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James Joyce and Mario Vargas Llosa: Meeting on the Margins

Abstract:
This study critiques two mainstream novelists known for their localities of Ireland and Peru as well as their long sojourns and major works set abroad. It argues that, contrary to popular, recent opinion regarding these seemingly abstruse and possibly elitist figures, both directly engage with the marginal aspects of both society and nature in intriguing and sensitive ways. Furthermore, these margins— as developed through consideration of a series of eclectic philosophical thinkers including Michel Foucault, Margarita Serje and Timothy Morton— are where the authors meet: where their writing converges. Comparison between the two hinges upon a philosophical understanding of these very margins. The writers, complex and irreducible, also seesaw between the terms that are almost always used to describe them: "modernist" and "realist", "humorous" and "serious", "local" and "global", terms which I believe require renewed and nuanced consideration and recasting in the light of this comparison. Through a combination of close-readings and integrated theoretical analysis, I argue that Joyce and Vargas Llosa meet on the margins of: modern society, the environment, and their political contexts, producing some of the most timeless works of twentieth-century fiction as a result.

Keywords:
James Joyce, Mario Vargas Llosa, The Latin American Boom, Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism, modernism, realism, Comparative Literature, Joycismo

Resumen:
Este estudio critica a dos novelistas "mainstream" conocidos por sus localidades de Irlanda y Perú así como también de sus estadías y obras principales que tienen lugar al extranjero. Razona que, contrariamente a opinión reciente y popular sobre estas figuras supuestamente abstrusos y quizás elitistas, los dos se enfrentan directamente a los aspectos marginales de ambas la sociedad y la naturaleza, de maneras intrigantes y delicadas. Además, estos margines— idea desarrollada al considerar una serie de pensadores filosóficos eclécticos tales como Michel Foucault, Margarita Serje y Timothy Norton – son dónde sus obras se encuentran. Una comparación entre los dos gira sobre un entendimiento filosófico de estos mismos margines. Los escritores, complejos e irreducibles, se balancean entre los términos que casi siempre son usados para describirlos: "modernista" y "realista", "humoroso" y "serio", "local" y "global", términos que requieren, yo pienso, una consideración renovada y con matiz, moldeándolos de nuevo a la luz de esta

nueva comparación. Por una combinación de análisis cerca y análisis teórica integrada, razono que Joyce y Vargas Llosa se encuentran en las "margines" de: la sociedad moderna, el medio ambiente, y sus contextos político – produciendo unas de las obras más eternos del siglo veinte-uno como resultado.

Palabras claves:
James Joyce, Mario Vargas Llosa, el Boom latinoamericano, ecocriticism, postcolonialismo, modernism, realismo, literatura comparada, joycismo.

Introduction

The study of the impact of James Joyce (1882-1941) in Latin Americanism dates back to two studies of the nineteen-eighties. These foremost works analysing Joycean poetics and Latin American prose are Gerald Martin's *Into the Labyrinth* (1989) and Robin Fiddian's *James Joyce and Spanish American Fiction* (1989), the latter extending his earlier 'Preliminary Study' (1982). Martin and Fiddian explore ways in which Joycean/Ulyssean narrative technique (including stream of consciousness, neologism and labyrinthine narrative structure) finds its way into Latin American writing. For instance, the writer Borges, who translated the last page of *Ulysses* for an Argentine readership in his magazine *Proa*, is said to employ some Joycean techniques of modern writing, in turn influencing much twentieth-century Latin American literature.[1] While brief reference to the Peruvian writer Vargas Llosa is made both Fiddian and Martin's surveys, they focus primarily on Argentine and Mexican writers, including the monumental Borges. Fiddian favours "panoramic and microscopic approaches" (Fiddian 1989a: 23) toward micro-and-macro comparison of Joyce/Latin Americans, notably juxtaposing broad theoretical developments with close textual observation. In contrast, Martin advocates a "standing back" of critic positionality (Martin 1989a: 140) so that one does not trip over oneself whilst describing this process of Joycean influence. Moreover, Martin describes "Joyce" (*noun*) as a "cipher for a far-reaching cultural phenomenon involving countless intellectuals and artists" (*ibid*.: 129). Yet, a truly local Latin American tradition was firmly taking hold during the 1950s and 1960s. As critic Jean Franco highlights, as evidenced by texts such as Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950) and Sebastián Salazar Bondy's *Lima la horrible* (1964), thinkers began to characterise Latin America from a standpoint unique to their countries, demonstrating a "preoccupation with self-awareness" (Franco 1970: 230), voicing their nations in a perspectivist manner based on personal experiences. Nonetheless, the influence of Joyce in particular was widespread, and became known as "Joyceisación" or "Joycismo", a term coined by the

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writer Carlos Fuentes. Thus, a tradition arose of transposing "Joyce" and his poetics into Latin American literature (Ladrón 2009a: 165); the effect of which was a literary form mirroring and adapting the undulations, confusions and extremities of modern life, connecting Western and South American literary traditions via the so-called father of modernism.[2] While not wishing to dispel Latinity itself, or fall into the pitfalls of Eurocentric cultural hegemony and Western dominance detailed by postcolonial critic Edward Said (see Said 1979: 5, 6), this article underlines the value of the comparative modernisms surfacing in these two writers.[3]

This study contributes to the above debate by extending the parameters of Joyce's sphere of influence to integrate the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa (1936-), often dismissed as literarily "parricidal" (Fiddian 1989b: 33)— unreceptive to the influences of his literary forebears, which inevitably exist. Vargas Llosa, author of five "totalising novels",[4] implicitly owes somewhat to *Ulysses* (1922), meriting comparison with Joyce in terms of style and overall (diegetic) content, as I will argue presently. The recent centenary of Ulysses might allow for a new Ulyssean textual comparison: Vargas Llosa's *Conversación en la catedral* (1969).

