitan, criss-crossing national borders and social borders, as well.

La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos is presented in three parts: For Part 1, entitled "Las palomas del milagro," the narrator travels through cities in Ecuador, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Nicaragua, the United States and the Dominican Republic, presenting stories, interviews, testimonies, radio transmissions, dialogues, oral traditions, letters and other forms (real or imagined) which discuss the music and personality of Daniel Santos—a figure, much like Wilde, whose legend is larger than life. Part 2, "Vivir en varón" reads more as an essay in which the narrator reflects on Daniel Santos, his masculinity and his audience. Part 3, "Cinco boleros aún por melodiarse," presents five vignettes of contemporary San Juan, Caracas, Cali, Quito, and El Yunque. Santos's bolero lyrics are sprinkled throughout these three sections.

The narrator's description of the reading experience in *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* has echoes of Wilde in its focus on melodrama and verbal play: "Los apremios de la carnalidad, el cuerpo que tatúa otro cuerpo con los filos de la caricia, la legalización de la cursilería, las absoluciones del melodrama, son algunos de los escaparates verbales que iluminó tal imposición" (5). There is also a dialogic quality to

the novel, as the narrator often addresses the reader directly and responds to his interlocutors. As Maja Horn points out in "Bolero Bad Boys," these interlocutors "not only reflect on their own memories of Daniel Santos but also repeatedly refer to the narrator himself whom they address as Luis Rafael Sánchez, collapsing the distinction between narrator and author, fiction and reality" (152). In addition to this play of identities between author and narrator, the narrator announces that he will also be crossing and mixing genres:

> Los géneros literarios son calculadas sugerencias de lectura que el escritor propone, llaves para acceder a la habitación independiente que es un poema, un drama, un cuento, una novela. Más allá de los textos que demarca la preceptiva, más acá de los textos que se confían a la tradición, se asientan los subgéneros, los posgéneros, los géneros híbridos y fronterizos, los géneros mestizos. A pesar de la marginalidad, a pesar del asiento en la periferia, ellos reclaman, también, una sugerencia de lectura, una llave de acceso. (5)

Here, the narrator is referring most directly to literary genres, as *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* is part novel, part documentary, and part fabulation. It is, in his words, "una narración híbrida y fronteriza, mestiza, exenta de las regulaciones genéricas" (6). However, this statement could be a reference to the bolero, as well—a genre which is often included in the realm of "low culture" but has made its way into "high" cultural forms such as novels and poetry. It is also important to consider that "género" in Spanish refers to both genre and gender—a suggestion that gender can also be hybrid and mixed, particularly when it is marginal.

Interestingly, in a novel centered on the identity of Daniel Santos, the reader never has direct access to the singer. The narrator does not interview Santos, nor does he directly describe him. As one of his (real or imagined) interviewees notes, "Enséñame, que yo de esas cosas sí que no sé. ¿Cómo es posible que tú estés escribiendo un libro

sobre él y no quieras conocerlo ni de lejos?" (Sánchez 46). Rather, he seeks out rumors, interviews, conversations, gossip and testimonies from Santos's fans, examining the bolero singer's legacy in the Americas and how people experience his music.

From the outset, Sánchez links this experience to sexuality: "La mención solitaria de su nombre levanta rumores de anarquía genital" (9). Testimonies and conversations from characters who have encountered Sánchez tell of "su prestigio aturdidor de macho" (9). A woman from a Catholic shelter in San Juan remembers her time as Santos's lover: "Ahora que me evito en los espejos me eriza, hasta la rabiza, recordar que en la cama ese hombre era un jardinero de delicias" (16). Another, from Panama, tells how Santos once purchased a monopoly on a prostitute of great fame, la Chola de Chiriquí, and left a famous actress lovesick and broken hearted (22). She refers to Santos as "[f]aldero, mujeriego, libertino y concupiscente" (22). But in spite of these displays of masculinity, there is a constant undertone of something deviant. Horn notes: "[I]n their telling and re-telling of Daniel Santos's popular myth and the *chisme* that surrounds him another layer of meaning emerges in the narrative: alongside the many accounts of Daniel Santos's profligate heterosexuality a scene of desire suffused with homoeroticism is 'sounded'" (152). This scene plays out not only in some of the characters themselves—for example, a trio of characters who are evidently drag queens—but also in the ambivalence of the first person narrator seeking the "tú," Daniel Santos. Horn explains:

> While one literally reads about Daniel Santos's conspicuous heterosexuality, one can 'hear' another story: the diadic and dialogic relation between the narrator (*yo*) and his elusive subject (*tú*), with all the amorous implications that the bolero always connotes. This latent homoeroticism, the relation between the *tú* and *yo*, structures the narrative and persists vis-á-vis the excessive heterosexuality that is Daniel Santos's signature style. (153)

Aside from sexual prowess, the narrator considers a trifecta he calls the three B's: "boleros, borracheras, barraganas"—boleros, drunkenness, and prostitutes (54). Santos is famed as a heavy drinker: "Después de mujerear largo y tendido bebía largo y tendido, dicen" (Sánchez 28). This excessive behavior also constitutes part of Santos's machismo; fans tell stories of drinking binges, exaggerated bets, and shameless revelry. The narrator suggests that it is precisely this lifestyle which allowed Daniel Santos to create art and move his audiences: "El exceso y el desorden lo hacían feliz. Y ese exceso y ese desorden retornaban la forma del arte populachero y al natural frente al micrófono" (60). The bolero singer's art inspires uncontrolled enthusiasm (39), and as he overhears in a conversation in Panama City, "el tipo cantaba en emoción latina" (52). A Venezuelan fan highlights Santos's individualism and authenticity: "Lo de él era cantar como el carajo serio que se preciaba ser. Lo de él era cantar en primera persona singular" (41).

