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Juan Filloy's *Caterva* and the geopolitics of the Joycean novel in Argentina

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ABSTRACT

James Joyce's *Ulysses* has had a profound impact on the Argentine literary imagination, renewing and redefining style, language, and narrative technique, as part of an expansive legacy that kicked off with Borges's early reception of *Ulysses* and translation of 'Penelope' in 1925 and gained increasing momentum throughout the twentieth century, peaking with the stylistic fireworks ignited by Cortázar's experimental novel *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*) in 1963. Yet this impact, I suggest, raises not only stylistic but also ideological questions.

In this essay, I engage with one of the most significant works of the Argentine Joycean tradition: Juan Filloy's modernist masterpiece *Caterva* (1937). In what follows, I insert *Caterva* within the long arc of Argentina's Joycean novelistic tradition in a reading that destabilises previous critical narratives from which it had been erased, while mapping out new transnational affiliations with Joyce. My claim is that Joyce's and Filloy's modernist novels intersect stylistically and ideologically through their use of rhetorical devices emulating the movement of trains and trams as quintessential symbols of modernity, but in a manner that foregrounds British imperialism as the engine powering infrastructure projects in Ireland and Argentina respectively within the intricate global networks of Empire.

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Córdoba, Argentina, 1937. *Caterva*, the first Argentine novel in the Joycean tradition by the largely unknown writer Juan Filloy (1894-2000) was published without fanfare. Despite its historic significance, it would take at least more than half a century for the novel to achieve critical recognition, a contradiction that prompted the critic Michel Nieva to dub the novel 'el eslabón perdido' ('the missing link') of Argentine literature.¹ In effect, the

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rediscovery of Filloy's modernist masterpiece has highlighted the problematic and provisional nature of literary canons and the need to revise and reconfigure them continuously, thus demanding a rethinking of the Joycean novelistic tradition in Argentina by tracing an alternative arc that situates *Caterva* as its first major exponent. This revision would imply revisiting an incomplete cultural narrative that had erased a pivotal figure such as Filloy, meaning that landmark 'Ulyssean' novels (in Gerald Martin's term)² such as *Adán Buenosayres* (1948) by Leopoldo Marechal and *Hopscotch* by Cortázar or, by the same token, the historic publication of José Salas Subirat's first complete translation of *Ulysses* into Spanish in 1945, ought to be reconsidered in the light of Filloy's underestimated legacy. Overall, the key features of this Joycean trajectory might be summed up in two contrasting impulses: the desire to offer an Argentine *résumé* of *Ulysses* (Borges) and the ambition to write the epic of the Argentine Republic based on the Irish model introduced by Joyce (Filloy, Marechal, Cortázar, Salas Subirat). Yet all these writers shared a single common trait, they aspired to do for their native Argentina and, hence, the regional variant of Spanish spoken in the River Plate area, what Joyce had done for his native Dublin and Hiberno-English. In particular, Filloy, Marechal, and Cortázar were attracted to the ground-breaking edge of *Ulysses* as they aspired to inject Argentine fiction with an equally innovative force. Borges's pioneering reception of *Ulysses* in 1925, as I show in this article, had given them an insight into Joyce's technique of interior monologue, unprecedented linguistic experimentation, exploration of the human body, and painstaking depiction of the city of Dublin.³

This article explores the nexus between Joyce and Filloy. It begins with an in-depth account of *Caterva*'s radical aesthetics and Filloy's ambiguous position within the Argentine literary establishment. It then situates the novel within the Latin American Joycean critical tradition while also revisiting Borges's historic review of *Ulysses* and fragmentary translation of 'Penelope' to trace his impact on Filloy's modernist imagination. The final section explores the linkages between *Ulysses* and *Caterva* through a postcolonial critical paradigm. From this perspective, I track the relationship between Joyce and Filloy by means of the literary-political discourses that represent the Latin American project of the 'Ulyssean' novel or *Joyceización* (in Robin Fiddian's word).⁴ This approach considers the historical contexts that united the two writers, namely, Ireland's and Argentina's fraught relations with colonial Britain, including the historical predicament of a country such as Argentina, where classic colonialism (imperial Spain) had been replaced with a new colonial order (imperial Britain) based on a non-territorial system of capitalist control of a newly independent nation-state. I therefore utilise a comparative approach based less on traditional models of influence than on historical contiguities arising out of the

entanglements of empire, modernity, and peripherality. Whether using Hiberno-English or River Plate Spanish, I argue that Joyce and Filloy cultivated a distinctive anticolonial creative expression, albeit one profoundly multilingual and pluralistic, and one that explored the tensions between the local and the global, tradition and modernity, the national and the foreign.

Caterva: politics, aesthetics, revolution

To understand *Caterva* it is important to emphasise the novel's ideology and the way it is shaped by national events, especially Argentina's first *coup d'état* of 1930 led by General Uriburu (*de facto* President 1930-32)—a military regime that sparked further socio-political unrest in a messy decade historically known as 'la década infame' (infamous decade). The *coup* installed a repressive regime of surveillance and police brutality that Filloy audaciously satirised through language and imagery associated with the wanderings of his seven vagabond protagonists, the 'caterva de aventureros' ('caterva of adventurers') that gives the novel its distinctive title.⁵ The Latinate word 'caterva', I should add, is another example of the novel's rich heteroglossia, a polysemantic word at once meaning, 'crowd, gang, mob, faction, rabble, throng, swarm, multitude, the vulgar, the hoi polloi, [and] the great unwashed', as Brendan Riley, the gifted translator of the first full-length English translation of the novel published in 2015, tells us.⁶

At the level of symbol and myth, the novel follows an Odyssean storyline which consists of the exploits of its eccentric group of seven middle-aged 'heroes'. The number seven is used symbolically and intertextually, carrying Biblical connotations alluding to the seven deadly sins and virtues, as well as loosely evoking the Sophoclean political tragedy, *The Seven Against Thebes*.⁷ The latter is playfully suggested through references to 'la patota tebana' ('the Theban gang'; *Caterva* 189) and the group's symbolic mission against the one-eyed monster of an authoritarian State and the tangled ruses they stage to reform society by attacking injustice, repression, and growing social inequality. Their travails purport a cycle of 'criminal' activities ranging from stealing a large sum of money (which they donate to their local trade union), setting up an explosive device in a freight train, hoodwinking officers of the law, and, thereafter, fleeing the policy authorities to avoid imprisonment and deportation. Their resistance is presented as part of a plan to support striking migrant workers at risk of deportation, which involves travelling to multiple destinations within Córdoba province across the British-owned railway network, as well as on foot, truck, and automobile.

The characters' predisposition to radical action as mischief-making rebels must be read within the context of the Russian Revolution of 1917, as well as

the ideological formations of the Argentine radical Left, which occurred in the late nineteenth century, when socialist ideas were introduced by large waves of European immigrants, especially Spanish and Italian, as well as exiles from the Paris Commune. This crucial period witnessed the founding of the Socialist party by the writer and politician Juan B. Justo in 1894, who also translated the first volume of Marx's *Das Capital* into Spanish (published in 1898), and the launch of the influential anarchist newspaper *La Protesta Humana* (*The Human Protest*) in 1897. Filloy himself was an early Soviet sympathiser and a regular contributor to socialist/anarchist publications, as his biographer Ariel Magnus points out.⁸ James Baer's claim that 'by the early 1920s anarchist unions were among the most influential in the country's labour movement'⁹ is particularly relevant to *Caterva's* novelistic vision, where the notion of classical heroism is satirically reconceived as revolutionary activism.

