The Aesthetics of Mythical Cityscapes from Cubism to Ultraísmo:

The Metaphysical Quest for National Identity in Joyce's Dublin and Borges' Buenos Aires

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Abstract

While many scholars like Joy M. Doss have compared James Joyce's manifestation of "anti-historicism, relativism, and simultaneity" with that of Picasso (8), his possible encounter with Cubism in 1912 at the United Arts Club in Dublin (Kennedy 16) in an Irish context has been hugely neglected. Considering the history of British invasion in Ireland, it is necessary to identify Joyce's incorporation of Celtic elements into European Cubism in relation to his mythical allusions to Celticism and Catholic medievalism in his portrayal of Dublin. Not long later, young Jorge Luis Borges departed from Argentina to visit Europe in 1923. Along with his reading of Joyce, his immersion in the Spanish art movement of Ultraísmo, particularly the principle of the synthesis of images, gave birth to his project of the creation of a "poetic myth for Buenos Aires" (Williamson 205) and his aesthetics of mise-en-abyme. While he borrows Joyce's mythical method in his writing, he also engages with Ultraísmo, the "Spanish iteration of the European avant-garde of the 1920s," to react against European High Modernism (Ochoa 629). Joyce's mythical Dublin lives its afterlife in Borges' postmodern cityscapes as they both draw on mythical elements and incorporate them into their writing to "make the reader aware of the dynamics between two distant things" from different temporality (Christ 4-5) to seek the collective memories of Irish and Argentinean. I argue that just as Joyce appropriates European Cubism into a new form of Cubist aesthetics to recreate a mythical Dublin, Borges' appropriation of Joyce's mythical method and Ultraísmo into an Argentinean context mythologises Buenos Aires to dismantle imperial histories through "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" (Eliot 177). Through comparing the metaphysical topography of Dublin in Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) and Borges' imaginary versions of Buenos Aires, in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" (1940), I examine how the visual aspects of the two reinvented cities function as allegories to implicate their search for collective national memories as contemporary 'peripheral' writers.

Keywords: Cubism, Ultraísmo, Transatlantic literature, Modernism, Postmodernism

Introduction

Cubism and James Joyce forever changed the definition of arts and marked the early blooming of modernism in the 1900s as they rejected the notion of painting and fiction as merely mimetic

artefacts. While many scholars like Joy M. Doss have compared Joyce's manifestation of 'anti-historicism, relativism, and simultaneity' with Picasso's approach (2013, p. 8), his possible encounter with Cubism in 1912 at the United Arts Club in Dublin (Kennedy, p. 16) has been neglected. Considering the history of British invasion and colonization in Ireland and the context of the twentieth century Celtic revival underway when Joyce first left for Paris in 1902 (Conde-Parilla, p. 14), it is necessary to identify Joyce's incorporation of Celtic elements into European Cubism in relation to his mythical allusions to Celticism and Catholic medievalism in his portrayal of Dublin.

Some two decades later, young Jorge Luis Borges departed from Argentina to visit Europe in 1923. Along with his reading of Joyce, his immersion in the Spanish art movement of Ultraísmo, particularly its principle of the synthesis of images, gave birth to his project of the creation of a 'poetic myth for Buenos Aires' (Williamson 2013, p. 205) and his aesthetics of *mise-en-abyme*. Borges emerged as a postmodernist writer in the 1930s after his phase as an 'anti-*modernista*' poet (Rice 2000, p. 49). While he borrows Joyce's mythical method in his writing, he also engages with Ultraísmo, the 'Spanish iteration of the European avant-garde of the 1920s,' to react against European High Modernism (Ochoa 2018, p. 629). Borges' interests in Joyce does not contradict his postmodernist style, as Joyce's Cubist aesthetics can be differentiated from European Cubism considering the embodiment of Celtic motifs, which leaves Joyce outside the Eurocentric literary circle. In this sense, they are both 'peripheral' writers under the system of world literature (Moretti 2000, p. 56). Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) parallels Joyce's sense of self-exile on a language level:

> *I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His [the dramatist Ben Jonson] language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.* (205)

It is no coincidence that the Celtic motifs in Joyce's topographies exist simultaneously with his expression of Irish self-exile from the Eurocentric culture and specifically the language that dominated modernist literature in both Bloomsbury and Paris at that time, as the plot was set in the wake of the Gaelic Revival in Ireland in the early twentieth century. Joyce's mythical Dublin lives its afterlife in Borges' postmodern cityscapes, as both draw on mythical elements

and incorporate them into their writing to 'make the reader aware of the dynamics between two distant things' from different temporality (Christ 1969, pp. 4-5) to seek the collective memories of Irish and Argentinean.