This article primarily analyses Vargas Llosa's first and most epic "totalising novel", *Conversación en la catedral* alongside the earlier comparable and famously trailblazing *Ulysses* of Joyce. This shows how Joyce and Vargas Llosa integrate elements of realist and modernist styles, ultimately evading all categorisation and sitting between labels commonly used to describe them, all the while depicting the marginal, or "in-between", aspects of society with great care.[5] Secondly, the article comments on how marginal themes in Joyce and Vargas Llosa are essentially postcolonial and ecocritical in nature. This article's conclusion includes an offering of further texts for the reader's consideration, not expanded here for lack of space, including Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Vargas Llosa's "Lituma" series: *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) and *Lituma en los Andes* (1993); also *Dubliners* (1914), and *El sueño del celta* (2010). Certain theorists of the "margins" might take this concept further. These texts and thinkers demonstrate that these margins are deeply ecological, social and political. Finally, while predominantly considering the labyrinthine prose of *Ulysses*, this analysis moves towards a more inclusive understanding of Joycean poetics, beyond *Ulysses*, important for legitimate comparison of the authors, and a truer notion of "Joycismo".

Joyce the realist-modernist, Vargas Llosa the modernist-realist: *Ulysses and Conversación en la catedral*

> "On the other hand, the developed-underdeveloped dichotomy now existed fully and completely within their [the 1960s generation's] countries – you did not have to go to Paris or New York to see an ultra-modern city – and therefore the Mestizo culture and the possibility of Ulyssean travel was now achieved almost as easily in the imagination or by staying at home (perhaps not quite: all the 'boom' writers were in fact great travellers – you had to travel to make the images and contrasts really move)."
>
> - Gerald Martin, *Journeys through the Labyrinth*, p. 168.

The cosmopolitanism of Joyce and Vargas Llosa appears in this quotation. The Borgesian notion that "the whole planet is 'Mestizo'" (Martin 1989c: 163) surfaces, imaging the City of Light, "travel", and "development", linking the *original* Ulyssean writer (Joyce) to Boom-writer Vargas Llosa via these concepts. Importantly, both writers also lived and worked in Paris, travelling widely.

Yet, just how closely do the depicted settings, Lima and Dublin, compare? *Ulysses* (1922) and *Conversación en la catedral* (1969), possibly the authors' most representative "total/-ising" novels where narrative tricks and tools abound, usher in modernity via microcosms and macrocosms of the sprawling cities Dublin and Lima, creating a unified picture of the modern world in the fabric of the modern city. This image exists, nonetheless, within colonialist parameters. As Rama underlines, European colonisers imported a rationalised "grid design" upon which "Latin American cities sprang forth in signs and plans, already complete" (Rama 1996: 5; 8), implying a structuralist foundation to literary-colonial heritage, holding particular relevance to Vargas Llosa's depiction of Lima. Rama's example, referencing colonial Spain, suggests an ongoing cultural inheritance imposed by European and U.S. powers through urban planning. In short, Lima copies Paris; Latin America copies Europe. However, it is worth noting that Joyce's setting, modern-day Dublin, unlike, say, Londonderry/Derry, actually owes more to Georgian architecture than the "grid plans" of the ancients, and is not so "sprawling" as, say, Paris, London, or Lima. This complicates the transposition of Joyce's fiction-world into Latin America, at least in terms of Dublin mirroring Lima.[6] There is a structuralist thread to Joyce's depiction of Dublin, however, as contemporary Bloomsday walking tours would demonstrate, and the idea that Joyce's darkly alluring Dublin (many events of the novel occur at night) may have inflected Vargas Llosa's dark and gloomy Lima to some degree remains pertinent. Martin's point, to some extent, remains valid in this new context. Through the occupation of space, and "movement", writers like Vargas Llosa captured the structure of modernity, following a route paved by Joyce, and *Ulysses*. Conversely, Ireland, like Latin America, fought its own battles against British Imperialism and political centralisation. Both are "postcolonial" nations. Both settings therefore have — if incidentally in the first instance — much in common.

Moreover, the juxtaposition of Joyce, Vargas Llosa, Ireland and Latin America as culturally peripheral is noteworthy — all have been subjugated by greater (more despotic) powers — either exile (chosen or not) or imperialism. The extent and severity of this peripheral element varies. But despite this shared peripherality, Mexican poet Amado Nervo's claim (reflecting Martin's analysis) that "Nosotros [latinoamericanos] no queremos ser pintorescos [...] queremos ser los continuadores de la cultura europea (y si es posible los intensificadores)" (Shaw 1971: 915) ('We [Latin Americans] do not want to be picturesque [...] We want to be the continuation of European culture (and if possible, the intensifiers thereof')[7] becomes important. Herein lies the quandary that European models are often favoured by the Latin American literati, despite the cultural inheritance of such models lying in unabated colonialism. This interpretation implies the hegemony of Fanon's "Graeco-Latin pedestal" (Fanon 1963: 36).

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Does an élite literati (writers such as Vargas Llosa) represent Latin Americans at all, or does it merely reproduce European standards (Joyce)? Is this line of comparative enquiry therefore entirely problematic? This cultural debate is well-documented, and surrounds the term "Latin America" itself, denoting an Imperialist view, hence "Latin" indicating a Europeanised vision and heritage. Writers such as Vargas Llosa, living in mainland Europe, are often accused of turning their back on their native land, and for subscribing to European standards as a result. The same was once said of James Joyce, exile of Ireland.

That history is unsavoury does not change its having occurred, and Nervo's "intensificadores" brightly suggests Latin America culturally exceeding European artistic standards. In other words, influence may exceed a Bloomian "anxiety" altogether, transcending into the sphere of the "global". Meanwhile, Vargas Llosa remains a Latin American. Martin's contention (above) perhaps subconsciously reflects a stylistic turn typical of the generation of writers he recalls: toward "active" reading in Boom novels and the emergence of *New Narratives* during the 1960s, a modernist subgenre which encouraged active readerly engagement in texts. If one need not "travel" to understand modernity, development and writing, as Martin implies, the Latin American reader who is "at home" need no longer surrender passively to the authority of omniscient, realist narration. This equalises writer and reader, undoing the former's privilege. Ironically, both Joyce and Vargas Llosa have, gradually, become authorities of fiction; their writing subject to the common critique that experimental literary modernism is a smokescreen for the writer's ego, evident in a text being written in the first place and its simultaneous ruse as *authorless*. Narrative experimentation, possibly insincere, exhausts itself. If Vargas Llosa compares to Joyce, this risks being due to the exhaustibility of the transglobal modernist experiment.