According to the testimonies, it is not only Santos's voice which inspires admiration, but his capacity for performance. An interviewee from Mexico City succinctly remembers a performance where the curtain rose and Santos was kneeling on the stage as he sang "Perdón, vida de mi vida." As he recalls: "Cantó manso, como el perro mordedor que se disculpa" (43). This segment highlights the importance of both sentimentality and performance in Santos's characterization. Although some critics have suggested that *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* puts forth a troubling positive view of machismo, Horn points out that "Sánchez repeatedly employs the suggestive expression 'vivir en varón'—to live in the male mode—(carrying the connotation of playing in a certain key, e.g. *tocar en b-moll*) to highlight how masculinity is performatively produced" (149). The scene evoked above is also noteworthy in that it

demonstrates an excess of sentimentality which seems counter to the singer's hyper-masculinity. Horn observes: "The bolero's performative space allows Daniel Santos to inhabit a theatricality, sentimentality, and sensibility which 'proper' forms of masculinity are impelled to excise" (150), and the same may be true of his listeners.

It is with a hint of irony, then, that Sánchez concludes that all of these elements—Daniel Santos's musical talent, raw emotion, a seemingly innate ability as a performer, his sexuality and penchant for drinking—are what make him a master of masculinity, of "vivir en varón:"

> [S]u voz enumeraba las tempestades del vivir en varón. Que son las que le cuento. Primero, sufrirse la felicidad. Segundo, disfrutarse el infortunio. Tercero, amar con conocimiento de causa. Cuarto, llorar si hay que llorar pero copiosamente. Quinto, precaverse de que la vida es el momento. (45)

These characteristics also seem to be what allowed Santos to connect to diverse audiences across the Americas, to "sing with Latin emotion" as previously described. Between mariachis and tequilas, the patrons of a cantina in Mexico tell Sánchez of the bolero singer's *mexicanidad* (37), while a tale from Peru tells of a newcomer who heard Santos for the first time and asked if the singer might have the blood of Incan emperor Atahualpa (31). Someone responds that such a man as Santos had the blood of all races: "Del taíno Agueybaná El Bravo. De la mocita Tembamdumba De Las Quimbambas. De algún españolete del decir metaforoso" (31). His talent also crosses political lines, as noted in the testimonies of one Cuban who stayed with Fidel, and another who left on the Mariel boatlift (47). From Managua, to Mexico City, to La Habana, to Lima, Santos's (real or imagined) fans speak of his ability to bridge culture and social class. Sánchez highlights this point in the singer's lyrics, including this fragment from Santos's "Qué extraña es la vida":

¡Qué extraña es la vida!
Hay tantos buenos,
Hay tantos malos,
Hay tantas clases de sociedad,
Y, sin embargo,
Junto a la fosa,
Es igual toda la humanidad. (70)

Following the testimonies, interviews and transcriptions in Part 1, the second part of *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* provides a meandering reflection on what it means to "live in the male mode" as the section's title ("Vivir en varón") indicates. Here, Sánchez attempts to take apart the myth of Daniel Santos, a task which he recognizes is quite difficult: "Desarmar un mito es más complejo que anestesiar un pez, operarlo y extraerle las tres letras" (75). Channeling the theory of Joseph Campbell, he describes myth as a manifestation of people's collective dreams and obsessions. In this way, Sánchez signals the link between Santos and his audience while also inviting his own audience to participate in the task: "Venid lectores, venid, al gran teatro de las simpatías afines. Venid lectores, venid, al gran teatro de las obsesiones" (76). Much like the works by Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell (discussed in Chapter 3), *Daniel Santos* highlights the importance of collective narrative and acknowledges it as a process. Here, an artist of a younger generation attempts to take apart the myth of Daniel Santos and re-fashion it. As in the process of translation, editing a myth, or re-writing someone's story, involves a certain level of erasure: "Lo difícil es vestirse de paciencia y reescribir una vida. Lo difícil es atreverse a todo en la reescritura, incluso borrar mil veces lo reescrito" (78).

Daniel Santos wrote in the context of modernity, an era characterized by ambivalence and plurality (80). According to Sánchez, the bolero singer approached

modernity from the margins: "[D]ebe recrearse la procedencia barriobajera de Daniel Santos y corresponderla con la modernidad suya en él. […] Y las diferencias que prosperan en toda marginación y toda periferia; diferencias que dibujan un tatuaje imborrable en los de abajo y los de arriba" (83). The mix of poverty and misery in "la barriada," or shantytown, teaches one to subvert taboos and conventions, to "risk it all." And Santos's origins are doubly marginal, coming from *Tras Talleres* in Puerto Rico—"barriada periférica de un país que es periférico" (86). These humble origins explain Santos's bohemian attitude, his continental fame as an irresponsible womanizer, and his musical repertoire which tells of pain and forgetting: "Repertorio de canciones que solazan al varón reacio a admitir faltas en sus tratos con mujer. Repertorio de canciones ensimismadas en el machismo depredador en que demasiados varones procuran el sello de garantía, un suponer—*Soy como soy. Y no como tú quieras. ¿Qué culpo tengo yo de ser así?*" (87). Santos's machismo is the myth which unites his diverse audience, from Perú to Puerto Rico; his music becomes a defensive weapon for all those who have lost something, or those who are about to lose something (89). As Sánchez ironically observes, "Daniel Santos postula una genitalia interracial, transnacional" (99).