In this paper, I argue that just as Joyce appropriates European Cubism into a new form of Cubist aesthetics to recreate a mythical Dublin, Borges' appropriation of Joyce's mythical method and Ultraísmo into an Argentinean context mythologises Buenos Aires to dismantle imperial histories by 'manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity' (Eliot 1975 p. 177). Through comparing the metaphysical topography of Dublin in Joyce's *Portrait* and Borges' imaginary versions of Buenos Aires, in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' (1940), this paper examines how the visual aspects of the two reinvented cities function as allegories to represent their search for national memories as contemporary 'peripheral' writers.

The Dialogue Between Joyce, Borges and the Visual Arts

The art movements of Cubism and Ultraísmo together form an interesting dynamic with Joyce and Borges' respective topographies. To address Joyce and Borges' engagements with the visual arts, I must first clarify my interdisciplinary approach, which is fundamental to comparing the ideologies behind artistic creations. Bearing the untranslatability between the visual arts and literature in mind, as Steiner writes, I aim to identify the 'semiotic concreteness' of modern artworks and literature that 'constitutes a line of critical and artistic thinking that runs throughout the twentieth century' (1949, p. xii).

To connect Joyce's ideological thinking with Cubism, we should first consider Harry Phelan Gibb's suggestion that Joyce attended a Cubist exhibition in 1912, which was very likely to be Ellen Duncan's exhibition at the United Arts Club in Dublin. Even if we dismiss the possibility of him attending the exhibition, the serialised publication of *Portrait* in *The Egoist* links the story and Joyce himself to Cubism, as the issue focuses on reviews of Cubist arts, including John Cournos and Wyndham Lewis's 'The Battle of the Cubes' and 'The Cubist Room' as well as book reviews of Rustic Cubist Albert Gleizes (Isaak 1981, p. 62), the mentor of Irish Cubists Evie Hone and Maine Jellett during their studies in Paris. Gleizes' incorporation of Medievalism and Celticism in his aesthetics of Rustic Cubism that expresses the unidentifiable nature of Irishness parallels Joyce's inclusion of the mythical medieval castle of Clongowes Wood in *Portrait*, a point I will return to later in the next section on 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' (Eagleton 1995, p. 237).

Borges, being a great admirer of Joyce, certainly picks up on his aesthetics of Irish Cubism in his mapping of Dublin in *Ulysses* (1922) and develops his creation of the metaphysical counterparts of Buenos Aires. As he reviews Joyce's mythical method in 'Joyce's *Ulysses*' (1925), he states his eagerness to trace 'its dense texture with the impeccable precision of a mapmaker' and notes that Joyce lends him the inspiration for his storytelling of 'ancients explorers who described lands new to their nomadic amazement and whose stories […] combined truth and fantasy' (Borges 1925, p. 12). It is clear that Borges' consistent interest in creating 'ancient' imaginary cities through intertextual connections comes from the 'amalgamation of dreams and the real' represented by Joyce's mythical method (Ibid., p. 13). His learning from Joyce's 'duality of existence' and 'ontological anxiety' embodied in the juxtaposition of flesh and streets (Ibid., p. 14) facilitates his employment of Ultraist technique in his topography. Both authors portray 'historical testimonies' as 'vivid' existence 'in the streets,' unveiling 'the consciousness' (Ciugureanu 2017, p. 292) as well as collective memories of the people in Ireland and Argentina. By comparing the two authors' mythical cityscapes, we can understand how the use of the method has transformed in a transatlantic sense across time to re-imagine the collective memory beyond colonial and/or imperial myths (Nagam 2013, p. 188) and thus remap their spaces. This study also contributes to the research in the understanding of Joyce's widespread legacy as a global phenomenon (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 342). By reading into Joyce and Borges' transcultural exchange, I strive to offer a perspective towards Joyce's legacy beyond the lands of Dublin and Europe and thus investigate how the visual aspects of his writing resonate in Latin America in a postcolonial sensibility.

