

©2019

Alexa M. Valenzuela

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

BETWEEN LONDON AND LIMA: LATIN AMERICA, THE ANGLOPHONE  
WORLD, AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

By

ALEXA M. VALENZUELA

A dissertation submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Literatures in English

Written under the direction of

Rebecca L. Walkowitz

And approved by

---

---

---

---

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October, 2019

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Between London and Lima: Latin America, the Anglophone World, and Twentieth-

Century and Contemporary Fiction

By ALEXA M. VALENZUELA

Dissertation director:

Rebecca L. Walkowitz

This dissertation explores the relationship between Latin American settings and the Anglophone world in the twentieth-century and contemporary novels of Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and Juan Gabriel Vásquez, arguing for a reconsideration of both Anglophone and Hispanophone literary histories and traditions. By tracing representations of Britain's vast informal empire in the Americas following the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898, I imagine the existence of an Anglo-Latin American cultural and political sphere whose structure is rendered legible in the thematic and formal connections formed within and across the texts of this dissertation. Beginning in the fictional Latin American republic of Costaguana in Conrad's *Nostromo* (1904), this project examines the respective Mexican, Cuban, and Panamanian settings of Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), Greene's *Our Man in Havana* (1958), and Vásquez' *The Secret History of Costaguana* (2007), which lie firmly within the boundaries of multiple competing and overlapping imperial systems, including the Spanish, British, and U.S. empires. These novels produce and are produced by the relations of informal empire that emerge from and give shape to the space of Anglo-Latin America.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Abstract**

Abstract.....ii

### **Introduction**

Imagining the Space of Anglo-Latin American Relations.....1

### **Chapter 1**

The Americas in the Anglophone Novel: Britain, Latin America, and “The Treasure House of the World” in Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo*.....26

### **Chapter 2**

Informal Empire in Turmoil: The Mexican Revolution, Race, and Modernism’s Hispanophone American Routes in D.H. Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent*.....58

### **Chapter 3**

Neo-Colonialism in the Age of Decolonization: Cuba, U.S. Imperialism, and the Collapse of the British Empire in Graham Greene’s *Our Man in Havana*.....94

### **Chapter 4**

The Anglophone World in the Contemporary Latin American Novel: Revisiting the “Treasure House” in Juan Gabriel Vásquez’s *The Secret History of Costaguana*.....159

### **End Notes**

All Chapters.....209

## INTRODUCTION

### **Imagining the Space of Anglo-Latin American Relations**

“The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas, was the constitutive act of the modern world-system.

The Americas were not incorporated into an already existing capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas.”

– Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein<sup>1</sup>

1904 was an important year in world history: it marked the formal transfer of the Panama Canal project from French ownership to U.S. hands and it saw the serial publication of Joseph Conrad’s *Nostramo* in the magazine *T.P.’s Weekly*.<sup>2</sup> Reading those events as part of the same history, this dissertation explores the space of Anglo-Latin American political and cultural relations from the publication of *Nostramo* to the contemporary moment. Far from representing two distinct developments – one political and one literary – across separate imperial and continental regions, the resonances embodied in the events of 1904 encapsulate this study’s recovery of a world-system in which a novel published in a British magazine at the turn of the century occupies the same transnational space as the near-simultaneous U.S. acquisition of a large-scale engineering project across the Atlantic Ocean in Panama.<sup>3</sup> The theorization of this shared space of Anglo-Latin America emerged from the underlying question motivating this project: how can Anglophone literary studies explain the resonances between one of its central author’s most complicated novels, *Nostramo* (1904), the fictional history of a

Latin American republic written by a former sailor who may (or may not) have spent a few days on Colombian shores as a teenager, and Gabriel García Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), a Latin American epic written over half a century later by a former journalist who spent much of his life in his native Colombia and became one of the continent's most representative writers? Critics have articulated versions of this question and framed their responses in various ways throughout the years. Some have emphasized the similarities between the two texts themselves while others have drawn historical relationships between Conrad's characters and other Latin American figures or discourses.<sup>4</sup> However, rather than trace a literary history of translation, circulation, and influence connecting the two writers across languages, regions, and traditions, this study imagines the interrelationship between the worlds inhabited by the authors and their texts across both time and space as one unit. As the geography of Anglo-Latin America gains shape, it reveals a constellation of texts – across both the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds – which produce and are produced by this transimperial, transnational, and multilingual region's own languages, histories, and traditions.

Scholars of twentieth-century Anglophone literatures have generally focused on colonial and post-colonial fictions from or about South Asia (particularly India), the Caribbean (particularly the West Indies), Australia, and Africa. However, this approach obscures the large body of Anglophone literature focused on the disruption to and loss of Britain's vast imperial network in Latin America – the largely, though not exclusively, informal system through which the British maintained economic control over the resources and political development of Latin American nations after the early-nineteenth century wars of independence. By excluding the Hispanophone Americas, including the

Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Anglophone literary studies ignores the discourse of colonial decline and crisis occasioned by anti-colonial revolutions and U.S. imperialism present in novels set in Latin America. Conversely, in Latin American studies, Britain's imperial role in the region is often over-shadowed by that of the U.S., particularly in the twentieth-century. Yet, as these novels show, the presence of British explorers, traders, financiers, and engineers undermined Spain's control over its American colonies and laid the ground work for the extensive trading networks that would intimately connect the economies of Latin America to the rest of the world, particularly the U.S. By analyzing Anglophone and Hispanophone narratives about this system of informal or primarily economic imperialism, my study bridges the gap between Anglophone literary studies, which often ignore Latin America, and Latin American studies, which has not always considered the literary and political impact of British imperialism.

In bridging this gap, my study of twentieth-century Anglophone novels set in Latin America and contemporary Latin American novels embedding these Anglophone traditions situates itself in recent conversations about the future of postcolonial studies in the age of global capitalism. In *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (2011), Neil Lazarus describes the urgent task to decouple postcolonial criticism from the post-modern assumptions that have governed much of its work, particularly in the acceptance of a fundamental break between the post-45 era of decolonization and the economic "downturn" of the 1970s: "this shift is from the old order of 'modernity' (whose constituent features and aspects – unevenness, revolution, the centrality of the nation, even imperialism – are seen to have lost their explanatory power) to the 'new world order' of fully globalised capitalism."<sup>5</sup> Instead of taking as given "the *obsolescence* of

imperialism” as a category for understanding the contemporary world, postcolonial studies must “take central cognisance of the unrelenting actuality and indeed the intensification of imperialist social relations in the times and spaces of the postcolonial world.”<sup>6</sup> My dissertation advances this articulation of the challenge facing postcolonial studies by taking seriously the need to diagnose and theorize the long history of U.S. imperialism as such. Indeed, as Lazarus points out, the post-9/11 era of U.S.-led interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan “have demonstrably rejoined the twenty-first century to a long and as yet unbroken history, wrongly supposed by postcolonial theory to have come to a close *circa* 1975. This is the history of capitalist imperialism.”<sup>7</sup> Combining the insights of Latin American studies of colonialism, which includes in its purview the role of the U.S. as an imperial power in the Western Hemisphere, with a postcolonial understanding of Anglophone novels about the development of this “capitalist imperialism” in Latin America, my dissertation creates a through-line between fields, histories, and representations which treat a common capitalist world-system from different perspectives and locations.

This study of Anglophone and Hispanophone novels which cross the divide between the regions of Britain and Latin America engages the postcolonial imperative to address the histories, legacies, and current practices of U.S. imperialism. In the metropolitan Anglophone arena from which *Nostramo* (1904), *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), and *Our Man in Havana* (1958) approach their Latin American settings, my dissertation examines the novels from a postcolonial perspective by highlighting their ability to accurately pinpoint and structurally critique U.S. power as a new wave of imperialism tied to global capitalism sweeping the world from the late-nineteenth century



to the Suez Crisis of 1956. By traveling and training their eyes to locations firmly within the U.S. orbit, including Panama, Mexico, and Cuba, Conrad, Lawrence, and Greene construct a fictional archive of anti-imperialist representations and strands of thought long before the post-45 era of decolonization and the rise of post-colonial narratives from the former British colonies. Far from being the only ones, they form part of a large cohort of twentieth-century writers from different genres and movements, including R.B. Cunninghame Graham, H. Rider Haggard, W.H. Hudson, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, Malcolm Lowry, Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, and John Le Carré. From the Viceroyalty of New Spain (including present-day Mexico) to the Viceroyalty of New Granada (including present-day Colombia and Panama) and through one of the most important strategic ports of Spanish-America (Cuba), the novels in this dissertation implicate the histories of Spanish formal imperialism, British informal imperialism, and U.S. imperialism in the Americas with the representation of neo-colonies in the post-independence era of Latin America. Thus, even as they mourn the loss of an informal and, at times, formal British empire in the region, they exhibit first an emerging and then a fully articulated consciousness of another global power overlapping with and eclipsing centuries of European domination as well as the anti-colonial revolutions heralding the decolonial horizon of the post-colonial era in the Anglophone world.

While the dissertation makes use of a postcolonial framework to trace the shifting realm of twentieth-century Britain's imperial imaginary of Latin America, the turn to contemporary Latin American novels, including *The Secret History of Costaguana* (2007), *Our GG in Havana* (2004), and *Poso Wells* (2007), suggests an alternative

framework for understanding the totality of the British-Latin American nexus. Focusing on *The Secret History* in particular, Chapter 4 highlights Global South narratives from Latin America as they articulate the connection between the discourse of development examined in these earlier Anglophone novels and the capitalist exploitation of sovereign republics from the nineteenth-century to today. Taken together, these novels imagine the space of Anglo-Latin America as a geographic, geopolitical, and cultural region whose material and symbolic existence emerges in their narrative structures as a critique of global capitalist exploitation. It is a space that renders visible the long-standing, trans-imperial, and transnational concern with U.S. economic and military power, implicating the history of competing and cooperating European empires in the rise of the American century and the post-9/11 world. It is also a space that reimagines the histories of political revolution from the totality of a global imperial system that was aided by local and foreign capitalists working together to advance the cause of economic development while obscuring its human, environmental, and social costs. Moving beyond the boundaries of the geopolitical and continental regions that are often authorized as objects of study by areas studies departments, a contingent space of Anglo-Latin American colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial relations disrupts the imperial and national histories underlying both the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, allowing the objects themselves to define – and redefine – the boundaries within which they should be understood.

Thus, this project forms part of ongoing efforts to reconfigure both area studies departments and the field of English-language literatures beyond the national and imperial boundaries that have traditionally defined these disciplines. If, as Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, argue, the formation of the Americas as a “geosocial

entity...was the constitutive act of the modern world-system,” attempts to understand the literary production of the Anglophone world, a field that is shaped by the geographies of British imperialism, must take into account this constitutive act from which the “capitalist world-economy” – and the European imperial system – was born.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the Americas are rarely acknowledged as central to the development of Anglophone writing, particularly in its twentieth-century modernist, colonial, and post-colonial forms.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the term “Anglo-Latin America” paradoxically ties the languages of the Anglophone world to the spaces of the Hispanophone sphere, highlighting pathways between the contrasting language of the text and the social world it represents. As an alternative framework for literary analysis, the world-system of “Anglo-Latin America” decouples the linguistic world of the “Anglophone” from its presumed geographical referent and the geopolitical territory of “Latin America” from its presumed linguistic community. Through this disruption, this dissertation argues that the many Anglophone texts which treat Latin American settings throughout the twentieth century reconfigure the languages and locations of the field as an object of study. To study British modernism, for example, requires looking not only at Anglophone texts set in the Americas from such central figures as Lawrence and Woolf, but also at the traditions, histories, and languages of the Hispanophone world as they work to produce the world-systems of the novels. Similarly, in post-colonial literatures, the novels of Conrad and Greene must be understood in the context of colonial relations that do not involve direct political and military administration of territory, extending beyond the formal boundaries of the British empire from which post-colonial Anglophone novels are generally presumed to emerge. By expanding the languages and locations of Anglophone literary studies to Latin American

territories, this dissertation alters the map of the field and its dominant traditions.

Framing the Anglophone novel through Latin America and the Latin American novel through the Anglophone world, this project asks different questions, sees new patterns, and reveals alternative traditions in both fields, challenging the existence of the self-contained and stable geographies upon which these disciplines are founded.

### **Post-Colonial Anglophone Studies, Latin American Area Studies, and Histories of the Global Atlantic**

By attending to novels that represent British imperial designs on former Spanish-American territory, this dissertation contributes to recent scholarship that seeks to recover a transimperial world-system obscured by disciplinary boundaries. As Luz Elena Ramirez shows in her survey of what she calls “Americanist” literature, British texts about Spanish-America and the later Latin American republics, from Sir Walter Raleigh’s *Discoverie of Guiana* (1596) to Graham Greene’s *Getting to Know the General* (1984), emerged from a long colonial and post-colonial history of interactions between Britain and the Hispanophone Americas.<sup>10</sup> Ramirez identifies in these Anglophone texts a discourse about the region that begins with the earliest triumphant narratives of exploration and ends with a modernist examination of British identity in the face of imperial decline.<sup>11</sup> “Americanist” discourse is characterized by a certain level of ambivalence and duality tied to Britain’s tenuous position as an informal imperial force: “This combination of doubt and hope, despair and exuberance belies the confidence generally associated with Britain as an imperialist and capitalist superpower.”<sup>12</sup> Although Ramirez argues that existing post-colonial paradigms are inadequate in the British-Latin American case, her identification of a coherent discourse that developed across the centuries provides a foundation for cross-disciplinary conversations, including those

between Anglo-American post-colonial studies and Latin American studies. Despite the vast historical differences between geographic settings, “Americanist” discourse reveals a similar underlying tension between an exoticized peripheral setting and an unstable metropolitan identity that is found in the paradigmatic texts of imperialism, such as *Heart of Darkness* (1899) or *Kim* (1901), which are frequently studied by post-colonial critics in Anglophone literary studies.

The novels in this dissertation reveal ideological, thematic, and formal connections across the Anglophone novel’s temporal and geographic divides which are often accepted as natural rather than constructed boundaries. The higher degree of ambivalence Ramirez correlates, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the risky economic investments made in turbulent political environments does not in itself prove the inadequacy of post-colonial paradigms to describe the British empire’s involvement in Latin America. Instead, it points to the importance of attending to competing chronologies of imperial developments across the various spheres of empire. Twentieth-century novels set in Latin America capture the processes of informal empire and neo-colonialism in the context of a global British imperial system that included – and continues to include – different forms of overlapping and interpolated colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial spheres. If British texts about Latin America exhibit a higher level of ambivalence and instability than is normally found in contemporaneous writing about other colonial settings at different stages of imperial development, shifting the grounds of comparison reveals correspondences between these works and later post-colonial texts from and about former British colonies that similarly explore these complexities of identity.<sup>13</sup> Rather than comparing spatially across the formal and informal

spaces of the British empire, comparisons across time render visible a long-standing critique of informal imperialism and neo-colonialism in Anglophone texts that runs through Latin American settings. As elucidated by post-colonial critics, the post-colonial Anglophone novel's portrayal of the incomplete work of decolonization, particularly in the economic and cultural realms, closely mirrors the themes present in these early and mid-twentieth century metropolitan texts set in Latin America, locating the region as a functioning informal colonial and post-colonial periphery of the British empire.

At the same time, reading Latin American settings across competing imperial spheres uncovers a global system made up of mutually constitutive parts operating within a single geopolitical territory. As recent studies of imperialism in the early Atlantic world have shown, territories in the Hispanophone Americas existed simultaneously as colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial spaces at various points in their history. In *The Occupation of Havana: War, Trade, and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (2018), Elena A. Schneider examines the eleven-month British occupation of Havana, then one of the Atlantic world's wealthiest trading ports, at the end of the Seven Years' War (1754-1763) as part of a long history of trade and warfare between the Spanish and British empires.<sup>14</sup> *The Occupation of Havana* recovers over a century of interimperial ties forged across colonial Caribbean cities whose locations within overlapping geopolitical spheres determined the horizon of possibilities available to those living within their contested boundaries. By the time British warships appeared on Havana's harbor in 1762, the Spanish empire's prized Atlantic colony was already deeply embedded within networks of trade tied to the British empire, particularly those based in Kingston, and Britain had made several unsuccessful attempts to capture the Spanish port.<sup>15</sup> As the British slave

trade to Cuba intensified in the decades before the occupation, Spain's efforts to secure its borders against its imperial rival destabilized commerce in the Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> The transfer of sovereignty during the occupation and the peace treaty which returned Cuba to Spain in exchange for Florida had a profound effect on Spain's management of its remaining empire.<sup>17</sup> The British occupation of Havana catalyzed Spain's turn to slave-trading to shore up its power in Spanish-America, cementing the growth of Cuba's sugar economy and eliminating opportunities for the colony's large population of African peoples and their descendants.<sup>18</sup> Revising traditional Anglophone scholarship about the siege, Schneider shows that the British did not seize Havana to bust "open Spanish trading monopolies:" Havana was already a "hybrid space, mutually constituted with its British American neighbors" through extensive trading channels, making the port city a logical and strategic target for British acquisition.<sup>19</sup> As the siege of Havana shows, the British and Spanish empires developed in relation to each other, creating intertwined histories that are obscured by their separation into distinct fields of study.

Framing Cuba's development as part of an important episode in eighteenth-century global Atlantic history – one which impacted not only the British and Spanish imperial spheres, but also the course of a Latin American nation's struggle for independence – highlights the importance of examining the island as a setting in twentieth-century Anglophone novels. While critics, including Ramirez, have tended to dismiss *Our Man in Havana* as an "entertainment" that merits less serious critique, Chapter 3 analyzes the novel as a crucial text in the British empire's representation of a nexus point between its own waning spheres of influence and competing geopolitical systems.<sup>20</sup> Buttressed by an emerging understanding of the ways in which Caribbean

colonies were governed by overlapping sovereignties and formed part of shifting regional configurations in the eighteenth century, the novel provides a window into a world in which the Anglophone and Hispanophone Atlantic did not occupy separate regions, but were rather intertwining parts of the same imperial system. Christopher Hull's study of Anglo-Cuban relations from 1898 to 1964 identifies *Our Man in Havana* as "one of Britain's strongest cultural connections with Cuba."<sup>21</sup> Although these connections have been eclipsed, as they have been elsewhere in Latin America, by the prominence of U.S.-Cuban relations, the British empire remained interested in Cuba into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When Winston Churchill visited the island as a correspondent for the *Daily Graphic* during Cuba's 1895 fight for independence from Spain, his final communication on the matter called upon Britain's 1762 occupation of Havana to imagine what the colony would have looked like "had England never lost it – a Cuba free and prosperous, under just laws and a patriotic administration, throwing open her ports to the commerce of the world."<sup>22</sup> The occupation of Havana during a crucial period of eighteenth-century Atlantic developments set the stage for *Our Man in Havana's* imagination of Cuba as a British colony that was lost to U.S. imperialism and anti-colonial revolution, a sentiment that shapes the twentieth-century novels of this dissertation set in various Latin American locations.

In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, Anglo-Latin American relations only intensified. Ernesto Bassi's *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* (2016) argues for the existence of a "sea-based regional approach" to the period following the Seven Years' War and preceding Latin American independence.<sup>23</sup> Bassi identifies a "transimperial Greater



Caribbean” constructed by the lived experiences of sailors and ships traversing South America’s northwestern Caribbean coast and various Caribbean ports across British, Spanish, French, Dutch, and U.S. imperial borders.<sup>24</sup> As an “aqueous territory of mobile markers” including vessels and flags, the Greater Caribbean is not defined by the boundaries of a political geography, but rather is constructed by everyday “region-makers” like captains and sailors whose circulation made clear that “ports like Kingston, Les Cayes, Saint Thomas, Curaçao, Cartagena, Havana, and even Philadelphia were part of a larger interconnected geographic space.”<sup>25</sup> In the context of this sea-based territory, early nineteenth-century Spanish-American port cities were increasingly pulled into a “transimperial Greater Caribbean free trade area” oriented towards and controlled by British commercial networks based in Jamaica.<sup>26</sup> In fact, trade between the Viceroyalty of New Granada, located in what is now Colombia and surrounding nations, and Kingston rivaled that between Cuba and Britain’s colonial center in the Caribbean.<sup>27</sup> As Mary Louise Pratt argues and Conrad mythologizes in *Nostramo*, Northern European trading relations played a crucial role in Latin America’s independence struggles, with British capital in particular helping to fund the revolutionary movement against its imperial rival.<sup>28</sup> Yet, *An Aqueous Territory* reveals the extent to which the Caribbean colonies and South America’s coasts were intertwined in a regional commercial network mapped by overlapping sovereignties which facilitated the eventual destruction of Spanish-America’s fraying imperial boundaries. As twentieth and twenty-first century Anglophone and Hispanophone novels about the British-Latin American encounter show, commercial ties and warfare often undermine the very territorial communities they are

called upon to stabilize, advance, and strengthen, creating in the process new horizons of affiliation.

Latin America's fight for independence from Spain inaugurated a new era of geopolitical alliances and global possibilities. Much like the brief transfer of sovereignty from Spanish to British hands in Havana created new possibilities for inhabitants of the Cuban city, the transimperial Greater Caribbean allowed for alternative definitions of political communities in what was once Spanish-America. In 1815, approximately four years after Cartagena declared itself independent from Spain, the new republic proposed to make itself a British colony. On the verge of recapture by Spanish troops, legislators in Cartagena preferred, and considered it a possibility, to become a part of the British empire, so much so that they raised the British flag over the city and sent a formal offer to Jamaica.<sup>29</sup> Lacking British support, the port city was reclaimed by Spain until the successful declaration of Simón Bolívar's Gran Colombia in 1819. Although "British Cartagena" never materialized as an established colony, this episode in Colombia's fight for independence exemplifies the range of possible outcomes that were available to actors operating in a world whose boundaries do not conform to our contemporary understanding of regions.<sup>30</sup> The histories of the 1762 occupation of Havana and the 1815 offer from Cartagena are two episodes in the historical and cultural narrative of Anglo-Latin America traced by this dissertation. Far from representing an exhaustive history of colonial and post-colonial interactions between the two regions – which is beyond the scope and purpose of this study – they are two examples of the ways in which recent work has uncovered a geopolitical entity that has largely been ignored or forgotten by

dominant imperial and national historiographies, including those emerging from Latin American area studies.

In Anglophone literary studies, a turn to these re-conceptualizations of early Atlantic and Hispanophone histories allows for a greater understanding of the worlds in which authors wrote and gave meaning to their texts. In *Mobility and Modernity: Panama in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Imagination* (2017), Robert D. Aguirre provides an analysis of Anthony Trollope's *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), a travel narrative based on the journey he undertook on behalf of the British Post Office to assess the efficiency and costs of its Caribbean routes, that exemplifies these possibilities.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to much post-colonial criticism which has focused on the West Indian portion of Trollope's journey, Aguirre highlights the "wider context of his mission, specifically the way in which Central America was becoming a global transit zone and a funnel for diasporic movement on a grand scale."<sup>32</sup> Placing Aguirre's work on the British Panamanian imaginary, a central topic of Chapter 4, in conversation with a transimperial Greater Caribbean framework, the "Spanish Main" emerges as a region that was materially and symbolically active in Trollope's understanding of the British empire's global horizons. As Bassi points out, South America's northwestern Caribbean coast is known in early-nineteenth century Spanish sources as the "Viceroyalty of New Granada" and in British sources as the "Spanish Main."<sup>33</sup> Trollope, then, traveled through the former Viceroyalty of New Granada, the new Colombian republic (then including Panama), the U.S. "Yankee strip," and the Spanish Main, a journey he understood in relation to the West Indies or Britain's formal empire within the Greater Caribbean region of the Atlantic world. If the Spanish Main was an important route to – and through

– multiple formal and informal imperial spheres, including but not limited to those of the British empire, and if, as this dissertation argues, the U.S. acquisition of the Panama Canal project marked a new era in a long history of British representations of Latin America, what additional worlds might be discovered in the traditional and obscured texts of Anglophone studies by attending to the multiply-claimed and crisscrossing regions of Anglo-Latin America? While this project does not address nineteenth-century novels, the twentieth-century and contemporary works examined here make frequent use of this earlier nineteenth-century history to re-imagine the space of British-Latin American relations in an era of nationalism, neo-colonialism, and imperial decline.