Whereas by the early 1930s—which is when Filloy conceived the idea for *Caterva*—Argentine anarchist organisations were not as populous or influential as their early twentieth-century counterparts, there were still numerous clandestine anarchist groups lurking in the background, groups which attacked governmental structures, opposed profit-seeking capitalism, and, by and large, challenged the prevailing status quo. Such were the radical activities committed by the so-called 'anarchists expropriators', or modern-day Robin Hoods. According to Argentine historian and journalist Osvaldo Bayer expropriators 'employed direct, violent means to fund their movement. They used the proceeds to bankroll the production of books, newspapers, and other forms of propaganda; to assist plans to spring their comrades from prison; and to support the families of those who remained behind bars or in early graves'.¹⁰ So, robberies, felonies, and other acts of violence were committed by expropriative anarchists in the name of social justice and solidarity to the disenfranchised. Filloy's vagabonds are imagined as parodic versions of expropriator groups, quixotic defenders of the down-trodden and, above all, fierce opponents of the 1902 Residency Law. This was a controversial piece of legislation which legalised the immediate deportation of immigrants deemed 'dangerous' by the Argentine authorities, becoming 'a new tool for controlling foreigners'.¹¹ My use of the term 'anarchism', a slippery term that 'straddles more than one ideological family',¹² refers not only to the inevitable type of rebellion and resistance practised by the expropriator groups described above, but also to its antithetical usage, meaning a pacifist community living beyond the State. Filloy's characters then, embody resistance and pacifism, as part of their complex and contradictory identities.

Known in the novel as *linyeras* (a term from the Argentine *lunfardo* dialect which in English can be variously rendered as 'hobo', 'tramp', 'bum' and 'vagabond', amongst others),¹³ *Caterva's* gang of seven integrate a multicultural collective of immigrants originally from Armenia, France,

Italy, Spain, Uruguay, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia. What, one may ask, attracted them to Argentina? Despite their wide range of experiences and nationalities, they were lured by the country's flagship immigration policy, an open-door strategy best captured by the catchy slogan 'governar es poblar' ('to govern is to populate'),¹⁴ whose chief aim was to recruit cheap foreign labour for an expanding agrarian economy. Yet the men failed to realise the elusive 'Argentina dream', forming instead an outsider community of *linyeras* living precariously on the fringes of society. In particular, Filloy's social critique is expressed through the figure of Abd-ul-Katan ben Hixem, (aka 'Katanga'), the novel's central character, Ulysean wanderer, and leader of the group who, like Leopold Bloom, is an outsider figure in Argentina. A non-practising Muslim by heritage born in Armenia—his father was killed in the Armenian genocide during the First World War—Katanga fled political persecution in the early 1920s. In this way, Filloy offers a portrait of the artist as a mature, modern Ulysses, a weary, yet sensuous, man of experience and a pacifist, truly sympathetic to the plight of the poor and Argentina's immigrants at risk of imprisonment and deportation.¹⁵

Whereas Filloy's usage of the word *linyera* implicitly emphasises the orality and immediacy of the River Plate vernacular, the word also denotes a wider semantic field, revealing further patterns of comparison whereby the meaning of *linyera* is associated in the novel with ancient Greek philosophy, a link that reinforces the novel's tight construction of plot, symbol, and character. In this case, a linkage is suggested with Cynicism and its association with dispossession, shamelessness, and discourses of poverty. Like the ancient Cynics, the *linyeras* are philosophers of sorts who practise the art of self-impoverishment and resemble their Greek ancestors by their 'unrefined manners, lack of shame, perplexing behaviour [...] pursuit of freedom and life free of attachments'.¹⁶ Josefina Ludmer inserts Filloy's characters within a rich tradition of *pícaros*, criminals, and beggars in Argentine literature who articulate a 'society of hobos' intended to subvert the economy of work and society.¹⁷ The novel, then, synthesises these rich associations through a multiplicity of symbolic levels where past and present, the ancient and the modern, the local and the global converge and coalesce, a paradigm reminiscent of Joyce's intertextual framework of correspondences. Therefore, in a grand epic gesture, the characters' identities (individual and collective) are determined by this expanding web of signification intricately weaving its way through the novel, in a manner that adds further nuances to the manifold meanings they embody: a multitudinous *caterva*, a community of Cynics-cum-*linyeras*, and a bunch of troublesome anarchists.

This Argentine odyssey, Brendan Riley writes, takes the group through 'a wide variety of locales both rural and urban—towns, farms, gas stations, boarding houses, brothels, general stores, cemeteries, train stations, dams

and lakes—in, around, and between Filloy's native Córdoba and Río Cuarto'.¹⁸ Here, on one level, we can recognise, naturally, *Caterva's* structural parallels with *Ulysses* and, by extension, Homer's *Odyssey*, especially the paradigmatic visits to the cemetery and brothel in the chapters entitled 'Embalse' ('Hades') and 'Río Tercero' ('Circe') respectively. But, on another level, we cannot ignore the rural dimension of *Caterva*, which to a large extent exemplifies what, historically, James R. Scobie has defined as Argentina's 'Revolution on the Pampas'. For Scobie, rurality within an Argentine context signifies modernisation, industrialisation, and the development of the railways in the grasslands' frontier: the pampas, the wheat and livestock zones at the heart of an export-led economy.¹⁹ Consequently, the novel traces not just the characters' urban experiences in and around Argentina's Córdoba, but also their epic or quixotic deeds through a hinterland penetrated by railroads, viaducts, windmills, and farms, and populated by large numbers of low-paid immigrants employed in the railway and agriculture sectors of the economy. Set in the early 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression, as well as shortly after the 'Roca-Runciman' Anglo-Argentine commercial treaty of 1933 that granted large concessions to Britain over the export of Argentine beef and wheat, *Caterva* holds up a satirical mirror to the deep economic and socio-political crisis of the 1930s.

'What ever happened to Filloy?' (Cortázar)

Born in 1894 in Córdoba, Argentina, to impoverished and barely literate French and Galician immigrants who settled in the Argentine Republic in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Filloy's marginal position within Argentina's literary establishment may be ascribed to the intersections of class, geography, and cultural inequality. This stems from his working-class immigrant background—of which he was immensely proud: 'Yo he sido criado atrás de un mostrador de un boliche' ('I was raised behind a grocery store's counter'), claiming his upbringing, gave him 'calle' ('street-wise')²⁰—together with his decision to reside in Río Cuarto (a small city in Córdoba Province, Central Argentina), rather than relocate to mighty Buenos Aires, the cultural and political capital of Argentina, as was the norm with writers from the interior of the country.²¹ Thus, in a Bourdesian sense, Argentina's centralised governmental system revolving around a national capital city associated with cultural, political, and economic power, meant that the rest of the provinces were regarded as peripheral backwaters, even if the illustrious city of Córdoba was upheld as a highly respected centre of learning, boasting one of Latin America's oldest universities, the National University of Córdoba (founded in 1613) while, more recently, the city had become the hotbed of the influential University Reform Movement of 1918, the first of a series of revolutionary events that

would be followed, five decades later, by the 1969 civil uprising known as the ‘Cordobazo’.²²