Although the Ultraist movement was led by Spanish poet Guillermo de Torre, Dadaism and the Ultraist movement were inseparable as Torre recalls in *Historia de las literaturas de vanguardia* (1965) that the 'double mask of humour and pathos' drew the Ultraist to Dada 'like a magnet' (Torre 1965, p. 320). Therefore, the semblances of visual representations between Dadaist artworks and Ultraist writing in terms of ideological expressions are important. In 'Ultraísmo' (1921), Borges defines the four principles of the movement: the 'reduction of the lyric to its primordial element,' namely the metaphor; the 'deletion of intervening sentences, of transitions and useless adjectives'; the 'abolition of ornamental devices, confessionalism, circumstantiation, exhortations, and studied nebulousness'; and the 'synthesis of two or more images in one, which will thus increase the images' power of suggestion' (Borges qtd. in Christ 1969, pp. 2-3). These principles serve the style of brevity and the infinite metaphysical layers of dreams/reality in Borges' texts, which explains his creation of allusive mythical typography

as it is ‘the purpose of the paradigmatic allusion to embody those secret but recurrent patterns’ (Christ 1969, pp. 3-5). The salience of these emerging principles sprung from Borges’s avant-gardist impulses, which adhere to ‘the expression of an adolescent poet who passionately embraced the vanguardist impetus that has swept through war-torn Europe’ (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 343). Therefore, the brevity of Borges’ short stories differs from Joyce’s stress on the flow of consciousness as an antithetical response to Joyce’s epic legacy (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 351). While he admires Joyce’s labyrinthine cityscapes, he expresses a postmodernist tendency to eschew Joyce’s epic scope by refusing to perform ‘a linear reading of a seemingly infinite book’ (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 346). Borges’ refusal of a linear epic allows him to simultaneously take after Joyce to appropriate an art movement into a national context to create an unknown mythical city but almost manifest the unstableness of Argentina out of his fear of the invasion of the European forces of fascism. The fear is particularly reflected in ‘Tlön’ as the story creates a disquiet atmosphere that can be read as a reaction towards the political considerations that generate both metaphysical and psychological uneasiness. The time and place in the story parallel a time in which the Fascist forces of Europe were casting a shadow over Borges and his contemporaries’ landscape under the influence of the Monroe doctrine, as they were concerned that their country would bow down to political contagion (Fiddian 2017, p. 90) similar to Joyce’s concern of colonial dependency.

The Hero’s Quests to the Fantastic Peripheral Lands: Joyce’s Portals and Borges’ Mirrors

The majority of present postcolonial studies tends to interpret the destiny of people from a postcolonial nation as singular. However, it is problematic to neglect the multiplicity within a particular population. As Homi Bhabha (1996) notes, the ‘destiny of the post-colonial nation-people is defined not merely by concrete political boundaries, but by a temporality of continuance, the transformation, displacement, even transfiguration of struggle through continuity into something unrecognisable’ (p. 191). The use of the portals in *Portrait* and mirrors in ‘Tlön’ as portals to the fantastic lands dismantles the imperial picture of the entire postcolonial nation through parodying the mythical trope of the hero’s expedition to discover an unknown world such as the Irish and Argentine folk heroes Cú Chulainn and Juan Moreira, and in turn, to re-discover the Irish and Argentinean collective memories.

If we read the multiplicity of the post-colonial nation people into the historical context of *Portrait*, it is clear that Stephen Dedalus' struggle to find the 'beauty which the artist struggles to express from lumps of earth' (Riquelme 2006, p. 307) parallels Joyce's difficulty in defining what Ireland means to him. Although Brain McHale often refers to modernist fiction as *epistemological* and postmodernist fiction as *ontological* (1987, pp. 9-10), the fairy-tale framework of *Portrait* is metaphysical as Joyce begins the novel with the sentence 'Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo…' (Joyce 1978, p. 7). This opens a portal for Stephen to 'walk' into the land of fantasy with the moocow. Therefore, Joyce draws 'attention to the book's artifice, to its status as art' and implies an autobiographical dimension (Riquelme 2006, p. 367) although Joyce denies the reading of the novel as entirely autobiographical by stressing the existence of an unknown narrator.