The final section, "Boleros aún por melodiarse," suggests a work in process, "songs" which have yet to be put to music. Some of these "boleros" are everyday stories of frustrated loves and frustrated lives versus the romantic lyrics of the bolero—suggesting either that art penetrates life, or that life mirrors art. However, literature is a closed text, while life is open to change: "¡Texto cerrado es la literatura, obligatoriamente verosímil, cada página un cálculo, finalmente édito lo reescrito mil veces! ¡Texto abierto es la vida, por lo regular increíble, una casualidad tramposa cada día, de fijación

imposible!" (159). As life is open to change, so is culture; Sánchez also takes this last section to reflect on "local color" and the charm inherent in the mixing of peoples and cultures:

> [E]l color local se construye en la tribu. Estremeciente hasta el agrado sumo o la repulsión, el color local lo construye el acto de contribalizar. Monjas y frailes por Roma los miércoles, irlandeses que conmemoran con *hot dogs* y cervezas a *Saint Patrick*, gallos y galleros de los lodazales del Caribe, la fiesta de toros con los trajes de luces, una kermese de negros que cantan música *soul* […] (189)

Local color can also be mischievous and deviant, and Sánchez notes that gender is another hybrid form of identity and culture. As a prime example, he names *el Grand Ballet Trocadero de Montecarlo*, an American all-male drag ballet corp which parodies the forms of classical ballet. This, too, is a combination of the local and the global: "[E]l travestismo es una localidad que viaja, el travestismo es un itinerante recital iconográfico" (Sánchez 190). Sánchez acknowledges that marketing also plays a role in this process, turning local products and performances into products of global consumption. Although this point is rather brief compared to the reflections on machismo and Daniel Santos's brand of masculinity, it is key to understanding notions of gender in *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos.* By first examining Daniel Santos, his legacy and his origins, Sánchez presents an ironic form of masculinity—one which was based very much on Santos's lived experience of a locality, but was subsequently exported to other parts of the Americas and made universal. However, Sánchez—an author whose work often involves gender-bending, proposes to erase and re-write this legacy. In this last section, he highlights the importance of change and deviation, in gender and in culture, and its capacity to create something new.

Appropriately, the final scene of *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* takes place in El Yunque, Puerto Rico's tropical rain forest. Evoking a green, virgin paradise, Sánchez depicts El Yunque as a naturally poetic scene where Adam and Eve might be reborn: "Uno llega a considerar, con seriedades, que, únicamente, los resurrectos y expatriados Adán y Eva, salvados de la indecencia original por hojas podridas, se asomarán a regocijarse de su nuevo hábitat" (203). Concluding on a hopeful note, he observes a group of teenagers who have skipped class to come to the forest, including a young couple who slips away from the group to make love. Horn describes this scene as a Dionysian, youthful utopia, noting: "Youth and unrestrained sexuality coupled with the topos of the natural rainforest appear to create a space unmarked by social norms and outside of any specific cultural tradition" (156). Hortensia Morell also highlights the importance of this scene and its suggestions for the future:

> Lejos en ese rincón edénico de los peligros de 'parecer varón' (el histrionismo del macho, la machería y el machismo de la 'Segunda Parte,' 'Vivir en varón'), la juventud contribuye a trazar la nueva imagen del cantante, y a crear otra evocación en su nombre. (11)

So while this bolero novel may begin with nostalgia for an age past, it ends by signaling new love and a new voice—one with a more hybrid concept of gender, and a transnational focus. Like its namesake, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* Sánchez's novel has at its center a play of identities, inversion of gender roles and verbal complexities.

Dominican American writer Junot Díaz also offers a new voice and a new lens through which to view concepts of gender, individualism and transnationalism. He published his first short story collection, *Drown,* in 1997 and his first novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao,* in 2007. Díaz, both literary critic and artist, has received

high accolades for his work; he received a Pulitzer Prize for *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* in 2008, and a MacArthur Genius Grant in 2012. However, he comes from humble origins; he was born in the Dominican Republic and emigrated to New Jersey as a child. He might also be seen as having "one foot in and one foot out," as Terry Eagleton observed of Oscar Wilde. Meghan O'Rourke of *Slate Magazine* describes his fiction as "propelled by its attention to the energetic hybridity of American life" (1). He writes in a combination of English and Spanish, often mixing high and low genres in his work.

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao follows the trials and tribulations of a young man named Oscar and his Dominican American family living in New Jersey. The protagonist's full name is Oscar De León; however, the title refers to him as Oscar Wao—a reference to a scene in the novel where Oscar's classmates think he looks like Oscar Wilde, but mispronounce the name. Like *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos,* the only direct reference to Wilde is in the title. However, through the characters' identity struggles and the narration's back and forth movement between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, Díaz also critiques cultural gender norms and presents cosmopolitanism as a mediation between the local and the global. When O'Rourke asks Díaz why he chose to organize the novel in a fragmented fashion—one that spans many decades and tells the stories of various people related to Oscar—Díaz responds that he is the product of a fragmented world: "Take a brief look at Dominican or Caribbean history and you'll see that the structure of this book is more in keeping with the reality of this history than with its most popular myth: that of unity and continuity. In my mind the book was supposed to take the shape of an archipelago; it was supposed to be a textual

Caribbean" (2). This approach is reminiscent of Luis Rafael Sánchez, who also produces a textual Caribbean in *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos.*

Díaz opens his novel with two epigraphs, one from the Marvel Comic series *Fantastic Four* and one from St. Lucian poet Derek Walcott. These epigraphs, in combination, reveal two prevalent themes in the novel: science fiction and Caribbean identity. Oscar's character is a reader and aspiring writer of comic books and science fiction novels, like Díaz himself. Oscar's friend Yunior, the narrator, uses science fiction to explain the history of the Dominican Republic—from the *fukú* curse which arrived with Christopher Columbus to the watchful, evil eye of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1891-1961), a dictator whose repressive regime ruled the island nation from 1930 to 1961. The second epigraph is a fragment of Walcott's "The Schooner Flight," an epic poem about a character named Shabine. Although Shabine loves his family and his island (presumably St. Lucia), he takes the schooner voyage and leaves home forever, disillusioned by growing corruption on the island. Shabine could be read as an allegory for his island, or for the Caribbean in general, and the final lines of the fragment Díaz has chosen reflect his hybrid identity:

> I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
> I had a sound colonial education,
> I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
> and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.

In an interview with Díaz, Edwidge Danticat explains her interpretation of this epigraph: "I was preparing to read about this one life, […] this person who is immediately named in the very title of the book and is claimed from namelessness. But I ended up reading about a nation" (2). By telling the stories of Oscar and the people who surrounded him, Díaz also reveals a larger story about nation, migration, and diaspora.