At the same time, Filloy’s eccentric tendency to privately publish most of his works in self-funded editions with limited circulation further exacerbated these cultural inequalities, with the caveat that Filloy, a qualified lawyer and, later, an exemplary judge, had the financial independence to distance himself from the literary establishment by self-consciously carving himself a position as an outsider. Indeed, despite belonging to the literary generation of Jorge Luis Borges, who was born just five years after Filloy, and the so-called ‘Grupo Sur’ (Sur Group)—the influential circle of writers who gravitated around the influential literary magazine *Sur* founded by the Argentine writer, editor, and feminist Victoria Ocampo in 1931—Filloy’s name does not feature amongst the frequent contributors to the iconic modernist magazine, nor did its prestigious press, Editorial Sur, publish any of the dozens of works he wrote during an exceptionally long and productive life.²³ But this is not because the Sur Group deliberately boycotted him, as there is no evidence to suggest this form of discrimination. Rather, his distancing owes more to his official position as lawyer/judge and, equally significant, widespread cultural censorship in the 1930s, which is when he published his major works. Indeed, Filloy admitted that the private editions, which had restricted circulation and were, by and large, read by a small group of friends came extremely handy, helping him avoid censorship during a fierce period of cultural repression targeted at the Argentine intellectual Left.²⁴ In short, *Caterva*, a novel about a community of bums living beyond social norms and against the centralised State, would unquestionably have fallen prey to the censors.

Still, one of Argentina’s most important writers, Julio Cortázar, whose experimental *Hopscotch* is deeply indebted to *Caterva*, was the one who recognised Filloy’s genius early on.²⁵ In *Hopscotch*, Cortázar’s solipsistic hero Horacio Oliveira nostalgically evokes *Caterva* in his Parisian exile by imagining a cultural reciprocity between the Argentine *linyera* and the Parisian *clochard*, playfully emphasising their connection through their nominal versatility:

—La cloche, le clochard, la clocharde, clocharder. Pero si hasta han presentado una tesis en la Sorbona sobre la psicología de los clochards.

—Puede ser —dijo Oliveira—. Pero no tienen ningún Juan Filloy que les escriba *Caterva*. ¿Qué será de Filloy, che?

La cloche, le clochard, la clocharde, clocharder. There’s even a thesis that was presented at the Sorbonne on the subject of the psychology of the clochard.

Could be, Oliveira said. But they don’t have any Juan Filloy to write *Caterva* for them. What ever happened to Filloy?²⁶

Following on from Cortázar's potent endorsement, the recovery of *Caterva* and its crucial reinsertion in the Argentine literary archive has enabled the reintroduction of one of Argentina's greatest 'Ulyssean' novels to a new generation of readers, both within and beyond Latin America. The novel's transnational circulation, especially now that it has been translated into English by the Dalkey Archive Press, is expressive of what Andreas Huyssen redefines as 'modernisms at large'—borrowing Arjun Appadurai's concept of 'modernity at large'—within a geographically expansive Joycean paradigm reimagined from a Latin American positionality.²⁷ Reading transnationally means actively expanding modernism geographically by exploring alternative modernities shaped by the exigencies of empire; it means mapping out what Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel call a 'locational approach' through which 'unsuspected' modernist experiments such as *Caterva*, might open up 'unsuspected' crisscrossings with *Ulysses*' modernist style and its colonial contexts.²⁸ Above all, it means activating a comparatist practice based on transnational encounters that can disrupt Anglocentric modernist paradigms not only by delineating new aesthetic and cultural linkages such as the nexus between *Caterva* and *Ulysses*, but also by provisionally destabilising the latter's canonicity. By situating *Ulysses* alongside a little known—albeit increasingly important—Argentine modernist novel, both works are reread anew, giving way to new literary imaginaries, affiliations, and histories, as well as positioning Hiberno-Argentine relations at the forefront of 'new' modernist studies in the global South.

This transnational and translational phenomenon gives rise to what Brian L. Price, César A. Salgado, and John Pedro Schwartz eloquently define as a 'TransLatin Joyce',²⁹ a versatile category that not only playfully captures Joyce's trademark polysemy and interpretative inexhaustibility, but also redefines Joyce's variegated reception, transmission, and circulation in Iberia and Latin America. For Price et al, a TransLatin Joyce is 'never conclusively translated: it never achieves the fixity of the past participle but stays suspended [...] operating perpetually in the progressive tense'.³⁰ Consequently, the semantically capacious properties of the term are turned into a metaphor and a conceptual orientation to resignify the transnational flow of Joyce's modernist aesthetics. This transnational flow also includes the first French translation of *Ulysses* by August Morel, Valéry Larbaud et al, which played a significant role in the Argentine literary scene.³¹ Filloy, who spoke French fluently, was able to get hold of a copy in the early 1930s.³²

The potential of transnational comparison within Joyce studies might be further enriched by Jessica Berman's notion of transnationalism, which is understood as a 'potentially disruptive, destabilizing, and transgressive as well as grounded in comparison'.³³ Berman situates Joyce's works within a 'continuum of political engagement', showing how Joyce's stylistic experimentation and political commitment intersects with the ethically engaged

writings of Indian author Mulk Raj Anand.³⁴ She argues that Joyce's anticolonial language served as an ethically and aesthetically relevant model that resonated with the specific socio-political contexts of Anand. Therefore, my understanding of Hiberno-Argentine relations is based less on static unidirectional models of influence than on 'a global range of relationships, practices, problematics, and cultural engagements with modernity'.³⁵ Berman's geographically situated approach can be applied to a writer such as Filloy, particularly in relation to the political realities of post-independence Argentina and what Marxist historians regard as its complicated neocolonial status as an 'honorary dominion' of the British Empire.³⁶

The political labyrinth

Prior to my discussion of *Caterva*, I believe it is important to return to early critical studies such as Gerald Martin's highly influential *Journeys Through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (1989) in order to track Joyce's critical reception in Latin America. Martin's book set out to define the phenomenal rise of the new Latin American novel with reference to a specifically 'Ulyssean' or Joycean moment, a period during which Latin America underwent a decisive socio-political transformation 'with the rise of workers' movements worldwide, the increased mobility of the easily alienated intellectual strata, [and] the beginnings of decolonization'.³⁷ This new political consciousness is associated with the continent-wide Córdoba University Reform Movement, as well as the socialist and anti-imperialist revolutions of Mexico (1910-17) and Cuba (1959) respectively. By means of the mythic trope of the labyrinth, a historically and politically informed category that reflects the forking paths of race, nation, class and gender, and is situated across a continuum of culture and space, Martin traces an intricate pattern thorough revolution (Bolívar), metaphysics (Borges), solitude (García Márquez), or existentialism (Paz), to name just the most significant.³⁸ The link Martin draws between the literary-historical Latin American labyrinth and the Joycean-Daedalian labyrinth is underpinned by a colonial heritage that exposes the conditions of peripherality, economic inequality, and historical marginality embedded in Ireland's and Latin America's vexed geopolitical relations with hegemonic powers and the energising promise of revolutionary renewal.