Expanding from the framework of a heroic quest, Joyce further illustrates the mythical aspect of Stephen's Dublin through his metaphysical journeys at the College and in the maze-like city. One of the metaphysical portals is the narrow dark corridor Stephen walks along on his journey to the rector's room to report on injustice. Joyce parodies Stephen's role as a national hero through alluding him to the figure of Hamilton Rowan as he comes out on the landing where Rowan had once passed (Joyce 1978, p. 57). As Stephen's movements stretch to the larger city, he again wanders into 'a maze of narrow and dirty streets' that leads him to awaken in another world 'from a slumber of centuries' (Joyce 1978, p. 103), which distorts the temporality of the present as fragments of the ancient woven into his perception of Dublin. Joyce's juxtaposition of the present and the ancient is thus a form of montage as it functions as a response to the 'two-fold process' of the fragment and its relationships and 'becomes the mightiest means for a really important creative remoulding of nature' (Eisenstein 1977, pp. 75-76).

The technique of passage and montage in Joyce's opening scene coincides or echoes characteristic technique of Cubist paintings to cloud the 'distinction between the elements of the art world and those of the object-world beyond it' (Steiner 1949, p. 181), as when Joyce fuses the world of the fairy-tale with the scene in which Stephen's father tells him the story as he writes 'His father told him that story…He was baby tuckoo' (Joyce 1978, p. 7). While Sypher compares the use of ambiguity and simultaneity in Joyce and Picasso's works in connection to 'the existentialist subject' (1960, p. 267), it is also worth noting that Irish Cubists Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone later also employ the technique of passage through visual

montages in *Decoration* and *Fern Study With Cubist Surround* with an emphasis on a colourful portal in the centre to an alternative world of depth, which is likely the result of their apprenticeship under Gleizes. Comparing to other European Cubists, Gleizes' *Composition* has a specific focus on the central portals like those in Jellett and Hone's works. As mentioned, reviews of Gleizes' books were put together with the installations of *Portrait* even prior to the publication of the novel. As Antliff notes, Gleizes' declaration of his interests in a doctrine of Celtic nationalism comes from his aspiration for the resuscitation of Celtic heritage in France following the domination by the Franks, a German tribe in the 18th century (2008, p. 659). Gleizes' rejection of 18th-century German culture coincides with Joyce's parody of the notion of 18th-century German *bildungsroman*[6] as he rejects to impose a '"national form" to the narrative trajectories' (Boes 2012, p. 3) on Stephen by highlighting his personal quest. Therefore, Gleizes' project of the revival of Celtic France and the alliance between the neo-Symbolist avant-garde and a Celtic nationalist movement (Antliff 2008, pp. 655-6) have possibly contributed not just to the effect of central portals in Irish Cubist paintings to explore Irish identity but also to the emphasis on a single portal in Joyce' writing.

Borges also opens his narrative in 'Tlön' with a 'portal' to a fantastic version of the city with the discovery of a disorienting mirror and an encyclopaedia in a country house in Ramos Mejía (Borges 1962, p. 27) in Buenos Aires. This device derives, I argue, from Joyce's use of passage and appropriation of the *bildungsroman* with the discovery of the curious items in the said country house in Borges' story. The juxtaposition of the two objects hints that while the mirror doubles the image of the narrator, the text itself also creates an intangible counterpart to the real Buenos Aires. As the narrator later calls metaphysics 'a branch of fantastic literature' (Borges 1962, p. 34), the metaphysical nature of both the mirror and the encyclopaedia reflects an autobiographical dimension like *Portrait* by emphasising the artificiality of the texts. Borges

[6] It is a German genre that is often interpreted as 'novel of formation' or 'education' as German term 'bildung' literarlly means the 'institutionalization of self-cultivation' (Castle 2006, p. 1). The genre is also commonly referred to coming-of-age narratives. Prior to modernism, authors like Charles Dickens use the tropes of the genre to follow their protagonists' growth from childhood into adulthood. These protagonists often encounter certain spiritual crises that shape their minds, which lead to them figuring out their identities and roles in the society. Joyce and Virginia Woolf both parody the genre into a more experimental form of life writing. In the case of *Portrait*, Joyce integrates his personal experience with the narrative ambiguously, making it difficult to distinguish the stories of Stephen and the author (Engholt 2010, pp. 11-17).