Following these initial observations on the broader social perception and comparison of both writers, I will outline common ground between two of their totalising novels, analysing their possible ancestral modernist (and part-realist) linkage further. Furthermore, whilst both writers are sometimes perceived as "urban", residing in cities and typically writing on inner-city themes without recall to environmental spaces, critics note, "even writers like Joyce who are usually regarded as primarily urban, exhibit a strong ecological dimension to their work" (Brazeau/Gladwin 2014: 1). Just as Joyce's work stretches across ecological and imperial plains, in Vargas Llosa's work, the oscillating Peruvian geography of *costa/sierra/selva* lends itself to ecological and geopolitical discussion. Travel, migration, exile, and *flâneurie* affect both writers and characters, with city-locations helping readers to examine depictions of globalised industrial capital. I will therefore follow up the modernist/realist analysis with an examination of *Ulysses and Conversación* from a postcolonial-ecocritical perspective. Besides, the question of genealogical influence altogether feeds into this postcolonial question, raising issues of canonicity and Europeanisation. What's more, land is, and always has been, a playground of various forms of empire.

Style, Structure, Form: The Fly on the Wall

Joyce and Vargas Llosa represent the juncture between literary realism and modernism. Sontag proposes, "the modernists' ruins [...] [are] reality itself", where "reality", for the photographer, is "an endlessly alluring, poignantly reductive way of seeing the world" (Sontag 1973: 62; 63). This philosophical "reality" is, though potentially vague, central to twentieth-century cultural movements, and prominent within Joyce and Vargas Llosa. Their novels seemingly inhabit the in-between of the "mainstream" and "periphery", although they are nowadays mostly associated with the mainstream, hence their numerous accolades (and indeed criticisms). This mainstream/periphery debate can be mapped somewhat onto realism/modernism. Modern art remains subject to a backlash and "fringe/peripheral" appeal nowadays. Conversely, modernism attempts to reverse the trend and make "realism" peripheral in culture, hence Ezra Pound's rallying call in 1937 to forever "make it [*the literary form*] new". In Chomskyan terms, a "dichotomisation" takes place between the two movements modernism and realism, each striving and tussling to become the most culturally acknowledged and popular. A comparison between key episodes of *Ulysses and Conversación* explores how this dichotomisation might subside to more fitting ideas of marginality and in-betweenness.

According to Sheehan, "What emerges from the 'Calypso'[8] chapter [of *Ulysses*] is the way [Leopold] Bloom's divided and alienated self is positioned and articulated within terms of an Irish-Jewish identification" (Sheehan 2009a: 35). Earlier, Haines, an Englishman, inertly says, "It seems history is to blame" regarding the "Imperial British state" (20) which Stephen (Telemachus) had critiqued.[9] Deferred imperial guilt expands in "Calypso", including guilt of antisemitism, rendering Bloom (Odysseus) a doubly-marginalised figure (perhaps triply, his marriage threatened by Blazes Boylan). This heroic typecasting appears ironic, though not without sincerely tragic family background:[10] an outsider-background shared with the Homeric Odysseus (Bloom). Critic Sheehan's proposed "alienation" of Bloom's identity in this fourth episode parallels a shift from first-person to third-person narration, mirroring an increasing awareness of Bloom as a mere human, or animal: "Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls" (53), animalism parodically contrasting with the polite "Mr". 7 Eccles Street represents Calypso in the nymph pictured above the bed (62), the only reference to the mythical being, discussion thereof causing Bloom to burn a "kidney" (63) distractedly. Much of the episode centres on food and (latterly) defecation: "He read on [*Titbits*], seated calm above his own rising smell" (66). Relatively realist, "Calypso" nonetheless uses substantial intertextuality: the letter from Milly; the British magazine *Titbits*, perused and used as toilet paper, showing Bloom's involvement in (and possible disregard for) adopted British culture and journalism in Ireland. Or, more likely: showing a practical approach to materiality derived from elsewhere, both culturally enriching and (then) serving a pragmatic social function—the epitome of the modernist/realist dichotomy in one, lavatorial, image.[11]

Similarly, Donald Shaw consigns Vargas Llosa's critical writings to "High Modernism" (Shaw 2002: 404), suggesting that this modernism had "plainly led via Borges directly to the Boom" (*ibid.*: 407). One example of Vargas Llosa's fictional narrative experimentation and

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consequent modernist tinge is his *vasos comunicantes* ('communicating vessels'): juxtaposed narratives, seemingly inspired by Faulkner (see King 2005). The overlapping dialogues of don Cayo Bermúdez (dictator Odría's[12] right-hand man) and don Fermín (protagonist Santiago's father); alongside Ambrosio (Bermúdez's, then Fermín's cab-driver) and Trifulcio (Ambrosio's father) (162), epitomises such apparently high poetic interplay. Whilst the former pair, socially higher-up, cordially organise a "trago" ('drink'), the latter father-and-son discuss "winning over" don Cayo: "para ganártelo, llévale algún regalito" (162) ('to win him over, bring him some small present'), the diminutive "-ito" stressing the importance of a small, well-judged gift. Class relations play out within this, allowing the reader to compare and contrast environments. Cayo, from the *sierra*, has seemingly infiltrated the affluent *costa*. Trifulcio assumes, "Si [Cayo] es importante ya ni querrá saber de ti [Ambrosio]" (162) ('If [Cayo] is important he will not want to know about you'). Ambrosio's peripheralisation is implicitly racialised: the proposed "gift" is to remind Cayo of the "pueblo" ('village') in the provinces whence he came—to touch his "corazón" ('heart'). Ambrosio is repeatedly dubbed using the racist term "zambo". This allows costa and provincias to figure into a hierarchy where mixed-ethnicity characters from the rural interior are notably low-down. (This recalls Sarmiento's age-old civilisation (city) versus barbarism (interior) conflict—see *Facundo*, 1845.) Nonetheless, Cayo's heart remains locked in the rural "interior". The characterisation of Trifulcio as a delinquent (163: "es mejor que no te vean conmigo"; 'it is better that they do not see you with me') contributes to this problematical hierarchy where indigenous characters are socially othered. Critiques of Vargas Llosa's narratological treatment of indigenous Peruvians (see Hunt 2020; Kokotovic 2000) become relevant. However, this section's communicating vessel, and its simultaneous or possibly analeptic *salto temporal* (temporal jump) make the reader cinematographically pan to Bermúdez explaining his late entry into politics: "Las circunstancias han hecho que a la vejez venga a meterme en política" ('Circumstances have rendered that in old age I have become involved in politics').[13] Bermúdez's response insinuates a small narrative gap, presumably where Fermín asks: *Why politics?* Bermúdez's rapid social mobility is associated with age, chance, and a move to the city. Overall, this section, replete with modernist techniques, shows narrative experimentation reinforcing concrete realities: the cosmopolitan city's triumph over the ethnic interior. This is a social, racial superstructure. Therefore, Vargas Llosa in this novel *deliberately* focuses on the plights of characters who inhabit the margins of society.