The novels of this dissertation are united in their understanding of Latin America as a site of colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial contestation. This sense of overlapping temporal and spatial geographies challenges traditional understandings of British and U.S. imperialism in Anglophone literatures and postcolonial studies. Taking the existence of a U.S. empire and history of imperialism that began in the nineteenth century and continues today as a foundational principle of Anglophone literatures set in Latin America, this study contributes to recent attempts to render visible the world-systems of the American century. For example, Lanny Thompson identifies what he calls an “imperial archipelago” encompassing the islands and territories acquired and ruled by the U.S. after the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai’i.<sup>34</sup> This “imperial archipelago” is furthermore rendered legible, not by the traditional geographic proximity of an archipelago or by shared cultural norms, languages, and histories, but rather by “the dominance of the imperial network.” “the islands of the imperial archipelago were connected principally to

the United States, not to each other, through centralized chains of empire.”<sup>35</sup> Although Thompson’s principal subject is the analysis of “colonial discourse” within U.S. representations of its “new possessions” between 1898 and 1903, *Imperial Archipelago* (2010) speaks to the larger question surrounding the relationship between postcolonial studies and histories of U.S. imperialism: should studies of imperialism and post-colonial societies include early and current iterations of U.S. possessions and interventions as examples of imperialism on par with those of the former European empires? The “imperial archipelago,” which brings into relief a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century colonial discourse that impacted the development of widely disparate societies through their connection to a centralized U.S. metropole, suggests that the current disciplinary separation between postcolonial studies on the one hand and American studies on the other has obscured important regional configurations which have shaped a discourse present in the archive of textual representations.<sup>36</sup>

Like the recent transatlantic histories that “challenge assumptions regarding the existence of isolated spheres of self-sufficient empires” and bring together “the divergent worlds of separate imperial historiographies,” this dissertation argues for a similar reconsideration of the fixed boundaries that treat Latin America as a constituted field of area studies that lies outside the purview of postcolonial studies, particularly as it relates to the study of British imperialism.<sup>37</sup> Although transatlantic paradigms have gained traction in Latin American studies, works which are transatlantic “in both subject and methodology” usually remain confined to the study of Spanish and Portuguese imperialism.<sup>38</sup> As the previous discussion has shown, a transatlantic or global Atlantic framework may be expanded to account for the simultaneous existence of Spanish,

British, and U.S. imperialism, to name only a few possibilities, in Latin America, raising new methodological questions about geopolitical region formations and illuminating new objects for historical, political, and cultural study.<sup>39</sup> Seen in the context of these emerging disciplinary conversations, framing Latin America as a field of Anglo-American postcolonial studies does not require abandoning the critique of “coloniality” and the “decolonial” turn in Latin American studies, but rather involves acknowledging the interrelated imperial and neo-imperial spheres within which these discourses have taken shape.<sup>40</sup> Thus, while some scholars in Latin American studies have rejected the “postcolonial” label in favor of alternative framings, those working in Anglo-American post-colonial studies have also engaged in conversations that complicate the nature of the “post-” in post-colonial, including the presence or lack thereof of a hyphen.<sup>41</sup> Shoring up Latin American studies as a separate discipline whose terms are incommensurate with work in postcolonial Anglophone studies reifies official imperial boundaries, adheres to the chronologies of development promoted by national historiographies, and obscures the “lived geographies” of alternative worlds in favor of a continental insularity.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, appropriating a large trans-continental area with a multitude of regional and national histories and cultures which has produced – as well as been produced by – a coherent disciplinary study for a postcolonial framework located, for much of its history, in the study of other territorial and linguistic communities fails to recognize the need for the theorization of a new space of relations.

Thus, while this dissertation mainly covers the development of an Anglophone imperial imaginary about Latin America in the twentieth-century, the final chapter explores the space of an Anglo-Hispanophone literary nexus that incorporates

contemporary Latin American literatures.<sup>43</sup> The novels examined in this project, from Conrad's *Nostromo* to Vásquez' *The Secret History of Costaguana*, narrate Latin American territory in light of the interconnected nature of developments within overlapping and competing imperial world-systems. Their representation of systemic economic exploitation and its structural effects on social and political realms creates an avenue for comparative analysis across time and space. Following Pascale Casanova's definition of a literary-linguistic sphere as a "literature-world"...that is, a homogenous and autonomous sphere in which the legitimacy of its centralized power of consecration is unchallenged," the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, among others, have been constructed as self-contained systems organized around the common history of imperial domination by a European power.<sup>44</sup> Building on the first three chapters' examination of a British discourse and literary tradition routed through Latin America, Chapter 4 challenges this separation of Anglophone and Hispanophone spheres by highlighting the ways in which contemporary Latin American novels themselves create alternative literary traditions routed through the Anglophone world. These traditions, moreover, are part of a long history in Hispanophone letters of including what have been seen as central British authors and texts as touchstones for debates about the nature of cultural production in the aftermath and present time of both formal and informal colonization. Although the Anglophone texts of this dissertation are oriented towards Latin America from a metropolitan British tradition, representations of Conrad in Latin American literatures across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries reveal that questions of cultural authenticity and identity in an increasingly globalized world are as internal to imperial centers as they are to colonial peripheries.

## Organization of Chapters

Beginning with the global world Conrad himself inhabited, this study highlights the interconnections between Anglophone literatures and Latin American settings. The first three chapters examine the twentieth-century Anglophone novels of Conrad, Lawrence, and Greene as they represent various stages in the evolving imperial relationship between Britain and Latin America. Identifying these texts as part of a geographic space of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism that cuts across British and Spanish territorial spheres or systems from the nineteenth-century and beyond raises questions which the following chapters address: how do twentieth-century Anglophone novels represent a region that remained mostly outside the boundaries of the formal British empire yet was intimately connected to its informal economic networks? In what ways does Latin America's emergence *as* a region within and outside the British empire shape relations among empires, nations and agents in the novels? In other words, what different spatial, political, and narrative structures emerge across Anglophone literatures that foreground the geopolitical and cultural territory of the Hispanophone Americas, from the colonial period of Spanish-America to the post-colonial Latin American republics? While focusing on the specific historical developments of their particular periods, the chapters construct a narrative of a British imperial imaginary of Latin America which registered the threat of U.S. imperialism and the rise of anti-colonial revolutions in Panama, Mexico, and Cuba as global phenomena shaping developments in the Anglophone world. Building on this foundation, Chapter 4 turns to Vásquez' re-writing of *Nostramo* as the story of Panama's overlapping imperial and national spheres, locating the beginnings of the U.S. neo-colony in nineteenth-century Colombia.



Chapter 1, “The Americas in the Anglophone Novel: Britain, Latin America, and ‘The Treasure House of the World’ in Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo*,” examines Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904), published the same year as the U.S. take-over of the Panama Canal project, as both the continuation of and rupture from an Anglophone tradition located in Latin America and routed through the Hispanophone world. Set in an imaginary South American republic at the end of the nineteenth century, *Nostromo* maps Britain’s informal empire in the Americas by centralizing pieces of Anglo-Latin American history, including Britain’s role in the decolonization of Spanish-America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Literary scholars often read *Nostromo* as a novel about colonialism writ large, comparing its depiction of colonial relations to other settings in Conrad’s oeuvre. Yet, Conrad shifts from his representation of European metropolises and formal colonies to the post-colonial geography of Latin America, depicting themes and histories that resonate with post-colonial narratives of the later twentieth century. Containing elements of many national histories, the chapter argues that *Nostromo*’s Latin American setting highlights the forms of neo-colonialism – a process of economic and cultural colonization in the post-colony driven in large part by informal imperial agents – present in the region, embedding elements of the post-colonial Hispanophone world into the structure of the colonial Anglophone novel and challenging the traditional chronologies of British imperialism in literary studies. Identifying “material interests” as the dominant ideology driving global capitalist exploitation of the Global South in the post-colonial era, *Nostromo* ties the nineteenth-century history of Britain’s informal empire in Latin America to the arrival of the American century and the establishment of U.S. neo-

colonies in the twentieth century, cementing the San Tomé “concession” as the enduring model of imperialism in the contemporary world.

Chapter 2, “Informal Empire in Turmoil: The Mexican Revolution, Race, and Modernism’s Hispanophone American Routes in D.H. Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent*,” takes up Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), which he wrote while traveling through Mexico and living in the American Southwest, as a re-routing of the map of Anglophone modernism through revolutionary Latin America, which the novel identifies as a parallel geography to Ireland. Through the use of an extensive discourse of primitivism to describe the indigenous people of the Americas and the cultures of Mexico, Lawrence develops his vision of European civilizational decline and American regeneration. Following the 1910 beginning of the Mexican Revolution, which was a major aesthetic as well as political and social movement, many Anglophone writers including Lawrence, Malcolm Lowry, Aldous Huxley, and Greene became captivated with the nation.<sup>45</sup> *The Plumed Serpent* theorizes a political and cultural imaginary containing Mexico, Ireland, and the U.S. Kate’s Irish background and her previous marriage to an Irish revolutionary involved in the nationalist struggle allows Lawrence to create an uneasy Irish-Mexican alliance against both European political forces and American mechanical power. As Kate moves deeper into Mexico and becomes involved with the resurrection of an Aztec religion, she draws sharp distinctions between Britain and the United States and strong similarities between indigenous Mexicans and the native Irish, revealing a space of Anglo-Latin American connection across the channels of early-twentieth century revolutionary politics and discourses of race. As the British imperial imaginary of Latin America registered the late-nineteenth century eclipse of its influence

by a rising U.S. power, Anglophone modernists tracked the development of other, at times more uncomfortable disruptions in Britain's Latin American peripheries: the emergence – and global resonance – of mestizo and indigenous cultural movements of the Hispanophone sphere against the informal empire's ideology of "material interests."

In Chapter 3, "Neo-Colonialism in the Age of Decolonization: Cuba, U.S. Imperialism, and the Collapse of the British Empire in Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana*," the project examines the relationship between genre and informal empire in Greene's *Our Man in Havana* (1958), which tells the story of James Wormold, a British vacuum salesman living in Cuba who inadvertently becomes an agent for the British secret service. Wormold is recruited to MI6 by Hawthorne, an agent stationed in Jamaica in charge of setting up Britain's "Caribbean network."<sup>46</sup> Cuba's location in the Hispanophone Caribbean and its delayed history of independence relative to other nations in the region complicates its position within a Latin American geography usually defined by a continental framework based on the shared experience of early-nineteenth century independence. Examining the island's importance within several competing imperial systems, this chapter situates Cuba as a central territory in the geography of Anglo-Latin America, particularly following the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898, which marked the beginning of a new phase of U.S. imperial developments traced by the novels in this dissertation. *Our Man in Havana* considers the island as central to an Anglophone Caribbean world that included the Hispanophone island in an interimperial network including Britain, which has been sidelined in the novel by the full-fledged development of Cuba as a neo-colony of the U.S. Although the novel's characters articulate a comparative view of British and Spanish imperial possessions as separate worlds, *Our*

*Man in Havana*'s narrative structure insists on maintaining direct political and geographic connections between London and Havana. Moreover, the novel's turn to the detective genre and noir fiction locates the emergence of a revolutionary horizon in the background of the parodic spy plot, within Wormold – and the novel's – political unconscious. If *The Plumed Serpent*'s Mexican settings details an anti-colonial revolutionary wave already well underway in the early-twentieth century, *Our Man in Havana*'s Cuban neo-colony anticipates the post-colonial horizon of the Cuban Revolution in the midst of a British imperial world-system in decline following the Suez Crisis of 1956.

The final chapter, “The Anglophone World in the Contemporary Latin American Novel: Revisiting the ‘Treasure House’ in Juan Gabriel Vásquez’s *The Secret History of Costaguana*,” analyzes Vásquez’ depiction of a cosmopolitan contact-zone within the emerging U.S. neo-colonial territory of Colombia’s Panamanian province. Returning to nineteenth-century Colombian and Caribbean history, *The Secret History* (2007) draws inspiration from Conrad's *Nostromo* rather than the magical realist tradition of the Latin American Boom writers. In the novel, Conrad's literary production – the sources for the tale, his private scenes of writing, and the aftermath of publication – becomes part of the author's rewriting of both Latin American narratives of independence and metropolitan Anglophone histories of imperialism. Maintaining parallel story lines, the novel traces the biography of Conrad and Altamirano across the world as Colombia undergoes a series of transformations, ultimately resulting in the loss of Panama to imperial competition and civil war. As the novel unfolds, *The Secret History* gives shape to the Anglo-Latin American world-system posited in this dissertation: Vásquez depicts a world in which

1904 matters not only to the U.S.-oriented post-colonial Latin American sphere but also to the British metropolitan space of *Nostramo*'s publication. Moreover, the chapter places *The Secret History* in conversation with other contemporary Latin American novels, joining them to a tradition of twentieth-century Hispanophone writing about the nature of cultural production in the context of competing colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial interests. In the context of an Anglo-Latin American framework including Conrad, Lawrence, and Greene, these novels gesture beyond Anglophone and Hispanophone literatures toward the histories and languages of other worlds increasingly connected through the proliferating networks of global capitalism that destabilize the self-contained knowledge-systems of our disciplinary geographies.

## CHAPTER 1

**The Americas in the Anglophone Novel: Britain, Latin America, and “The Treasure House of the World” in Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo***

Novels set in places under formal territorial colonization – including the Belgian Congo of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and the Anglo-India of Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901) – tend to receive the greatest attention from Anglophone literary critics. These novels have become the paradigmatic examples of the imperial adventure or colonial novel: narratives in which European characters, portrayed as the agents of empire, venture into, settle in, explore, and otherwise map territories administered by their various nations. In contrast to these well-known examples, Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904) is set in a post-colonial country in a continent whose formal age of empire had largely come to an end in the early-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> While Britain was reaching the height of its imperial power at the turn of the twentieth century, the vast majority of Spain’s American empire had disintegrated almost eighty years earlier during the wars of independence. However, although Britain maintained relatively few formal colonial settlements in continental Latin America, it operated a large and well-developed informal empire which precipitated the demise of Spanish-America and the rise of U.S. imperialism in the region.<sup>2</sup> Following the dissertation’s examination of an Anglo-Latin American political and literary sphere, this chapter asks, what is gained by taking seriously *Nostromo*’s portrayal of Latin America as an informal colony of the British empire? Moreover, how does altering the map of British imperialism to include its informal peripheries change the way literary studies understands the development of the twentieth-century Anglophone novel? Reframing one of the field’s central authors, whose

life and works have been particularly influential in expanding the purview of Anglophone literature to include representations far beyond the British metropole, through the geographies of the Hispanophone Americas challenges the field's assumptions about the locations, languages, and traditions of Anglophone cultural production.

As a colonial-era novel set in an ostensibly post-colonial world, *Nostromo* captures the early stages of a global transformation that would have a lasting impact on the twentieth-century and beyond. Published the same year as the U.S. takeover of the Panama Canal project in 1904, Conrad wrote *Nostromo* in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898 in which the United States stripped Spain of its last remaining imperial possessions in the Americas and the Pacific. As the letters to his close friend R.B. Cunninghame Graham show, Conrad was following the conflict closely. In many ways, the War of 1898 signaled the arrival of the U.S. as a major imperial threat in the twentieth-century, portending the rise of the American Century. Written almost immediately after, *Nostromo*'s portrayal of Latin America as an informal British colonial periphery tied to Anglophone Europe via extensive economic development projects often funded by U.S. investments lays the foundation for a re-organization of power that would come to pass not long after the novel's publication. Much of the novel is told in disorienting flash-backs and repetitions from the perspective of a distant European observer, a sometime traveler to South America "for business or curiosity" (72).<sup>3</sup> *Nostromo*'s use of cyclical, dysfunctional, or compulsive storytelling mirrors the repetition of colonial structures in the post-colonial era. As characters come to terms with the trauma of recurring social and political disruptions to Costaguana's national development, they articulate – or fail to articulate – versions of a story that might give

order to the violence, placing it in the context of a forward-moving narrative of economic development and stability encapsulated by the characters' faith in "material interests." Embedding these accounts within its own repetitive structure, *Nostromo* reveals the informal ties of British imperialism that propel Costaguana's development into a model of neo-colonialism, capturing in its cyclical form the structure of a world-system in which post-colonial states exist as both colonial and neo-colonial territories. Moreover, by framing the modes of nineteenth-century European discourses about Latin America with the novel's complex sociopolitical narrative of a compromised nation, *Nostromo* undermines the dominant logic of imperialism undergirding much circulating knowledge about the region, creating an early twentieth-century anti-colonial discourse whose critique of global capitalism and U.S. imperialism precedes the post-colonial Anglophone novel and captures elements of a twentieth and twenty-first century novelistic tradition in Latin American letters.<sup>4</sup>

Set in an imaginary South American republic in the 1890s, the novel traces a complicated path through the events leading up to a civil war. Following the early-eighteenth century wars of independence from Spain, Costaguana is rocked by civil unrest and controlled by neo-colonial interests. Charles Gould, the last descendant of a prominent Anglo-Latin American family, returns to the country with his English wife Emilia to reopen the San Tomé Concession, an abandoned silver mine in the country's occidental province of Sulaco previously thrust upon and owned by his father. Despite his father's representation of the mine as a curse, Gould is enamored with the idea of the San Tomé concession as a profitable enterprise with a noble purpose: "What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security.... Only let the material interests once get a firm footing,



and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist.”<sup>5</sup>

In the name of these “material interests,” the Goulds join forces with Sulaco’s creole families to install a five-year dictatorship under Don Vincente Ribiera. However, the Ribiera government’s mandate to ensure the success of the mine and several concurrent economic development projects, including a vast railway system financed by an enormous British loan, is quickly threatened by the Montero brothers, two mestizo military heroes with their own desires to control the nation and its engine of economic development in Sulaco. Faced with the prospect of relinquishing the mine, Gould sees only two radical options: secession from Costaguana or the complete destruction of the mine. As the Monterists advance on Sulaco, Nostromo, the Italian head of the longshoremen in Sulaco, is trusted to lead the daring scheme of transporting a shipment of silver out of Sulaco. By the novel’s end, Sulaco has seceded from Costaguana to become the Occidental Republic, Nostromo is killed while trying to retrieve the silver he has hidden from his employers, and the Goulds have cemented a thriving neo-colony in Latin America while ominous “labour troubles” and another revolution loom on the horizon.

Finding that his memories of earlier Caribbean voyages and possible landing in “Central America” as a young sailor were insufficient to base a novel on, Conrad relied on second-hand knowledge while writing *Nostromo*, including widely circulating histories of the region and personal accounts by friends and Latin American exiles living in London.<sup>6</sup> His potential textual sources for the novel have been well-documented by critics of his work.<sup>7</sup> C.T. Watts provides a detailed account of Conrad’s relationship with R.B. Cunningham Graham, the Scottish author who lived much of his life in South

America. Their friendship was bolstered by several political affinities, including a dislike of U.S. policies in the Americas and a sympathy for Spain during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Watts writes, “Against the background of the jingoistic fervour of the 1890s it is easy to see why Conrad, whose native land had long been the prey of Russian and Prussian imperialism, frequently addresses Graham as an ally in a lonely battle against widespread folly and perception.”<sup>8</sup> As their correspondence shows, Graham introduced him to Pérez Triana, the exiled son of a Colombian president and later dignitary to Britain, who recounted tales of his country’s civil war.<sup>9</sup> In his writings, Pérez Triana, who likely served as the model for the long-suffering creole statesman Avellanos, was critical of the sudden U.S. support for Panamanian independence from Colombia, widely understood as an attempt to gain control of the canal project.<sup>10</sup> As Chapter 4 examines in detail, Juan Gabriel Vásquez’ 2007 novel *The Secret History of Costaguana* casts Pérez Triana as Conrad’s unwitting victim and the novelist as thief of his story and, by extension, the story of Colombia and Panama. In *The Secret History*, Conrad appropriates Pérez Triana’s story without attribution or acknowledgement of the specific national histories involved.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Conrad wrote to Graham, “Costaguana is meant for a S. Am<sup>can</sup> state in general; thence the mixture of customs and expression. C’est voulu. I remembered but little and rejected nothing,” acknowledging the second-hand nature of his relationship to South American history and a desire for abstraction.<sup>12</sup> Woven into the novel, Conrad’s second-hand sources produce a rich layer of textual mediation, highlighting the extent to which history is both a source of information and a formal question in *Nostramo*.

Offering an account of Costaguana's transition from a formal Spanish colony to a post-colonial state characterized by competing national and imperial claims, *Nostramo* reveals the contours of a global imperial system centered around control of the Americas. British imperialism in Latin America in particular differed from its practices elsewhere primarily by the absence of large-scale territorial colonization. Fighting for control over what was ostensibly Spanish-American territory, the coasts and outer edges of the continent were as far as British forces advanced in their formal colonization efforts. Notable colonial settlements and administered territories included British Guiana in Northern South America, British Honduras in Eastern Central America, and the Falkland Islands off the Southern coast of Argentina.<sup>13</sup> However, despite the Spanish crown's attempts to control commerce within its American empire, Britain and other competing interests developed extensive economic networks in the region. These ties made it beneficiary, and indeed possible, for British agents to advance revolutionary efforts against Spain during the early-nineteenth century. In fact, Mary Louise Pratt writes, "Many scholars doubt the Spanish American independence movements would have been crystallized at all had it not been for the relentless pressure of North European capital. Many also regard expansionist European interests as one of the reasons the movements did so little to change basic socioeconomic structures."<sup>14</sup> As she points out, creole families, or the American-born descendants of peninsular Europeans, welcomed British help against Spain in part to fend off liberal Spanish reforms aimed at improving the conditions of indigenous people.<sup>15</sup> Luz Elena Ramirez locates this history in what she calls *Nostramo*'s vision of "Andean development," arguing that the novel captures the sense in which Latin American leaders welcomed British and other investments. For

these leaders, independence was seen as a double-edged sword: the freedom gained from ousting the colonial power also created a dangerous power vacuum.<sup>16</sup> Instead of seeing close economic relationships with North European countries as a potential neo-colonial trap, revolutionary figures – including Simón Bolívar, who once praised British fighters as “Saviors of my Fatherland” – sought to deepen these ties to ensure the success of both the immediate struggle for political autonomy and the long-term prospect of nation-building.<sup>17</sup> The British Empire then was instrumental in the Latin American fight for independence from Spain, a role it was able to play in large part because it had developed trading relationships throughout Spanish-America, which *Nostramo* captures in its representation of Costaguana as an informal British colony.

By the late nineteenth-century, most of the Hispanophone Americas, corresponding to what historians today call “Latin America,” had become independent republics. In sharp contrast to its actions during the “Scramble for Africa,” the British were, for the most part, content to work with local governments directly administering their own territories. This was partially because there was no need to use overwhelming force in order to further their own economic interests and partially because the threat of infringing on U.S. interests ensured no other European powers would likely make formal territorial claims. The U.S. adopted the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, demanding that European powers stay out of South America. For Britain, this relieved the need for the most extreme protectionist practices.<sup>18</sup> As trade and commerce grew unimpeded, territorial conquest and political administration were abandoned for the *laissez-faire* approach of building economic ties. As a result, post-independence Latin America is often characterized as a British and U.S. “dependency,” which “implies no *formal*

subordination of satellite to metropolis. Subordination may arise from economic imbalance and – a possible corollary – ideological or cultural ‘hegemony.’”<sup>19</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain was able to exert political and economic influence without directly occupying or administering territory, a condition post-colonial critics often associate with “neo-colonialism.” Although the differences between formal and informal imperialism or colonialism and neo-colonialism are not always easy to distinguish in the context of complex historical practices, informal imperialism and neo-colonialism, as they are used in this dissertation, shift the focus away from forms of imperial domination which traditionally involve territorial control to those in which control is exercised primarily through economic forms of coercion, including dependence on metropolitan markets for trade, goods, or investments, thereby eliminating the need for physical occupation of one state by another.<sup>20</sup> Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Latin America was a key node in the networks of informal imperialism through which empires advanced their economic ties to territories they did not administer and protected their access to emerging global markets.