adds another mythical layer to the narrative by paralleling the narrator's perception of monstrous mirrored infinite images (Borges 1962, p. 28) and by the unearthing of stone mirrors by orthodox believers in the thirteenth century in the 'historical works' on the imaginary Uqbar (Borges 1962, p. 29). By noting that the literature of Uqbar is 'one of fantasy and that its epics and legends never referred to reality, but to the two imaginary regions of Mlejnas and Tlön' (Borges 1962, p. 29), Borges opens up the portals to many possible versions of Buenos Aires through the notion of the '*hrönir*' that is represented by the Ultraist principles of the synthesis of images and metaphorical representations as hrönir can be understood as 'the proliferation and duplication of ideal physical objects to the proliferation and duplication of concepts,' such as the 'sophism of the coins' (Haug 2009, p. 72).

As noted, the ideologies of Dadaism and the Ultraist movement are interrelated as Ultraist writers regard Dadaism as 'a blueprint to build, a raft to new cultural lands' (Ludington 2018, p. 5), which parallels Borges' implication of the existence of infinite possible worlds. To unearth unexplored cultural lands, the Dadaist preoccupation with primitivism also shares Borges' focus on a mythical return to the ancient age as the primitive does not 'disappear in the Dadaist valorisation of the machine and technology' but returns 'as an archaic' force 'at the core' of what is most modern (Biro 2009, p. 23). This employment of the mythical method is present in leading Dadaist Francis Picabia's work *Nature Mortes, Portrait of Cézanne, Portrait of Renoir, Portrait of Rembrandt*. Dadaist primitive imageries are associated with colonial history and 18th-century Enlightenment philosophy (Folland 2020, p. 804), therefore, the primitive functions as an ironic 'dark mirror' of the classical European tradition (Connelly 1995, p. 9) like Borges' abominable mirrors that 'disseminates the visible universe' (Borges 1962, p. 28) to reveal the other worlds hidden by Eurocentric cultures due to the earlier discussed looming threat of Fascism in Argentina.

Like the *Beowulf* poet, despite the very different ways they 'transport' their protagonists to a fantastic land, Joyce and Borges both draw on the trope of fantastic transgressions in Old Norse myths to fight 'monsters.' Such employment of the mythical method shows that the fantastic displacement of the hero in an unfamiliar realm is particularly important to consider in relation to the sense of disorientation of the two protagonists in postcolonial contexts. By parodying the heroic narratives, Borges follows Joyce's footsteps in using memory as the 'mnemotechnic approach' in which fragments of 'collective,' 'personal,' 'intertextual, as well as body and place' turn into the authors' strategies to build their 'odyssey of (national) memor[ies]' (Rickard 1998, p. 6) and strive to 'find a special Ithaca' (Ciugureanu 2017, p. 284).

Although Borges mainly emphasises on the infiniteness of the possible worlds, Joyce's single Cubist passage and Borges' Ultraist mirrors both portray the visuality of depth to blend reality and fantasy together to defamiliarize Dublin and Buenos Aires and break down the illusory vision built upon the legacy of the Enlightenment in the 18th century.

From Modernist Ireland to Postmodern Argentina: 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' in Joyce's Medieval Castle and Borges' Metaficional Geographies

By emphasising the fantastic nature of Joyce's Dublin and Stephen's struggles to describe the fantastic earth of the city, Joyce portrays a certain fluidity as the city strives to move beyond its colonial non-modernity under the growing power of Irish nationalism. The lack of solid national identity is a result of what Eagleton calls 'a dialectic relation between the "archaic" and the "modern"' (1995, p. 287). Eagleton's notion of 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' (1995, p. 273) helps us link Joyce's self-conscious acknowledgement of the artistic work as an artifice to the doubleness of the Irish nation in Irish modernism (Larrissy 2011, p. 33), which is the tension between the return to the pre-modern through the mythical method and its structural place in the middle of political conflicts.