This is postcolonial and ecocritical: "Ecocriticism… stands to profit from postcolonialism as it struggles to engage critically with globalisation" (Garrard 2011: 193). The two critical frameworks have in common reaction to a globalised, commodified world. Ambrosio, like Joyce's Bloom, is peripheral and thus cannot access the global, despite being a protagonist in the *catedral* (three-hour, Bloomsday-esque) conversation. Importantly and conversely, Borges saw Ireland as a "sister nation [to Latin America] in view of its peripheral position in relation to mainland Europe" (Izarra/Novillo-Corvalán 2009: 133). Furthermore, Galicians have read Joyce's Ireland in this way.[14] Fuentes, rightly "argued that the process of 'joyceisation'

or 'joycismo' in Latin American literature attained a continental magnitude" (Ladrón 2009c: 165). Therefore, we might conclude that "Calypso", analysed above alongside Vargas Llosa's narrative techniques, conjures both sides of the peripheral-versus-central, local-versus-global dichotomies, quintessential to modernist concerns regarding the dizzying dimension of twentieth-century life, predicated, nonetheless, on social realist, regionalist themes. Both writers address marginal themes from within this in-between space, this modernist-realist *mêlée*.

Furthermore, in "Oxen of the Sun", Joyce's modern literariness is flaunted. In this chapter, Joyce tracks the history of English, emulating and parodying diverse literary styles. Occurring at 10 p.m. at the National Maternity Hospital (Sheehan 2009b: 66), over twelve hours have elapsed since "Calypso", wherein many events transpire, most importantly Paddy Dignam's funeral.[15] The Joycean contrast between moribund and natal scenes highlights death and rebirth more broadly. T. S. Eliot remarked, with *Ulysses*, Joyce "destroyed the whole of the nineteenth century" (Sheehan 2009c: 69). It follows that Joyce birthed the twentieth century regarding fiction.[16] Hence, the apparent demise of realism, the death of omniscience. Nevertheless, Joyce's parodies approach realism, looping between realism and modernism, once more straddling literary categorisations. For instance, seemingly echoing romantic Charles Lamb's sentimentalism, we read of Bloom: "Or is this the same figure, a year or so gone over, in his hard hat (ah, that was a day!)..." (393). Considering Lamb's "Old China": "Here — a cow and rabbit couchant, and coextensive — so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine cathay [chinaware]" (Reidhead 2012: 520) — there are points of comparison. Bloom's "precociously manly" appearance, and unexplained memory, inverts Lamb's "feminine partiality for old china" (*ibid.*: 519), parodying the gendering of inanimate objects. Lamb's explanatory clauses are satirised by Joyce as ornamental dead-ends. Therefore, Joyce (though writing a monumental novel) here favours the Imagist tendency of economical language-use:[17] a concern partly shared by realists who "reacted against the excesses" of prosy Romantics such as Lamb (Sayeau 2018a: 94). But, perhaps more importantly, playful parody sparks readerly curiosity: what happened on that "day", and why is Bloom's "hard hat" worth mentioning? Thus, romanticism is not replaced with realism—humans remain realistically long-winded—and both hold merit for Joyce. "[In] *Ulysses* Joyce never abandoned realism" (Sheehan 2009d: 20). Consequently, reading Joyce remains enriched by what is and is not real. Indeed, "[t]o write about the modernist novel [...] is to write not only about the possibilities of the genre, but about its perceived impossibility" (Trotter 2006a: 70).

Such seemingly impossible linguistic manipulations as Joyce exhibits lead some toward avoiding the word "parody" to describe this episode of *Ulysses* altogether (Wales 1989: 319). Malachi Mulligan reappears as "Our worthy acquaintance" (382), the adjective a Joycean inanity, or facetious red-herring: Mulligan is especially lewd. "Our" implies a reader's long-established (realist) connection to the *figure* of Mulligan, demonstrating realism and modernism's inseparability through figures: "Figures in narrative fiction do tend towards cliché because they have to be made continuously recognizable despite internal and external alterations" (Trotter

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2006b: 72). Thus the "figure", in this case, Mulligan, is identifiable from a modernist or realist perspective. The "external" consistency of the logos of realism, as the "internal" consistency of the *logos* of modernism, relies on some understanding of popular figures and clichéd realities. Hence, the reader discovers realist tropes (long-exposition, cliché) to which ultra-modern Joyce is not immune. Like Vargas Llosa, Joyce does not break the Sontagian "endless allure" of the real.