*Nostramo* links the history of British involvement in Latin America’s independence movement with the region’s incorporation into informal imperial networks. While many characters remember Costaguana’s war of independence fondly as an honorable struggle for freedom, they regard with contempt the current cycle of endless wars. Giorgio Viola, the Genoese owner of an inn frequented by Italian emigrants and English engineers, idolizes Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Bolivarian struggle for “liberty” and all those Europeans who fought alongside him, noting that “everywhere he had seen Englishmen in the front rank of the army of freedom,” Englishmen like Gould’s

grandfather (25). Arriving in Montevideo in 1842 and making a name for himself as a heroic fighter in Uruguay's post-independence civil war, Garibaldi became an enduring transatlantic symbol of the "struggle for liberty."<sup>21</sup> If Viola represents an Old World revolutionary romanticism, Gould embodies the relentless drive for economic development in contemporary Costaguana. Mr. Holroyd, a powerful head of steel and mining interests in the U.S. who agrees to finance the Goulds' re-opening of the San Tomé mine, observes his holdings from a skyscraper in San Francisco, firmly believing that extraordinary wealth and power is his divine right as a U.S. citizen. He tells Gould,

"Time itself has got to wait on the greatest country in the whole of God's universe. We shall be giving the word for everything; industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics, and religion, from Cape Horn clear over to Smith's Sound, and beyond too, if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole. And then we shall have the leisure to take in hand the outlying islands and continents of the earth. We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not." (58)

Holroyd's striking pronouncements have been read as a foreshadowing of the coming American century. However, it had in many respects already arrived when Conrad began *Nostromo* in 1902, about four years after the U.S. took control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam (perhaps those "outlying islands" referenced by Holroyd). Conrad was critical of U.S. interventions in Latin America, seeing them as evidence of a new imperial power driven by insatiable greed.<sup>22</sup> The overlapping narratives of nineteenth-century Latin American decolonization on the one hand and twentieth-century U.S. imperialism on the other render visible a world-system of global imperialism that situates *Nostromo* firmly within a post-colonial Anglophone and contemporary Hispanophone tradition which literary studies of British imperialism fail to capture.

As many studies of *Nostromo* have noted, Latin America is a post-colonial setting that has been, in some senses, re-colonized. For example, in *Culture and Imperialism*

(1993), Edward Said describes *Nostromo* as “set in a Central American republic, independent (unlike the African and East Asian colonial settings of his earlier fictions), and dominated at the same time by outside interests because of its immense silver mine.”<sup>23</sup> Like other examinations of the novel, Said identifies a difference in the “Central American” setting – which is “independent (unlike the African and East Asian colonial settings of his earlier fictions)” – and praises Conrad’s “prescience” in forecasting the “unstoppable unrest and ‘misrule’ of the Latin American republics (governing them, he says, quoting Bolívar, is like plowing the sea)” as well as “North America’s particular way of influencing conditions.” As Said argues, “No American has been immune from this structure of feeling” which Holroyd’s speech, quoted above, conveys and yet few have examined Conrad’s “implicit warning” about “its redolent self-congratulation, its unconcealed triumphalism, its grave proclamations of responsibility.” Nonetheless, despite this difference and remarkable prescience, Said critiques *Nostromo* in the context of Conrad’s broader strengths and limitations about imperialism. For, although “Conrad allows the reader to see that imperialism is a system,” his position within a dominant Western cultural sphere prevents his ability to see resistance against that hegemonic system as genuine: “he writes as a man whose *Western* view of the non-Western world is so ingrained as to blind him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, *Nostromo* “embodies the same paternalistic arrogance of imperialism that it mocks in characters like Gould and Holroyd.”<sup>25</sup> Helping to shape decades of critical conversations about the Anglophone novel and imperialism, Said’s analysis has spawned several responses around the nature of *Nostromo*’s – and Conrad’s – ideological attitude toward

imperialism, including some defenses of the novelist and “a warning that superficial analyses will not reveal the complexity of Conrad’s politics.”<sup>26</sup>

Rather than engage in a defense or condemnation of the novel’s imperialist politics, this chapter advances Said’s proposition that Conrad’s novels present a vision of “imperialism as a system.” Moreover, the particular “system” that *Nostramo* is produced by and produces for the reader is the geopolitical, social, and economic world of the “Americas,” which, as the Introduction discusses, “was the constitutive act of the modern world-system” without which “there could not have been a capitalist world-economy.”<sup>27</sup> Turning to the particular histories and cultures of this geography as a central part of *Nostramo*’s imperial world-system, this chapter recovers the Hispanophone foundations of the Anglophone novel, providing an alternative framing for the seemingly binary and oppositional nature of some approaches to Conrad. Conrad’s background as the son of an aristocratic Polish family that was persecuted for its revolutionary ideals by a powerful imperial power may have predisposed him to see the world according to the creole characters that populate *Nostramo*. The educated and elite class of Latin American exiles he had access to in London while writing the novel, particularly in the form of Pérez Triana, would have provided a window into the life of these creole families whose world-view may indeed reflect a certain “paternalistic arrogance” toward the mestizo, indigenous, and African populations of Latin America as well as a belief in the superiority of European civilization. Conrad’s facility with this discourse and representation of the revolutionary movements *after* independence through creole eyes advances Eurocentric approaches to the Global South. Yet, Conrad’s experiences as a sailor in the Caribbean while still employing his Polish identity and his subsequent



evolution into a writer living in metropolitan London as a naturalized British citizen points to the transnational nature of his identity and the world which he navigated, complicating understandings of the novel as simply reflections of a metropolitan European culture.

While taking into account the creole perspective that *Nostromo*'s narrator often reproduces, this chapter uncovers the broader world-system of the Americas as the driving force of the novel: Conrad did not foreshadow a world of U.S. imperialism and the "mis-rule" of Latin American republics by corrupt foreign and local interests, anticipating the establishment of neo-colonialism as the dominant form of colonial control in the global post-colonial age. Rather, Anglophone literary studies has failed to account for the totality of the historical context in which those forces were already well-underway and cemented by the end of the nineteenth century. Instead of predicting the arrival of a U.S.-led neo-colonial world-system, which had already been coalescing simultaneously and in concert with the early nineteenth-century Latin American independence movements, Conrad's "prescience" lies in his ability to identify, formalize, and destabilize the discourse of economic development and political stability that would come to define a significant tradition of post-colonial theory and writing in the post-45 Anglophone world, and which would, indeed, come to define the field of twentieth-century Anglophone studies. *Nostromo*'s complex chronological structure reflects a world of competing and overlapping imperial and national temporalities: Costaguana is both a colony, post-colony, and neo-colony, because it belongs at once to the spheres of Spanish, British, French, U.S. and Latin American influence. Thus, the novel's form – and critics' persistent assertion that it "foreshadows" elements of the later century –

mirrors the temporal complexity of an imperial system marked by formal and informal spaces whose stages of development must be read across the histories of several empires and nations.

Conrad knew that the U.S. was supporting a Latin American independence movement, not for any political commitment to liberation, but rather to secure the rights to the Panama Canal during a prolonged and bloody civil war in Colombia: “What do you think of the Yankee Conquistadores in Panama? Pretty, isn’t it?” he asked Graham in 1903.<sup>28</sup> Yet, the U.S. move to take the canal, which it secured in 1904, was the culmination of a gradual and clear imperialist development, preceded by the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898. Moving through the world of imperialist British culture, drawing on his voyages to a global Caribbean world, and witnessing the U.S.’s imperial actions in Panama, Conrad understood that the system of imperialism included Latin America as a central location in which the “future” of the formal empire was already becoming the past in its informal peripheries: U.S. actions “tapped into persistent and evolving anxieties about British decline.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, this chapter reads *Nostramo*’s sense of a foreclosed future, in which revolutionary resistance to the neo-colonial regime does not offer a viable alternative to the establishment of “material interests,” as an early twentieth-century Anglophone example of the later post-colonial discourses against triumphant nationalist and imperial narratives. The novel ends with the anticipation of an organized labour movement which will destabilize the neo-colony, a movement created by the very structures of economic exploitation they will seek to destroy. However, the logic of “material interests” remains entrenched in the model of “imperium in imperio” by which the national form relinquishes its sovereignty, creating competing territorial

communities in the “concessions” it grants foreign agents within its boundaries. Thus, *Nostromo* creates the foundation for a later tradition of Anglophone and Hispanophone literatures that renders visible the de-territorializing force of global capitalism as it draws alternative economic and cultural maps over the geopolitical territories that area studies and literature departments often treat as stable and fixed objects.

### **Inhabiting the “Eye:” From a Nineteenth-Century European Discourse to a Twentieth-Century Mapping of Britain’s Informal Colonial Periphery**

The novel begins with a highly-aestheticized collage of images representative of South American nature, presenting readers with a familiar nineteenth-century discourse about the region. Pratt has identified three images that came to stand metonymically for the “new continent” of South America in the early-nineteenth century: “superabundant tropical forests (the Amazon and the Orinoco), snow-capped mountains (the Andean Cordillera and the volcanoes of Mexico), and vast interior plains (the Venezuelan *llanos* and the Argentine pampas).”<sup>30</sup> Travel narratives gave shape to these images through the mediating lens of a male European gaze, a “seeing-man” or a disembodied, impersonal, and universal aggregate of the various European explorers who came before him.<sup>31</sup> Mirroring the role of a narrator, this “seeing-man” creates the landscape through the language of the sublime in which the grandeur of the natural world supersedes any particular human histories or individual stories. These images-as-texts are prevalent in *Nostromo*, perhaps most tellingly when the narrator inhabits the position of an “eye” that oversees the terrain, like a drone hovering from above: “From that low end of the Great Isabel the eye plunges through an opening two miles away, as abrupt as if chopped with an axe out of the regular sweep of the coast, right into the harbour of Sulaco” (8). The town is nestled between the Cordillera and the plains, two geographical features

immediately recognizable to metropolitan readers as synonymous with continental Latin America. Sulaco, then, is buried within layers and layers of geographical barriers that represent dominant modes of thinking about and reading the nineteenth-century landscape. *Nostromo* appropriates these images and embeds them within a detailed social, political, and economic history of a nation.

As one of the many traveling figures in the novel, the narrator broadly explains the changes occurring in Sulaco, Costaguana's resource-rich yet isolated province that contains the San Tomé silver mine: He was a traveler to Costaguana who ran in the same Anglo-American and creole circles of many of the central characters:

Those of us whom business or curiosity took to Sulaco in these years before the first advent of the railway can remember the steadying effect of the San Tomé mine upon the life of that remote province. The outward appearances had not changed then as they have changed since, as I am told, with cable cars running along the Street of the Constitution and carriage roads far in to the country, to Rincón and other villages, where the foreign merchants and the Ricos generally have their modern villas, and a vast railway goods yard by the harbour, which has a quay side, a long range of warehouse, and quite serious, organised labour troubles of its own.

Nobody had ever heard of labour troubles then. (72)

His vague reference to "labour troubles" gestures to the future, realized by the end of the novel, when Sulaco becomes the capital of the new Occidental Republic. Yet the narrator does not seem to have witnessed Sulaco's transformation first-hand, having only seen the "steadying effect" of the silver mine before the railway project was completed. His appreciation for the mine's ability to stabilize the politically volatile nation locates him as someone who would have been readily welcome at the Gould home. Yet, the tension between these "steadying effects" and the related "labour troubles" hints at his complicated relationship with one of the novel's key themes: the establishment of neo-colonialism in the post-colonial state. While the narrator identifies himself as a casual

traveler to Latin America for “business or curiosity,” *Nostromo* reveals the inner workings of Sulaco’s creole families and their intimate Anglo-Latin American acquaintances, showing a much closer relationship to South America’s elite than a mere traveler would have.

Conrad’s narrator both knows much more than anyone else in the novel (including things no character could have known) and has not actually witnessed many of the central events. These events have already occurred long before the start of the story, and are retold out of sequence by the narrator based on the recollection of several characters. These features give the narrative at once a quality of permanence and transience, as if things have always already happened, yet have never really been told, despite remembrances of events occurring multiple times throughout the novel. In *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson associates this paradox with the novel’s representation of the emergence of capitalism in Sulaco: “Nostromo is, like Lord Jim, the interrogation of a hole in time, an act whose innermost instant falls away—proving thus at once irrevocable and impossible, a source of scandal and an aporia for contemplation.”<sup>32</sup> When the narrator describes the modern villas, railway yards, cable cars, and carriage roads in Sulaco, we know that the town’s capitalist transformation is complete before the civil war that make these economic reforms possible has even begun. We also know that the railway industry is now, like the mine, suffering from “quite serious, organised labour troubles,” the kind of social unrest that a stable government beholden to foreign interests had been expected to prevent. Referencing these labor problems as a uniquely shocking occurrence in the present, the narrator gestures toward a twentieth-century horizon in which resistance to neo-colonial exploitation is a permanent fixture of the modern

landscape. Moving from a simpler traveler to “that remote province” to a shrewd observer of Costaguana’s most powerful families, he negotiates a distance and proximity to the novel’s central events that alternatively mark him as outside and inside the Latin American setting.

Through the eyes of a Spanish-American colonial creole community, *Nostramo* offers an account of British informal imperialism in Latin America, the mostly, though not exclusively, economic system through which British and Anglo-Latin American forces maintained control over the natural resources and political developments of Latin American republics from the early nineteenth-century onwards.<sup>33</sup> While Holroyd represents a looming North American power mostly at the peripheries of the novel, the British act as central economic agents, entering Costaguana as mining engineers, railway workers, shipping company managers, or members of illustrious Latin American families. Viola’s inn is divided into two sections: one side for the English engineers (the “*signori inglesi*”), the other for everyone else (except Costaguana natives, who did not dare intrude into his “Italian stronghold”) (26). Sir John, the chairman of the British railway board, arrives in Sulaco to expedite the development of his project, which includes a 1.5-million-pound loan from Britain. He knows that the “great scale” of his plans are tied to Costaguana’s current government, which would use force against its own people, if necessary, to carry out the plans for a railway. Without the Ribiera government, Sir John risks embroiling Britain in a costly South American war (30, 87). In his reluctance to use force, he articulates official British policy toward Latin America. The pursuit of an informal imperialist practice coupled with the history of advancing decolonization efforts created for British agents an ambiguous place within South

American national developments, an ambiguity which *Nostramo* captures in the figure of Charles Gould.

Sir John's tour of Costaguana to secure land for the coming railway between Sulaco and the interior is made possible by his connection to Gould ("the King of Sulaco"). As a member of the esteemed Gould family and current owner of the San Tomé silver mine, Gould has unparalleled access to Costaguana's elite creole families: "with a relative martyred in the cause of aristocracy, the Sulaco Oligarchs (this was the phraseology of Guzmán Bento's time; now they were called Blancos, and had given up the federal idea), which meant families of pure Spanish descent, considered Charles as one of themselves" (37). From the perspective of those Costaguaneros not of "pure Spanish descent," these creole families represent the oligarchy and aristocracy. Yet, the narrator is careful to point out that they were only called "Oligarchs" by those associated with the ruthless dictator Guzmán Bento, discrediting a negative view of the "Blancos" as a sign of those dark times. Gould's ability to navigate the turmoil of Latin American politics is attributed to his family's existence within the two worlds of British and Spanish-American identity: "He's one of the Costaguana Goulds, pure-bred Englishmen, but all born in the country," Holroyd tells his friends (60). Holroyd, then, is not only investing in a South American mine, but also in the particular embodiment of English racial purity and American birthright that the Gould family possesses. The Gould family's attachments to the land are portrayed as intimate and historical – they have been "liberators, explorers, coffee planters, merchants, revolutionists" – a sharp contrast to the U.S. financier whose interests are primarily financial and capricious (37). Conrad situates the Goulds within a privileged British Anglophone sphere that neither belongs to the

class of old (Spanish) or new (U.S.) colonizers nor to the colonized classes of indigenous, mestizo, or African populations of the Americas.

**“Now the Whole Land is Like a Treasure-House:” *Nostromo* and Post-Colonial Thought**

Conrad’s portrayal of creole intellectuals and political leaders resonates with late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Latin American debates surrounding identity and culture. Thus, Jennifer French argues for a greater consideration of the novel in Latin American studies, pointing out that its interpretation has largely been left “to a European and Anglo-American critical tradition that has tended to read *Nostromo* as either a projection of European (usually Polish or Italian) political issues onto a South American landscape, or as a manifestation of Conrad’s overarching geopolitical vision.”<sup>34</sup> French reveals the similarities between the creole intellectual Decoud, who orchestrates the plan for a civil war that will protect the Gould’s neo-colonial enterprise, and Latin American intellectuals including José Martí and César Zumeta, both writers who sought political exile in New York.<sup>35</sup> Martí’s essay “Our America” (1891) articulates a need for struggling Latin American republics to move past a Eurocentric view of the continent’s development and to abolish the racial inequalities of the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> The threat of neo-colonialism, both from the U.S. and Europe, brought into relief the urgency of creating an inclusive “American” identity that could encompass the region’s many cultural and national forms. As the nineteenth-century came to a close, it was clear to many of the region’s leading thinkers that nearly a century of revolutions, military coups, and dictatorships had brought little relief from, and had in some cases exacerbated, exploitation by imperialist forces. Through its ironic depiction of creole culture, *Nostromo* captures this sense of skepticism and frustration on the part of Latin American



intellectuals who were both beholden to European ideals (and languages) and increasingly aware of their chokehold on the continent.

Decoud's grim assessment of Costaguana mirrors this emergent strain of thought. Having returned to his native country from Paris, where he lived a bohemian life with the rest of his wealthy family and could laugh at the follies of his fellow citizens, Decoud suddenly feels incensed by what he finds there:

“Now the whole land is like a treasure-house, and all these people are breaking into it, while we are cutting each other's throats. The only thing that keeps them out is mutual jealousy. But they'll come to an agreement one day – and by the time we've settled our quarrels and become decent and honourable, there'll be nothing left for us. We are a wonderful people, but it has always been our fate to be” – he did not say “robbed,” but added, after a pause – “exploited!” (127)

Decoud's irritation is triggered by the loud screeching noise of the railway engine as it moves past the Viola house, representing “a new edge on a very old truth” (126). Unable to contain himself, he speaks his mind in the presence of Antonia, Avellanos, and Mrs. Gould, who protests at the injustice of his statement. The novel's final scenes prove him right, as the neo-colonial powers settle on an agreement that will enrich them all. The U.S. is the first government to recognize the legitimacy of the Occidental Republic, putting the necessary stamp of approval on a plan – ironically, Decoud's plan – that will ensure the success of the British-funded railway project (a precursor to the Panama Canal) and Gould's silver mine (348). Yet, in the presence of Avellanos, an ardent anglophile, and Mrs. Gould, the beloved wife of the “King of Sulaco” and the novel's moral compass, Decoud cannot bring himself to say the English have “robbed” Costaguana. Connecting the current state of affairs to Sir Francis Drake's sixteenth-century expeditions, he articulates a trans-historical understanding of Costaguana's past,

present, and future, one that sees clearly the relationship between colonialism's earliest beginnings and its latest iterations.

Yet, if Decoud embodies a particular strain of anti-colonial thought, he also belongs to those families who are too busy "cutting each other's throats" – idolizing Europe and sowing racial divisions – to address the neo-colonial threats to the nation. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon offers a critique of the "national bourgeoisie" in post-colonial Africa that closely resembles *Nostramo*'s portrayal of Costaguana's ruling classes: "Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism."<sup>37</sup> Instead of using the infrastructures established by colonialism to advance the nation as a whole, Fanon argues, the national middle class will simply improve their own lot, demanding control over government and other sectors of society for the sole purposes of transferring wealth from one elite class to another. Because the national bourgeoisie ultimately aspires to imitate the Western bourgeoisie, it will do everything in its power to cater to the latter's desire for business or pleasure in the former colonies. *Nostramo*'s creole and mestizo families, though divided by racial tensions, act out this intermediary role. Indeed, for Fanon, born in the French colony of Martinique and a supporter of anti-colonial efforts in Africa, Latin America was a cautionary tale.<sup>38</sup> He writes, "Latin America, made up of new independent countries which sit at the United Nations and raise the wind there, ought to be an object lesson for Africa. These former colonies since their liberation have suffered the brazenfaced rule of Western capitalism in terror and destitution."<sup>39</sup> Observing Latin America from his late-twentieth century

vantage point, Fanon saw clearly the relationship between the racial system instituted by European colonization and later racial and ethnic tensions in the post-colonial state, exacerbated at every turn by the progress of Western capitalism or, as Gould would call it, “materials interests.”<sup>40</sup>

As facilitators between Europeans and the rest of Costaguana’s society, *Nostromo*’s elite families act as go-betweens, offering up Costaguana’s resources to the highest bidder. Avellanos, the revered statesman who survived unspeakable torture during the past dictatorship, is himself the architect of another dictatorship, one which conveniently suits the purposes of the U.S. and Europe. Driven by an absolute love for his country, Avellanos builds support for the Ribiera dictatorship with eloquent speeches and declarations “of which the echoes reached even Europe” (100). As the novel and Decoud make clear, Europe’s interest in Costaguana is almost exclusively financial (100, 124). Avellanos is revered by metropolitan figures because he believes ardently that nations must pay their debts to other nations in order to be respected, and Costaguana’s debts to Europe are many. He “desired passionately for his country: peace, prosperity, and (as the end of the preface to *Fifty Years of Misrule* has it) ‘an honourable place in the comity of civilized nations’” (103). Avellanos is humiliated by Costaguana’s inability to pay its foreign loans. Indeed, Holroyd brands Costaguana ““the bottomless pit of 10 per cent: loans and other fool investments. European capital had been flung into it with both hands for years’” (58). When the Ribiera dictatorship is finally established, with Gould’s approval and the help of a loan from a U.S. bank located “next door but one” to Mr. Holroyd’s San Francisco building, the era of relative political stability once again encourages European investment (105). Sir John’s railway project, financed by a loan

from Britain, is the biggest of these investments; it is bound up in “a vast colonization scheme” that depends on the absolute power of the mine over national affairs (106).

Avellanos represents the class of educated and “civilized” men whose belief in European superiority is so ingrained that their version of patriotism threatens to mire the country in a permanent cycle of dependence on the very forces of colonialism they had fought to expel.

The narrator does not portray Avellanos as malicious so much as oblivious and elitist. He is often found pontificating to Emilia from his “rocking-chair of the sort exported from the United States” in the Sala Gould, a symbol that the verbose patriot is beholden to foreign interests and a primary vehicle for the establishment of neo-colonialism in Costaguana (39-40, 65, 103, 127, 144). Nobody is a bigger fan of Charles Gould than Avellanos, who proclaims the Englishman a true patriot worthy of his South American country and his wife more of a Costaguanera than those who were born there (39, 65). When the San Tomé mine is successfully re-opened, Avellanos proudly declares it an “Imperium in Imperio” (83, 99). After Montero threatens the Ribiera regime with another military coup, he secures another loan that makes possible a shipment of arms to Sulaco’s regiment in order to fight off the insurgent forces:

Amongst his other activities of that stirring time, Don José had become the chairman of a Patriotic Committee which had armed a great proportion of troops in the Sulaco command with an improved model of a military rifle. It had just been discarded for something still more deadly by one of the great European powers. How much of the market-price for second-hand weapons was covered by the voluntary contributions of the principal families, and how much came from those funds Don José was understood to command from abroad, remained a secret which he alone could have disclosed; but the Ricos, as the populace called them, had contributed under the pressure of their Nestor’s eloquence. (109)

Avellanos' pure political ideals are undermined by their connection to shady transactions involving foreign capital and a well-established global market for weapons of war. The circulation of these arms from Europe to Latin America prompts readers to ask: who pays for the weapons that power revolutions? What banks are involved in providing loans to finance political movements? In other words, whose interests are at stake in the creation and development of insurgencies, civil wars, and other kinds of unrest (the separation of Sulaco from Costaguana, Panama from Colombia)? Avellanos' lengthy speeches and pronouncements – that “eloquence” which Gould believes is found in abundance in the Americas – are intimately connected to those “material interests” that make his patriotic aspirations possible through colonialist channels.

The Blanco party's animosity toward the Montero brothers and their supporters is at least partly rooted in a racist belief that mestizo politicians should not rule the country. Led ideologically by Don José and financially by Gould, Holroyd, and Sir John, the party is made up of elite conservative families with a stake in maintaining the status quo in so far as their material and social wealth is concerned. Their primary concern is the ability to bribe political leaders. Decoud, whose earlier articulation of the perils of neo-colonialism is one of the clearest condemnations of imperialism in the novel, implies as much when he admonishes Antonia for their collective failure to bribe Montero: “Could [Gould] not, a gentleman, have told this Sir John what's-his-name, that Montero had to be bought off—he and all his Negro Liberals hanging on to his gold-laced sleeve?” (132-3). Calling him a “stupid, ferocious Indio,” he explicitly associates Montero's indigenous race with corruption and greed. Aware of the racial identities undergirding the class system, the narrator emphasizes Decoud's whiteness, calling him “the very type of a fair Spanish

creole” with a “golden beard” (111-3): “His full round face was that of a warm, healthy creole white which is never tanned by its native sunshine. Martin Decoud was seldom exposed to the Costaguana sun under which he was born” (111). Decoud’s white complexion becomes symbolic of a colonial ideology embedded within creole society. By marking Decoud as a member of Costaguana’s white creole class who is even further removed from his American identity by his residence in Paris, *Nostromo* clearly aims to connect the Blanco party with a specific racial, cultural, and class identity tied closely to a fundamental belief in European superiority.