The concept of 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' (Eagleton 1995, p. 273) contributes to the reading of Joyce's medieval castle of Clongowes Wood as a mythical building that alludes to nationalist passions and the fear for civil wars at the same time. According to Conde-Parrilla, the castle was the campus of the oldest Irish Catholic lay school founded in 1814 by Irish Jesuits Daniel O'Connell and Peter Kenny (2020, p. 14). In this sense, the students' love for the school such as their cheering for the rector as the drivers point 'with their whips to Bodenstown' (Ibid., p. 20), where one of the founding fathers of modern Irish republicanism and leaders of Irish Rebellion of 1798 Theobald Wolfe Tone is buried (Conde-Parrilla 2020, p. 14), alludes to nationalist sentiments. On the other hand, Stephen's fear for the 'dark entrance hall of the castle' haunts him as he sees a figure in a white cloak coming up the staircase (Joyce 1978, p. 19) evokes the imagery of the Wild Geese who fought and died as a consequence of the Jacobite War (Connolly 1998, p. 593). The haunting state of the castle is then a 'drama of competing claims to title' as it involves 'some form of anxiety about ownership' (Michaels 1985, p. 89) and the question of the legitimacy of the claiming of that title. In the case of Ireland, the castle represents the unclaimable nature of the land as it struggles between nationalist sentiments and the fear of violence within the nation. The medieval nature of the castle signifies a space from another temporality as fragments of historical events woven

together at the site. In this sense, 'the artist's mind' becomes 'the receptacle of the past, shaping and evaluating it according to his own needs' as Eliot elaborates on the mythical method (1997, p. 49). The metaphor of the medieval castle is thus ideologically Cubist because of its 'reification of time' (Steiner 1949, p. 190) as the image presents an 'intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time' (Pound 1913, p. 201). Joyce's embodiment of Catholic medievalism, Jellett's recurring motif of the Madonna and Child and Hone's stained glass for the east window of Eton College Chapel (Gibbons 2014, p. 130) together form a mutual ideology with the mythical 'return' to medievalism between various forms of arts to explore Irish identity.

Extending from the previous discussion on Joyce's parody of the 18th-century German form of the *bildungsroman*, Borges' historical allusions embedded in the metaphysical topography of metafictional geographies in 'Tlön' fuses history and fiction like Joyce's allusive castle to question imperial history. The narrator's reading of 'atlases, catalogues, annuals of geographical societies, travellers' and historians' memories' (Borges 1962, p. 29) at the National Library hints the metaphysical spanning of the geographical and historical framework of the story which leaves the narrator an 'astonished and airy feeling of vertigo' (Borges 1962, p. 31). As the narrator starts leafing through a mysterious book left by Ashe in 1937, the 'secret doors of heaven open wide' for him and he grasps a 'vast methodical fragment of an unknown planet's entire history, with its architecture […], with the dread of its mythologies […], with its emperors and its seas, its minerals and its birds and its fish […], with its theological and metaphysical controversy' (Borges 1962, p. 31). His realisation of the possible existence of unknown architectural designs and geographical knowledge implies the existence of a Buenos Aires that has never been 'officially' recorded under the imposition of imperial history. Unlike the established and real *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Borges 1962, p. 28) first printed in 1771 in Edinburgh and the fictionally 'well-circulated' *Anglo-American Cyclopaedia* printed in 1917 that are on sale or even catalogued at the National Library (Borges 1962, p. 29), the mysterious book is of unknown origin. These three fictional encyclopaedias then create a 'geographical' map that stretches from Europe to America and eventually to an illusory planet.

Borges' geographical and temporal trajectory of the story is fundamentally based on the technique of the mythical method as it coincides with that of the real history known to us: Following the rule of the empires of Spain and Portugal, Mignolo distinguished a 'second phase of world modernity' in the 1770s. Events including the 'European Enlightenment, Hegel's philosophy of history, the French Revolution' and fights for independence in Anglo- and Latin

America (Fiddian 2017, p. 4) occurred before the rising power of the United States manifested in the 19th century, which contributed to the outbreaks of World War One and World War Two. Borges' alludes to these historical events through the years of publications of the three real or fictional encyclopaedias. In this sense, the abstractness of its topographical features is metaphorical to the censoring of the 'real' history of Buenos Aires by imperial voices. Therefore, his metaphorical and abstract visual representations of Tlön again signifies a 'non-existing' (Borges 1962, p. 31) Buenos Aires in the colonial account of history.