Similarly realist in premise, *Conversación*, a dictatorship novel, sees corruption seeping into every character. Bermúdez's nickname, "Cayo Mierda" ('Cayo Shit'), evokes the lifelike trope of realist fiction: after all, "Realism is as much about the distance from reality as it is proximity" (Sayeau 2018b: 91). Humans are storytellers, unscientific, inventive, *prosaic*: "Cayo Shit" is, indeed, what one might say of a despotic figure. Don Cayo "Mierda" parallels Santiago's self-description: "Ni abogado ni socio del Club Nacional, ni proletario ni burgués [...] Sólo una pobre mierdecita entre los dos" (176) 'Not a lawyer nor a partner of the National Club, not a proletariat nor a bourgeois [...] just a poor little shit between the two'). The noun "mierdecita" ('little shit') viscerally images Santiago as *in-between* the extremes of life: estranged from the wealth of his well-connected father, and from destitution. The villain "Mierda" is self-consciously interiorised by this protagonist, a marginalised "mierdecita" off-cut. Jean Franco recalls the many scatological references within *Conversación*, including Lima itself, described as "color de caca" (Franco 1999a: 237) ('the colour of shit'). This, as we have seen, mirrors Joyce (and possibly Peruvian poet César Vallejo, see endnote 6) in its lavatorial frankness. This is essentially a social realist, neo-Marxist premise: corrupt humans are the products of a corrupt society. *Conversación*'s dark view of Lima reflects the realist tendency to view metropolises as disappointing, or corrupting to the natural (cf. Balzac's *Illusions Perdues*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, or Dickens's *Great Expectations*).

Also indicative of the tension between modernism and realism is both writers' treatment of journalism; Vargas Llosa's being predicated on personal experience (cf. the 1998 "Prólogo": 7). Santiago must write "editoriales contra la rabia" (17) ('editorials against rabies'). This politicised task is futile. While this is parodic, implying Santiago could be doing so-called proper journalism, Santiago also passively says, "Bah, esto me fastidia menos que escribir sobre Cuba o Vietnam" (17) ('Bah, this annoys me less than writing about Cuba or Vietnam'). The esteemed foreign affairs department seems to hold little interest either. Santiago thus becomes apolitical, disaffected by the Cold War. The modernist stereotype of the *non-engagé* protagonist surfaces, although this is layered: rabies is, however hopeless *politically*, a concrete problem that must be affronted, through a means albeit wholly different from a daily column. Vargas Llosa self-consciously emphasises problems that literature cannot solve. The rabies editorials bear comparison with Joyce's Mr Deasy, whose writing is "about the foot and mouth disease [...] There can be no two opinions about the matter" (32).[18] Bathetic contrast emerges. Joyce, like Vargas Llosa, downplays everyday periodicals compared with so-called high modernism (the novel in our hands). While modernist writing is inherently more interesting to Joyce, a degree of realism remains necessary for the interior meaning of his writing. Paradoxically, the

high-aspiring modernist cannot escape the realist's material needs: writing for a salary (as in the serialised Victorian family saga) or, in Mr Deasy's case, to simply be listened to. Joyce, publishing *Ulysses* in Paris, 1922, and Dubliners in 1914, will have known difficulty in monetising modernist literature, adding to this realist necessity.

A fruitful comparison to Santiago, is Sartre's character Antoine Roquetin (*La Nausée*, 1938), whose disinterested, existential nausea runs thus:

> "A trente ans! J'ai pitié de moi. Il y a des moments où je me demande si je ne ferais pas mieux de dépenser en un an les trois cent mille francs qui me restent – et après... Mais qu'est-ce que ça me donnerait ? Des costumes neufs ? Des femmes ? Des voyages ? [...] Je me retrouverait dans un an aussi vide qu'aujourd'hui" (Sartre 1938 : 242)
> ['At thirty years old! I pity myself. There are moments where I ask myself if I wouldn't do better to spend in a year the three hundred thousand *francs* I have left – and then... But what would that give me? New suits? Women? Travel? [...] I would find myself just as empty in a year as today'].

Like Santiago, Antoine is thirty, uninterested though governed by money—Santiago states, "No quiero vivir mejor" (714) ('I do not want to live better'). Joyce's Lenehan, in "Two Gallants" (*Dubliners*) encounters a similar rut: "He would be thirty-one in November. Would he never get a good job? Would he never have a home of his own?" (51-52). Such *ennui* is a product of modernist settings, reflecting Marxist work-life alienation and the unbearable complexity of the modern world. Joyce was, during the period *Ulysses* is set, an active socialist, and Vargas Llosa was, though drifting from the Left "in stages" throughout his career (Kristal 1999: 99), similarly concerned with social justice in his early work.[19] Like Antoine, Bloom and Santiago are flies on the wall, alienated, torn between dizzying modernity and the unrelatable past. They are akin to Walter Benjamin's detached *flâneur*. The jarring transposition of Homer's *Odyssey* into modernity, in *Ulysses* itself, replicates this. Ambrosio, arguably the most important character in terms of exposing modern evil, is made socially peripheral: he is a fly on the wall in every sense, subjugated racially and economically. Yet, he is privy to important circles. The assonance between the first syllable of his name and that of the maid Amalia connects two outsider figures. The modernist/realist debate hinges on a philosophical notion of periphery. Santiago concludes the novel, ciphering Ambrosio: "Trabajaría aquí, allá, a lo mejor dentro de un tiempo había otra epidemia de rabia y lo llamarían de nuevo, y después aquí, allá, y después, bueno, después se moriría, ¿no, niño?" (727) ('He would work here, there, perhaps in some time there would be another rabies epidemic and they would call him again, and then here, there, and then, well, then he would die, ¿no, kid?'). Santiago's dead-end job writing "editorials against rabies" hardly compares to the bleak livelihood of Ambrosio, linguistically collapsing in on itself ("aquí, allá"; 'here, there'), offering only vagabondage, then wishful death. Despite Ambrosio's hyperbolic subjugation beneath modern evils, the pen remains in the affluent Santiago's hands, bringing us Ambrosio's words. The reader aligns with Santiago as listener: the story of the peripheries is still ciphered through the mainstream, and Ambrosio,

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the ultimate victim, is not afforded the final comment. Joyce might be described in a similar way to Vargas Llosa, who exhibits "a modern, Latin American realism" (Larsen 2000: 161);[20] if only, for Joyce, "Latin American" might be replaced with "Irish".