In one of the novel's many footnotes, the narrator relates Oscar's obsession with science fiction to his experience of migration:

> It might have been a consequence of being Antillean (who more sci-fi than us?) or of living in the DR for the first couple years of his life and then abruptly wrenchingly relocating to New Jersey—a single green card shifting not only worlds (from Third to First) but centuries (from almost no TV or electricity to plenty of both). (Díaz 20-21)

The author also explains his own immigration experience in these terms, noting that he identified with *The X-Men* because he felt like a mutant as a smart, bookish child in his poor urban community in Central New Jersey. Mutants are a metaphor for race, and he says, "I have no problem re-looting the metaphor of the X-Men because I know it's my silenced experience, my erased condition that's the secret fuel that powers this particular fucking fantasy" (Danticat 4).

Science fiction also serves to illustrate the almost inconceivable power which dictator Rafael Trujillo exercised over the island during thirty years, something which Dominican newspaper *La Nación* described as "a cosmic force" (a quote which Díaz uses as an epigraph for Part II of the novel). Díaz also connects Trujillo to supernatural forces in what he calls the fukú curse, an ever-present evil which Yunior claims has followed Dominicans since the time of Columbus: "[I]t is believed that the arrival of Europeans on Hispaniola unleashed the fukú on the world, and we've all been in the shit ever since" (1).[19] In this way, the fukú comes to represent colonization, capitalism, and all of the social norms which came with those processes imposed on native peoples by Europeans.

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[19] Yunior describes the *fuku americanus* as an imperial curse which brought doom and destruction to the New World. During the Trujillo era, he notes that any individual who opposed Trujillo suffered tragedy and ruin—an effect of the *fuku*. He uses this as a way to introduce Oscar's story: "As I'm sure you've guessed by now, I have a fukú story too" (6).

However, Yunior also connects the fukú to Trujillo, referring to him as the curse's hyperman or high priest: "No one knows whether Trujillo was the Curse's servant or master, its agent or its principal, but it was clear he and it had an understanding, that them two was *tight*" (3).

In addition to representing the Curse, Trujillo also represents machismo and hyper-masculinity in the novel. He is described in the historical footnotes and in the story of Oscar's family as a ruthless sexual predator, a tendency which has been confirmed in other historical and fictional works.[20] This behavior is, in fact, the origin of the family's fukú curse; their story begins with the political persecution of Abelard Luis Cabral, Oscar and Lola's grandfather, who refused to bring his beautiful young daughter to Trujillo's ball. Later, Belicia, the only surviving daughter of the family, would be beaten to near death for sleeping with the husband of Trujillo's sister. This event sets into motion her migration to the U.S., and the subsequent experience of her children, Oscar and Lola, as they live in a state of diaspora. Trujillo's sexual behavior would ultimately lead to his own downfall, as Yunior explains that he was allegedly assassinated on his way to a brothel: "a consummate culocrat to the end" (154). Trujillo embodies the idea of the patriarchy, in both political and personal terms, and Díaz links sexuality and dictatorship throughout the novel. In "Dictating Desire, Dictating Diaspora," Elena Machado Sáez argues that *Oscar Wao* explores how cultural authenticity is enforced while also

[20] Díaz comments to Edwidge Danticat that he "tried to stuff as many books as possible into *Oscar Wao*" (5), including books on Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Other works which explore the aggressive sexual behavior of Trujillo are Robert D. Crassweller's biography *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator* (1966); Julia Alvarez's 1994 novel, *En el tiempo de las mariposas,* based on the true story of the Mirabal sisters; and Mario Vargas Llosa's 2001 novel *La fiesta del chivo.*

emphasizing the Dominican Republic's history of dictatorship as "the decisive element shaping belonging" (523).

Masculinity, and gender identity in general, are at the heart of the novel. All of the novel's main characters are, in some way, plagued by social and cultural expectations placed on them due to their gender. This is especially true for Oscar—an overweight, smart, sentimental young man who is constantly told by classmates, neighbors, and his own family: "Tú no eres nada de dominicano" (180). His golden age, as presented by Yunior, was at the age of seven, when he had two girlfriends at once. When he loses those girlfriends, he cries at the school bus stop and is promptly labeled a "mariconcito" (16). Soon after, Oscar begins to gain weight as he dedicates an increasing amount of time to "nerdy" activities—playing Dungeons and Dragons, reading science fiction novels, and watching anime. Yunior notes that this may have been acceptable had Oscar belonged to a different ethnic group, but that Dominican society has very specific expectations:

> [D]ude was supposed to have Atomic Level G, was supposed to be pulling in the bitches with both hands. Everybody noticed his lack of game and because they were Dominican everybody talked about it. His tío Rodolfo […] was especially generous in his tutelage. Listen, palomo: you have to grab a muchacha, y metéselo. That will take care of *everything.* Start with a fea. Coje that fea y méteselo! (24)

At certain points, Oscar does attempt to follow the advice of family and friends, trying to make himself more macho and more Dominican. He replaces his glasses with contacts, gets rid of his moustache, and tries to "polish up what remained of his Dominicanness, tried to be more like his cursing swaggering cousins, if only because he had started to suspect that in their Latin hypermaleness there might be an answer" (30). However, he remains a virgin throughout high school, college and beyond. Machado Sáez observes:

"The sentimentality that contributes to Oscar's inauthenticity as a Dominican male is intimately connected to his thwarted heterosexuality. Unable to find a willing partner with whom to engage in sex, Oscar's virginity delegitimized his masculinity and his identity as a Dominican" (535).

Oscar's sister Lola, on the other hand, embraces traits normally reserved for men in Dominican culture. Yunior first describes her as "a long-distance runner who drove her own car, had her own checkbook, called men bitches, and would eat a fat cat in front of you without a speck of vergüenza" (25). Part of her character comes from childhood trauma; she was sexually abused by an older acquaintance, "and surviving that urikán of pain, judgment and bochinche had made her tougher than adamantine" (25)—a covert reference to Wolverine. Lola is a source of strength for Oscar, as she constantly looks out for her younger brother—both protecting him from jeers, and encouraging him to empower himself through life changes. For her unconventional approach to womanhood, she finds herself at odds with her mother. However, part of this animosity and misunderstanding lies in her embracing non-Latino, punk culture. When she decides to shave her head like Sinéad O'Connor, for example, her mother is convinced that she is a *lesbiana* (37).