Joyce's work, the quintessential literary labyrinth, epitomises this spiralling historical moment, which might be explained through at least two main interrelated factors. First, it can be understood by decolonial projects expressive of a historical crisis most prominently captured by Stephen Dedalus' 'nightmare of history' (*U* 2.377), a crisis that preoccupied writers from cultural 'peripheries' such as Argentina in an attempt to displace and decentre imperial historiographies. Second, it can be understood through a

use of language that is representative of a uniquely revolutionary phenomenon which conveys what Eugene Jolas famously described in his *transition* manifesto as ‘The Revolution of the Word’.³⁹ Taking its title from Jolas, Colin McCabe’s *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (1978) is one of the earliest critical studies to articulate a political reading of Joyce’s work that combines Marxist and structuralist perspectives, inaugurating a critical discourse that conceives Joyce’s works as a two-way process between ‘the politics of reading and the reading of politics’ enacted by the constant displacement of language.⁴⁰ By exploring the subversive potential of Joyce’s modernist practice, McCabe’s study, as Christopher Norris attests, reverses the Marxist assumption that ‘social realism is the only respectable form of committed or progressive writing [showing] that revolutionary writing is that which unsettles, dissolves or fractures the comforting sense of a one-to-one relation between language and the word’.⁴¹ Since the publication of McCabe’s study over four decades ago, the convergence between modernism and politics through the treatment of style has gained increasing attention from critics, having to a large extent been expanded and diversified by the global turn in modernist studies and the necessity to examine how a specific writer’s literary style responds to the pressures of empire and the experience of modernity. Rebecca Walkowitz, for example, highlights the need to explore how ‘developments in modernist literary style coincide with new ways of thinking about political critique’, particularly works that invoke a ‘posture of worldliness’, a paradigm that is defined as the ability of specific writers to imagine modernist narratives that ‘conceive of the center from the perspective of the margins’.⁴²

Within Latin America, political readings of Joyce gained meaningful momentum in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution and the publication of Julio Cortázar’s landmark *Rayuela*, described by Beatriz Sarlo as ‘the paradigm for a revolution in literature’.⁴³ When in the year 1968 a symposium was held in post-revolutionary Cuba to assess *Hopscotch*’s far-reaching impact on the Latin American landscape, Cortázar’s novel emerged as a direct response to the ideological and linguistic paradigm overwhelmingly identified with Joyce’s revolution of language. By means of a type of reading based less on questions of influence than on overlapping affinities, historical contiguities, and political engagement, both novels were reimagined as potent aesthetic tools to capture political struggle. In a roundtable discussion, Cuban writers Ana María Simo, José Lezama Lima, and Roberto Fernández Retamar recognised the writer’s task of engaging with the Spanish language radically and experimentally, just as Joyce had previously done with the English language. It was a creative task that privileged non-linear models of reading, experiments in the representation of time, space, and subjectivity, as well as multilingual encyclopaedic projects that emerged as complex responses to the changes brought about by

decolonisation, new political values, and cultural identity.⁴⁴ At the same time, Simo, Lezama Lima, and Fernández Retamar concurred that reading *Hopscotch* as a new horizon for the Latin American novel must simultaneously take into account its experimental origins, which meant reassessing foundational Joycean works such as Marechal's urban epic *Adán Buenosayres* (1948), hailed by Carlos Gamerro as the quintessential '*Ulises porteño*',⁴⁵ and widely considered to be the first novel in the Spanish language deeply indebted to *Ulysses*, and yet a work that was preceded by Filloy's *Caterva* by more than a decade.⁴⁶ Marechal took to further lengths the Joycean formula via a vernacularising process that engaged with *Ulysses* in a highly idiosyncratic manner by inflecting and, ultimately, enriching this material through his own linguistic, cultural, and historical circumstances. But the rhetorical investment in new stylistic and linguistic possibilities aimed at renewing the Argentine literary landscape, is as relevant to Filloy as it would later be to Cortázar and Marechal. The Argentine *Ulysses*, like Joyce's ambivalent relationship with the imperial language —'The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine'⁴⁷—was to be written in Spanish (the language of the coloniser), but in the locally and culturally differentiated River Plate dialect. Spanish is 'now also *our* language', observes Fernández Retamar, with reference to the Latin American regional variants.⁴⁸ A linguistic project that Vicky Unruh later described as the 'vernacular turn' in early twentieth-century Latin American literature with the emphasis falling squarely on language, orality, and unofficial dialects.⁴⁹

River Plate Joyce: from Borges to Filloy

In this context, the revolutionary potential of the Joycean novel had its roots firmly planted in Argentina's avant-garde generation of the late teens and early 1920s. This cultural project emerged in the wake of the Centennial celebrations of independence from Spanish rule (held in 1910), a national imaginary which triggered intense intellectual debates concerning tradition and modernity. During this intensely creative period, the Argentine Republic was grappling with the pressures of modernity, mass immigration (between 1870 and 1914 almost 6 million immigrants arrived in Argentina),⁵⁰ and an export agricultural economy dominated by the British Empire.⁵¹ The avant-gardists straddled the vernacular spirit of cultural nationalism (*criollismo*; a cultural movement concerned with national identity) and the cosmopolitanism of European modernism, as manifested in leading literary magazines such as *Proa* (*Prow*; 1922-23; 1924-26) and *Martín Fierro* (1924-27). This tension—though one must point out that these magazines saw no contradiction in espousing a range of positions, on the one hand championing international modernism and, on the other, embracing the *criollista* position associated with the cultural

nationalism of the *Centenario*—is most overtly captured in the name of *Martín Fierro*. Extracted from José Hernández's late-nineteenth century poem *El Gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872), the name of the journal at once connected past and future by providing a powerful symbol of a bucolic, antimodern Argentina, condensed in the figure of the legendary gaucho and the modern futurities and technologies imagined by the avant-garde. The *Martínfierristas* (whose principal contributors included Borges, Marechal, Evar Méndez, Oliverio Gironde, Norah Lange, and Xul Solar, amongst others) advocated the anachronistic *criollo* tradition, together with an almost obsessive search for an authentic Argentine idiom. For Sarlo, the *Martínfierrista* discourse was highly 'heterogeneous', generating 'unresolvable contradictions': 'On the one hand, there was the national subject, the gaucho *Martín Fierro*, on the other, the European and cosmopolitan tenets of aesthetic renovation'.⁵² Against her reading of *Martín Fierro*, however, Sarlo singles out Borges. Only Borges, she argues, successfully overcame these critical tensions 'by producing a body of work that might be defined as "avant-garde urban *criollismo*".⁵³ The key point here is that the youthful Borges simultaneously operated as a theorist of the Ultraist movement (launched in Madrid in 1918) and as a cultural ideologue intensely preoccupied with questions of language, tradition, and *criollismo*. He emerged as one of Argentina's most influential intellectuals, wholeheartedly supporting the *criollista* vernacular turn, yet without falling into the monologic trap of parochialism or xenophobia:

A los Criollos les quiero hablar: a los hombres que en esta tierra se sienten vivir y morir, no a los que creen que el sol y la luna están en Europa.⁵⁴

It's to criollos I wish to speak, men who feel that it is in this land where they live and die, not to those who believe the sun and moon are in Europe.⁵⁵