Yet, Decoud is also portrayed as a man without a country, a Conradian figure who retains an ironic distance from the provincial follies of his compatriots, yet is frustratingly (and tragically) attached to their fate. ““Why need a man be thanked for returning to his native country?”” he asks Antonia when she welcomes him back from France (115). Don José’s patriotic schemes provide Decoud with a sense of legitimacy to counter the weightlessness of his previous existence. In France, he could be “Frenchified” but not French, giving off “an idea of French elegance” without possessing the actual thing (111). In his early journalistic endeavors, before proclaiming himself the “Journalist of Sulaco,” he writes as an “idle boulevardier, in touch with some smart journalists, made free of a few newspaper offices, and welcomed in the pleasure haunts of pressmen” (143). Partly due to his tendency to go on tangents about the absurdity of Costaguanan affairs, Decoud is asked to write an article on the country’s political condition by his French friends for “an important Parisian review.” Written in a serious tone but light spirit, the article’s content seems to mirror his diatribes:

...he would explain with railing verve what Don Vincente Ribiera stood for – a mournful little man oppressed by his own good intentions; the significance of battles

won, who Montero was (*un grotesque vaniteux et féroce*), and the manner of the new loan connected with railway development, and the colonization of vast tracts of land in one great financial scheme. (112)

Later, he would ask his friends what they thought of his writing, considering the whole thing – article, country, and himself as author – a great joke. Like Conrad, Decoud seems to engage in arms smuggling not for any particularly strong political belief, but rather for personal reasons. The absurdity of the mission, something which Conrad would emphasize every time he wrote about his own experience, permeates throughout the novel as just another example of Latin American excess. Yet, Decoud is also consistently the voice of uncomfortable truths in the novel, forcing Don José, Antonia, and Emilia Gould to confront their place within the larger imperialist system they have profited from to various degrees.

Like Decoud, Dr. Monygham's profound cynicism prevents him from espousing sincere political principles, but he also confronts Emilia with their complicity in turning Sulaco into a "Treasure House of the World," perfectly organized for the enrichment of the West. "We all had our rewards," he tells her (364). Dr. Monygham makes a distinction between the law and order established to protect neo-imperialist interests and a genuinely moral system of rule. He predicts – rightly, as it turns out – that those very people who came to the defense of British and U.S. agents would soon enough begin to feel oppressed by the systems put in place to protect the wealth of foreigners and local elites. He asks Emilia to imagine, would the San Tomé miners march down the mountain today to save their Señor Administrador, aligning their own interests as indigenous laborers with those of a wealthy English family and their white creole friends? Alone with her thoughts, Emilia knows that the answer is no: "She saw the San Tomé mountain

hanging over the Campo over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy, more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government, ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness” (373). Alone and childless in “the Treasure House of the World,” Emilia sees “with prophetic vision...the degradation of her young ideal of life, of love, of work” (373-4). The explicit romance associated with these three figures – Decoud (launching a revolution for Antonia’s love), Dr. Monygham (salvaging the revolution for his platonic devotion to Emilia), and Emilia (unable, even in the end, to see anything but perfection in her husband) – contains their observations within the realm of the personal and intimate. Yet, their ability to articulate, both to themselves and each other, the dark reality behind the benign ideology of “material interests” suggests that Conrad locates the novel’s central truths in these absurd, romantic, or disordered visions of the world.

The Montero brothers, leaders of the most recognizably anti-colonial revolution in the novel, are heavily influenced by the cultural and political ideals of the European metropolises. The showdown between the Monterist revolutionaries and the Ribiera government should symbolize the fight between the colonized masses seeking independence from Europe and European descendants in the Americas. Instead, it becomes another example of the corruption caused by Europeanization that afflicts anti-colonial revolutionary movements as much as neo-colonial puppet governments. Born to a poor family and, for all intents and purposes, leading a revolution against Old World aristocratic excesses, the Montero brothers are themselves inspired by tales of French aristocracy. Their origins are unclear; perhaps they had been “brought up by the munificence of a famous European traveler” or perhaps “their father had been nothing but



a charcoal burner in the woods, and their mother a baptized Indian woman from the far interior” (31). Pedrito Montero, the younger brother had spent most of his time in France as part of a vaguely defined diplomatic mission, lounging in Parisian hotels and

devouring the lighter sort of historical works in the French language, such, for instance, as the books of Imbert de Saint Amand upon the Second Empire. But Pedrito had been struck by the splendor of a brilliant court, and had conceived the idea of an existence for himself where, like the Duc de Morny, he would associate the command of every pleasure with the conduct of political affairs and enjoy power supremely in every way. Nobody could have guessed that. And yet this was one of the immediate causes of the Monterist Revolution. This will appear less incredible by the reflection that the fundamental causes were the same as ever, rooted in the political immaturity of the people, in the indolence of the upper classes and the mental darkness of the lower. (277)

By tying the “immediate causes of the Monterist Revolution” to Pedrito’s poor taste in French books, Conrad satirizes the level of European cultural influence on Latin American political movements. For Conrad, the revolutionary movement in Costaguana does not offer a real alternative to neo-imperial politics.

Meanwhile, government officials currently in place exhibit the same tendencies. Before committing himself to a civil war, Gould keeps his mine operating by bribing politicians throughout Costaguana. One of these, a peripheral figure never given a proper name, is described ironically as,

a great man of another sort, with a dark olive complexion and shifty eyes, inhabiting then the Palace of the Intendencia in Sulaco, and who piqued himself on his culture and Europeanism generally in a rather French style because he had lived in Europe for some years – in exile, he said. However, it was pretty well known that just before this exile he had incautiously gambled away all the cash in the Custom House of a small port where a friend in power had procured for him the post of sub-collector. That youthful indiscretion had, amongst other inconveniences, obliged him to earn his living for a time as a *café* waiter in Madrid; but his talents must have been great, after all, since they had enabled him to retrieve his political fortunes so splendidly. Charles Gould, exposing his business with an imperturbable steadiness, called him Excellency. (67-8)

Gould strikes the official as “Cold, dull. No intellectuality. Red hair. A true Englishman. He despised him” (69). The politician’s “dark olive complexion” is immediately tied to the untrustworthiness of his “shifty eyes,” echoing the racism undergirding Decoud’s earlier descriptions of Montero’s indigenous background and Don José Avellanos’ absolute terror of “Negro liberalism.” With figures like Decoud and Pedrito Montero, *Nostromo* astutely identifies the moral decay of figures who see Europe, particularly France, as the highest achievement of culture. These characters in “exile” escape to Europe to live carefree bohemian lives, passing through cafes and returning to Costaguana with illusions of grandeur and a belief in Europe’s ultimate superiority.

The ironic stance toward Latin American affairs that characterizes both Decoud, the narrator, and, to some extent, Dr. Monygham stems from Conrad’s identification of something flawed in the neo-colony. The irony surrounding Avellanos’ patriotism is that it is financed by British and U.S. capital in the service of an economic and political project that benefits the new imperialists much more than Costaguana: the very engines of national stability and prosperity are those that will, when the fighting starts, tear the country in half, effectively separating Don José from his beloved nation and resulting in his spiritual and physical death. Decoud instinctively understands the conflict of interest inherent in the Gould-backed Ribiera regime and Don José’s brand of patriotism, but he is motivated to help by his love for Antonia and a self-destructive nihilism. When Antonia takes up Don José’s fight at the end of the novel, proposing to annex Costaguana as well and threatening to oust those neo-colonial powers that refuse to support a new revolution, Dr. Monygham, the English doctor and Emilia’s admirer, makes his most memorable pronouncement in the novel, often read as Conrad’s final word on the coming

century of neo-imperialism: “There is no peace and rest in the development of material interests” (366). *Nostromo*’s reproduction of a Eurocentric world-view from the perspective of elite, primarily white creole families or European travelers obscures a fundamental tension between the racist representation of anti-colonial forces and the weight of the novel’s anti-colonial arguments.

The complex relations between the key players in the novel illustrate the challenge *Nostromo* poses for both Conrad’s early-twentieth century metropolitan readers and contemporary critics. As a neo-colonial fiction about a country that has undergone formal decolonization, the novel disrupts traditional metropole-colony relations often found in colonial or imperial narratives. *Nostromo*’s plotting of imperialism includes several layers of colonization and decolonization history along with cultural systems that are alternatively local and foreign. If it is true that the Goulds are neither colonizers nor colonized, foreign nor native (and neither are the creole families who surround them, despite their troubling connection to the Spanish empire), it also true that those very categories that delineate identity in imperial narratives lose their organizing power: If, as the novel suggests, an English man who grew up in England and marries an Englishwoman – the Gould family, we are told, “always went to England for their education and for their wives” (36) – can be as South American as any other Costaguanero, what is the fundamental meaning of “native”? And if mestizo and indigenous characters like the Montero brothers, who claim to represent anti-colonial causes, ultimately espouse European world-views, where exactly is the “foreign” located? *Nostromo* highlights identities that escape traditional definition by nationality, race, or cultural background, capturing the colonial legacy of European, African, and Amerindian

integration as well as the post-colonial processes challenging those legacies. Although Conrad's adopted nation remained a powerful colonizing force into the twentieth-century, the messy neo-colonial and post-colonial relations between characters and cultural systems in *Nostromo* reflect a world in which what is native is coming from the outside and what is foreign is coming from the inside.

### **Latin America in the Anglophone Novel**

Latin America has been a prominent setting in many twentieth-century novels, including those by Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and Malcolm Lowry. Long before the global post-colonial age and the collapse of the British Empire, Anglophone writers turned to the Western Hemisphere to represent the aftermath of decolonization. Through various political, cultural, and social lenses, they captured the racial and socioeconomic changes of new republics within a neo-colonial system. Yet, it is a comparatively under-explored geography for Anglophone literary critics. Mariano Siskind asks,

Why has the South American corpus in Conrad's work not been addressed in literary criticism? That is, in considering the spatial constructions in *Nostromo*, why has there been no differentiation, in terms of the historical and narrative particulars, from other landscapes such as Africa and Asia, beyond noting the ungovernability of South America?<sup>41</sup>

While much work has been done to change this in the case of *Nostromo*, the region as a whole remains outside the purview of colonial and post-colonial literary scholars working on English-language literatures. This chapter suggests that part of the issue lies in a desire to read Latin America allegorically as a reflection of other more prominent or familiar colonial settings that fall within formal imperial boundaries and reflect traditional metropole-colony relations. *Nostromo*'s British characters are primarily economic agents,

some of whom are descendants of those who aided the fight for independence from Spain. Their activities reveal the region's status as an informal colony of the British Empire, even as it remained within Spain's cultural and linguistic sphere and would soon be drawn into the U.S.' economic and military orbit. Conrad's replotting of Costaguana's history into a cyclical and repetitive narrative structure that casts doubt on historical progress mirrors the structure of overlapping colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial temporalities, which prevents the realization of the promise of independence movements because resistance fails to address the economic roots of "imperium in imperio."

## CHAPTER 2

**Informal Empire in Turmoil: The Mexican Revolution, Race, and Modernism's  
Hispanophone American Routes in D.H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent***

In D.H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*, Kate Leslie, the forty-year old Irish widow and protagonist of the novel, has a conversation with Don Ramón Carrasco, a charismatic Mexican acquaintance, about whether or not she should stay in Mexico. Having recently lost her husband and with two fully grown children from a previous marriage, Kate finds herself visiting Mexico at a moment of transition. When her American family members have to return to the U.S., she has to make a decision: she can go back to Europe with her old life now fundamentally over or she can remain in Mexico, where she fears the dark spirit of the American continent will take away her liberty. ““There is no such thing as liberty,” Don Ramón tells her, ““You only change one sort of domination for another. All we can do is choose our master””<sup>1</sup> At that very moment, while mourning the loss of her beloved husband who died fighting for the cause of Irish liberty, Kate does not have the time nor the will to indulge her enigmatic companion's provocations; “The immediate question was whether she should stay in Mexico or not.” Yet, as the novel progresses, Kate and Don Ramón debate one of the fundamental questions raised by anti-colonial movements of the twentieth century: how do decolonized nations maintain sovereignty after independence? Written in revolutionary Mexico by a writer whose most well-known works focus on domestic English settings, *The Plumed Serpent* does not fit into a literary framework that privileges metropolitan centers and locations. Instead of emphasizing Western European locations within and outside texts, Lawrence's novel shifts the attention to the Mexican countryside and

Britain's Celtic fringes, portraying Mexico and Ireland as comparative peripheries: territories on the outskirts of the world-system that share sociopolitical and cultural affinities by virtue of their resistance to metropolitan centers.

The novels taken up in this project, including Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*, unsettle these established geopolitical and cultural maps in different ways. Conrad's *Nostromo* dramatizes the system of informal imperialism by establishing Costaguana as a periphery of the British empire, complicating both Spanish and British imperial histories based largely on the existence of formal colonial bonds. If Conrad registers a particularly British anxiety about creeping U.S. influence in South America, it is because Britain was a well-established metropolitan power in the region. In *Nostromo*, London effectively displaces Madrid as the imperial center that shapes the political and economic affairs of Costaguana. The ease with which Conrad's colonial novel supplants one metropolitan center (Spain) for another (Britain) betrays the existence of an extensive Anglo-Latin American relationship without which his central fiction would not be possible. Latin America functions as a neo-colonial territory in early twentieth-century Anglophone texts, shaping the novels' mappings of imperial relations. Lawrence captures this system after the emergence of the United States as a major world power, a reality which Conrad's 1904 novel defers into the future, and in the midst of one of the largest anti-colonial, social revolutions of the twentieth-century. *The Plumed Serpent*'s story of an Irish woman's entanglements in Mexico takes place after World War I and the Mexican Revolution significantly altered the nature of Britain's informal empire in Latin America. Rather than portray Britain as a powerful actor in domestic affairs, the novel considers Mexico's effect on British identity, asking to what extent the troubled question of

Britain's internal cohesion, already severely threatened by Irish independence, is reflected in events occurring in distant Mexican provinces. By comparing Mexico's national conflict to Ireland's political struggles, Lawrence establishes a relationship between the Latin American and British peripheries that creates alternative Anglo-Latin American bonds as the twentieth century moves toward the global age of decolonization.

Recently, Gayle Rogers has called for a reconsideration of modernist studies through the lens of non-metropolitan locations and languages, asking, "How do Anglophone scholars move beyond thinking about the English language, or about Anglophone modernists, as the only starting point, endpoint, or center of gravity for studies of translation in global modernisms?"<sup>2</sup> His analysis of the relationship between two peripheral figures – the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore and the Spanish poet Juan Ramón Jiménez – sees Anglophone modernism as a "temporary stopping point" for their movement across a "Global South/European South" axis connecting India and Spain. Tagore traveled through English, becoming a temporary sensation in Anglophone circles, into Spanish (by way of Jiménez' translations), where his influence, Rogers points out, has arguably been more substantive and long-lasting. Rogers' pressing question highlights the importance of moving beyond the established pathways of Anglophone critique, which more often than not tend to reinforce "Euro-American languages and literary institutions" as the core around which all other languages and histories revolve. Relationships and representations that do not centralize the metropolitan centers of London or Paris are unlikely to receive the same attention as those that do. Thus, the picture of modernism that emerges reproduces the same core-periphery geographies of Western/Northern European literary-imperial histories while authors or works that



challenge these geographies remain marginal, alternative, or excluded altogether.

Following this line of inquiry, this chapter considers *The Plumed Serpent*'s portrayal of two peripheral locations (Mexico and Ireland) in the context of an Anglophone modernism that was shaped by developments in the Hispanophone world. Produced in Mexico and published near-simultaneously in London and New York, Lawrence's novel raises the possibility of a world literature structured by – and through – the peripheral geography of the Americas where a strain of revolutionary modernism located radical possibilities in provincial areas.<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Plumed Serpent* and Modernism's Hispanophone Routes**

*The Plumed Serpent* begins in Mexico City, where Kate finds herself on vacation after the death of her husband, Joachim Leslie, a famous Irish independence leader. At a dinner party, she meets Don Ramón Carrasco, a well-educated creole landowner living in the countryside. When he invites her to visit his hacienda in the small lakeside town of Sayula, she tentatively takes him up on his offer. Wanting to get away from Mexico City's incessant commotion yet not ready to return to Europe, where her life's opportunities seem to be waning, she travels to Sayula and takes up a house there. Much of the plot occurs here, in the Mexican provinces, where rebellious political factions pursue their own agendas of violent revolution. One of these factions is led by Don Ramón, who claims to want an end to the Mexican people's subjugation to national elites who have sold out the country to foreign interests. To restore Mexico to its indigenous roots, he enlists the help of General Cipriano Viedma, or Don Cipriano, a fierce general of largely indigenous descent who leads an army only sometimes loyal to the central government. From Sayula, Don Ramón and Don Cipriano lead a revolt against the

Catholic church, replacing all religious images and objects with Aztec symbols and fundamentally transforming the fabric of provincial life. At first presenting themselves solely as a religious movement, the men of Quetzalcoatl eventually seek to overthrow the government and institute a theocracy. Kate is both a witness to and a participant in Don Ramón's plans. She marries Don Cipriano and accepts a place in their new pantheon as the goddess Malintzi. The novel is presented largely through her eyes as she comes to terms with her husband's death, her disappointment with modern European civilization, and the potential regeneration offered by life in the Mexican provinces.

As Kate becomes embroiled in Don Ramón's plans, the novel develops a sustained and significant comparison between the national provinces in Mexico and the Celtic provinces of Britain. The two nations exist as peripheral territories in multiple imperial systems that cut across several continents experiencing strong nationalist movements for independence from formal and informal imperial bonds. However, Lawrence's novel is not just interested in their comparison as nations. Instead, *The Plumed Serpent* advances a comparison between a national province and an imperial province based on their resistance to metropolitan demands, a resistance which is grounded in the continuing presence of pre-colonial social forms. Now marshalled in the service of anti-colonial movements, these forces, which have long-existed alongside colonial regimes, serve as direct challenges to the Western European world order. "Mexico is another Ireland," Don Ramón tells Kate, adding, "Free Mexico is a bully, and the old, colonial, ecclesiastical Mexico was another sort of bully....and liberty is a change of chains" (64). Speaking directly to the fight for independence in Ireland (and implicating its religious identity), the novel imagines societies reaching into their deep

pasts, before the colonial period and the formation of the modern nation-state, for their cultural foundations, echoing Wai-Chee Dimock's "deep time" for literary studies.<sup>4</sup> By deploying the pre-colonial indigenous as an operative anti-imperial category, *The Plumed Serpent* enables alternative trans-peripheral mappings of relations among marginalized nations that need not necessarily involve the system's core and which cut across the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, uniting their anti-colonial revolutionary fringes. These fictional mappings draw a direct line of comparison between Britain's Celtic fringes and Mexico's provincial towns. When he left England in 1919, Lawrence was eager to escape the country's repressive nationalist politics. Thus, he traveled away from the European heartland toward North America where he found autonomy from national demands, a thriving marketplace for his works, and a vibrant modernist culture in the revolutionary Mexico of the 1920s. Through his writings, Mexico and Ireland become locations on a modernist map that plots engagements – both fictional and otherwise – at the edges of Euro-America.

Applying his skill for portraying modernity's disruptive effects on rural settings to an unfamiliar national context, Lawrence turns a provincial Mexican town into a reflection on the provinces of the world-system, including those within the Europe itself. Even within the U. S. and Mexico, already peripheral spaces in metropolitan world literature models, Lawrence established himself in the more remote locations of the Southwest, Lake Chapala, and Oaxaca, rather than New York and Mexico City.<sup>5</sup> On the shores of the lake, Northwest of Mexico City, he rapidly accomplished his goal of drafting the first version of the novel in just under three months. Lawrence wrote his second draft of the novel in Oaxaca, Southeast of the capital, after a short trip to

England.<sup>6</sup> In addition to removing the distractions of acquaintances and urban life, Mexico's provincial locations connected him to landscapes and peoples that would feature heavily in his work. The lake serves as the backdrop and vehicle to a physical as well as symbolic journey Kate undertakes in her search for a mystical connection (71-87). His travels also led Lawrence to recently excavated archeological sites where the remains of pre-Columbian civilizations were once again on display. Lawrence and Frieda visited the ruins at Teotihuacán, on the outskirts of Mexico City, where he first saw the plumed or feathered serpent of Quetzalcoatl.<sup>7</sup> The provinces of Mexico provided a rich cultural and religious history that Lawrence could mine for sociopolitical alternatives to nationalism, socialism, and capitalism. They also provided him with a model of comparison across continents that was not routed through the centers of the nation or Europe, but through the peripheries of both.

### **Lawrence, Revolutionary Mexico, and Modernism in the Americas**

By the early 1920s, when Lawrence began to write *The Plumed Serpent* in Mexico, the British had lost considerable influence in the Western Hemisphere. The end of the war marked a fundamental change in relations between Europe and the Americas. The outward dominance of the U.S. in dictating national developments in Latin America became increasingly pronounced following the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the acquisition of the rights to the Panama Canal in 1904.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Central and South American countries underwent a drastic and destabilizing economic reorganization caused in part by developments in Europe. World War I radically disrupted the trading networks supporting British economic activity in Latin America and redirected them

toward the U.S. and Germany.<sup>9</sup> The increasingly difficult trading environment in countries such as Argentina, where the British had enjoyed a large amount of influence, forced British governments to decide whether to intervene or defer to local interests. They rarely chose to formally intervene, including in Mexico where the Revolution of 1910-1917 ushered in a nationalist government that was particularly hostile to British interests.<sup>10</sup> The Mexican Revolution overthrew the government of Porfirio Diaz, whose dictatorship helped establish a flourishing trade relationship between Britain and Mexico. Thus, British businessmen and politicians often regarded the revolution negatively, deeming the participants to be lawless bandits and hoping in vain that the U.S. would intervene to restore order.<sup>11</sup> Beginning in 1911, several successions of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary governments carried out a series of nationalist reforms that would last until 1940. Meanwhile, European powers were heading toward the first major confrontation of the century that would reshape not only Western Europe but also the Western Hemisphere and colonial peripheries elsewhere. The U.S. emerged from World War I in a stronger, though not unchallenged, regional and global position.<sup>12</sup> In post-war Mexico, Lawrence witnessed the realization of Conrad's earlier prognostications: the decline of British influence in Latin America and the establishment of U.S. hegemony in the world.

While these conditions strained economic and political ties between Britain and Mexico, they did not signal the end of all relations between the two countries. As Jennifer L. French points out, the prominence of the U.S. in staking its territorial claims to Latin America has largely obscured Britain's role in the region, creating what she calls an "Invisible Empire" in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup> This informal

empire, she argues, did not become visible in Spanish American writing until the 1920s, when the effects of World War I revealed to many writers the extent of their nations' dependence on British economic demands and led to increasing social unrest.<sup>14</sup>

Contemporaneously in Anglophone letters, several British writers turned their attention to Mexico, where one of the earliest social revolutions of the century had unsettled the neo-colonial ties between the metropole and Latin America. These novelists include Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, and Malcolm Lowry, representing an important facet of the twentieth-century Anglophone canon oriented toward the Americas.<sup>15</sup> *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) captures the immediate aftermath of revolutionary fighting in the 1920s, when the newly installed (and often short-lived) governments sought to stabilize the country, implement reforms, and curb foreign power. Waugh and Greene's later novels, *Robbery Under the Law* (1939) and *The Power and the Glory* (1940) respectively, focus on the persecution of Catholic priests that stirred outrage in Britain while Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), written in 1938, depicts an ex-consul who remains in Mexico after the British broke diplomatic ties with the country over the nationalization of the oil industry. The decades following World War I, then, proved decisive for the future of a long-established but often overlooked neo-imperial system that would, as the century progressed, recede further into the background of historical accounts. The effects of the Mexican Revolution reverberated in the British metropole as few events in the Latin American peripheries had done before, leaving behind an Anglophone literary legacy that remains scarcely explored.