Yunior completes the triangle as he spends a year rooming with Oscar in college, and tries repeatedly to sleep with Lola—eventually succeeding, only to ruin the relationship with infidelity. Throughout his friendship with Oscar, he makes it his mission to make him more manly, more popular with girls, and more acceptable to other Dominicans. Machado Sáez views the relationship between Oscar and Yunior as central to the novel's argument, even arguing that Yunior is the actual protagonist of *Oscar Wao:*

> [T]he relationship between Yunior and Oscar calls attention to how narrating a diaspora's history also entails domesticating difference. While Oscar is endearingly inauthentic, Yunior's mission to identify him as a representative subject who can embody the Dominican diaspora leads him ultimately to silence Oscar's points of queer Othernes—his virginity and sentimentality. (524)

In this sense, Machado Sáez reads Oscar and Yunior as two competing narratives of diasporic identity (525). Yunior's mission, then, shows how "a common inheritance of exclusion and oppression links these [national and diasporic] communities together" (526).

Machado Sáez reads *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* as a foundational fiction of the Dominican diaspora. Doris Sommer, the literary critic who coined the term "foundational fictions," examined the allegory of nation in nineteenth century (heterosexual) romances. Translating this theory to Díaz's novel, Machado Sáez proposes: "Oscar's final transformation from virgin to Dominican man is part of the foundational logic driving the novel, a consolidating impulse that aligns it with the nationalist novels of Sommer's study. […] Díaz shows that the project of domestication, of defining the authentic diasporic subject, requires the violent silencing of Oscar's queerness" (527). Part of this view stems from Yunior's comment, in a footnote, about the commonalities between dictators and writers. Dictators persecute writers, he conjectures, because dictators "know competition when they see it" (528). Díaz is also quoted, in an interview with *Slate* magazine, saying that "the real dictatorship is in the book itself, in its telling" (O'Rourke 3). Machado Sáez interprets this statement by reading Yunior as a narrative dictator, "the individual consciousness filtering the narratives of the other characters" (528). However, the truly repressive force in the novel seems to be the gender expectations imposed on each character—social norms which

originated with the arrival of Europeans to the Caribbean, thus forming part of the fukú curse.

Of course, Yunior is also a victim of this mindset. In the *Slate* interview, Díaz emphasizes that readers must consider his motives for telling Oscar's story: "Yunior's telling of this story and his unspoken motivations for it are at the heart of the novel and can easily be missed" (O'Rourke 3). Machado Sáez suggests that Yunior is trying to exorcise his own sexual demons: "His involvement in Project Oscar has more to do with his own issues with sexuality, especially as his infidelity and addiction to sex become tied to the political context of the Dominican nation. Through Yunior, the personal becomes political" (541). Although he may have more compassion and humanity than Trujillo, Yunior perpetuates the same hyper-masculine behavior by constantly chasing after women, speaking disrespectfully about their bodies, and sleeping with multiple women while in a relationship. Perhaps this is why Lola tells him, on one of their last nights together, "Ten million Trujillos is all we are" (324). Machado Sáez also highlights this quote, noting: "Díaz's novel is a foundational fiction for the Dominican diaspora, an attempt to reconcile exile with belonging, diaspora with nation, marginal with mainstream" (344).

At the end of *Oscar Wao,* Yunior doesn't have a solution to these (unspoken) issues. He simply quotes Dr. Manhattan from *Watchmen,* telling his readers: "In the end? […] Nothing ever ends" (331). However, the solution might also be within the novel itself—particularly in its linguistic, cultural and geographic movement. If Yunior is able to subtly question notions of authority and masculinity, he is only able to do so from a cosmopolitan standpoint. In fact, he and Oscar, both science fiction fanboys, stretch the

term to its limit. Oscar does not see himself as a citizen of the world, but as a citizen of the galaxy, of the *cosmos.* Addressing the reader, Yunior often calls himself "your Humble Watcher," also implying that his standpoint is not linked to one country or to another, but rather to the universe. These hybrid identities come from the comic books both men so uncharacteristically read—a product of their mixed national origins, of constantly moving between two nations and cultures.

Cosmopolitanism is also present at the linguistic and textual levels. Yunior code-switches throughout the novel, sometimes within the same sentence. For instance, he tells of Oscar's first encounter with his fatal last love, Ybón: "His cousins, los idiotas, took him to a cabaret and that's where he first saw her. And that's where ella se metió por sus ojos" (289). Susan Balée suspects that Díaz's own experiences as a smart kid in a poor, immigrant community taught him to strategically switch languages: "He learned to code switch. Not just from language to language, but from identity to identity" (345). In this sense, he very much resembles Oscar Wilde, an artist and critic who moved easily between social worlds and manipulated cultural narrative from within. Balée further notes that Díaz successfully harnesses language and narrative to code-switch between genres:

> Junot Díaz embodies the energy that comes from mixed genres. He is a mestizo from the DR who lives in the US. He oscillates between the two cultures, just as he oscillates between English and Spanish in his fiction. He, the master crafter of narratives, also makes sure that the most intellectual of his readers—professors, like he is at MIT—can see that he has their discourses down too. (346)

This is clear when Yunior is describing the brutally long beating that Oscar received in the cane fields of the Dominican Republic: "It was like one of those nightmare eight-a.m. MLA panels: *endless*" (299). In one sense, this code-switching results in relatability; diverse readers can identify with *Oscar Wao,* from comic book fans, to Dominican

Americans from poor neighborhoods, to academic elites (although, as Diaz demonstrates, one could be all three). On the other hand, as some critics have pointed out, it results in a sense of otherness. For example, monolingual English speakers will, at times, feel uncomfortable due to their inability to comprehend the Spanish words, and non-academics might easily miss the joke about the MLA.