And yet Borges would put forward a more nuanced renegotiation of the local and the global two decades later in his seminal lecture 'El escritor argentino y la tradición' ('The Argentine Writer and Tradition'; 1951). A mature Borges, now recoiling from the nationalist excesses of his youthful self, urged Argentine (and Latin American) writers to take full advantage of their unassailable 'right' ('derecho') to the Western archive, a 'right', he suggested, 'mayor que el que pueden tener los habitantes de una u otra nación occidental' ('greater than that which the inhabitants of one Western nation or another may have').⁵⁶ For Borges, the Irish (and the Jewish) are a case in point. By virtue of being 'different' and acting within a culture to which they feel no form of devotion, they were able to innovate within a culture that was not theirs. At the same time, one must bear in mind that Borges's anticolonial reading of Irish literature was first published in his 1925 review of *Ulysses*. Introducing Joyce as the ultimate Irish 'rebel', he equates *Ulysses*' stylistic audacities with the Irish literary tradition:

James Joyce es irlandés. Siempre los irlandeses fueron agitadores famosos de la literatura de Inglaterra. Menos sensibles al decoro verbal que sus aborrecidos señores [...].⁵⁷

James Joyce is Irish. The Irish have always been famous for being the iconoclasts of the British isles. Less sensitive to verbal decorum than their detested lords [...].⁵⁸

By foregrounding Joyce's subversive status as an Irish writer, Borges developed a cultural strategy that suited his own peripheral position as an Argentine, while construing both countries as alternate spaces defined by a form of marginality that greatly fomented, rather than hindered, literary innovation. This is how, effectively, Borges resignified *Ulysses* within the context of his *criollo*-avant-garde aesthetics and *Rioplatense* Spanish, a recreative translation which, as we shall see, became central to the Argentine Joycean imaginary later redefined by Filloy.

Thus, let us briefly consider Borges's vernacularisation of Joyce. Writing a review-essay of *Ulysses* and translating the last two pages of 'Penelope' into River Plate Spanish for the January 1925 issue of the avant-garde magazine *Proa* gave Borges the ideal opportunity to apply the principal tenets of his *criollista* ideology onto Joyce's revolutionary novel. By rethinking *Ulysses* as an Argentine text, Borges prioritised a creative strategy that foregrounded the notion of cultural contact, particularly by means of the decontextualising practice enabled by the little magazine that gave him the freedom to shift Joyce's novel into a new context, language, and textual medium. As a corroboration of his linguistic conviction to legitimise a primarily oral vernacular, Borges opted for the use of the Argentine *voseo* (the non-standard second-person singular pronoun used in the River Plate region) instead of the peninsular *tuteo*, challenging conventional translation practices that normally utilised the standard *tú* form. It is as if Borges wanted Molly Bloom, whose birthplace was Gibraltar and who is believed to have been fluent in Spanish as a young girl—she was the daughter of the lavishly named Lunita Laredo of Spanish and Jewish ancestry—to speak Spanish with what would be immediately perceived as a 'thick' Argentine accent. Just as Joyce inserted Molly Bloom's contradictory identity within colonial Ireland and the disputed territory of Gibraltar (officially known as a British crown colony), so Borges complemented and complicated Joyce's project by incorporating into the translation the politically charged context of his native Argentina.⁵⁹ Accordingly, by using *vos* instead of *tú*, he aimed to capture capture the richness and complexity of Molly's voice, adding a new linguistic layer to her celebrated polyvalence:

The sun shines for you he said (*U* 18. 1571-2).

Para *vos* brilla el sol me dijo (my emphasis).⁶⁰

Borges's use of the local River Plate dialect to Argentinise Molly Bloom becomes both an aesthetic and a political act. By means of an anticolonial programme, albeit one that does not simplistically endorse telluric myths or nationalist rhetoric, River Plate colloquialisms are used as inherently provocative metaphors, especially the idiosyncratic *voseo*, which ought to be read as an assault to the standardised Spanish dictated by the Real Academia Española in an endeavour to legitimise Argentine Spanish. By conflating the River Plate vernacular with Joyce's experimentalism, Borges is suggesting that the regionally inflected *idioma de los argentinos* (to borrow the title of his 1928 book of essays) is better suited to convey Joyce's Hiberno-English modernist aesthetics.

As we shift to *Caterva*, one can affirm that Filloy, like the early Borges, understood political consciousness as a defining feature of the Joycean novel, as he humorously inscribes within the opening pages of the novel the then controversial issue of British economic and cultural infiltration in the River Plate region. This anticolonial spirit was overwhelmingly associated with infrastructure projects such as the British-controlled railway system, a form of resistance that in the 1930s was captured in a satirical print cartoon known as 'el pulpo inglés' ('English octopus'), a popular illustration 'depicting a greedy consortium of British railways, centred on Buenos Aires with tentacles spreading across the country, in control of natural resources and national assets, tenaciously constricting and suffocating Argentinian development'.⁶¹ As Filloy's vagabonds peruse a copy of the daily newspaper in Chapter 1 of the novel, they focus on a piece of news announcing Edward VIII's ascension to the throne on 20 January 1936. Utilising demotic language rich in Argentine slang, the irreverent group poke fun at the pretentious peerage titles that are bestowed to members of the British nobility. Thus, one of the *linyeras* reads to the amused group a pompous catalogue of the new monarch's official titles:

- ... el nuevo monarca se llamará Eduardo VIII, Rex, Imperator. Como príncipe tuvo los siguientes nombres: Eduardo, Alberto, Cristián, Jorge, Andrés ...
- ¡Eh, bárbaro!
- ... Patricio, David; Príncipe de Gales, Conde de Cambridge, Conde de Garrick, Conde de Chester ...
- ¡Buen queso!
- ... Duque de Cornwall, Duque de Lancaster, Duque de Rothesay, Duque de Cornouaille ...
- ¡Qué carnaval!
- ... Baron de Renfrew ...

– ¿Varón? Está por verse. Si es como el her ...

Lord de las Islas Británicas, Gran Mayordomo de Windsor ...

¿De que estancia dijiste, che? (*Caterva* 16).

... the new king will be named Edward VIII, Rex, Imperator. As prince, he had the following names: Edward, Albert, Christian, George, Andrew ...

Hogwash!

... Patrick, David; Prince of Wales, Count of Cambridge, Count of Garrick, Count of Chester ...

What a big cheese

... Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Lancaster, Duke of Rothesay, Duke of Cornouaille ...

What a circus!

Baron of Renfrew ...

Baron? Un varon? 'A man, a warrior ...?' We'll see about that. If he's anything like his big brother ...

High Steward of Windsor, Lord of the British Isles ...

Which cattle ranch was that, che ...⁶²

Here, Filloy juxtaposes the formal register of the press with the witty and vociferous retorts of the group, as the pompous language of the British landed gentry clashes with the vulgar language of the landless vagabonds. In this way, the catalogue of feudal titles becomes, *mutatis mutandis*, a comic indictment of aristocratic privilege told in the local *criollo* dialect. Notice, for example, how the honorific title 'baron' is transformed into 'varón' ('man'), which is immediately associated with the traditional Argentine *estancia* (cattle ranch), setting the tone for the usage of the quintessential Argentine lexical expression: the locution 'che', which, in this case, functions not only as an informal vocative used by one of the men to capture the group's attention, but as a symbol of anticolonial resistance. The passage acquires further political ramifications when considering that King Edward VIII abdicated eleven days later to marry twice-divorced American Wallis Simpson, a dramatic decision that triggered a constitutional crisis in Britain and its Commonwealth Dominions, particularly in the Irish Free State.⁶³ Within Argentina, the abdication crisis provided further fuel to incite the historical revisionism of the 1930s, whose dominant ideology was Marxist and its leading exponent the Argentine writer Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz. The revisionists, according to Falcoff, 'depicted Argentina as a sort of gigantic *estancia* whose agricultural and stock-raising capacities were

being mercilessly exploited by Great Britain through a pliant Argentine élite'.⁶⁴ By highlighting the links between empire, elitism, and aristocratic hegemony, Filloy playfully signals modernity's impact on the world's margins through stylistic devices such as the bombastic catalogue and the use of River Plate Spanish. This rhetorical strategy reinforces a linguistic continuity with Borges's Argentinisation of Molly Bloom and the cultural programme of *criollo*-avant-garde aesthetics.