The same anti-cosmopolitan strains that made British business in Mexico difficult may have appealed to Lawrence, who was profoundly disillusioned with liberal

democratic principles in Western Europe.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the novel portrays European civilization as reeling from the mass destruction of World War I and seemingly at the end of its development, the inevitable conclusion of colonial greed and an insatiable appetite for modernization. Lawrence links the “collapse of the white man” in Mexico to the imperial project’s humanizing mission: “In attempting to convert the dark man to the white man’s way of life, the white man has fallen helplessly down the hole he wanted to fill up. Seeking to save another man’s soul, the white man lost his own, and collapsed upon himself” (69). The novel’s emphasis on the white man’s soul implies a civilizational crisis beyond political and economic decline, a crisis of identity for which Lawrence sought radical solutions. Kate wonders if America is the “death-continent, the great *No!* to the European and Asiatic, and even African *Yes!* Was it really the great melting-pot, where men from the creative continents were smelted back again, not to a new creation, but down into the homogeneity of death?” (original emphasis, 68). “But yet! But yet! The gentle voices of the natives” suggest another meaning to America: the pre-Columbian stones in the National Museum, the pyramids at Teotihuacan, and the snakes of Quetzalcoatl strike Kate as examples of a primitive Mexico that remains alive beneath the Spanish churches and plazas (70). The novel registers Mexico’s archeological findings as both an object of horror and fascination for Kate, often adopting a familiar European attitude toward native cultures. Yet, it also employs indigenous cultures to critique European imperialism and predict the end of white civilization in Mexico, undermining the stability of a strictly Eurocentric primitivist discourse. In indigenous America, Lawrence intends to find the “roots” of all civilizations, the “deep places” from which individuals spring up and, “like leaves, and aeroplanes, blow away on the wind in what

they call freedom” (71). In the decade following the Mexican Revolution, Lawrence perceived, with dread and wonder, a new period of human history routed through the Americas, which could still be freed from modernity’s encroachment.

Lawrence’s vision of America as a site for European regeneration situates him within a tradition of interwar modernism connecting artists in Europe and the Western Hemisphere through a shared commitment to the idea of “Europe.”<sup>17</sup> Gayle Rogers has identified numerous periodicals, translations, and other intellectual exchanges that formed part of this transnational modernist network which sought to redefine European civilization by seeking its cultural instantiations on the margins of the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, creating in the process a rich literary and cultural history.<sup>18</sup> If European civilization was declining on the continent, they thought, its values could still be found and salvaged in the places it had touched. Although rarely discussed in this context, Lawrence’s dark, anti-European version of America challenges the cosmopolitan modernism practiced by these elite European and creole intellectuals, who believed that a rejuvenated West would bring progress to all communities involved in its re-creation. Dread and destruction pervades his Mexican landscape even as the novel articulates a potential resolution found in the continent. ““It may be you need to be drawn down, down, till you send roots to the deep places again. Then you can send up the sap and the leaves back to the sky later,”” Ramón tells Kate. The antidote to Europe’s decline could not originate within colonial culture as it did with the project of a rejuvenated West, but rather must reside in the indigenous traces left behind by centuries of colonization. In this, Lawrence echoes the nationalist and nativist critiques of cosmopolitan cultures, which were accused of continuing the imperial project of Europeanization begun by



colonial regimes. Fiercely anti-colonial yet deeply invested in primitivism, anti-cosmopolitan yet embedded in the transnational modernist cultures of its time, *The Plumed Serpent*'s contradictions illuminate the radical modes of thought circulating through the period and shaping Lawrence's art during a profound moment of crisis in the metropolitan centers.

Although Lawrence would not arrive in the Americas until 1922, his relationship to the Western Hemisphere was long-established by the North American publishing networks that kept him viable as a writer through the difficult years of World War I and beyond. When he left England in 1919, Lawrence was an outsider to both his fellow citizens and his literary contemporaries.<sup>19</sup> Against the backdrop of World War I, writers in Britain were vulnerable to censorship and susceptible to the demands of national politics, demands which Lawrence resisted. His ties to Germany – his wife, Frieda, was German and they often traveled there to visit her family – made him a target of surveillance. Further, the publication of *The Rainbow*, deemed obscene by some readers, and an anti-war story, "England, My England," in 1915 brought him to the attention of government censors.<sup>20</sup> In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence tells the story of a provincial English family over three generations as they experience the disruptions of industrialization. The novel was tried successfully under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 and received little defense from Lawrence's publishers or friends.<sup>21</sup> The remaining copies were destroyed and the book was unavailable in England for eleven years. *The Rainbow*'s sequel, *Women in Love*, resumes the tale of sisters Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, following them and their love interests to a dramatic conclusion in the Alps. Following the controversy over *The Rainbow* and the increasingly hostile suspicions leveled against

him by British authorities, Lawrence was unable to find a publisher for *Women in Love*, which was completed in 1916 but would not come out until 1920. As a result, he began to consider the U.S. as an alternative marketplace for his writings. During this period, Lawrence started on his first project directly addressed to an American audience, *Studies in Classic American Literature*. In 1923, he would finally complete and publish the first U.S. edition of *Studies* while living in New Mexico. Nine of Lawrence's books with his American publisher, Thomas Seltzer, would be published first, and sometimes only, in the U.S.<sup>22</sup>

After the war, Lawrence continued to regard a move to the U.S. with intrigue, but he was not ready to leave Europe altogether.<sup>23</sup> When the Lawrences were granted passports to leave England, they traveled to Italy, where they had lived previously. In Italy, he wrote or completed a series of works, including the novels *The Lost Girl*, *Mr. Noon*, and *Aaron's Rod* as well as several short story and poetry collections, a travel book, a play, and other non-fiction works. Leaving Europe was a momentous decision for the Lawrences, reflecting a physical as well as symbolic detachment from the continent that had caused them much pain but had also been their home, even when England itself was inhospitable.<sup>24</sup> When they decided to leave, they did not travel directly to the U.S. from Italy, but instead traveled to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) for a very brief period, Australia for a few months, and finally to the American Southwest, where they would stay for almost three years in New Mexico. Lawrence wrote very little in Ceylon, but completed a novel, *Kangaroo*, in Australia. His novels of this time period – *Aaron's Rod* (1922), set in the English midlands and Italy, and *Kangaroo* (1923), set in Australia – reflect Lawrence's deeper pre-occupation with the individual's role in society following

the war. Both novels feature men struggling to be free from the demands placed on them by family obligations and political movements.<sup>25</sup> His next long novel, *The Plumed Serpent*, which he wrote in two stages in Mexico from 1923 to 1925, also features strong male leaders dissatisfied with the current social order, but this time they offer a solution to the problems they encounter. Returning to the perspective of a female character, Lawrence casts the central character as the one struggling to reconcile her desire to be a modern European woman with her strong attraction to the traditional patriarchal values of the men around her. Although *The Plumed Serpent* is perhaps his most extreme novel of this time, advocating for a shift from the modern nation-state to a pre-modern theocracy, it builds on the questions he had begun to ask with *The Rainbow* and continued to pursue in various works. In Mexico, Lawrence extended his consideration of how provincial settings register disruptive national and global developments from England to the colonial peripheries, involving all of the world-system in his search for another path forward.

Despite his fraught relationship with England, the extended time he spent outside of the country, and the trans-Atlantic networks through which his works circulated, Lawrence is often read primarily as an English writer whose attention was limited to the national provinces that serve as the settings of his most well-known works, including *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, his final novel. Instead, this chapter sees his conscious rejection of English nationalism and his eventual decision to leave the continental community of Europe as enacting a break with the metropolitan Anglophone modernism of his contemporaries, one that connected him to a global modernist circuit in the American peripheries. Recent critical work on Anglophone

modernism has attempted to chart alternative ways of situating early twentieth-century writers whose works do not seem to anticipate the high-modernist style of the 1920s. Howard J. Booth proposes to read E.M. Forster and Lawrence not as “‘reluctant’ modernists,” but rather as writers whose “texts look for alternatives to modernity, often figured in terms of the organic, and a full connection to the surrounding world – a life, in short, beyond alienation.”<sup>26</sup> His engagement with primitivism in *The Plumed Serpent* illustrates a search for a model of uncorrupted consciousness that he believed could still be found in non-Western cultural forms, resistant as they were, in his view, to modernity’s impositions. The novel’s articulation of indigenous religion as containing the path to a full and natural life – particularly for Kate, if she is able to relinquish her stubborn female will – corresponds with his desire to counter the disruptions of modernity by turning to the seemingly whole and organic cultures of non-Western societies. It also reflects Lawrence’s engagement with the modernist cultures of Mexico City, where artists embraced indigenous traditions in their representations as a means of rejecting the neo-colonialism of the past and forging newly inclusive social bonds.

*The Plumed Serpent* centers the intersections of racial, ethnic, and class differences in modern Mexico, where the status of indigenous peoples became a central element of the artistic revival following the political unrest of the revolution. Mexico City in the 1920s was a thriving destination for American and European literary figures who were attracted to the artistic renaissance that followed the revolution.<sup>27</sup> The 1922 murals of Diego Rivera and others were widely publicized in the Mexican press and received acclaim abroad.<sup>28</sup> Rachel Adams has identified “the Mexicanist presence in American modernism” by tracing the work of women artists living in Mexico City during this

Renaissance.<sup>29</sup> The nationalist, often state-sponsored project of *indigenismo*, she argues, was built on a celebration of indigenous culture which sought to unify native populations under a newly integrated national community. Modernist artists engaged in this celebration of traditional cultures in ways that revised the traditional European model, which saw the past as detrimental to formal experimentation.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to Western European contexts, the continuous presence of indigenous peoples and their cultures in Mexico and other Latin American countries, and their consistent exclusion from previous models of national community, made the cultural forms of the past a potential site of resistance for artists seeking to advance the revolutionary project. Mary Louise Pratt has described Latin America's indigenous societies as constituting a central feature of the region's "peripheral modernities," which must account for "the *copresence of modernity's 'selves' and 'others.'*"<sup>31</sup> If modernity's "selves" represent Europe's ideal modern subject (a position occupied by creole elites), its 'others' are those indigenous peoples or African slaves whose cultures and languages could not be captured by models of modernity made available in the European core. Lawrence's primitivism emerges in relation to the particular forms of modernity and the modernist practices found in the cosmopolitan circles of Mexico City, including an attempt to grapple with this "copresence" of modernity's "selves" and "others" through centuries of colonization. In the Latin American peripheries, Lawrence was not isolated from global trends that shaped artistic responses to major social upheavals. Rather, he was intimately connected to the colonial and neo-colonial conditions that, as Simon Gikandi has argued, influenced modernist developments in the European core.<sup>32</sup>

In Mexico City, Kate has access to one of the principal expressions of Mexican modernism in the murals of Diego Rivera. Lawrence frames the murals, which he had visited and disliked, by the novel's critique of the "great script of modern socialism:"

These flat Indians were symbols in the great script of modern socialism, they were figures of the pathos of the victims of modern industry and capitalism. That was all they were used for: symbols in the weary script of socialism and anarchy.

Kate thought of the man polishing his oranges half an hour before: his peculiar beauty, a certain richness of physical being, a ponderous power of blood within him, and a helplessness, a profound unbelief that was fatal and demonish. And all the liberty, all the progress, all the socialism in the world would not help him. Nay, it would only help further destroy him. (44)

Kate rejects depictions of Mexican peasants as symbols of the oppressed, who are only portrayed from an "ideal, social point of view." The novel's scenes of street merchants in the city stand as explicit counterpoints to these one-dimensional images. Descriptions of indigenous Mexicans as "fatal and demonish" indicate the use of a dark primitivism to counter these sympathetic discourses. By distancing the novel from the most popular aesthetic expressions of revolutionary Mexico, which used portraits of indigenous peasants to further anti-capitalist and nationalist causes, Lawrence explicitly refuses an available model for imperial critique and nation-building through a cosmopolitan and state-sponsored celebration of indigeneity. Through the novel's move to the Mexican provinces, Lawrence articulates an alternative to both these cosmopolitan, nationalist celebrations and those imperial discourses used to justify colonial rule.

### **Character, Provincial Settings, and the Nation in *The Plumed Serpent***

The first chapter of F.R. Leavis' book about the works of D.H. Lawrence is devoted to the author's lesser-known novels. Of *The Plumed Serpent*, he wrote, "There is no need to discuss the book in detail; it is the least complex of all Lawrence's novels."<sup>33</sup>

Like Leavis, critics have generally regarded the novel as a failed experiment, too wrapped up in its own ideological fervor to deliver a persuasive story. At times, the novel's investment in its theme – the regeneration of the Mexican people through the resurrection of Aztec gods – interrupts the progression of the narrative. Long descriptions of mythological rituals and religious chants overwhelm the richly drawn scenes of everyday life in the country. Additionally, Kate's preoccupation with race consciousness and her subsequent involvement in a religious cult that emphasizes a rejection of all "foreign" elements is reminiscent of early twentieth-century fascist movements. While Lawrence himself expressed a discomfort with fascism, *The Plumed Serpent* does not often distance itself from its heroine's acceptance of a deeply troubling patriarchal and racialized movement nor does it allow her much room to entertain critique.<sup>34</sup> The first draft of the novel, it seems, would have fared better with modern audiences, partially because it presents a more "exploratory" or tentative account of the religious movement.<sup>35</sup> *Quetzalcoatl*, as the Lake Chapala draft was titled, is half the length of the final draft, with fewer hymns, rituals, and ceremonial details while Cipriano explicitly declaims fascism in an omitted passage. Nonetheless, the final draft's critique of European imperialism and belief in the coming triumph of indigenous resistance movements complicate its characters' more extreme racial and religious ideologies. Meanwhile, the emphasis placed by critics on Kate's failure to express an overt resistance to Quetzalcoatl ignores her character's role in advancing the text's formal re-orientation toward provincial settings, where Lawrence locates the possibility of total social regeneration. By moving narrative action and character development to peripheral regions within the nation, the novel centralizes provincial settings.

For all of its emphasis on the return of a primitive Mexican spirit, *The Plumed Serpent* begins in the country's former colonial center, Mexico City, where an exasperated and exhausted Kate attends the last bullfight of the season with Owen and Villiers (4).<sup>36</sup> The bullfight immediately situates Mexico within a formal Spanish colonial network, having been brought to the Americas from the Iberian Peninsula. The bulls, moreover, have been specifically imported to Mexico City from Spain for this special occasion (4). Disgusted by the gory scene, Kate runs away from the arena. Outside, she is assailed by the sounds, scents, and sights of urban life. The city's masses, cars, museums, buildings, and commerce "oppress" her and she longs to break free. Once inside, she feels at home again: "She was glad to get to her corner in the tea-house, to feel herself in the cosmopolitan world once more, to drink her tea and eat strawberry shortcake and try to forget" (19). Inside the tea-house, Kate is not far away from the comforts of Europe. Mexico City provides her with spaces to eat and drink familiar foods, and to feel part of "the cosmopolitan world once more." The novel registers the city's colonial modernity through its urban landscape: "The buildings were either new and alien, like the Country Club, or cracked and dilapidated with all the plaster falling off" (25). The "new and alien" buildings are comfortable and familiar to Kate, as when she retreats to the tea-house after an uncomfortable outing. However, the neo-colonial, hyper-mechanized character of the city is profoundly unsettling to her, driving her desire to disconnect completely from its social world. She longs "To be left alone, not to be touched. To hide, and be hidden, and never really be spoken to" (93). The driving question that begins the opening chapters is about place: why is Kate in Mexico and where will she go next?



Thus, Lawrence hinges the reader's interest in the novel on Kate's relationship to place – and “place” in Mexico is mapped according to markers of colonial modernity.

Kate's dread at being connected to masses of people and her desire for total isolation from “worldly contacts” and the “mechanical world” are an expression of the novel's desire to turn away from “the world” of Europeanized modernity, toward a fundamentally different way of life (52, 93). About to turn 40, Kate is “Used to all kinds of society” and “watched people as one reads the pages of a novel, with a certain disinterested amusement” (35). Unmoored from her past life, she is seemingly wandering through the world in search of a concrete future, yet she rejects the expatriate community available to her in Mexico City (42). She laments the fact that she is in Mexico, but simultaneously rules out the possibility of returning to Europe. Her strong sense of alienation and disaffection from those around her is embodied by her character's physical movements. She is often described as sitting in the shadows, closing windows and doors, and abruptly leaving scenes. This desire to be disconnected dictates everything from her interactions with other characters to her taste in architecture. She prefers the old Spanish houses with their shadowy patios that “turned inwards” and allowed one “to turn one's back on the cog-wheel world” (93). Her character is an expression of a fundamental desire for dis-location, and her acceptance of the Aztec rituals can at least partially be explained by their appeal to this very desire, expressed as a movement away from the mechanical “world” of modernity. As the novel continues, the Quetzalcoatl rituals are described as a turning “inward:” “He sang in the fashion of the old Red Indians, with intensity and restraint, singing inwardly, singing to his own soul, not outward to the world” (113). Kate's need to escape from the “world” is strongest in Mexico City

because the novel equates worldliness with the cosmopolitan, neo-colonial capital of the country.

In one of the novel's most symbolic episodes, Kate travels by Pullman train (a mechanical sign of modernity's ever-increasing reach) and boat to her rented house in Sayula, where she will join Don Ramón and begin her involvement with the Quetzalcoatl movement. Inside the train, she observes in great detail a microcosm of Mexican society: farmers with their "beautiful serapes," officers with their "heterogeneous bundles," and businessmen with "the oddest luggage, canvas hold-alls embroidered in wool" (74). As the train makes its way through the dry landscape, Kate is occasionally startled by men and women selling goods outside, signs of humanity that she hides from by closing the window (77). When she disembarks, she takes a boat ride across the lake, where she feels "she had met the mystery of the natives" for the first time (83). The two boat rides she takes to arrive at the house symbolize the crossing of a large divide between two seemingly irreconcilable worlds. Her deep connections with the boatmen illustrate the collapse of previously impermeable social boundaries between a white, Anglo-Saxon woman and indigenous men (96). Kate enters a dream-like state as the motorboat moves through 'the fish-milk water,' past an "inaccessible village of pure Indians who spoke no Spanish" (94). When she arrives at the house, she vows "not to get caught up in the world's cog wheels anymore" and begins a literal retreat from the world, by closing all the doors and windows of the house and going to sleep (98). However, she is almost instantly disturbed by the sounds of Juana, her Mexican servant whose "rather plum-in-the-mouth Spanish, adding 'n' to all her words" breaks Kate's sense of peace with the imposition of the sounds of a colonial language on her psyche (98). Even as Kate longs to

be insulated from all worldly forces, she is confronted by Juana's irregular speech, a stark contrast to her idealized journey through a landscape where "pure Indians" spoke no Spanish. Kate finds temporary relief from the "world" in the provinces, but she is quickly reminded that provincial spaces in Mexico are not removed from the modern world that Kate despises. As she observes in the plaza, "Sayula also had that real insanity of America, the automobile" (100). The provinces are volatile places where the contradictions of modernity reach a boiling point, giving life to a movement that seeks to end the mechanization of the "world."

Provincial locations in Anglophone novels have typically been associated with the nineteenth-century novels of George Eliot, whose sleepy settings tended to be located relatively close to the national center, in provinces that were or could be presented as familiar to metropolitan readers, able to stand in as "a miniaturized version of the nation."<sup>37</sup> In contrast to the regional novels of the early nineteenth century, which were often set in the Celtic fringes and depicted a region belonging to the nation, the provincial novels of the Victorian period seemed to contain the nation within them. Lawrence's novels often focus on provincial settings inside England. His last novel (and the only one he would write after *The Plumed Serpent*), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), would return to the English midlands, where a married aristocratic woman finds love with a gamekeeper. However, his settings' relationship to the national community remains unstable. National identity in *The Plumed Serpent* introduces elements of cultural and racial ambiguity. Kate's Irish identity places her at the margins of British society even as she expresses views that would be familiar to metropolitan European readers. Meanwhile, the provinces' antagonistic relationship to the central government creates an internal

national conflict mirroring Kate's double-identity. The character of the Mexican nation is a hotly debated question in the novel and Ireland's position as a European "other" complicates Kate's relationship to Mexico. The two parallel questions of identity – who is Kate and what is the character of modern Mexico – intertwine when she becomes a Mexican deity through her marriage to Don Cipriano. Thus, national and personal identity collide in unexpected, unsettling ways in Lawrence's Anglo-Latin American provincial novel.

The novel's preoccupation with national identity is evident in character descriptions that associate a person's nature with the country of their birth. During the opening bullfight scene, Lawrence uses nationality as a convenient shorthand for a series of character traits associated with belonging to that particular group:

The Mexican half raised himself, and looked around murderously at Villiers. Physical violence was being offered, and the only retort was death. But the young American's face was so cold and abstract, only the eyes showing a primitive, birdlike fire, that the Mexican was nonplussed. And Kate's eyes were blazing with Irish contempt. (8)

The primary quality that identifies the unnamed man, Villiers, and Kate is their nationality: Mexican, American, and Irish. Lawrence's insistence on tying nationality to the natural character and physical traits of a person, often through Kate's impressions of national types, reveals an acute awareness of the strength of these attachments. Even Kate's reluctance to belong anywhere is attributed to her Irish character; "She was never *in* any society: too Irish, too wise" (35). Owen Rhys, Kate's American cousin, and Villiers, his American friend, are strongly defined by their Americanness. Owen "was a born American, and if anything was on show, he had to see it" (4). This trait, moreover, is more powerful than Owen's deeper impulses. Kate eventually distances herself from her

companions, because “She was weary to death of American automatism and American flippant toughness” (83). Meanwhile, Kate’s impressions of Mexico are almost always attempts to define the essential character of the nation. People, buildings, goods, cars, and animals all become signifiers of national identity. To her, “Mexico meant the dark-faced men in cotton clothes, big hats: the peasants, peons, *pelados*, Indians, call them what you will. The mere natives” (66). The night is not just any night, but a “Mexican night” during which the “grisliness and evil” of the country comes out (23). And her small hotel in Mexico City, “foreign” and full of Italians, is “kindly and human,” “like Italy” (18). Places and people in the novel are attached to national character in a cumulative and consistent way.

Yet, the power of national referents in the novel also reveals an anxiety about representing a social world in which traditional categories no longer produce the expected identities. Even as *The Plumed Serpent* categorizes individuals according to race and nation, it simultaneously introduces cultural and linguistic combinations that destabilize these same categories. Don Ramón, for example, is Mexican, but his character defies the established traits accorded by Kate to most citizens of Mexico. The Mexican nationality is at odds with the essence of his character. His race is described as “almost pure Spaniard, but most probably” containing “the blood of Tlaxcalan Indians in his veins as well” (55). Thus, he is a mixed Mexican character who contains the “blood” of Spanish colonialists and indigenous Americans, a common trait of the American-born population following centuries of colonization. However, because Don Ramón is more Spanish than Indian, he troubles Kate’s categorizations of the Mexican people. Lawrence imagines an affinity between Kate and Ramón that is founded on his essential difference from the

“real” Mexico. When she looks into his “knowing brown Spanish eyes,” an instant understanding emerges; they are “Europeans in essence,” after all (34). Ramón connects with Kate on a quasi-cultural-genetic level that presupposes race as tied to a civilizational identity passed down through generations. Kate insists on seeing Ramón’s European essence, telling Cipriano, “And I *don’t* think he is Mexican...He seems to me to belong to the old, old Europe” (185). In the American Southwest and Mexico, Lawrence encountered racial identities that fundamentally redefined the relationship between character and nation. When race or bloodlines do not appear on the surface to match the character of the nation, national identity is thrown into relief as an unstable and contradictory category. The provincial setting in modern Mexico serves as a battlefield for competing visions of the nation.

Characters like Ramón contain racial identities that cannot be traced to a single origin. When he began to write about Mexico, Lawrence had already encountered the indigenous peoples of the U.S. Once in New Mexico, he was able to experience first-hand the Native American culture he had only read about, primarily in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*.<sup>38</sup> He was struck by the jarring disconnect between his experiences and Cooper’s representations. The sense of radical racial otherness he expressed eventually made him uncomfortable with the existence of mixed marriages, particularly between Mabel Sterne Luhan, his white patron in New Mexico, and her Native American husband, Tony Luhan. Some of this discomfort can be found in his portrayal of Kate’s decision to marry Cipriano, which she only makes after overcoming her great apprehension about “marrying a man of another race” (245). In Mexico, Lawrence encountered a nation that was deeply divided along racial lines, yet nonetheless

united under the same banner of citizenship and with a highly-mixed population.