Díaz's use of language could also be seen as an act of rebellion and individuality—that is, of refusing to conform to a given set of linguistic norms. Edwidge Danticat addresses this idea when she notes his frequent use of "the N-bomb" in *Oscar Wao*, asking the author if he is concerned about backlash. He responds by noting that Yunior uses this word, not Oscar—suggesting that linguistic markers play an important role in characterization. In a more general sense, he is unapologetic: "[L]anguage has never been a good dog and its free exercise will never provide comfort to cultures of respectability. And I guess I've never really been one for comforting my readers either" (6).

Ultimately, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is the story of Oscar's struggle for individualism—what Wilde considered the ultimate right to develop oneself how one chooses, without worrying about government or empty social norms such as gender expression. The novel, and its focus on Oscar's personal struggle, highlights the point that defensive nationalism and diasporic identity often result in added pressures; while living in the United States, Oscar is still expected to conform to Dominican cultural norms. Ultimately, he is never fully accepted by either culture. Díaz seems conscious of this issue when asked, in the *Slate* interview, whether he feels a duty to represent Dominican culture in his writing: "As a person of color living in the U.S. you're often

considered an extension of your group—individualism is hard to come by" (6). As a result of his own individualism (and the suffering it has caused him), Oscar has a sense of goodwill toward others. Yunior relates Oscar's final days as a high school teacher: "Every day, he watched the 'cool' kids torture the crap out of the fat, the ugly, the smart, the poor, the dark, the black, the unpopular, the African, the Indian, the Arab, the immigrant, the strange, the femenino, the gay—and in every one of these clashes he saw himself" (264). Oscar, though deemed a "nobody" by his peers, is also Everybody. In the end, this might be the superpower he so wished to have.

Finally, it is worth noting that although Díaz makes no reference to Oscar Wilde (aside from Oscar's nickname), he does acknowledge an affinity to the Irish in his interview with Edwidge Danticat: "Lola wants Oscar to be the Dominican James Joyce but Oscar just wants to be a Dominican Andre Norton. I'm a Joyce fanatic—the Irish have had a colonial relationship with the English a long, long time and that's one reason they're so useful to immigrant writers of color in the US" (5). Both Luis Rafael Sánchez and Junot Díaz, like Wilde and other Irish writers, understand the dilemma—but also the possibilities—of being "internal exiles."

While neither author has directly acknowledged the influence of Wilde, *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* demonstrate an affinity for Wilde's philosophy and legacy which go far beyond their titles. Both authors use gossip and rumors to construct the identities of Daniel Santos and Oscar, both hopeless romantics and both eccentric characters who provoke the audience to reconsider social viewpoints. Daniel Santos, like Trujillo and Yunior in *Oscar Wao,* is depicted with an ironic hypermasculinity. In spite of the machismo present in both

novels, sexuality and gender are ultimately suggested to be fluid and hybrid; both works acknowledge the possibility of changing the narrative. Santos is also admired, like Oscar, for his intense individualism, a supreme realization of self. In the case of both novels, this critical standpoint is possible from a cosmopolitan perspective which crosses national borders while also blurring the lines between language, gender and genre.

CONCLUSION:
HYBRID IDENTITIES, HYBRID NARRATIVES

"You talk to me of nationality, language,
religion. I shall try to fly by those nets."
James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

In 2010, Ry Cooder, a U.S. Latino musician, collaborated with a well-known Irish folkloric band, The Chieftains, to create an album called *San Patricio*. Featuring artists from Mexico, Ireland and the U.S., the album tells the story of the San Patricio Battalion. Led by Captain John Riley, the San Patricios were a group of disaffected Irish American soldiers who deserted the U.S. Army in 1846 to join the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexican War. Most of the soldiers fell during their final stand at the Battle of Churubusco, and those who survived were later hung for treason by the United States. A brief reflection on the musical narrative of *San Patricio* seems a fitting way to conclude this study, as the album unites many of the concepts which appear in Irish Latin American Studies—in particular, these works point to hybrid identities in a constantly evolving, transnational narrative.

The cover art on the album, designed as a Mexican *lotería* card, reveals an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe holding a fallen Irish soldier—an image which is then framed in a cross. On the inside cover, other *lotería* cards appear: the heart, the bird, the guitar, the (Mexican) flag, and the soldier. The disk itself includes songs in English, Spanish and Gaelic, a combination of Irish and Mexican sounds ranging from bagpipes to boleros; among them, listeners will find a norteño by Los Tigres del Norte, a bolero sung by 90-year-old Chavela Vargas, an Irish lullaby by Moya Brennan, and a poem set to the music and narrated by Liam Nelson. Ninian Dunnet of the BBC calls the album "a transatlantic

musical campaign," noting: "In equal measure a curio, a lament, a history lesson and a hoedown, *San Patricio* is one of those albums that happily transcends its parts" (1).

The San Patricios are a classic example of the hero-traitor dichotomy which often appears in Latin America's Irish characters. Mexicans honor these rogue soldiers on national monuments and remember them in popular culture as heroes. However, for many U.S. citizens, even Irish Americans, the desertion of the San Patricios would likely represent a treasonous betrayal. Perspectives on both sides of the border are shaped by sentiments of nationalism. However, if the previously mentioned texts have demonstrated anything, it is that individual choices—including those of national heroes—often have less to do with nation than with the search for personal and political freedom.

According to popular legend, the San Patricios felt disaffected due to the poor treatment and discrimination they received from their fellow U.S. soldiers. As Irish, Catholic immigrants, they were considered second-class citizens. In one song, "The Sands of Mexico," Ry Cooder narrates in the voice of an Irish soldier, justifying his decision to desert:

> Now the [U.S.] army used us harshly,
> we were but trash to them.
> Conscripted Irish farmers,
> Not first-class soldier men.
> They beat us and they banged us,
> mistreated us, you know,
> but they couldn't make us killers
> on the sands of Mexico.