Railway politics: *Ulysses* and *Caterva*

Empire, as Filloy suggested above, has political implications in the capitalist world-system. On a macroscale, Britannia depended on large infrastructure projects to 'rule the waves': seaports, canals, shipping networks, as well as their crucial connections with the railways, were part of an intricate system of land and oceanic commercial networks: from the nearby Dublin Port on the Irish Sea to the geographically distant Port of Buenos Aires on the Río de la Plata in the South Atlantic. More specifically, British railway investment in Dublin ('the "second city" of the British Empire', as Joyce once said)⁶⁵ and Argentina (an economic dominion of the British Empire) was designed to significantly pump up the economic system which, in the case of the Argentine Republic, enabled the efficient transportation of raw materials and primary goods from the colonial 'periphery' to the metropolitan 'centre'. The centre being, of course, London, the imperial capital, from which the economic affairs of peripheries such as Dublin and Buenos Aires were ruthlessly masterminded. In their respective endeavours to represent the politics of space, Joyce and Filloy relied extensively on maps, charts, and surveys to represent the geographies of Dublin and the Argentine pampas, a cartographical impulse which, in turn, can be examined in conjunction with their responses to colonial Britain's infrastructure projects, such as the construction of trams and railways in Ireland and Argentina.

In their topographical guide to the Dublin of *Ulysses*, critics Ian Gunn and Clive Hart give more credit to the statistical almanac published by the Scottish journalist Alexander Thom, entitled *Thom's Dublin Street Directory* (1904 version), as the blueprint for *Ulysses*, than to the elaborate structure of Homeric correspondences promoted by Joyce's early critic, Stuart Gilbert.⁶⁶ Commenting on Joyce's writing of the 'Wandering Rocks' episode, which he allegedly did with a map of Dublin firmly in hand, Frank Budgen similarly remarks upon the totalising ambition of *Ulysses*, a novel which aspires to contain, 'Dublin itself. Its houses, streets, spaces, tramways and waterways', hence privileging Joyce's physical, as opposed to mythical, method of composition.⁶⁷ Consider, for example, the interpenetration of urbanisation and imperial hegemony in the opening lines of the 'Aeolus' episode. The busy tramway operating in 'THE HEART OF THE

HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS' (U 7.1-2) gravitates around, and originates from, Lord Nelson's monument (erected in 1808-9; destroyed 1966), a mechanical motion that bolts together Dublin's transportation system and operates as a thinly disguised instrument of British domination:

Before Nelson's pillar trams slowed, shunted, changed trolley, started for Blackrock, Kingstown and Dalkey, Clonskea, Rathgar and Terenure, Palmerston Park and upper Rathmines, Sandymount Green, Rathmines, Ringsend and Sandymount Tower, Harold's Cross (U 7.1-4).

In *Caterva*, correspondingly, the train network of the pampean region is used as the novel's main structural framework. Station names are adopted as chapter titles, shaping the wanderings of the gang, as they hop on and off British-owned cargo trains carrying cattle and foodstuffs such as wheat and maize destined for Buenos Aires (Argentina's commercial artery), which are subsequently transported to the capital's port system and thereafter shipped to Europe as part of a global capitalist economy. The way the narratives in both novels adopt a specific style that reflects speed, urban technology, and the movement of the train, what Andrew Thacker calls 'a movement through modernity', is particularly noticeable in the use of rhetorical figures such as chiasmus and parallelism, which are based on repetitions, syntactical reversals, and, in the case of chiasmus, X-shaped crisscrossings.⁶⁸ 'Linguistic chiasmus', Thacker writes, 'is prompted by the material spaces of transport [particularly] the movement of trams and trains'.⁶⁹

This is nowhere more evident than in 'Wandering Rocks', an episode described by Clive Hart as essentially 'chiastic',⁷⁰ composed of eighteen vignettes which revolve around the characters' movements through the cityscape of Dublin. Chiasmus is illustrated by Father Conmee's spur-of-the-moment decision, as he strolls through Gardiner Street towards the North Strand Road, to hop on a passing tram to avoid getting muddy shoes, which exemplifies what Enda Duffy calls the interrelation between 'the space of geopolitics' and 'the space of cities',⁷¹ as Joyce's painstakingly detailed representation of Dublin's physical reality intersects with the political economy of the late-colonial capital:

On Newcomen bridge the very reverend John Conmee S. J. of saint Francis Xavier's church, upper Gardiner street, stepped on to an outward bound tram.

Off an inward bound tram stepped the reverend Nicholas Dudley C. C. of saint Agatha's church, north William street, on to Newcomen bridge.

At Newcomen bridge Father Conmee stepped into an outward bound tram for he disliked to traverse on foot the dingy way past Mud Island' (U 10. 107-114).

Note, for example, how priest and machine, culture and technology, tradition and modernity crisscross in an X-shaped structure, which are variously presented in the novel as a spatial strategy, rhetorical game, and symmetrical formation. Furthermore, the episode exhibits the technique of simultaneity through the crisscrossing pathways of inward and outward-bound trams on Newcomen bridge, as they are simultaneously boarded by Father Conmee (outward) and the reverend Nicholas Dudley (inward):

The movement of the railway reappears in the catechism of 'Ithaca', as Bloom gazes at a cluster of stars in the night sky that resembles a moving train, whose sinuous, interlaced tracks in celestial space stretch up to infinity, an X-shaped pattern that is suggested, once again, through the use of chiasmus:

Retreating, at the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, Amiens street, with constant uniform acceleration, along parallel lines meeting at infinity, if produced: along parallel lines, reproduced from infinity, with constant uniform retardation, at the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, Amiens street, returning (U 17. 2085-9).

And yet even in the vastness of interstellar space the railways are powered by the huffing and puffing of imperial Britain's economic engine, whose tracks are projected onto the textual space of the cosmos. At the same time, Laura Winkiel pertinently notes that 'the Great Northern Railway of Ireland was designed in imitation of its British counterpart [and] Ireland's semi-peripheral position in the world-system is vastly different from that of the British metropolitan center',⁷² showing how imperial transportation designs impacted the life of colonial possessions in Ireland and around the world.

Within Argentina, which boasted the largest train network in Latin America, the engine of British economic imperialism was also heavily dependent on the railways, which the liberal ruling elite regarded 'as harbingers of civilization and as both instruments and symbols of progress'.⁷³ In *Caterva*, the incessant movement of the railways can be similarly associated with the spatial and rhetorical features of the text and the Odyssean wanderings of the protagonists. Take, for instance, the opening lines of the novel, which takes place under a railway bridge:

Estaban juntos bajo el puente. No se habían reunido como los cantos rodados: porque sí, rodando ... Sino en virtud de una corriente secreta. Una corriente espiritual que los empujó a ese cauce, desde diversos confines. Aparentemente, porque sí, rodando ... (*Caterva* 15).