Characters often express anxiety about importing white American and European ideas while much of the indigenous population remains destitute, unable to take advantage of the relief offered by these systems because they are disconnected from positions of power by racial and cultural hierarchies dividing the population (44, 224-5, 238-9). Ramón wants to change Mexico from the inside out: “Politics and all this *social* religion that Montes has got is like washing the outside of the egg, to make it look clean. But I, myself, I want to get inside the egg, right to the middle, to start it growing into a new bird” (original emphasis, 173). He believes that the Mexican nation has the potential to be reborn into a true representative of its people, but it can only do so if it becomes completely detached from “foreign” ideas, those colonial imports that obscure its actual nature. Colonial conditions in Mexico require Lawrence to revise the metropolitan equation of race and nation to character.

Lawrence’s Mexico breaks the bonds between nation, race, and character. During a conversation over dinner, Toussaint, one of Kate’s male acquaintances, explains the differences between the races – “pure” Spaniards, “pure” Indians, and “the half-breed or mixed blood Mexicans” – as she listens in rapture (56). According to Toussaint, in a mixed-race person, the blood of the races (in this case, Indian and Spanish) co-mingle but never fully fuse together. Instead, their nature is shaped by an imagined clash of civilizations, a biological war occurring inside the body and manifesting itself on a collective level. Under this model, there is no possibility of a future without racial discord because the “blood” of one race is fundamentally different and discordant from that of another. The mixed individual remains, for Toussaint, Ramón, and Cipriano, forever

divided by the races inside. Kate herself expresses this same sentiment when looking at the murals in Mexico City. The murals' grotesque caricatures of social types enrage her, "And perhaps, she thought to herself, the white and half-white Mexicans suffered some peculiar reaction in their blood which made them that they too were almost always in a state of suppressed irritation and anger" (47). Mexico's social ills are tied to this racial mixture, raising similarities between Ramón's Quetzalcoatl and other dangerous political movements based on theories of racial purity.<sup>39</sup> Toussaint believes that "Freedom" cannot help the Mexican people because they are not themselves free from within, a sentiment Kate will later express about the Irish; "They are at the mercy of their own natures," their mixed blood (55). When the nation is at odds with the powerful notion of civilizational race, it becomes superfluous and even detrimental to the development of an individual or a people's character. The colonial history of the Americas introduces an element of racial conflict to the production of national identity that Lawrence approaches from the scale of civilizations competing with one another for control over an individual's dominant traits, a struggle that is expressed collectively in the apparent rage and turmoil felt by Mexican mestizos.

### **Mexico and Ireland as Comparative Peripheries in the Anglo-Latin American World-System**

Kate first encounters Don Cipriano after the bullfight in Mexico City, when she runs away from the gory scene without her companions. In the pouring rain, he offers to help her find a car to take back to her hotel. While waiting, Kate notes his "very English English," a product, he tells her, of his seven-year education in England (16). When Kate tells him her family name, he responds that he knew James Leslie, Joachim's brother, from his time in Oxford. "He was killed in the war," he mentions, prompting Kate to



exclaim, ““How small the world is!”” (17). When they meet again at a tea-party, he asks if her husband was Joachim Leslie, ““the famous Irish leader?”” (61). In this “small” world, a stranger in Mexico happens to know Kate’s late husband and his brother because of their connections to Irish politics and “the war.” Comparisons between Ireland and Mexico are common, particularly when Kate finds herself disillusioned with Joachim. Kate at once admires and despises his zeal for Irish independence, a cause she now regards as worthless (149-150). Her dissatisfaction with his death drives her closer to Don Ramón and Don Cipriano, who express a deep distrust for national institutions, often in song or verse form (232-5, 328). Kate’s feelings for Ireland reflect an exasperation with national revolutions, as she tells Don Ramón’s wife, Doña Carlota, “What does Ireland matter, what does nationalism and all that rubbish matter, really!” (150). Through Kate and Don Ramón, the novel draws a comparison between the two struggling nations based on their geopolitically disadvantaged position in relation to over-bearing neighboring countries.

Lawrence’s text employs a metropolitan imperial racial discourse associating the Irish with various non-white “others.” As the first colony to gain independence from Britain in the twentieth-century, Ireland occupies an important if ambivalent place in the post-colonial world. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which brought an end to the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) with the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, was signed two years before the Lawrences sailed for North America. The English approach to the Irish vacillated between treating them as equitable members of the union and infantilized members of colonized peoples.<sup>40</sup> As a British subject, Kate internalizes the idea of the Irish as Europe’s racialized “others.” Vincent Cheng has argued that, by

the end of the nineteenth century, Britain had developed “a discourse racialized along a binary axis that posited the English ‘race’ as one pole (the positive) and the Irish as the other (the negative), in which ‘Irish’ was defined as everything not desirably ‘English.’”<sup>41</sup> Lawrence portrays Irish identity, embodied by Kate, as a marker of belonging to what the narrator calls the “dark” and “backward” races of the world rather than to the white and advanced civilizations of Europe: “Ah the dark races! Kate’s own Irish were near enough for her to have glimpsed some of the mystery. The dark races belong to a bygone cycle of humanity. They are left behind in a gulf out of which they have never been able to climb” (133-4). The novel’s comparison between Ireland and indigenous Mexico engages in a writing practice dating back to the Elizabethan period in which the Irish were compared to Native Americans who were portrayed as primitive and uncivilized.<sup>42</sup> In *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Lawrence again makes use of this discourse by comparing “the Irish/Celtic race” to “the black race not merely in terms of tropes, but insistently as *fact*, as literal and biological relatives.”<sup>43</sup> However, in *The Plumed Serpent*, this metropolitan primitivism is used to undermine the logic of the imperial project.

Kate’s character struggles with what it means to be both Irish and English in a setting where her identity is determined primarily by her association with the white Anglo-American class of foreigners. Kate sees herself as an outsider to all social groups because of her Irish identity. She “was more Irish than anything, and the almost deathly mysticism of the aboriginal Celtic or Iberian people lay at the bottom of her soul” (377). Although she identifies closely with the “Celtic” and “Iberian” cultures, the Mexican people she encounters, particularly those who work for her, do not recognize her cultural identity, often referring to her as a “gringuita,” a white woman (134, 305). All white

foreigners, someone tells her, are outsiders, even if they have lived in Mexico for a long time (92). Kate resents being grouped with them, feeling the undercurrent of blame that accompanies the label. She knows that white foreigners are, at least in some cases, the perpetrators of exploitation, “But, then, Kate was not responsible for that. And Juana seemed almost to make her so” (134). Kate is made to *feel* responsible for the actions of a group she does not identify with by her servants’ insistence on calling her a “niña” and a “gringuita” (98, 203, 249). At times, she also considers herself English or European (383). She pines for the familiarity and safety of “Christmas at home, in England,” with “the buses rolling on the mud in Picadilly, on Christmas Eve, and the wet pavements crowded with people under the brilliant shops” (391). On the other hand, she proclaims that her Irish identity allows her to retain a connection to “a residue of memory, something that lives on from the pre-Flood world” (377). Kate’s negotiation of what it means to be an Irish woman in Mexico highlights the problematics of race present on the European continent, particularly in Britain’s Celtic fringes. The text’s relation to indigenous Mexico is complicated by Kate’s troubled identity as both a British subject and a member of what Britain considered its own “backward” race. In this sense, the novel is doubly-positioned: it is as an imperial text whose attitudes toward racial “others” would resonate strongly with metropolitan European audiences, and it is a text whose protagonist strongly identifies with these “dark” races.

Lawrence suggests that Kate’s Irish character allows her to access a position in Mexican society that is unavailable to many other white characters in Mexico, even those who have lived in the country for decades and are Mexican citizens. Juana compares Kate to the Virgin Mary, also called “Niña,” because they are both white foreigners who came

from across the sea, foreshadowing Kate's entrance into the movement's religious system (203). When she joins Don Ramón's pantheon as a goddess, Kate takes an Aztec name and wears the traditional robes of the Mexican people (299). Her character's decision to become Mexican offers a potential solution to the intractable problems presented by colonialism not only in Mexico, but in Ireland as well:

Ireland would not and could not forget that other old, dark, sumptuous living. The Tuatha De Danaan might be under the western sea. But they are under the living blood, too, never quite to be silenced. Now they have to come forth again, to a new connection. And the scientific, fair-and-square Europe has to mate once more with the old giants. (378)

When Kate first meets the male Mexican characters, she is impressed by their explanation of Mexico's colonial condition. Toussaint asks, "In what spirit have the Spanish and other foreign fathers gotten children of the Indian women? What sort of spirit was it? What sort of coition? And then what sort of race do you expect?" (56) In other words, the mixed-race Mexican people embody the violence of colonization. Their existence will "go on making everybody despair, till it destroys itself." Kate's transformation into Malintzi reverses the effects of cultural colonization through the inclusion of a white Irish woman into the pantheon of Mexican gods.<sup>44</sup> Her mixed-race union to Don Cipriano makes use of the marriage trope to join two societies whose underlying affinities can mask otherwise untenable differences.<sup>45</sup> The union of an Irishwoman and an indigenous Mexican man serves as a metaphor for the geographic unification of disparate Anglo-Latin American peripheries in the world-system.

The novel turns the similarities between Ireland and Mexico as struggling nations into deep affinities between the Irish and Mexican people as a race. Like the Irish, Mexico's people appear to form neither a nation nor a race. The figures that dot the

Mexican landscape are primarily men of different occupations and social classes who nonetheless share “something mysteriously in common.”

They were of many tribes and many languages, and far more alien to one another than Frenchmen, English, and Germans are. Mexico! It is not really even the beginnings of a nation: hence the rabid assertion of nationalism in the few. And it is not a race.

Yet it is a people. There is some Indian quality which pervades the whole. Whether it is men in blue overalls and a slouch, in Mexico City, or men with handsome legs in skin-tight trousers, or the floppy, white, cotton-clad labourers in the fields, there is something mysteriously in common. (67)

To Kate, this something is “some Indian quality” that transcends both nationality and race, and fundamentally defines a “people.” The “alien” tribes and languages would be enough to divide powerful nations in Europe, but in Mexico they form the foundation of the social fabric. An indigenous or “Indian” identity, which will be central to the teachings of Don Ramón and Cipriano, reminds Kate of her own Irish people (133-4). Under conditions of unequal power, nationalism is not a symptom of a fully formed nation, but rather the absence of one. Race, which Lawrence variously defines as blood and civilization, becomes a much more powerful and defining social force.

For Kate, Mexico’s relationship to the U.S. in the novel is an analogy for Ireland’s dependence on others, and thus represents her late husband’s ultimate failure. Having lost her beloved husband to an abstract cause, Kate is deeply disturbed by the human desire to fight for social progress, particularly when the end result is merely an illusion of progress. Her deep dissatisfaction with the world around her seems to be fueled in part by the realization that her husband’s life may have been wasted in the service of a dream that would never materialize. Joachim’s fight for “a free Ireland and a great Irish people” was flawed, she believes, because, “the Irish aren’t a great people anymore, and you *can’t* make them free. They are only good at destroying – just mere

stupid destroying. How can you make a people free, if they *aren't* free? If something inside them compels them to go on destroying” (150). The question of how to make a people free – and, indeed, what the meaning and possibility of freedom is for an individual and a collective – preoccupies Ramón as well. He is equally disappointed with the state of Mexico. Having won independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century, the modern nation-state as he sees it has failed to provide security, economic prosperity, or social equality for the vast majority of its citizens. Instead, it is beholden to U.S. industries and European ideals: foreign machines and a foreign religion have brought neither relief from poverty nor spiritual salvation for the vast majority of Mexico’s people. He articulates the need for a Mexican religion, one that draws on Aztec mythology rather than European gods, as a project of national regeneration. Rather than argue that the gods of Quetzalcoatl are in opposition to those of Catholicism, he instead sees them as Mexican “manifestations” of a deeper, mystical connection to one God, from which all religions may draw their legitimacy. This ultimate God may very well originate from and live in Rome, but he cannot look European: ““God must come to Mexico in a blanket and in *huaraches*, else He is no God of the Mexicana, they cannot know Him”” (326). Ramón understands the fundamental problem plaguing peoples in nations that were once dominated by more powerful actors: decolonization cannot simply be political; it must be cultural and economic as well.

### **Uneasy Alliances: From Indigenous Mexico to Britain’s Celtic Fringes**

*The Plumed Serpent* marginalizes both national and imperial metropolises in two primary ways: 1.) it moves narrative action from Mexico City to the Mexican provinces, where characters occupy fluid and at times contradictory identities within and outside the

national community, and 2.) it connects the cultures of the national provinces to those of Britain's peripheries, insisting on a bond shared by indigenous Mexico and the Celtic fringes of Europe. Through this association between national and imperial provinces, the novel raises questions of collective and personal belonging that emerge and develop outside of metropolitan spaces. *The Plumed Serpent*'s setting is connected to the racial divisions inside European territory through Kate's divided identity. Most Mexican characters do not distinguish a racial difference between Kate and other European and American white women. Kate, however, feels this difference acutely, thinking through what it means to be a member of a non-English, racial class in Europe, even as she uses an imperial metropolitan discourse to portray Mexican indigenous people as dark and primitive. These configurations of national and racial identity in peripheral regions disrupt assumptions about the relationship between provincial settings and homogenous national communities. These settings contain characters whose racial and cultural identities are not necessarily visible to the naked eye, yet have a profound influence on their development and the national psyche. In *The Plumed Serpent*, the provinces are the site of a deeply divided populace fighting for the soul of the nation, a battle that takes place at the level of the individual and the collective.

Lawrence's use of the provinces as setting reflects a long history of Anglophone novelistic developments that began in the British peripheries rather than its center. As Katie Trumpener argues in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, "English literature, so-called, constitutes itself in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through the systematic imitation, appropriation, and political neutralization of antiquarian and nationalist literary developments in Scotland, Ireland,

and wales.”<sup>46</sup> The lack of a coherent cultural identity at the imperial center, the home of “Englishness,” is matched by a heightened form of cultural nationalism at the peripheries, where a series of literary genres capture the character and history of a particular place.<sup>47</sup> It is in these locations that the Anglophone novel develops its attention to regional identity, a theme that Lawrence would draw upon repeatedly to create his own kind of regionalism.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the British peripheries give rise to forms of nationalism unavailable to the center. Narratives which capture these nationalisms serve as models for writers inside England seeking to represent the nation at the center of an increasingly sprawling formal and informal empire. In Mexico, Lawrence was connected to active provinces that had an outsize influence in artistic representations of modernity.

The number of artists whose works focus on peripheral regions underscores the importance of rural spaces in Americanist modernist production. Mary Louise Pratt writes, “the fact is that in the Americas, north as well as south, modernity produces a flourishing of experiments in nonurban aesthetics, of artistic projects anchored not in the city but in the countryside, the jungle, the mountains, in border regions, and in the heterogeneous social order.”<sup>49</sup> *The Plumed Serpent* makes use of these landscapes to portray a chaotic and volatile movement spreading throughout the countryside and finally threatening social stability in the centers of power: “It was as if, from Ramón and Cipriano, from Jamiltepec and the lake region, a new world was unfolding, unrolling, as softly and subtly as twilight falling and removing the clutter of day....slowly spreading and penetrating the world, even into the cities” (326). The reversal of influence, whereby the provinces serve as powerful generators of change in the cities, presents a different kind of social development narrative, one that challenges the presumption of the



metropole's rule over the provinces and reinforces the importance of provincial developments in determining events at the center. Lawrence's metropolitan fiction (which was always interested in marginal domestic spaces) encounters a Hispanophone American modernism interested in provincial spaces as sites of social progress and vitality. By transposing his regional English novel to a neo-colonial setting in the Americas, he connects Anglophone literature's interest in regional identity to the Hispanophone world's revolutionary aesthetics.<sup>50</sup> In his novels, Lawrence wrestled with his conflicting attachments to both England and Europe. *The Plumed Serpent* weaves the national community into and out of regional provinces (the American Southwest, Central and Southern Mexico), global peripheries and cores (Mexico and Ireland in relation to the U.S. and Britain), continental and hemispheric collectivities (all of America and Europe), and trans-continental linguistic blocs (the Anglophone and Hispanophone world). Lawrence's fiction crosses the British-Latin American nexus this dissertation maps, a network which includes the peripheral and semi-peripheral territories of the British empire. As the English metropole registered the losses of both its Irish fringes and Latin American neo-colonies, Lawrence imagined an Anglo-Latin American world-system structured by comparative peripheries whose cultural forms developed outside of metropolitan centers.

## CHAPTER 3

**Neo-Colonialism in the Age of Decolonization: Cuba, U.S. Imperialism, and the Collapse of the British Empire in Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana***

When Graham Greene set his dark comedy in 1950s Havana, he explained his decision as almost a lucky accident, insisting that the true subject of the novel had little to do with the political background of the city.<sup>1</sup> *Our Man in Havana* (1958) was meant merely as a light entertainment that would expose the inadequacies of British intelligence in a city where Greene had always had a good time. Cuba at the time was ruled by Fulgencio Batista, a dictator friendly to U.S. influences who would soon be ousted by Fidel Castro's revolution. However, Greene's focus was elsewhere: "I had not wanted too black a background for a light-hearted comedy, but those who had suffered during the years of the dictatorship could hardly be expected to appreciate that my real subject was the absurdity of the British agent and not the justice of a revolution."<sup>2</sup> This chapter shows that, far from obscuring the political background of late 1950s Havana, the novel brings into relief the problems plaguing the city. In minimizing "the justice of a revolution," Greene trained his eye on the injustices of neo-colonialism. The novel makes use of the tropes of the detective and parodic spy genre to avoid explicit discussions of life under a police-state, particularly with its main character, Jim Wormold, operating obliviously as a well-meaning and melancholic European emigrant protected from torture by his British citizenship. Yet, as Wormold falls deeper into the plot of the spy novel – and, simultaneously, travels deeper into Cuba's interior – he becomes the primary vehicle through which the political realities of the neo-colony become legible to Anglophone readers. In the context of the Cold War, *Our Man in Havana* (1958) presents writing as

an act of encoding and reading as an act of decoding the conditions of neo-colonialism that structured social and political life in Cuba.

The novel depicts Havana as a neo-colonial urban landscape with a dark edge. The city is a foreign tourist's paradise, with bars, clubs, banks, tours and beaches all geared toward making the North American or European vacationer's stay a pleasant one. Trade is booming, with the prominent European Traders' Association dominating business relations and developments rising in Vedado, the exclusive new neighborhood where skyscrapers compete with mansions for real estate. Yet, strange "disturbances" have alarmed Cuba's emigrant community and the prospect of nuclear war creates an element of uncertainty on the island. While world powers play their war games in the foreground of the novel, a "revolution" marches on in the background. This chapter begins with a discussion of Greene's life-long affair with Latin American politics during the turbulent left-wing revolutions of the post-45 era. As both a journalist and secret agent who traveled widely throughout the world, Greene was steeped in the discourses of metropolitan culture and their circulation abroad. *Our Man in Havana* presents his competing portrait of a Cuba that extends beyond dominant portrayals in the Global North. The novel provides a detailed map of Havana as a well-ordered U.S. neo-colony in which disruptions to tourism and trade register as communist attacks against capitalism and democracy. Laying bare the neo-colonial relations that structure life on the island, *Our Man in Havana* implicates Britain's fantasies of world domination, born out of a deep desire to ignore the reality of U.S. dominance in what was once a thriving informal empire, in the construction of Havana as a decadent and surreal landscape which does not, in fact, exist for British pleasure. By casting Wormold as an unsuspecting detective

figure who accidentally investigates Cuba's status as a neo-colony of the U.S., the novel counters the willful blindness of British foreign policy.

Critics of the *Our Man in Havana* have been reluctant to classify the novel as having serious political or historical reverberations. Peter Hulme, for example, explores the novel's less-visible "local contexts" without "a view to turning *Our Man in Havana* into a serious political novel" that engages deeply with the revolutionary movement occurring in its setting.<sup>3</sup> This reluctance stems partly from Greene's own insistence that the novel be read as an "entertainment" and that the choice of Havana was almost an "accident."<sup>4</sup> Given this critical desire to remain faithful to Greene's own powerful and numerous reflections on the writing of the novel, few studies exist that treat *Our Man in Havana*'s critique of competing imperial powers in Havana or representation of Cuba's neo-colonial history. In light of what Hulme describes as Greene's serious engagement with the "politics of decolonization," this chapter highlights the relationship between those politics and the novel as a political text that cycles through many generic tropes.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the ridiculous and absurd nature of the surface plot, the organization of the chapters and Wormold's transformation into a detective raise serious questions about the structural relations of empire within which the novel's characters are allowed to operate with relative impunity. The "Interludes in London" that divide the Havana plot codify the relations of informal imperialism connecting Britain to Cuba via Jamaica into the form of the novel. Meanwhile, Wormold's brief, yet haunting trip to the provincial city of Santiago, the site of an important defeat for Castro's revolutionary fighters, marks a stark shift in tone that turns the lighthearted comedy into a noir, political thriller. Although Wormold begins the novel as an unsuspecting and harmless misfit, he ends it as a shrewd

observer of Britain's imperial decline and its failure to adapt to a changing world order led by the U.S. and challenged by decolonization movements moving from the provinces to the capital. Written and set almost exactly two years after the Suez Crisis of 1956, *Our Man in Havana* provides a lens into a period of deep anxiety for metropolitan authorities in London from the perspective of a British emigrant whose life has been spent largely sidelined from the true centers of economic and political power in the thriving U.S. neo-colony of Havana.

*Our Man in Havana* is a genre-bending work that can variously be described as spy thriller, parody, travel narrative, and detective novel. It details the disastrous if comedic consequences of faulty British intelligence about Cuba during the Cold War through the perspective of a struggling British vacuum salesman living in Havana who inadvertently becomes a secret agent.<sup>6</sup> James Wormold is recruited to MI6, the British foreign intelligence branch, by an agent named Henry Hawthorne who operates from Britain's base in Jamaica. In need of money to support his teenage daughter Milly's expensive hobbies, Wormold accepts the assignment with no sense of what he could possibly supply to the Secret Service. Nonetheless, Hawthorne reassures him (and his superiors in London) that he is the right man for the job: "'Patriotic Englishman. Been here for years. Respected member of the European Traders' Association. We must have our man in Havana, you know'" (25). After some negotiations, Wormold is given the agent code name 59200 stroke 5, a number based on Greene's own experience as Officer 59200 during his brief tenure as a member of MI6 in the 1940s.<sup>7</sup> The novel follows Wormold as he invents several reports to send to a man known only as "the Chief" in London. The story of Wormold's absurd fabrications and the chain of events they set off

in Cuba are interrupted by three brief “interludes” and an epilogue set in London. These interludes feature Hawthorne and the Chief of intelligence discussing what they consider to be Wormold’s great contributions. The discrepancies between Wormold’s story and the conversations in London are both humorous and alarming: the seriousness with which metropolitan authorities treat Wormold’s intelligence reports stands in stark contrast to the absurd way in which Wormold goes about imagining events and information they might find valuable.