According to the lyrics, the Irish soldiers made a decision based on their morals, not their nation. The cross on the cover art is also a revealing element: the Irish Catholic soldiers, facing discrimination on the basis of their faith, felt an affinity and a loyalty to the Mexican enemy—also Catholic, and also considered inferior by U.S. soldiers. In the

album, there is a sense that the San Patricios, though reviled and punished for their decisions, were on the right side of history. Thus, Cooder concludes his song: "La historia me absolverá / on the sands of Mexico."

"March to Battle (Across the Río Grande)" also attempts to redeem the legacy of the San Patricios, emphasizing the injustice they suffered at the hands of the U.S. government. With the musical accompaniment of Banda de Gaita de Batallón (a Mexican bagpipe ensemble), Los Cenzontles (Nahautl for "The Mockingbirds"), and L.A. Juvenil (a traditional "banda" group), U.S. artist Liam Nelson recounts:

> But when at Churubusco
> we fell to Yankee hands,
> no court of justice did we have
> in the land of Uncle Sam;
> As traitors and deserters all
> we would be shot and hanged
> far from the green green shamrock shore
> across the Río Grande.

Similar to Eduardo Cormick's rendering of Admiral Brown, *San Patricio* presents a narrative of the Irish as a people dispossessed, still yearning for home. While this may be the case with various groups who have emigrated to Latin America, there is a particular affinity toward the Irish. The history of the San Patricios resonates, perhaps, because it points to a shared history of colonialism, rebellion, and the religious solidarity of Catholicism.

Jorge Luis Borges explains his affinity for the Irish in a broader sense, pointing to their shared capacity to create universal works of art. As he writes in "El escritor argentino y la tradición," the Irish capacity for artistic creation and innovation has less to do with blood or ethnicity as it does with transnational experience:

> Tratándose de los irlandeses, no tenemos por qué suponer que la profusión de nombres irlandeses en la literatura y la filosofía británicas se deba a una preeminencia racial, porque muchos de esos irlandeses ilustres (Shaw, Berkeley, Swift) fueron descendientes de ingleses, fueron personas que no tenían sangre celta; sin embargo, les bastó el hecho de sentirse ingleses, distintos, para innovar en la cultura inglesa. Creo que los argentinos, los sudamericanos en general, estamos en una situación análoga. (161)

In a global, capitalist society, individuals and nations struggle between nationalist and cosmopolitan impulses, between tradition and modernity. As Richard Kearney notes, this oscillation is also present in Irish literature: W.B. Yeats looked back toward pre-modern culture in an effort to revive tradition, while Joyce moved forward to postmodernism (105). This is clear in Joyce's novel use of language, one which recognizes multiplicity and hybridity. Writing about *Finnegans Wake,* Kearney notes:

> As the *Wake* makes plain, Joyce gave no quarter to ethnocentric imperialism with its smug refusal to accept that each society is composed of 'diverse tonguesed [sic]…antagonisms.' Behind the postures of imperial *consensus* Joyce's writings expose a cultural *conflict* expressive of the underlying polyvalence of language itself. (107)

Language forms part of (imagined) national identity, an identity which Joyce challenged in his use of polyglot narrative and constantly changing forms. These questions of language continue to be relevant today. Recently, Robert J. C. Young criticized the concept of multilingualism, positing that the concept of language as a discreet entity is, in itself, an invention: "In promoting multilingualism, we are upholding and confirming monolingualism, the idea that people speak separate, classifiable, and classified single languages, each of which by definition is marked by a border that ensures unity, like the boundary of a nation" (1209).

It seems that Borges was most drawn to Joyce for this experimental language, which presented a challenge and a puzzle to anyone who would attempt to translate his

work. As seen in Isidoro Blaisten's "Dublín al sur" and Roberto Ferro's *El otro Joyce,* Borges's and Salas Subirat's translations of Joyce have had far-reaching influence in Argentine literature, as these works acknowledge an intimate relationship between Joyce and Argentina while they explore the problems and processes of translation. The protagonists of both narratives turn to translation in order to unlock secrets, although their efforts are complicated by a seemingly endless doubling and confusion of identities.

According to Wail S. Hassan, "the original and its translation are caught in a dialectic of power and resistance" ("Translational Literature" 1435). Although translation theory has often described itself in terms of dualities such as home and exile, self and other, Hassan notes that translational literature questions that duality:

> I have argued that translation here does not operate externally on a single-language text that acts as a metaphor for a unified self. Rather, translation occurs in the original and is a visible part of it, at once alien and familiar, an exile at home, or a home in exile—a hybrid self that harbors the other within it. (1436)

Like "Dublín al sur" and *El otro Joyce,* the works which Hassan has presented as translational literature also include doubles and confusions over authenticity. On this point, he theorizes that doubleness expresses the impossibility of restoring an original except through creative re-creation (1439). This process of re-creation, he says, will always be susceptible to accusations of deception and forgery. The narrators of these works often cannot accept "that origins, like originals, are irretrievable, never perfect or self-identical in the way they tend to be nostalgically imagined, and that translation is the only mode of being for the exile" (1439). This theory certainly helps to explain Joyce's polyglot narrative, written in exile. It also provides a significant link between works by Ferro and

Blaisten, which center on language, with other works in this dissertation, which center on exile, movement and diaspora.