Inspired by Guillermo de Torre like Borges was, Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-Garcia painted *Hoy* to portray fragmented window facades, primal signs, clocks marking time, words, numbers, national flags and real stamps to fuse real physical materials with painted images through compiling collages and tempera on cardboard to create metaphysical 'intertexts.' The mixture of national flags of real countries including Latin American and European ones and unidentified ones as well as real stamps parallels with that of Borges' real and fictional encyclopaedias, which criticises the Eurocentric editions of history through a Latin-American perspective. By channelling the ancient through modern metafictional typographies, both Joyce and Borges and their artistic counterparts illustrate different components of national memory that 'emerge at different times after' the historical 'event(s) to be memorized' have taken place (Groes 2016, p. 347).

Directions to the Ultimate Utopias

Flirting with the idea of possible metaphysical utopias through their Cubist and Ultraist topographies, Joyce and Borges hint at a possible liberation from their entrapment in imperial histories through the movements of mythical birds and that of a mythical compass respectively. Near the end of *Portrait*, Stephen encounters 'bird after bird' and asks twice 'what birds were they' (Joyce 1978, p. 228-30), which mythologies their origins. The birds invoke the images of an ancient temple and the 'hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings' like 'an Irish oath' and a 'symbol of departure,' contrasting with Stephen's immobility within the material Dublin represented by 'the culture of Dublin in the stalls' and 'the human dolls framed by the garish lamps of the stage' (Joyce 1978, p. 230). His final decision to leave Dublin (Joyce 1978, p. 257) represents his urge to fly with the birds in search for the ultimate utopian vision of Ireland as 'a sense of fear' of the ancient 'unknown' (229) moves in his heart with the birds in flight.

The motif of mythical birds is also present in many of Irish Cubist Mary Swanzy's paintings. In *Le Cathédrale Engloutie*, the three white doves standing on top of a cage are allegorical to the Celtic knot of the Trinity. In contrast to the ordinary birds held captive like the immobile Stephen, they look at an ancient religious building distanced from the apocalyptic chaos of shipwrecks like Joyce's mythical birds, waiting to depart to the magical land. Swanzy's learning of Gauguin at Gertrude Stein's Salon (Gibbons 2014, p. 129) allows her to embody 'the unstable selfhood that is unconfined by cultural or temporal limitations and that begins to approach the ontological status' (McBryan 2011, p. 193) of what Roland Barthes calls an 'anachronic subject' (1975, p. 14) in her use of mythical materials as Joyce does.

Borges' compass similarly points a direction to the metaphysical utopia as it vibrates 'mysteriously' with its blue needle longing 'for magnetic north' (Borges 1962, p. 41). Along with the alphabets of Tlön carved on its metal case, the slight tremor of the compass (Borges 1962, p. 41) indicates the existence of the fantastic Tlön. The Ultraist and Dadaist mutual technique of the use of the 'archaic force' creates new cultural lands parallels Joyce, Swanzy and Gauguin's motif of the 'anachronic subject' (Barthes 1975, p. 14). Thus, they all give us a historical sense that involves a perception of the presence of the past (Eliot 1997, p. 49) in search for the Utopian Dublin and Buenos Aires in the collective minds of Irish and Argentinean people.

Conclusion

Joyce and Borges' publications of *Portrait* and 'Tlön,' while composed in different national contexts and periods, both reflect the problem with the notion of collective postcolonial identities. Joyce and Borges' Cubist and Ultraist mythical topographies continue to live their afterlives in the age of late capitalism in terms of their search for national and/or cultural memory in conceptual arts as their view of art forms as systems capable of 'infinite variation recurs' in Conceptual artworks (Burnham 1974, p. 79) to generate new cultural landscapes. The legacy of Joyce and Borges' mythical cityscapes then halts 'at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism' (Eliot 49) to pass on the technique of the mythical method to latter artworks and literature to continue the journey of the entire human race to the ideal mythical city.

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