As the central territory involved in the Spanish-American War of 1898 that marked for many (including Conrad) the arrival of the U.S. as a major player in global affairs, Cuba is an important setting for Anglophone novels charting the development of the American Century.<sup>8</sup> Cuba had been declared a Spanish colony since 1492, becoming an important base for Spain’s subsequent expeditions into what would become its American empire.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, the colony was a key trading post and producer of sugar, at one point producing a third of the world’s supply.<sup>10</sup> Although Cuba remained largely under Spanish control until 1898, Britain briefly laid siege to Havana in 1762 at the end of the Seven Years’ War (1754-1763), holding the port city for eleven-months before returning it in exchange for Florida during peace negotiations. The all-but-forgotten British occupation of the critical and wealthy colonial city lasted less than one year, but left behind a legacy of trans-Atlantic relations spanning British and Spanish colonial histories. Britain’s desire to acquire Havana illustrated the city’s already-established role as a key connecting node in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. The well-traveled routes between Kingston and Havana involved connections forged through the inter-imperial slave trade that determined the course of

colonial history.<sup>11</sup> When the U.S. set its sights on Cuba in 1898, it had already developed extensive trade relations with the island, importing a vast majority of Cuba's sugar exports under a reciprocity treaty with Spain.<sup>12</sup> The imposition of a tariff on sugar imports to the U.S. in 1894 caused an economic crisis that added fuel to an already turbulent political environment.<sup>13</sup> When a rebellion against Spanish rule broke out in 1895, a series of events – including the sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana's harbor – and policy goals prompted the U.S. to declare war on Spain ostensibly on behalf of Cuban independence.<sup>14</sup> When Spain relinquished its claim to Cuba in the Treaty of Paris, the island became a U.S. protectorate. The U.S. maintained military rule in the country until 1902 when the Platt Amendment all but guaranteed its control over much of the nation's affairs.<sup>15</sup> The period between 1902 and 1959 was marked by civil unrest and intervention from Washington, economic booms and depressions largely determined by the sugar trade, and the rise of a military strongman in Batista willing to increase the already close relations between Cuba and the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

Britain's role in modern Cuban history, the immediate context for Greene's novel, encompasses multiple aspects of its imperial rise and decline. Having ceded control of much of the Americas to the U.S. during several key moments of crisis and negotiation throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Britain had little choice but to accept its status as a once-central, now-peripheral economic force in Latin America, including the Hispanophone Caribbean.<sup>17</sup> However, the region remained important to its interests, particularly in the years preceding World War II, when its commercial passageways across the Atlantic were threatened by German U-boats, leading to a period of intense intelligence-sharing between the U.S. and its competitor.<sup>18</sup> During the war,

Greene served on MI6's Portugal Desk under Kim Philby, observing German intelligence operations in South America and the Caribbean.<sup>19</sup> Norman Sherry describes Wormold's origins in German agents operating in Lisbon, a neutral site from which many nations conducted spying operation in the Americas, and Thomas Schoonover proposes a relationship between the hapless British agent and Heinz Lüning, a spy sent to Cuba to develop Germany's South American network, arguing that Greene would have known about him through his intelligence work in Portugal and media attention on the case.<sup>20</sup> Lüning, Schoonover argues, was used as a scapegoat by Allied powers in need of a victory. Cuba, then under Batista's control, executed Lüning in 1942 after largely exaggerating his importance.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Captain Segura and foreign officials congratulate themselves for “for getting rid of a dangerous agent” with Wormold's deportation (217).<sup>22</sup> Dr. Hasselbacher's role as a defeated elderly German doctor with allegiances to an earlier time of peace under the “Kaiser” also makes use of this chaotic post-war context (141-5), as Jewish refugees and others fleeing the war mixed in with already-existing German emigrant communities.<sup>23</sup> As a British intelligence officer working on the Iberian Peninsula during World War II, Greene would have known better than most the geopolitical context guiding British operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the routes of intelligence traveling through the former Spanish and Portuguese imperial metropolises.

*Our Man in Havana* is set during the final years of Batista's rule. It took Greene some years to settle on Cuba as the setting for the novel. The story originated in the 1940s, when he wrote a one-page outline of a movie that would be set in Estonia in 1938. The movie was rejected and Greene would later reflect on the inappropriate nature of



writing a comedy set in the days of Hitler, a setting “too dark for comedy.” The correct setting eluded him for some time, “But in fantastic Havana, among the absurdities of the Cold War (for who can accept the survival of Western capitalism as a great cause?) there was a situation allowably comic, all the more if I changed the wife into a daughter.”<sup>24</sup>

Greene made a total of 12 trips to Cuba in the years before and after 1959, including his first substantial stop in 1954 after the U.S. refused to allow his passage through Puerto Rico.<sup>25</sup> His last visit would be in 1983, when he spent time with fellow writer and correspondent Gabriel García Márquez and Castro.<sup>26</sup> Although he is never named, the novel makes numerous references to Castro’s revolutionary army. Castro, the son of a Spanish immigrant who became a wealthy farmer, followed in the footsteps of Cuban revolutionary thinker José Martí, who died in battle in 1895, and launched a series of mostly unsuccessful attacks against Batista throughout the 1950s.<sup>27</sup> From the Sierra Maestra mountains close to Santiago in the Oriente Province, Castro continued his campaign, even inviting *New York Times* correspondent Herbert Matthews to his hideout, embarrassing Batista and causing a stir upon the publication of the story in early 1957.<sup>28</sup>

That same year, while writing the novel, Greene decided to travel outside of Havana and witnessed the clear signs of a civil war.<sup>29</sup> Ending up in Santiago, he participated in a small operation to bring warm weather clothing to Castro’s rebels in the Sierra Maestra mountains, later describing his efforts to meet them as “a comedy of errors as absurd as anything I described later in *Our Man in Havana*.”<sup>30</sup> During this trip, he met two well-known revolutionary leaders, Haydée Santamaría and Armando Hart.<sup>31</sup> Unlike Conrad, who “remembered but little” of his brief landing on South American shores, Greene spent

a considerable portion of his life traveling to Latin America, a central setting for his works.<sup>32</sup>

Through his engagement with local Cuban figures, he also involved himself in sensitive matters involving Anglo-American relations of the post-Suez Crisis era. Although Castro did not come to power as a communist leader, Cuba soon became entangled in the politics of the Cold War, particularly with the new government's insistence on regaining control of the economy and ending decades of U.S. domination.<sup>33</sup> Batista had supported Britain during the disastrous events of 1956, when the Suez Crisis threatened its standing as an imperial power in the Middle East.<sup>34</sup> Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, signaling the end of British influence in its old protectorate.<sup>35</sup> Britain's subsequent invasion of Egypt caused the U.S. to break publicly with its ally, imposing economic sanctions to force a withdrawal, and furthered the cause of Arab nationalism against European and, increasingly, U.S. colonialism.<sup>36</sup> In the context of these heightened tensions between the U.S. and Britain, Batista made the British a tantalizing offer in 1957: he requested an arms purchase that would give them valuable U.S. dollars in exchange for obsolete weapons.<sup>37</sup> When Greene learned of the impending arms sale, he pressed a member of parliament to ask the Foreign Secretary in 1958. At first denying it, the Foreign Secretary later admitted that weapons had indeed been sold to Batista, but Britain had no knowledge of a civil war.<sup>38</sup> Writing to *The Times* on January 3, 1959, Greene asked, "What kind of information, we may well ask, was the Foreign Office receiving from its representatives in Cuba?"<sup>39</sup> The novel's Santiago episode, in which Wormold travels outside of Havana to Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Santa Clara, and Santiago by car, clearly details the conditions of war that would have

been obvious to anyone with information about the country (61-8). On January 1, 1959, a mere three months after the publication of Greene's novel and less than a month after British tanks were delivered to Batista, Castro entered Havana (with some of his rebels on those British tanks), officially ousting the dictator and disrupting centuries of formal and informal imperialism on the island.<sup>40</sup>

Greene's biting critiques of U.S. neo-colonialism in many of his works situates him within the tradition traced by this dissertation of British Anglophone writers who were preoccupied with what they saw as a new economically-dominant imperial force rising in the twentieth-century world. These critiques often earned him the reputation of being a communist sympathizer and anti-American. In a letter to *The Times* published on September 4, 1967, Greene expressed his desire to have royalties from the publication of his works in the Soviet Union donated to the families of two imprisoned writers there. Though he hoped to draw attention to the issue, he emphasized that the letter should not be construed as a critique of the Soviet Union as a whole: "If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States of America, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union, just as I would choose life in Cuba to life in those southern American republics, like Bolivia, dominated by their northern neighbor, or life in North Vietnam to life in South Vietnam."<sup>41</sup> By 1967, Greene had already chosen to spend much of his time traveling through various locations in Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe.<sup>42</sup> He had supported communist governments and the Soviet Union, sharply critiqued U.S. and British foreign policy aimed at destabilizing left-wing governments and movements, and written widely-read novels challenging conventional accounts of Cold War geopolitics.<sup>43</sup> Thus, his public proclamation that he would rather

live in the Soviet Union than the U.S. if given the choice (which he did not, in fact, possess as he was barred from entering the United States for much of his life) bolstered the perception of his critics who had long labeled him a communist with a soft spot for dictators, a reputation that prompted the FBI to keep a file concerning his activities.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, Greene lobbied, both publicly and privately, for the release of political prisoners, particularly writers, from communist countries.<sup>45</sup> Yet, he remained steadfast in his belief that U.S. imperialism was a fundamental threat to the decolonizing world, as evidenced by his decades-long engagement with the politics of Cuba and Central America.

Identifying Greene as a central power-broker between the Anglophone world and several left-wing revolutionary movements, leaders, and cultural figures in Latin America, this chapter examines the correspondence between Greene and *Time* correspondent Bernard Diederich, recasting Greene through the lens of Latin American politics rather than the national or colonial frameworks he is often read through. Despite having spent much of his life traveling to Latin America and setting many of his works over almost five decades in the region, Greene is rarely recognized for the intimate political and cultural connections he had to the Hispanophone world and, thus, to the novelistic tradition examined in this dissertation. Fictional and non-fictional texts set, partially or in whole, in Latin America include: *The Lawless Roads* (travel narrative, Mexico, 1939); *The Power and the Glory* (novel, Mexico, 1940); *Travels with My Aunt* (novel, Paraguay, 1969), *The Honorary Consul* (novel, Argentina, 1973); *Getting to Know the General* (memoir, Panama, 1984), and *The Captain and the Enemy* (novel, Panama and Paraguay, 1988).<sup>46</sup> Ending with Wormold's deportation from Cuba, *Our Man*

*in Havana* (1958) adds a new twist to the re-telling of a history that inspired a large corpus of twentieth-century Anglophone novels set in Latin America. Britain's role as a trading power and ally against Spain during Latin America's colonial period and then as an informal imperial force sidelined by the U.S. during its post-colonial era transformed the region into a fruitful setting for authors who located critiques of the British Empire in a place that was, for the most part, never formally colonized by Britain, but remained a key part of its informal empire. These critiques in turn powered an extensive examination of U.S. imperialism in the Anglophone novel, one of the dominant forces of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Our Man in Havana* shifts the attention from the traditional colonial or metropolitan spheres of Greene's other novels for which he is well-known, including *The Quiet American* (French Indochina, 1955) and his "Catholic" novels, – *Brighton Rock* (England, 1938), *The Heart of the Matter* (British Sierra Leone, 1948), and *The End of the Affair* (England, 1951) – to a neo-colony that is economically controlled by the U.S. while Britain and other powers hover in the background.

The chapter then turns to an analysis of the novel's representation of Britain as a minor power and the U.S. as the dominant economic and military force, a mirror of the Conradian plot that begins this dissertation. In *Nostramo*, Mr. Holroyd, the San Francisco-based businessman, provides funding for an Anglo-Latin American family's exploits while the U.S. military provides the threat of force necessary to determine the outcome of a civil war. Nostromo, the Italian boatswain whose nickname comes from Captain Mitchell's mispronunciation of "nostro uomo" or "our man" in Italian, is often ridiculed by his adopted Italian family for giving up his name to please the English.<sup>47</sup> His "silly name" is a symbol of his servitude.<sup>48</sup> Wormold's designation as "our man" echoes

Conrad's "man of the people."<sup>49</sup> His proper name is also tinged with indignity, evoking connotations of "old," "mold," and "worm."<sup>50</sup> Both Nostromo and Wormold find themselves feeling betrayed by their respective employers: Nostromo by the British family who sent him on a deadly mission and Wormold by the British intelligence agency he is so hastily drawn into. However, whereas Nostromo ends as a tragic figure – a slave to the Gould silver he stole and killed by his only father figure – Wormold finds redemption in his refusal to be manipulated by London.<sup>51</sup> Wormold is never really "their" man, but rather shows through his absurd actions the fantasy behind the namesake. *Our Man in Havana* takes up the history of European decline and U.S. domination in the Americas half a century after *Nostromo*'s portrait of a country on the verge of its own civil war manipulated by British hands and financed by U.S. dollars, only this time the war rages on while the British are left to watch from the sidelines. By centralizing the absurd antics of a marginalized British emigrant in Cuba, Greene's novel foregrounds the relations of informal empire tying London to Havana, embedding their structure into the form of the Anglophone novel at a crisis point in British imperial history.

### **Transatlantic Correspondence: Greene, Latin America, and U.S. Imperialism**

From 1967 to 1990, Greene wrote a series of wide-ranging letters to Bernard Diederich, a friend and journalist covering Central American politics for *Time*.<sup>52</sup> He discussed his views on many contemporary Latin American events and figures, from human rights abuses in Haiti to the Iran-Contra Affair. His early letters in particular focus on the reign of François Duvalier, the president of Haiti from 1957 to 1971 who ran a ruthless dictatorship. Greene's novel *The Comedians* (1966) was a critical look at

Duvalier's rule in the country, making him a target of his ire. The letters to Diederich also contain critiques of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and underscore Greene's ability to use the media, including the *New York Times*, to influence public opinion about important events. An analysis of the letters reveals that Greene wrote non-fiction pieces for two main reasons: 1.) to facilitate his travels in the region by offering stories to publications in exchange for flights and monetary compensation, and 2.) to circulate knowledge about Latin American affairs to an audience unlikely to have access to points of view unpopular during the Cold War. As a writer, journalist, and former intelligence officer, Greene was skilled at using his intimate knowledge of Central and South America to participate in a multi-media landscape that included both Hollywood and the most powerful publications in the U.S. and Europe. In contrast to Conrad, his was a knowledge gained primarily through first-hand experiences, including extensive travels to countries in the region – such as Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, Paraguay, Argentina, Nicaragua, and El Salvador – and intimate contact with powerful left-wing political leaders and movements. From 1938 until his death in 1991, Greene was engaged with Latin American affairs and developed numerous relationships with important figures, including a long friendship with Gabriel García Márquez, a publication history with Victoria Ocampo, and several conversations with Castro.<sup>53</sup> This section traces that history through the lens of Greene's correspondence with a key figure who served as an intermediary and sounding board as he immersed himself in the region. I argue that the region was one of the most important centers of gravity for both his non-fiction and fiction works.

Twelve years after Lawrence published his Mexican novel *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), Greene's long-standing life in Latin America began with a 1938 trip to Mexico to

document the persecution of Catholic priests in the country.<sup>54</sup> Aboard a ship returning from Mexico, he made his first, brief stop in Havana.<sup>55</sup> His friendship with Diederich began on a trip to Haiti in 1954, the same year that Greene visited Cuba three times.<sup>56</sup> They remained friends until Greene's death in 1991 and Diederich introduced Greene to many key figures in the region. Greene was always immersed in the journalistic world even as he was highly critical of traditional media publications. In 1973, he responded to complaints from Diederich who was working in the Mexico City offices of *Time*, writing, "Altogether the atmosphere on Time must be very difficult for you. Personally I find it a more readable paper now than in the old days....I now read it perhaps two dozen times a year when before I only read it in aeroplanes" (16 March 1973). He was intimately familiar with the various popular magazines and newspapers, particularly those coming from the U.S. His critiques of these publications centered around their inadequacy in publishing what he deemed as relevant, timely, and accurate information about the regions he visited. He continues in the same letter, "The Times is almost as bad as Time about Latin America, perhaps worse and somehow I can never bring myself to read the *Monde* regularly" (16 March 1973). Greene may have disliked U.S. publications, but he did not discard them for others, seeking instead to influence their coverage with interviews, opinion pieces, and his own longer magazine articles. He was skilled at commanding the attention of the press when he found it lacking on a particular issue, including when succeeded in bringing attention to humanitarian issues in Haiti through an interview with the American Press Corps in London in 1974 (13 Feb 1976, 20 April 1976), causing Duvalier to order the publication of negative articles on Greene, something which greatly amused him (20 April 1976). Finding his own extensive, first-



hand knowledge contradicting news reports, Greene was not reticent to voice critiques of press coverage about Latin America and the Caribbean, a theme also present in *Our Man in Havana*. Following his early engagements with Mexico and Cuba, Greene spent much of the rest of his life deeply invested in the politics of Central America, particularly in Panama, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. He traveled to the region extensively for over two decades.

In the early 1970s, Greene told Diederich of a vague plan to visit Panama for the first time (16 March 1973). By 1976, he was still formulating a concrete way to visit the country, writing that he had hoped to get an invitation from General Omar Torrijos, then the Commander of the Panamanian National Guard (25 May 1976, 15 July 1976). Greene planned to pay his way to Panama in the way that he usually financed his travels: by writing an article for a publication about the trip. *The Daily Telegraph* had already shown interest in the piece (25 May 1976). By October of 1976, Greene excitedly told his friend that he was planning for a December trip to the country and that he would stay for at least three weeks if Torrijos would pay for his stay (25 May 1976, 18 Oct 1976). He had promised Torrijos a sympathetic treatment in his writing (25 May 1976). Greene wrote with a sense of urgency precipitated by the renewed negotiations between the U.S. and Panama surrounding the Canal Zone. He was aware that the trip would likely anger the C.I.A., another source of gratification (15 Sept 1976). Since they had discovered his brief membership in the Communist Party while a student at Oxford, U.S. intelligence agencies kept an eye on his travels throughout the Americas, at times denying him passage through U.S. territories.<sup>57</sup> In 1981, Greene used the Freedom of Information Act to request his F.B.I. file and obtained a heavily redacted copy.<sup>58</sup> Greene traveled to

Panama in December and, by all accounts, had a wonderful time with Torrijos. His article for the *Daily Telegraph* was prepared in January and immediately picked up in the U.S. by *The New York Review of Books*, with several other publications in multiple languages showing interest in the piece, including the Spanish-edition of *Playboy* and a Swedish magazine (12 Feb 1977). Greene even caught the attention of a public relations man in New York who was interested in having the British author write an article for the president of Venezuela (19 Feb 1977). The article capitalized on the growing media attention on Panama, moving rapidly from draft to publication in the space of only two months. It was out by February of 1976 – and Greene had an idea for a novel.

Following his 1976 visit to Panama, Greene went back to the country several times and developed a close relationship with Torrijos. Although the general was never elected to the presidency, Torrijos was the de facto ruler of Panama from 1968 to his death in 1981. He successfully negotiated the Torrijos-Carter Treaties of 1977, which stipulated the gradual return of control of the Canal Zone to Panama while ensuring the U.S. the right to maintain the “neutrality” of the canal in perpetuity.<sup>59</sup> The canal was returned to Panamanian control in 1999. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties replaced the earlier Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903 which ceded control of the Panama Canal to the U.S. shortly after U.S. support of the civil war between Colombia and Panama guaranteed the latter’s independence.<sup>60</sup> The Suez Crisis of 1956, in which nationalization of the Suez Canal prompted an invasion of Egypt by Israeli, British, and French forces, renewed Panamanian calls to re-examine U.S. control of the Panama Canal.<sup>61</sup> Having essentially forced the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt and publicly denounced European colonialism, the U.S. inadvertently advanced Panamanian efforts to decolonize its own

canal.<sup>62</sup> A deadly conflict between Panamanians and Americans in 1964 further led to a breakdown of diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>63</sup> From 1976 onwards, Greene received detailed reports from his sources in Panama about the negotiations (1 June 1979). He wrote numerous articles in support of Torrijos and against U.S. demands, always ready to serve as a “friendly observer” for the general (30 Nov 1977, 30 Dec 1977). When an agreement was reached, Greene was invited by Torrijos to attend the celebration of the canal’s symbolic return to Panamanian control in Washington D.C. (7 Aug 1979).

After Torrijos’ sudden death in 1981, Greene confessed to Diederich that he feared his Central American life had come to an end (26 Aug 1981). Yet, the end of this period was to mark the beginning of another: Greene’s involvement with political developments in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Torrijos had wanted Greene to become involved with Nicaragua early in their relationship, introducing him to guerrillas and asking him to visit the country (20 Sept 1977, 24 Sept 1980). Greene was well aware of developments in Nicaragua, often corresponding with Diederich about the Sandinistas (9 Oct 1978). As had happened with Cuba, Haiti, and Panama, Greene turned his attention to Nicaragua just as the country’s national politics were entering a period of deep crisis, one which would bring copious coverage in the foreign press. Nicaragua had long been ruled by a powerful military dictatorship under the Somoza family.<sup>64</sup> When the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a group of left-wing rebels, deposed Somoza in 1979, Ronald Reagan engaged in a covert effort to aid the “contras,” a rebel group opposed to the newly-formed Sandinista government. Reagan’s aid to the contras against the wishes of Congress became known as the Iran-Contra Affair.<sup>65</sup> Greene supported the Sandinistas’

rise to power, often receiving updates from Diederich, who was covering Central American affairs for *Time*, and passing on his own news. Both Greene and Diederich lamented the press coverage on Nicaragua, wondering in particular why *Time* seemed to provide often inaccurate or biased news against the Sandinistas.

Between February and March 1983, Greene wrote a series of revelatory letters to Diederich about a story published on January 24, 1983. The *Time* story, “New Regime, Old Methods,” purports to provide a “defector’s firsthand account of massacres and tortures” in Nicaragua.<sup>66</sup> Greene, who had just returned from a trip to Panama and Nicaragua, called the piece “a hatchet job” and so objected to its contents that he “broke his new year’s resolution” by participating in a Television interview disputing its facts (2 Feb 1983, 28 Feb 1983).<sup>67</sup> He claimed to have spoken to priests and American nuns who would have told him of any wide-spread human rights abuses (28 Feb 1983). He also added his signature to several letters written on behalf of the Sandinistas, which were also signed by García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes (15 April 1983). On April 4<sup>th</sup>, Greene received a letter from Diederich which likely included a copy of another *Time* piece. The piece, titled “Nicaragua’s Elusive War,” published on April 4<sup>th</sup>, details the events of a press conference called by the Sandinistas. Although the story included some reporting from Diederich, both writers found fault with the piece. Greene wrote, “I feel very much like you about Time Magazine and the way they are going on. Its a pity you cant transfer to Newsweek” (15 April 1983). The *Time* article accuses the Sandinistas of exaggerating the effects of the war on the population. However, it also details the involvement of the Reagan administration and the C.I.A.: “One of the worst-kept secrets in Central America is that the U.S. has been helping to arm and aid some of the Sandinistas’ most active

opponents.”<sup>68</sup> Greene used his considerable influence in the press and his access to guerrilla movements and governments to critique coverage of Central American affairs in U.S. and European publications. Meanwhile, he began and completed a novel about Torrijos, timing its publication to influence Reagan’s 1984 re-election campaign.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Greene also became involved in the politics of El Salvador, which was undergoing a similar left-wing guerrilla movement against military rule. The Salvadoran Civil War that began in 1980 was to become a twelve-year conflict between an umbrella organization of left-wing movements called the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the recently-installed military-led Civil Revolutionary Government Junta (JRG). The Junta came to power in 1979 in what was widely considered a stolen election.<sup>69</sup> The FMLN consolidated the support of several disparate left-wing forces, including the Popular Liberation Front (FPL), and began to attack the government in 1980. The Reagan administration once again delivered military and financial aid – in this case, to right-wing military death squads – to oppose a left-wing movement in Central America.<sup>70</sup> On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1980, Greene, who had been traveling frequently through Central America with his Panamanian hosts, wrote a letter to Diederich about a kidnapped South African citizen. Diederich seemed to be asking Greene which details of the South African’s release he could share with the world. Speaking of his relief that “there is a chance the South African may be released soon,” Greene wrote that Diederich,

...perhaps could add that I had a sympathetic response at a meeting with an FLP leader in Central America. By the way it was my fifth visit. I dont want you to say anything about the British bankers as I was only a messenger in that case. I dont think you should say that they promised to free the South African because of my intervention – only that they listened sympathetically to what I had to say. (24 Sept 1980)

Greene and Diederich were laboring under the impression that the South African citizen was on the verge of release, planning the spin they would put on a story in the press. Although parts of the letter imply that Greene was simply adding fictional information to the piece (“they will need some publicity” and “perhaps you could add”), he speaks later of definite visits and encounters (“it was my fifth visit” and “I was only a messenger in that case”) and a desire not to exaggerate the nature of the encounter with “an FLP leader in Central America.”