If Blaisten and Ferro recognize the multiplicity inherent in language and text, Mario Vargas Llosa explores the notion of multiple selves in *El sueño del celta.* The Peruvian author takes a more historical approach to the Irish-Latin American connection in recounting the journeys, both interior and exterior, of Roger Casement. By taking a "first world" character and allowing him to discover himself (or new versions of himself) in the Congo and the Amazon, Vargas Llosa flips the Ulyssean journey described by Gerald Martin in *Journeys Through the Labyrinth.* At the same time, he acknowledges another famous Latin American narrative of Irish identity: the theme of the hero and the traitor. Borges's "Tema del traidor y del héroe" seems to suggest that Fergus Kilpatrick was either a hero or a traitor, but the historian in his story chooses not to unsettle the historical myth. Vargas Llosa allows Casement to exist as both, presenting a narrative which acknowledges the diversity of the self, both in terms of politics and sexuality. In this sense, the Irish seem to serve a metaphorical role as foreigners in Latin American narrative. As Julia Kristeva notes in *Strangers to Ourselves,* the foreigner is a symptom: "[P]sychologically he signifies the difficulty we have of living as an *other* and with others; politically, he underscores the limits of nation-states and of the national political conscience that characterizes them and that we have all deeply interiorized […]" (103). Casement's foreign journeys lead him to recognize the Other in himself.

In re-visiting the story of Roger Casement, Vargas Llosa participates in the constantly evolving narrative of nation and identity. Irish-Argentine writers Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell also acknowledge historical narratives while adding new

perspectives to them. In *Entre gringos y criollos,* Eduardo Cormick explores the "possibilities of being"—which include being English, being Irish, and being Argentine. Based on the collection's title and the stories within, it would seem that most characters, both Irish and non-Irish, exist in a place "in between." However, the most important thing is being free, as demonstrated by the character of William Brown in *Quema su memoria.* Cormick's compatriot, Viviana O'Connell, continues a family tradition of storytelling which involves Celtic myth, but adds to it a feminine perspective. In both cases, identity is hybrid and based on a constantly evolving narrative.

Nationalism privileges one narrative of identity, be it on terms of nation, religion or language. However, Stanford Friedman reminds us that "identities *within* a cultural group are not homogeneous, however much they are imagined to be" (277). Migration is part of this heterogeneity, as new groups—migrants, refugees, exiles, and other ethnic groups—are constantly on the move. As Kristeva points out in her study of foreigners in ancient Greece and Rome, this movement has been present since the beginning of recorded history. Stanford Friedman affirms: "Movement, whether forced or sought out, is the foundation of human evolution and the history of change on a global landscape" (260)." Many of the writers presented in this study, and their characters, are "on the move"—and they are weary of nationalism for this reason; it imposes limits. Borges understood this quite well:

> Quiero señalar otra contradicción: los nacionalistas simulan venerar las capacidades de la mente argentina pero quieren limitar el ejercicio poético de esa mente a algunos pobres temas locales, como si los argentinos solo pudiéramos hablar de orillas y estancias y no del universo. ("El escritor argentino" 158)

The presence of the Irish in Latin America, albeit perhaps unexpected, reveals that national and ethnic backgrounds are often much more complicated than the national

myths of identity which we construct.[21] On the narrative level, this presence might provide writers with the artistic license to transcend national boundaries in their work.

The borders imposed by the nationalist narrative are geographical, but also psychological and sexual. More recently, Irish-Argentine writer Viviana O'Connell has addressed the gendered nature of identity in her discussion of diversity—proposing that we should not create labels, but see all members of society simply as people. In her essay, "Tributo a Oscar Wilde: Pecados de un irlandés en Londres," she observes that Wilde was persecuted for his individualism. Oscar Wilde, she laments, "trató de vivir ese mundo personal e individual en el mundo real y el mundo real lo devoró" ("Tributo"). U.S. Caribbean writers Luis Rafael Sánchez and Junot Díaz also question the limitations placed on gender and individuality by colonial or nationalist discourse. Like Wilde, from whom they draw the titles of their works, they present an ironic form of hyper-masculinity, ultimately presenting gender as fluid and hybrid.

Cosmopolitanism presents a competing narrative to nationalism, one which leads to a sense of freedom for oneself and good will toward others. Both Junot Díaz and Luis Rafael Sánchez embody this new vision of cosmopolitanism, an experience of being perpetually in between cultures. Eduardo Cormick's character of Guillermo Brown, in *Quema su memoria,* is also a cosmopolitan. Although the younger statesman, Mitre, tries to locate his sense of patriotism, Brown recognizes that patriotism and national identities such as the "criollo" are invented narratives, and that even the so-called "founder" of the Americas was a cultural hybrid. This is also the case with Vargas Llosa's character of

[21] It is worth noting that the same narrative is gaining ground in science, as the Human Genome Project and the trend of at-home DNA kits reveal, to people around the world, that their genetic information does not always match their ethnic narratives.

Roger Casement; although he became caught up in the narrative of patriotism, his worldview was shaped by his encounters with other cultures. By revisiting the stories of these national heroes, Vargas Llosa and Cormick do not necessarily re-write history, but rather widen its scope, recognizing that cosmopolitan worldviews were present from the outset. They suggest that although patriots may serve as the gatekeepers of national identity, cosmopolitans are often the founders of nations. They make room for the stranger—often embodied in Irish characters—and, in doing so, call attention to the Other in their own selves and cultures.

In pushing the boundaries of gender, genre, and nation, these works also push the boundaries of literary criticism. Ferro and Blaisten, in ways both explicit and subtle, incorporate translation theory into fictional works. Vargas Llosa, a writer normally studied by critics of Spanish American narrative, used mostly English-language sources to research Irishman Roger Casement—all in order to better understand the influence he exercised over Polish-British writer Joseph Konrad. Eduardo Cormick and Viviana O'Connell demonstrate the ways that Irish and Celtic culture fuse with the Argentine, while Luis Rafael Sánchez and Junot Díaz blend high and low culture, English and Spanish, testimony, history and fiction, to explore cultural connections in the Caribbean and the United States. These works do not fit neatly into Hispanic literature, nor are they easily accessible to scholars of Irish Studies. Even Transatlantic Studies tend to remain within the boundaries of language. Just as Hassan describes translational literature, these narratives set themselves apart from their cultures, but "by moving decidedly toward another culture so as to straddle the two and to occupy the space between them as a bridge" ("Translational Literature" 1435). This is precisely why these works are worth

studying—in their intersections of local and global, national and transnational, they create connections between disciplines, between languages, and between cultures.

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