They were together under the bridge. Not compacted like rows of rocks: randomly, rolling ... but rather by virtue of a secret current. A spiritual current that propelled them to that riverbed, from different places. Most likely, randomly, rolling ... (my translation).⁷⁴

In true epic style, the novel begins *in medias res*, opening, as it were, in the thick of the action. Just as *Ulysses* opens atop the Martello Tower by the Irish Sea, so *Caterva* opens with a riverine scene on the shores of the Cuarto River of Córdoba. The paragraph offers a bird's-eye view of the seven vagabonds sleeping rough under the railway bridge, a contradictory space that at once fuses modernity's 'progress' (technology, urbanisation, Europeanisation), and failure (poverty, homelessness, peripherality). Using alliteration, Filloy blends his characters with the movement of the train, emphasised by the gerund form of the verb *rodar* (roll), the suffix *rodando* denotes continuous motion, further accentuated by the structure of the opening and closing sentences, as the three dots of the ellipses suggest the to-ing and fro-ing of men and machine. Moreover, the idea of mobility is effectively captured by locally inflected geological metaphors. The phrase 'cantos rodados' (literally 'rolling stones' or, intertextually, one may also suggest, 'Wandering Rocks') denotes loose pebbles that settle in the riverbeds and that signify the name of a type of natural rock formation specific to the mountainous region of Central Argentina. Therefore, by using a symmetrical structure that imagines the characters' identities in relation both to the modern city and the geological sediments from the river (even if the text ambivalently affirms and negates the characters' link with the pebbles), Filloy inserts them as displaced subjects located between the rural and the urban, between past and future, and between the global and the local. On the one hand, they are driven by the velocity of modernity, and, on the other, they are aimlessly drifting *linyeras*, migrants, rolling stones, and literary heirs of Odysseus/Bloom through the flowing river of history: from Homer's '*Epi oinopa ponton*' to Joyce's 'snotgreen sea' (*U* 1.8) and Filloy's emergent Pampean riverscape. The Cuarto River offers its hospitable muddy banks as a zone of refuge, symbolising the 'spiritual' and 'secret' currents that bind the heroes together as a collective or 'Homo septuplex' (*Caterva* 187). Both currents represent the group's visionary politics and what Marta Sierra describes as 'their desire to create a parallel society in the Argentine sphere', one that spurs social and economic change.⁷⁵

At the same time, *Caterva*'s political message must be read within the effervescent intellectual context of the 1918 University Reform Movement and its virulent attack on an antiquated educational system undergirded, as Richard Walter notes, by nepotism, religious orthodoxy, and upper-class privilege, amongst many other things.⁷⁶ The 'new generation' of University youth to which Filloy indisputably belonged was inspired by the anti-oligarchic spirit of the Mexican and Russian Revolutions, as well as the formation of trade union organisations and the emergence of the political Left in Argentina at the turn of the century, as noted earlier. The double whammy of political oppression and economic crisis of the 1930s was, indeed, a far cry from the reformist spirit of the late teens and Argentina's

so-called 'golden years' of unprecedented economic growth. Consequently, the action of *Caterva* is framed by this double discourse, that is, the desire to reform society (idealism, social justice, trade-unionism), on one level, and the desire to escape the authoritarian state (censorship, violence, repression), on another. If the desire to reform society is associated with the peregrinations of the seven vagabonds and their cunning schemes to subvert society from below, the desire to escape the authoritarian state is represented by an interstellar/allegorical journey. A Dantean device, the journey across the stars and the planets is also utilised by Joyce, recalling the cosmic vision of 'Ithaca' where Bloom and Stephen emerge, 'silently, doubly dark, from obscurity by a passage from the rere of the house into the penumbra of the garden (U 17.1036-38) to contemplate the interstellar spectacle of 'the heavtree of stars' (U 17.1036-39). In *Caterva*, the astronomical motif comprises of three main tropes. First, the cosmic dialogue, which is enacted through Katanga's celestial visions of his father mainly cast in stream of consciousness style (*Caterva* 26-28); second, the hallucinatory voyage of the vagabonds by means of which their psyches undergo radical transformations, a stylistic *tour de force* told in an exuberant polyphony that complexly integrates Ithaca's catechitic structure, Circean histrionics, third-person narrative, and stream of consciousness (see *Caterva* 187-91); and, third, the supernatural ending enacted through the group's ascension into heaven (*Caterva* 369-70). I would like to dwell on the final trope. In a Wakean fashion, the closing lines of *Caterva* cyclically evoke the riverside scenery of the novel's opening lines:

Cantos rodados, pulidos de distancias, rodando porque sí alzaban vuelo por un prodigio del espíritu (*Caterva* 369).

Cantos rodados, polished by distance, rolling randomly, they took flight through a marvellous act of spirit.⁷⁷

In this manner, the novel's opening geological metaphor of the *cantos rodados*, and the concomitant idea of mobility, circles back to the end of the book, except that the reader is now invited to witness the wonder of flying stones ascending to the heavens. Through this Dantean allegorical flight, by the end of the book the vagabonds ascend into heaven, inviting the reader to imagine new possible worlds:

Y se perdieron en el cielo como la sombra de dos aves en la memoria (*Caterva* 370).

And they were lost in the heavens like the shadow of two birds in memory.⁷⁸

The parallel with Bloom leaving the pub in 'Cyclops', assailed by the belligerent Citizen and his subsequent ascension into heaven 'like a shot off a shovel' (U 12. 1918) is obvious, except that in *Caterva* the characters' pursuers are

the officers of the Argentine police force, whose detention may result in the vagabonds' arrest, imprisonment, and deportation. What is also significant is the closing simile drawn from the natural world, which I take as a nod to Homer. It evokes an affinity between the vagabonds' disappearing act and 'the shadow of two birds in memory', which suggests an evanescent image that raises the issue of its own unreliability. Surely, the shadowy birds flying away in the distance will fade away in the flawed memory of the perceiver/ beholder. But the simile also suggests the wider vantage point of a bird's-eye view looking down on an imperfect world or social system which remains very much unchanged despite the characters' heroic efforts. Henceforth, the magical resolution of an ascension to heaven through 'a marvellous act of spirit', which may be interpreted as the vagabond's final act of resistance and an extraordinary exit strategy from their unrelenting pursuers. Finally, as an afterthought to the ascension motif, I would like to suggest an interesting view put forward by Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland* (1996). Kiberd proposed a comparative affiliation between *Ulysses* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Cien años de soledad*; 1967) based on the novels' 'subversive combination of the mythical and the real' to advance anticolonial critiques, suggesting that Joyce anticipated 'by some decades the somewhat similar ascension of Remedios the Beauty'⁷⁹ (342). It strikes me that, since *Caterva* preceded *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by three decades, some due credit must be given to Filloy as an equally important predecessor of magical realists such as García Márquez and, correspondingly, as someone sharing Joyce's peculiarly modernist use of the real and the mythical to express the profound crisis of the modern age.