Bloomsday to Doomsday: Ecocritical and Postcolonial Themes

The experience of belonging to the cultural periphery mentioned above, a feature of modernity afflicting Santiago, Ambrosio, and Bloom, is also central to the radical potential of these novels as postcolonial-ecocritical texts, returning us to Martin's notion of "development" which I began my analysis with. As Huggan and Tiffin note, "radical Third-Worldist critiques [...] tend to see development as little more than a disguised form of neocolonialism" (Huggan/Tiffin 2015a: 29). The "total" novel such as *Ulysses* and *Conversación* (each spanning just over seven hundred pages) is an effective mode for an environmental writing, seeing the ecosystem as a whole, deconstructing such notions as "development" sometimes altogether. Furthermore, "postcolonial ecocriticism is that form of criticism which appreciates the non-instrumentality of environmental writing" (*ibid.*: 35). Joyce and Vargas Llosa's city-writing is "non-instrumental" in its meandering, non-teleological focus: its very totality. Postcolonial-ecocritics show growing concern for unquestioned, neo-colonialist development. "Calypso", localised to a shop and 7 Eccles Street, follows "Proteus", a stream-of-consciousness set in open Sandymount Strand, untouched by building development. Joyce foretells the anti-developmental concern. Vargas Llosa questions the parallel development of young men, the city of Lima, and Peruvian society. Writing on a different novel, of the same *Limeño* setting, Oviedo wrote that Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros* (1962) depicts the microcosm of Leoncio Prado military academy against the macrocosm of the city of Lima (Oviedo 1997: 1520). Conversely, both writers suggest how the (macrocosmic) modern city conditions one to a (microcrosmic) Foucauldian corporeality of power: "in short, one has 'got rid of the peasant' and given him 'the air of a soldier'" (Foucault 1975: 135). The control of bodies is more important than concerns relating to the idea of development, for both Vargas Llosa and Joyce; the sociopolitical occupation of space, and bodies, are intertwined.

Foucault's ecocritical notion of *biopolitics* (manipulating life to political/nefarious ends), too, helps in explaining the writers' relationships between land and humans. Bio-power involves "the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production" (*ibid.*: 145), and Joyce and Vargas Llosa depict worlds where their protagonists are potently physical, confined within the expectations of capitalist society. Molly Bloom, the archetypal peripheral character, is stationary throughout *Ulysses*, in a manner loyal to the original Penelope. In a sense, Molly, like Penelope, is subjected to the ultimate ecocritical act of biopolitical "insertion". Joyce rebels against this violence done to her, by giving her the final, furious and now-famous monologue, closing the novel.

Colombian Margarita Serje theorises the connection between the peripheries and the misleading, thorny notion of development, as follows:

> Por otro lado, la experiencia de ser parte de la periferia, y su retraso inherente, ha impregnado profundamente la conciencia moderna de quienes somos ciudadanos de un "país en desarrollo". En esa medida, las categorías metafóricas de periferia y marginalidad, de frontera y de confín, han determinado y distorsionado nuestra perspectiva. Es necesario deconstruir y desatar este punto... (Serje 2011a: 20)
> ['On the other hand, the experience of being a part of the periphery, of its inherent backwardness, has profoundly impregnated modern conscience of who we, citizens of a "developing country", are. In this measure, the metaphorical categories of periphery and marginality, of borders and limits, have determined and distorted our perspective. It is necessary to deconstruct and untie this point...']

Serje deconstructs the notion of a "developing country", questioning its terminology, suggesting that categories such as "margins" and "peripheries" are distorting and metaphorical: problematic. (Colloquially and similarly, we are euphemistically often told that the land is *improved* when it is sold to contractors or *developers*.) Although writing on modern-day Colombia, Serje's definition of (and rejection of) the margins applies to Latin America more broadly, as well as to Anglo-American settings. In fiction though, Joyce and Vargas Llosa still sit between these figurative marginal categories, showing concern for development and its fragile conceptual bounds in their literature, in a measured way. Deconstructing these "categories" of marginality, as Serje does, is a task worth undertaking and applying to modernist writers. Even apparently main characters appear peripheral in these modernist-realist works, as we have so far seen is the case for Bloom, Molly, Santiago and Ambrosio. The developed and developers are, in short, easily confused.

Within Anglo-American Modernism, "Deconstructive criticism has done greater justice to the aesthetic and political power of parody and self-parody, in *Ulysses*, than literary history ever did" (Trotter 2006c: 92).[21] Though the descaled importance of literary history regarding *Ulysses* is debatable, deconstruction allows us to better assess the modernism-realism spectrum within Vargas Llosa as well as Joyce, and the ecocritical/decolonial themes that spring from the writing. Parody becomes increasingly discernible by carrying this out. Additionally, Timothy Morton argues convincingly that 'ecological criticism must mobilise a ruthless deconstruction of Nature' (Morton 2014: 302), disencumbering us from modernity's tools and the specifically industrial and anti-natural aspects of modern life. Joyce and Vargas Llosa's modulating between modernism and realism, between the mainstream and the periphery, is rooted within geographical and therefore ecological concern, understandable by the deconstruction of "signs". The critical progression from Rama (p. 5, this article) to Serje, is deconstructionist, anti or at least post-developmental; concerned with re-evaluating the terminology of the cultural margins, and with throwing down the gauntlet to modernity, a process interacting with literary modernism. According to Huggan and Tiffin, "One of the central tasks to postcolonial ecocriticism as an emergent field has been to contest – also to provide alternatives to – western ideologies of development" (Huggan/Tiffin 2015b: 29). The question,

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according to Huggan and Tiffin, is not *why* we develop, but *how* we develop. Joyce and Vargas Llosa's modernist-realist writing fringes on this fact that the world—and 'development' unabated and Westernised—must be reconsidered, and alternatives are needed. Otherwise, development becomes merely a buzzword for colonisation of native lands, Irish and Peruvian, to the detriment of indigenous people and lands. The need to deconstruct and provide renewed and nuanced alternatives to mainstream ideologies is both and always has been literary and physical.