By reading Joyce and Filloy comparatively and transnationally, my core aim throughout the essay has been to elucidate the modernist complicities between *Ulysses* and *Caterva* and, ultimately, exploring both novels geopolitically through imperial Britain's looming presence in their complex depictions of space, movement, and rhetorical techniques. In this way, the insertion of *Caterva* as Argentina's first 'Ulyssean' novel has simultaneously meant revising the Argentine project of *Joyceización*, rethinking the story of its origins, the variegated cross-cultural encounters out of which it arose, including how it is framed by the discourses of Borges's vernacularisation of 'Penelope' and Cortázar's groundbreaking *Hopscotch*, the latter coming hot-on-the-heels of the Cuban revolution. In short, reading modernism from a River Plate angle means situating a radical modernist icon such as James Joyce within an Argentine context, it means revisiting and reinforcing the long-standing Borgesian paradigm of Hiberno-Argentine relations, and, at a macro-level, mapping out Joyce's transnational circulations in the global South.

Notes

1. Michel Nieva, 'Juan Filloy: El eslabón perdido', *Soles digital* (2019), p.1. <https://solesdigital.com.ar/libros/juan-filloy.html>. (Accessed 10 August 2020).
2. Gerald Martin, *Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 7.
3. For an extended discussion of this Joycean trajectory in Argentina and, in particular, the Joyce-Cortázar nexus, see Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, 'Rereading Cortázar's *Hopscotch* through Joyce's *Ulysses*', *Moveable Type*, 4 (2008), pp. 56-84.
4. Robin Fiddian, 'James Joyce and Spanish-American Fiction: A Study of the Origins and Transmission of Literary Influence', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 66 (1989), pp. 23-39 (p. 23).
5. Juan Filloy, *Caterva*, intro. Andrea Alejandra Bocco (Córdoba: Universidad de Río Cuarto, 2016), p. 13. Hereafter cited in parenthesis within the body of the text. All Spanish translation are mine, unless otherwise stated.
6. Juan Filloy, *Caterva*, trans. Brendan Riley (Dublin: Dalkey Archive Press, 2015), p. 3.
7. It is also well known that Filloy was totally obsessed with the number seven to the extent that all his works feature seven-letter titles.
8. See Ariel Magnus, *Un atleta de las letras: Biografía literaria de Juan Filloy* (Córdoba, Argentina: Editorial Universitaria Villa María, 2017), p. 186.
9. James E. Baer, *Anarchists Immigrants in Spain and Argentina* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), p. 33.
10. Osvaldo Bayer, *The Anarchists Expropriators: Buenaventura Durruti and Argentina's Working-Class Robin Hoods*, trans. Paul Sharkey (Chico, California: AK Press, 2015), p. 160.
11. Baer, *Anarchists Immigrants in Spain and Argentina*, p. 33.
12. Michael Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 311.
13. See Alejandro Ulloa, ed. *Diccionario del habla de los Argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 2003), p. 367, for a definition of *linyera* and the multiple uses of the term.
14. Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires: La Cultura Argentina, 1915), p. 219.
15. For example, Katanga helps Don Rufo Pereyra, a grieving widower with a sick infant (*Caterva*, 123-32), just as Bloom is concerned about the precarious finances of the widow of the recently diseased Paddy Dignam and her young children (*U*, 12.762-64; 13.1226.27).
16. My definition of Cynic behaviour has been extracted from Ansgar Allen's *Cynicism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020), pp. 2, 34.
17. Josefina Ludmer, *The Corpus Delicti: A Manual of Argentine Fictions*, trans. by Glen S. Close (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), p. 377.
18. Brendan Riley, 'Translator's Introduction', p. xii.
19. James R. Scobie, *Revolution on the Pampas: A Social History of Argentine Wheat, 1860-1910* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. ix, 4-5.
20. Filloy, cited in Magnus, *Un atleta de las letras*, p. 430.
21. A case in point is the Córdoba-born writer, politician, diplomat, and journalist Leopoldo Lugones (1874-1938), one of Argentina's leading intellectuals, who gained prominence after making Buenos Aires his primary place of residence.

22. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, trans. Claud DuVerlie (Cambridge: Polity, 1993).
23. His life spanned three centuries, which earned him the sobriquet, 'el hombre de los tres siglos' (the man of three centuries). Such extraordinary lifespan encapsulates the major events of modern Argentine history, from Hipólito Yri-goyen's presidency to the first coup d'état, through to the rise, fall, and return of Juan Domingo Perón, the so-called 'Dirty War', the Malvinas/Falklands armed conflict, and the return to democracy in 1983 and beyond. See M. Gowland, 'El hombre de los tres siglos: Entrevista con Juan Filloy', *La Nación*, Suplemento cultura, 3 Septiembre 1995, p. 3. For a comprehensive history of the province of Córdoba, see Efraín U. Bischoff, *Historia de Córdoba: Cuatro siglos*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1979).
24. Magnus, *Un atleta de las letras*, pp. 82-3. See also Sandra Gasparini, *Resquicios de la Ley: Una lectura de Juan Filloy* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1994), p. 7.
25. Just as Cortázar was one of the few Argentine writers to recognise Filloy's genius, so he was the only one who defended Marechal's novel in a 1948 review that appeared in the magazine *Claridad*. While members of the Sur Group had ostracised Marechal because of his political allegiance to Peronismo and had written scathing reviews of the novel, Cortázar valiantly put to one side political differences to celebrate Marechal's radical project of literary renovation. See Julio Cortázar, 'Leopoldo Marechal: Adán Buenosayres' reprinted in *Leopoldo Marechal: Adán Buenosayres*, ed. Jorge Lafforgue and Fernando Colla (Madrid: Archivos, 1997), pp. 879-83. The scathing review was penned by Eduardo González Lanuza, also reprinted in the Archivos critical edition, pp. 876-9.
26. Julio Cortázar, *Rayuela* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1994), p. 464. Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 462.
27. Andreas Huyssen, 'Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World', *New German Critique*, 34.1 (2007), pp. 189-207 (p. 194).
28. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, 'Introduction', in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).
29. César A. Salgado, Brian L. Price, and John Pedro Schwartz, 'Introduction: The Global Paradigm in Fourth-Wave Ibero-American Criticism on James Joyce', in César A. Salgado, Brian L. Price, and John Pedro Schwartz (eds.), *TransLatin Joyce: Global Transmissions in Ibero-American Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), pp. xi-xx (p. xi).
30. Price, et al, 'Introduction', p. xiii.
31. James Joyce, *Ulysse*, traduit de l'anglais par M. Auguste Morel assisté par M. Stuart Gilbert. Traduction entièrement revue par M. Valery Larbaud avec la collaboration de l'auteur (Paris: La Maison de Amis de Livres, 1929). For a discussion of the circulation of the French translation in Argentina, including the crucial role played by Joyce's publicist, Valery Larbaud, see Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, *Borges and Joyce: An Infinite Conversation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2011), pp. 11-16.
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74. I translated this passage myself to maintain the wordplay and structure of the original. Throughout the essay, however, I have adopted Brendan Riley's excellent translation of the novel.
75. Marta Sierra, 'Máquinas, Ficciones y Sociedades Secretas: *Caterva* y *La Ciudad Ausente*', *Revista Iberoamericana*, 211 (2005), pp. 521–37 (p. 522).
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77. This translation, much more superior than mine, was suggested by the anonymous reader of *Textual Practice* to whom I am deeply grateful.
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