Conclusions

Joyce and Vargas Llosa construct irreducible winding landscapes of sand, sea, mountains and cities, with their styles located between realism and modernism, between humorous comments and serious social points, between local specificity and global appeal. Their landscapes feature peripheral nations suffering from power, simultaneously benefiting from the exciting thrust of modern technology and possibility. For both writers, this boils down to knowledge of the margins: a postcolonial and ecocritical issue. Additionally, truly Latin American concepts deployed by Vargas Llosa in a novel such as *El sueño del celta* (2010) (for example, the *vivo* versus *tonto*, *caciquismo*, and *civilización y barbarie*) may also be applied to elucidate Joyce's conception of Ireland, a place of complexity and sometimes great suffering. Such a comparison might reverse/undo the potential pitfall of merely *applying* Europe to Latin America.

Throughout this study, I have intended to show that James Joyce and Mario Vargas Llosa meet on the social, cultural, and environmental margins, ciphering the peripheries of society through their mainstream characters. Straddling realism and modernism with irreducibility, these novels refuse to be boxed in, making them appealing to scholars and readers. The novelists embrace key twentieth-century literary developments, from the Sontagian "endless allure" of the real to oscillation between modernist features. Their "totalising novels" (especially *Ulysses* and *Conversación*) testify to this, showing history's complexity, and the *in-between* where analysis of reality and non-reality occurs.

I have reduced the theoretical framework used in an original version of this analysis. As a suggestion for further research: reading Joyce and Vargas Llosa might be enriched, as Jean Franco suggests of Latin American studies generally, by applying Deleuze and Guattari's interesting geo-philosophical theories (see Franco 1999b: 229). One might analyse these authors by applying the Deleuzian/Guattarian "rhizome" (Deleuze/Guattari 1987: 25), a botanical figure showing the interconnectedness of humans, nonhumans, and the land within Joyce and Vargas Llosa contrasted to "atavistic" (in the sense of single-rooted) thought. Joyce's rhizomatic "alliance" between humans, animals and objects reveals itself, I would argue, more self-consciously than Vargas Llosa's. But both Vargas Llosa's Peru and Joyce's Ireland might, further, be described as rhizomatic in terms of Glissant's (postcolonial) use of the term. Glissant adopts the rhizome to create the idea of interconnecting, composite cultures central to postcolonial identity (see Glissant 1996a: 59). Glissant's proposed "composite" (non-atavistic) cultures would seemingly include modern-day Peru and Ireland: those heterogenous

places, where indigenous and superimposed cultures are mixed, undoing a binary alluded to in the Latin-American Sarmentian binary of *civilización y barbarie* — the civilised city versus the untamed, barbaric, interior heartland.

It is important to note that Joyce and Vargas Llosa embrace a variety of styles. While "Joyce" is practically synonymous with "Ireland", and likewise "Vargas Llosa" with "Peru" — an examination of both writers' knowledge of one another's homelands, particularly Vargas Llosa's of Ireland in *El sueño* (2010), would enrich a transitional, interdisciplinary study covering the pair. This project offers a wide remit. For that reason, this study focusses on themes rather than chronology, providing inductive close-readings while re-evaluating the critical debate. Raymond Leslie Williams justifies the intertwinement of (post)colonial and ecocritical themes within Latin American thought and society:

> Dentro del campo específico de las letras latinoamericanas, la gran mayoría de los análisis de las novelas del *Boom* y posteriores fueron realizados mucho antes del desarrollo de la ecocrítica. Aquí se proponen algunas aportaciones a este punto de vista [...] Muchos de los estudios sobre la naturaleza en Latinoamérica provienen del periodo colonial (Williams/Salas-Durazo 2014: 296) ['Inside of the specific field of Latin American letters, the vast majority of analyses of novels of the *Boom* and later were carried out much before the development of ecocriticism. Hereafter are proposed some remittances to this point of view [...] Many of the studies on nature in Latin America stem from the colonial period']

Further analysis of *Dubliners* and *Portrait*, and not just *Ulysses*, would open up further scholarship, since, as Kibodeaux notes, "individual stories have been largely ignored, at first because of a narrow view of *Dubliners*, and later because of an excessively broad treatment of the book as only a precursor to the Joyce canon" (Kibodeaux 1976: 87). Similarly, regarding *Joycismo*, Price highlights:

> comparative studies of Joycean influence in the Americas [were] defined as a radical postcolonial linguistic experiment and construed as a means of lending credibility to the experimental novels of Latin American boom writers. By focusing on the linguistic pyrotechnics, mythological structures, and narrative games that characterized Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, scholars crafted a lens through which the novels of Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, José Donoso, and Guillermo Cabrera Infante could fly by the nets of peripheral writing, so to speak, and find wider audiences in the global republic of letters. (Price 2014: 182)

Including such texts as *Dubliners* and *Portrait* (1916) would therefore more accurately clarify *Joycismo* — that transposition of Joycean poetics into Latin America. But the conclusion reached relies on the idea that Vargas Llosa in particular does not "fly by the nets of peripheral writing", as Price denotes.

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Examining "totalising" novels is still important as, to quote Glissant: "Le toujours nouveau n'est plus ce qui reste à découvrir dans les espaces blancs sur la carte; c'est bien ce qu'il faut encore fragiliser pour éparpiller vraiment la totalité, c'est-à-dire l'accomplir à la fin" (Glissant 1996b: 69) ('The always 'new' is no longer discoverable by what is left in the blank spaces on the map; it is rather in what one must still weaken to really divide the totality; that's to say to accomplish it at last'). While Glissant seemingly disagrees with the critic Homi Bhabha's more hybrid notion of the *in-between* (see Bhabha 2012: 321), through the "blank spaces on the map" Glissant illustrates the importance of "totality" in fiction and identity, implying as a result that the modernist experiment hinges on this striving for a *total* impression of modern life. This total impression ultimately builds a fuller postcolonial picture.

Doris Sommers writes of Vargas Llosa's generation, "the new novelists wanted to deny any intellectual debts at home" (Sommers 1990: 72), suggesting an *anxiety of influence* paraphrased as "intellectual debts", experienced by new novelists like Vargas Llosa during the Boom (those "parricidal tendencies" suggested by Fiddian, see p. 3, this article). Nonetheless, through Bloom, Stephen, Mrs. Bloom, and even Mr. Duffy ('A Painful Case', *Dubliners*); Santiago, Ambrosio, Amalia, Lituma, Tomás (*Lituma* novels), and Roger Casement (*El sueño del celta*), we see a compendium of hapless inhabitants of the cultural margins, tugged toward mainstream and peripheral society at once: that pull of (debilitating) modernity. These characters are peripheral *flies on the wall*: privy to, and detached from, the occurrences of modern, capitalist life. Joyce and Vargas Llosa are comparable, and that comparison occurs when they meet on the margins, circling mainstream thought, the order of the day. These margins are environmental, social, political; sometimes sexual, almost always geographical. Rather than an anxiety of influence, Joyce, it seems, had an anxiety of identity, his obsession with Ireland as "home", while writing from overseas, testifying to this. Tensions in the homeland are perhaps what draw Vargas Llosa's focus elsewhere—but his outlook remains, like Joyce's, global, as well as local.

The journal issue of this piece, "Modernismos Revisited II", stresses the important connections between European vanguards (Joyce) and the comparative legacies they have (Vargas Llosa, *inter alia*). The comparative analysis above conjures something of the ecological and social interconnectedness that both writers studied are sensitive to, helping to trace linkages and direct influence from Joyce to Vargas Llosa. Their writing remains concerned with the margins, in-between the modern and the old; irreducible, and, consequently I think, longstanding.

NOTES

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[1] For further analysis on the connection between Joyce and Borges, see Patricia Novillo-Corvalán's *Borges and Joyce: An Infinite Conversation* (2011).

[2] The present article uses decapitalised versions of the terms "modernism" and "realism" due to the nuanced implications of these words in Anglo-American/Latin American contexts. For lack of space, this article does not explore in detail the disparities between these movements, instead simply stating that the modernism (lower-case "m") of Vargas Llosa's generation in Latin America (~1960s) translates loosely to the modernist writing of Joyce's generation in the US/Europe (~1920s, 30s); both rebelled against a prior form of (realistic) storytelling. Donald Shaw's essay "When Was Modernism in Spanish-American Fiction?" (2002, see bibliography) takes this connection further.

[3] For a seven-part breakdown of Joycean poetics and their meaning and relevance within Latin American literature, see Martin 1989b: 130-133.

[4] Williams terms five of Vargas Llosa's novels as *totalising* (see Williams 2014: 121). *Totalising* novels are often associated with encyclopedism and coherentism. As Anderson writes, "for Vargas Llosa, this 'totalizing impulse' is closely linked to the representation and mediation of reality [...] [and] [i]f Vargas Llosa associates the total novel with realism in literature, Fuentes highlights the importance of myth" (Anderson 2003: 61). This reference to realism is telling; Anderson cites *Ulysses*, which as my analysis shows is part-realist, as an example of the "totalising" novel, striving for "a unified, absolute system or truth" (*ibid.*: 62). A *total* or *totalising* novel seeks to achieve this unification within a singular text. Tellingly, Sabine Schlickers acknowledges "la totalidad de la realidad" within this subgenre (Schlickers 1998: 204); Efraín Kristal further dubs *Conversación* as "total", for it has "a web of human relations that include numerous characters from a wide range of social settings and situations" (Kristal 2012: c.45). Therefore, a *totalising novel* can be realist, modernist, both or neither, but aims to depict a "unified" picture through its overall diegesis. The term is apposite for both *Ulysses* and *Conversación*.

[5] This line of enquiry is inspired by conversation with, and teaching from, Professor Philip Swanson.

[6] Fiddian aptly summates this literary phenomenon: "I propose first to investigate some of the conditions of *Joyceización*—that process whereby Joyce's legacy, represented principally by *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), has passed into the mainstream of Spanish-American writing" (Fiddian 1989c: 23).

[7] All Spanish-to-English translations in parenthesis are my own.

[8] Emphasis mine.

[9] In "Telemachus".

[10] See "Hades".

[11] One might compare this moment of Ulysses with the poem of another, earlier, influential Peruvian writer César Vallejo, notably the poem 'Trilce I' in *Trilce* (1922). Critics are undecided as to the definite subject of this poem, though suggestions have included poetry criticism, and defecation (or a tongue-in-cheek imaging of one as the other). For an account of this, see Shaw's "'Trilce I' Revisited" (1979-1980, see bibliography).

[12] Manuel Odría, Peruvian President, 1948-1956.

[13] *Narrative jumps* are summarised in Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, "designating as *prolepsis* any narrative manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later, designating as *analepsis* any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment", meanwhile,

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anachrony "designate[s] all forms of discordance between two temporal orders of story and narrative" (Gennette 1980: 40, both). Vargas Llosa's largely present-tense novel, intermittently referencing the past, favours analeptic (*flash-backward*) techniques. These are "heterodiagetic": different in content from the original narrative (*ibid.*: 50).

[14] See Ladrón 2009b: 166: "In the same decade [the 1920s], particularly significant was the reception of Joyce by a group of Galician writers who supported the Irish Literary Renaissance [...] because of its peripheral location, its nationalism and their shared Celtic origins".

[15] See "Hades".

[16] See Connor 2006: 52: "One might almost say that the move from modernism to postmodernism involves a move from poetry to fiction". Joyce's imagination arguably fringes on both.

[17] The modernist tendency for economical language is headed by the imagistes of the period, including Ezra Pound, H.D., Ford Madox Ford, and, indeed, James Joyce.

[18] In "Nestor".

[19] See *The Guardian* 14 June 2019.

[20] See Franco 2002: 51: "Although neither of them [Octavio Paz and Mario Vargas Llosa] could be described as ever having been part of the Left, both shifted from a commitment to certain broadly leftist notions of social justice to conservative positions, which in the case of Vargas Llosa became a fully-fledged defence of neoliberalism".

[21] On critical deconstruction and Joyce see O'Brien 2004: 203 and Robinson 1987: 377-378.

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