On November 28, 1979, around ten months before Greene’s letter to Diederich and mere days after the military junta seized power, members of the FPL stormed the South African embassy in San Salvador and kidnapped the ambassador, Archibald Gardner Dunn.<sup>71</sup> The FPL initially demanded a sum of 20 million dollars and the publication of a pro-guerrilla manifesto in the newspapers of South Africa, then controlled by the Apartheid regime. After failing to secure these demands, they continued to negotiate with Dunn’s family and various others for a smaller sum of money. Greene’s letter implies that certain “British bankers” as well as himself were involved in discussing the release of Dunn, though he only references him as a “South African,” suggesting perhaps that he did not know the name well. He emphasizes his role in the affair as being merely to illicit a “sympathetic response” and that his contacts “listened sympathetically,” hoping to paint a view of the Central American leader as receptive to entreaties. Whether or not Greene did personally speak to the FPL asking for the ambassador’s release, he believed as late as September that they would release him. Less than a month later, on October 8, 1980, the FPL released a memorandum stating that the ambassador had been murdered.<sup>72</sup> They refused to reveal the details of his death or the

whereabouts of his body, which has remained a mystery to this day. On July 11, 2018, El Salvador's Supreme Court ruled that the current president, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, a former guerrilla leader elected to office in 2014, must testify as to the whereabouts of Dunn's remains, having allegedly been at the time of his kidnapping the second in command of the FPL.<sup>73</sup> Operating as a sort of spokesman for Central American guerrilla movements and governments in the Anglophone world, Greene enjoyed an enormous amount of access to knowledge about the region. However, the Dunn affair is a testament to the limits of what he could know, even from his privileged position as a trusted confidant and invited guest of many left-wing leaders in Panama, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

Although Greene spent much of the late twentieth-century focused on Central American affairs, he continued to keep a close watch on Cuba. He told Diederich of a trip to Cuba in 1966, a time that was particularly happy for him (12 Jan 1977). In 1979, he turned down an offer to interview Castro for a *Time* piece, confessing that he felt inadequate to the task (9 Jan 1979). Yet, he had already had a last-minute three-hour conversation with the Cuban leader in 1966.<sup>74</sup> He met Castro again in 1983 in the company of García Márquez as part of an "unofficial" delegation sent from Nicaragua and Panama after Torrijos' death.<sup>75</sup> Six years earlier, at the 1977 signing of the Panama Canal treaty in D.C., Greene and García Márquez, two former communist party "members" barred at one point or another from entering the U.S., had bonded over their presence in the country as part of an official Panamanian delegation invited by Torrijos. Greene was even provided with a diplomatic passport from Panama for the trip.<sup>76</sup> When he finally returned to Cuba in 1983, he would remark that Fidel looked much more

relaxed and younger than he had in 1966 (2 Feb 1983). When Diederich mentions his own encounter with the Cuban leader, Greene replies, “He is a man I cant help liking!” (3 Feb 1984). During Greene’s 1983 meeting, “Fidel prophesied a guerrilla victory in San Salvador in a year’s time,” a prophesy that would not come to pass (28 Feb 1983). The Salvadorean civil war lasted until 1992. The Cuban ambassador traveled to meet Greene in Nicaragua in 1985, asking him to come to Cuba before returning to Europe. Greene was too tired to go, planning instead a longer trip specifically to spend a week in Havana (27 Jan 86). Despite writing numerous times of his desire to return to Cuba, Greene would not make it back before his death in 1991 (17 Dec 1985, 27 Jan 1986, 10 July 1986). He wrote several non-fiction pieces on Cuba for British publications over the years and maintained a travel journal during his most pivotal trip in 1957, when he began to write *Our Man in Havana* from his room at the Sevilla-Biltmore Hotel in Old Havana.<sup>77</sup>

In his later years, Greene expressed disappointment in the Central American leaders who came to power, exclaiming more than once that he did not want to return to Panama or Nicaragua (27 June 1985, 24 Oct 1985, 30 Oct 1985). The situation in Panama was particularly distressing to him as those who followed his friend Torrijos failed to live up to his expectations (17 Dec 1985). Manuel Noriega became the de facto ruler of Panama after Torrijos’ death in 1981. He remained in power from 1983 until 1989, when he was removed by a U.S. invasion.<sup>78</sup> Although he would return to Central America a few times before his death, Greene wrote to Diederich, “I miss Omar more and more...” (27 June 1985). He did not want to make an official visit to Nicaragua to create “propaganda” for the Sandinistas in 1985, preferring instead to go on a quiet trip alone, and he thanked



Diederich for keeping him informed of the increasingly “complex and nasty” situation in Panama (24 Oct 1985). Yet, he remained steadfast in his belief that U.S. imperialism was to blame for much of the region’s problems, writing in stark terms of his disdain for Reagan and American foreign policy. When news of the Iran-Contra Affair broke – a matter he and many journalists were already familiar with – he wrote, “Yes, like three quarters of the world I am enjoying the Reagan affair” (22 Jan 1987). In these later years, Greene also began to travel with more frequency to Russia, coming to believe that the U.S. and Russia were “two sides of the same coin” (27 June 1985). Although he remained interested in news out of Central America and the Caribbean until his death, his letters took on a note of melancholia: “I don’t think I want to go back to Haiti,” he wrote, “and the past” (22 Jan 1987).

When his disappointment with Noriega reached its peak, Greene reasoned, “I must admit that if I have to choose between a drug dealer and United States imperialism I prefer the drug dealer” (13 April 1988). In fact, Noriega had been a valuable C.I.A. asset since his days as Chief Intelligence Officer for Torrijos.<sup>79</sup> After Torrijos’ death, he worked closely with U.S. intelligence agencies to provide information on the various guerrilla movements and left-wing governments in Central America. Although he himself was a drug dealer, he was considered a U.S. ally in the War on Drugs, and thus allowed to continue his own drug trade.<sup>80</sup> As Noriega became more erratic, at one point orchestrating the torture and execution of a prominent dissident, the U.S. was faced with the possibility of withdrawing its support. However, they feared that another leader might not be so willing to let American agencies use Panama as a staging point for their involvement in Latin America.<sup>81</sup> The U.S. would eventually topple its own asset in

1989.<sup>82</sup> It is unclear how much, if anything, Greene knew about Noriega's involvement with the C.I.A., never mentioning it in his letters to Diederich, but *Our Man in Havana* became another prescient example of the tangled webs created by foreign intelligence channels as they passed through unlikely and unpredictable sources. Greene must have been aware of the final U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989, but he did not mention it to Diederich in his last letters, a curious omission given the extent to which the two had spent the last two decades discussing Panamanian affairs. Greene died in 1991, writing a final letter to Diederich just six months before his death in which he marveled at the twists and turns of history that resulted in him finally having a Haitian publisher (20 Oct 1990).

Throughout his life as a creative writer and journalist, Greene was able to provide news that ran counter to both official government narratives and foreign news coverage of events in Latin America, particularly the Caribbean and Central America, the site of several key geopolitical crises throughout the Cold War. From his position as a writer who was sharply critical of U.S. and Western European policies, he had access to places and political figures many foreign journalists did not. At times, Greene made promises of sympathetic coverage to figures who would otherwise be reluctant to offer access, including General Torrijos in Panama. Greene's critique of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America made him a welcome figure to leftist insurgent movements and governments, and his desire – and keen ability – to insert himself into sensitive U.S. government negotiations, commanding the attention of the media, made him many enemies. Greene's sources in places that were considered geopolitical conflict zones meant he could assess the credibility of circulating news by checking with his correspondents, one of whom was

Diederich. These connections gave his novels a sense of foreshadowing, allowing him to circumvent the traditional life-cycle of the news to give his novels a timelier quality than even the relative immediacy of the journalistic form. The flow of information in a modern media landscape is a prominent theme of *Our Man in Havana*, reflecting Greene's deep understanding of the relationship between fictional and non-fictional representation. Indeed, the author was fascinated by the ways in which news traveled throughout the world, commenting to Diederich that he was intrigued by Torrijos' need to use couriers rather than codes or telephones to relay information: "I am always delighted when the 20th Century goes back through the multiplication of technology to the 17th or 18th Century –." (19 Feb 1977). Greene's novels and his long-form articles about Latin America are part of an on-going conversation between the Anglophone author and the Hispanophone world across multiple forms of communication over half a century. *Our Man in Havana*, only his second novel set in Latin America, is a key link in the story that unites Greene to Latin America.

### **"Fantastic Havana:" Reading the U.S. Neo-Colony as Setting in the Anglophone Novel**

*Our Man in Havana* shows how Cuba's development into a U.S. neo-colony in its post-colonial period followed an uneven path, particularly in its capital city. Although it is clear that Europeans like Hawthorne and Wormold occupy a privileged position in relation to local characters, the ultimate architects and beneficiaries of Havana's capitalist boom are U.S. citizens and institutions. The novel begins with Havana as a quintessentially neo-colonial urban setting, with bars, clubs, banks, country clubs, business associations, and missionary schools all available for the enjoyment of foreign

tourists, businessmen, and residents. Despite Cuba's post-colonial status, the city is in many ways comparable to Kingston, Jamaica, which was still a formal colonial territory of the British Empire. When Hawthorne, the MI6 agent stationed in Kingston, shows up in the vacuum cleaner shop on Lamparilla street, Wormold immediately recognizes his type, because, in his "stone-coloured tropical suit, and wearing an exclusive tie, he carried with him the breath of beaches and the leather smell of a good club: you expected him to say, 'The Ambassador will see you in a minute'" (7). Tropical-themed clothing, beaches, and clubs are the markers of the kind of business traveler Wormold is accustomed to seeing in the Caribbean. Just as Hawthorne's status becomes clear through Wormold's eyes, Havana's status as a neo-colony of the U.S. emerges through the small social sphere he has built around himself and his sixteen-year old daughter. Having been left by Milly's mother, Wormold has been raising his daughter alone, only keeping the company of an older German doctor. A veteran of both World Wars, Dr. Hasselbacher finds himself unable to believe in much of anything concrete. "I am interested in the blueness of the cheese," he tells Wormold, referring to an experiment that is unlikely to ever reach a conclusion and therefore will never let him down (6). While Wormold worries about practical, long-term matters, including how to finance Milly's future education, his friend is concerned only with dreams: "Reality in our century is not something to be faced" (6).

Through their sustained friendship formed over drinks at various hotel bars and clubs, the novel reveals the extent to which Havana's social and economic life is accessible to – and indeed structured around – U.S. and European business and tourism. Wormold and Hasselbacher meet for a "morning Daiquiri" at approximately the same

time every day at the Wonder Bar (4). Additionally, the two men frequent their favorite bars at night, including the bar at the Seville-Biltmore Hotel (26, 36), the Tropicana (87), and the Nacional (87). Havana's darker nightlife, which includes strip clubs and the thriving sex tourism industry, makes an appearance later on in the novel (126, 206), when Wormold's spy work leads him to places we are meant to believe he usually avoids. When Wormold asks his assistant Lopez for help on a special project, Lopez automatically assumes his boss wants access to sex workers. As an Englishman in his position, it would be the most natural request (56). While Wormold and Dr. Hasselbacher frequent bars populated by foreign residents, they avoid those favored by tourists alone: "No Havana resident even went to Sloppy Joe's because it was the *rendez-vous* of tourists" (21). Despite remaining mostly oblivious to local Cuban life, Wormold considers himself an insider in Havana. He resents being seen as a "permanent tourist" by local residents, employing the traditionally paternalistic attitude that they must be unable to learn from experience (30). It does not yet occur to Wormold that his British citizenship entitles him to privileges local working-class Cubans will never have, including protection from torture by the police, and he will thus always be an outsider to a city which, in his own words, was a place "to visit, not live in" (53). Although Wormold's down-trodden and modest persona is somewhat different from the typical foreign businessman in Havana, he nonetheless represents a familiar colonialist perspective which views Cuba as a tropical island where white European men like himself can live with relative ease and indifference to local realities.

In this sense, Wormold mimics British metropolitan attitudes about Cuba. When it comes to Milly, he believes that England is the "region of safety" where his daughter will

be protected from the lecherous men pursuing her, a portrayal that the novel encourages by highlighting her status as a desirable sex object (19). Dr. Hasselbacher warns him, ““This isn’t England or Germany, Mr. Wormold. Girls grow up quickly in the tropics”” (4). The tropics represent a zone of danger for Mr. Wormold’s teenage daughter who is pure and innocent. When Hawthorne asks for a secretary to send to Wormold, he describes the assignment in simplistic terms: ““Havana—a small station, agreeable climate”” (47). In the eyes of the men in London, Cuba is very concisely a small island with a tropical climate. Its existence registers only in so far as it can be useful to the Global North. Thus, Cuba’s sugar, coffee, and tobacco industries are the subject of numerous intelligence reports as is its potential to become a “key spot” in the Cold War (25, 45, 57). The island becomes legible within metropolitan epistemologies, which are materially represented by the structure of the London headquarters: “Hawthorne rose in the elevator floor by floor from the basement: a rocket’s-eye view of the world. Western Europe sank below him; the Near East; Latin America. The filing cabinets stood around Miss Jenkinson like the pillars of a temple round an aging oracle” (47). Miss Jenkinson, the head of the secretaries, is the matron of all of the knowledge collected abroad. Hawthorne’s access to a “rocket’s-eye view of the world” symbolizes the imperialist metropolitan eye roaming over both familiar and exotic dominions which it maintains power over by virtue of its ability to categorize its knowledge about them. Although both Wormold and Dr. Hasselbacher are either oblivious to or critical of this imperial world-view, they are also well-versed in the colonialist tropes that categorize the tropics as dangerous to European characters, especially young women.

The island's already-existing status as a neo-colony of the U.S., where economic and business ties intermingle with corrupt governments to reproduce the structures of colonialism, facilitates the British project of intelligence collection. The dominance of global capitalism is evident in Havana's modern skyscrapers, a feature of the city that often stands out to Wormold in an otherwise old colonial landscape evocative of its Spanish past. In one part of the city, "The pink, grey, yellow pillars of what had once been the aristocratic quarter were eroded like rocks," while "In the West the steel skyscrapers of the new town rose higher than lighthouses into the clear February sky" (53). The new town, which is always identified by its "new steel architecture" (70), refers to the neighborhood where Havana's millionaires live, including the British ambassador: "They were in the new quarter of Vedado: little cream-and-white houses owned by rich men. You could tell how rich a man was by the fewness of the floors. Only a millionaire could afford a bungalow on a site that might have held a skyscraper" (132). British officials have only to tap into an already existing network of businessmen and politicians willing to enrich themselves further. Captain Segura, the chief of police in Vedado and Milly's suitor, is a key figure in this regard. He is known as the Red Vulture (16, 32, 33) because, according to Dr. Hasselbacher, "he specialized in torture and mutilation" (33) and reportedly has a cigarette case made of human skin (40). His victims remain ignored by the local papers, receiving no press (60). Captain Segura eventually teaches Wormold the distinctions between the "torturable" and the "untorturable" classes, or the difference between everyday Cubans with no means or connections and connected elites (158-161). When Wormold begins his intelligence-gathering mission, Cuba is already a well-

functioning and highly-developed neo-colony controlled by foreign businessmen and local politicians aligned with competing interests.

In the midst of this competition, Cuba's capitalist development is controlled by the U.S. This is most clear in Vedado: "The skyscrapers of the new town stood up ahead of them like icicles in the moonlight. A great H.H. was stamped on the sky, like the monogram on Hawthorne's pocket, but it wasn't royal either – it only adverted Mr Hilton" (132). The Hilton Hotel is a prominent sign of U.S. economic influence and it stands in the most exclusive "new town" of Havana, which is also the heart of the city's new developments. The H.H.'s representation of Hilton Hotel instead of Henry Hawthorne, both initials that are not "royal," undermines London's perception of British power in the Hispanophone Caribbean. It is Hilton that rules over Havana's crown jewel of capitalist development, and Hawthorne is, in any case, an embarrassing representation of the British Empire's fumbling covert operations at a time of steep decline following the Suez Crisis. Throughout the novel, the Chief alludes to the pressure of U.S. imperialism on British efforts to establish "their" man in Havana, a city largely oriented toward and critical to U.S. interests. He stresses that Wormold cannot be "anti-American because "Havana's not the place for any prejudice like that. We have to work with them—only up to a point of course" (45). The Chief is in a constant struggle to cooperate with the Americans while still maintaining his independence from them (153). Although he does not trust U.S. discretion (80), he understands that they have power over Cuba and the Western Hemisphere, making cooperation necessary and ultimately inevitable in the fight for global control. The signs of U.S. influence permeate through Wormold's Havana and include a prominent American Bank where he feels completely



insignificant (19), Milly's American convent school which he is desperate to keep her in (12), and Miami, the city to which Milly's mother escaped when she left him (70). The U.S. represents a powerful and mostly negative presence looming over Wormold, the "shapeless" British protagonist whose life is upended by his recruitment into MI6 (27). In this sense, *Our Man in Havana* represents a drastically weakened British Empire through the eyes of a down-and-out, middle-aged British divorcee whose lack of financial means and overall pathetic demeanor only highlights the great force of U.S. economic imperialism.

With Cuba firmly established as a neo-colony of the U.S. and, to a lesser extent, its Western European allies, any disruptions to the usual way of doing business register in London as a distressing anomaly. Various characters in the novel make vague references to a series of "disturbances" which is a euphemism for the political violence that has managed to disrupt tourism and trade (5, 15). When Wormold decides to skip his regular morning daiquiri with Dr. Hasselbacher, he stops in at Sloppy Joe's instead of the Wonder Bar. He would normally never go there if it were not for recent occurrences, because the bar was normally a meeting spot for tourists, which Wormold assiduously avoids, "but tourists were sadly reduced nowadays in number, for the President's régime was creaking dangerously towards its end" (21). The passage continues in what is one of the novel's strongest condemnations of U.S. neo-colonialism:

There had always been unpleasant doings out of sight, in the inner rooms of the Jefatura, which had not disturbed the tourists in the Nacional and the Seville-Biltmore, but one tourist had recently been killed by a stray bullet while he was taking a photograph of a picturesque beggar under a balcony near the palace, and the death had sounded the knell of the all-in tour 'including a trip to Varadero beach and the night-life of Havana.' The victim's Leica has been smashed as well, and that had impressed his companions more than anything with the destructive power of a bullet. (21)

The unnamed tourist sees poverty as “picturesque:” the beggar, the balcony, and the palace are captured by the expensive camera lens as representative of the Cuban landscape. His friends convene to drink at the Nacional later, seemingly unfazed by the violent and sudden death. They take pieces of the shattered camera lens as souvenirs to show “Dr. Humpelnicker.”<sup>83</sup> The novel absorbs both the typical images of tourism, which stand in for the vast economic power of U.S. and European foreigners in Cuba, and the exact words of tourist marketing materials, recasting them as symbols of a shocking lack of care for human life, whether it is foreign or domestic. These vague “disturbances” enter the story when Wormold inexplicably decides to deviate from his traditional routine through which he holds himself apart from both local Cuban life and the world of beach-going tourists. Just as the bullet suddenly smashes the objects of life into small pieces, political violence ruptures the calm surfaces of Wormold’s existence. As the novel progresses, these episodes intrude into the story with unexpected regularity, adding an emotional intensity that is otherwise kept at bay by Wormold’s languid demeanor.

*Our Man in Havana* draws an explicit correlation between decreasing tourism and the rising instability of the current regime, highlighting a common theme across the Anglophone novels of this dissertation. As *Nostramo* makes clear through its own exploration of the forces driving capitalist development in Costaguana, political stability was often used a bargaining chip by both old and new imperialist agents who emphasized the importance of cooperation in order to create the necessary conditions for economic growth. Similarly, in Greene’s Havana, anti-colonial resistance to the status quo disrupts tourism and trade precisely because the structures of colonialism are tied to the prosperity of capitalist development. The passage above suggests that the current government is on

the brink of collapse. When Wormold visits another retailer in his annual trip outside Havana, the picture is bleak. The two vacuum cleaner salesmen sit in rocking chairs discussing the dire situation: “Trade was back—rock rock—nobody was buying electrical goods in Santiago—rock rock—what was the good? rock rock. As though to illustrate the point the electric light went out and they rocked in darkness” (64). In addition to the U.S. tourist’s death, the president has been the subject of multiple assassination attempts. While walking at night in the city, Wormold looks at the “palace with the dark windows where the President had never slept since the last attempt on his life” (114). The police are instructed to keep tourists safe (22), a fact that underscores their importance to Cuba’s economy. Thus, civil unrest registers in London as a series of odd, seemingly unexplainable “disturbances” to the smooth operation of the profitable and otherwise well-managed neo-colony of the Global North, mirroring the *Nostromo* plot in which Costaguana’s many revolutions register in Europe as threats to their investments the country. However, whereas Conrad portrays resistance to the British family’s control over Costaguana’s enormously profitable silver mine as deeply flawed and futile, Greene frames political violence as an existential threat to the morally-bankrupt conditions of neo-colonialism imposed by U.S. economic influence while the representatives of British power concoct empty fantasies of imperial domination in the background.

### **A Mad World: The Cold War, Imperial Fantasies, and the Post-Suez Spy Novel**

Already declining in 1904, when Conrad published *Nostromo*, British power in Latin America and elsewhere was on the brink of collapse following the Suez Crisis of 1956. *Our Man in Havana* shows how the struggles of the Cold War – and the purported defense of capitalism and democracy – provided a shield for London against the realities

of the American Century and the collapse of the British Empire. In the mid-1950s, the Cold War shifted to the Global South as new and old imperialist powers fought for control and influence over decolonized and decolonizing republics.<sup>84</sup> The Chief and Hawthorne are fixated on Cuba's potential role in this struggle. Hawthorne is very clear with Wormold that the island, though small, could become important, because "Dictators drift together. Big ones draw in the little ones" (25). Hawthorne's only concern about Wormold's friendship with Dr. Hasselbacher is whether the doctor's sympathies are "East or West" (24). Similarly, the Chief describes Havana as a potential "key-spot. The Communists always go where there's trouble," making an apparent reference to the political unrest described earlier (45). When Wormold sends them drawings of large constructions in the Oriente province, the Chief seems almost excited to have stumbled onto something so deadly that the H-bomb will pale in comparison (81-2). The Chief's Permanent Under-Secretary believes the constructions in Cuba have a "Communist origin," but perhaps they could be American. In any case, whoever "they" are, "they've become very active in Cuba—apparently with the help of the police" (152). The Prime Minister is extremely worried and wants to inform "the Yankees" as soon as possible (153), gesturing to the extensive history of intelligence-sharing between the U.S. and Britain before and after the war.<sup>85</sup> Hawthorne has sent the drawings to "Atomic Research," however, "the trouble is we've been bemused by the atom-boys and have quite forgotten that there may be other forms of scientific warfare just as dangerous" and "one musn't forget the economics of warfare. Cuba can't afford to start making H-bombs, but have they found something equally effective at short range and *cheap*?"

(original emphasis 167). Cuba is legible in London only as the site of a monumental Cold War struggle.

The Cold War and nuclear weapons introduce an element of uncertainty about the world that colors Wormold's experience of his environment. Although Wormold later recoils from being used as a pawn in these global war games, he initially agrees to become a secret agent out of financial necessity and a certain Cold War nihilism: "In a mad world it always seemed easier to obey" (23). Following the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945, the threat of nuclear war looms large over the characters. Dr. Hasselbacher tells Wormold that theirs is not an "age for saving:" "'We live in an atomic age, Mr. Wormold. Push a button—piff bang—where are we? Another scotch please'" (5).<sup>86</sup> When Wormold responds that the agency has sent him a new vacuum cleaner model named "the Atomic Pile Cleaner," Dr. Hasselbacher jokes that he was not aware science had gone as far as inventing a household cleaner for atomic bombs. Wormold often draws comparisons between what he finds as real and what he does not:

That evening hour was real, but not Hawthorne, mysterious and absurd, not the cruelties of police stations and government, the scientists who tested the new H-bomb on Christmas Island, Khrushchev who wrote notes: these seemed less real to him than the inefficient tortures of a school-dormitory....The cruel come and go like cities and thrones and powers, leaving their ruins behind them. They had no permanence. But the clown whom he had seen last year with Milly at the circus—that clown was permanent, for his act never changed. That was the way to live; the clown was unaffected by the vagaries of public men and the enormous discoveries of the great. (27-8)

He tells Milly to never learn from experience, associating knowledge with the scientific advancements that led to the creation of nuclear weapons and the bombing of Hiroshima (28). Wormold is able to rationalize his involvement in these global games between "kingdoms, republics, powers" by appealing to his belief that, if nuclear war is so much

larger than him, then his participation either way does not matter (58). Even so, he fails to recognize that, by working for MI6, he has become a character in the metropole's imperial fantasies.

In order to become "our man in Havana," Wormold taps into easily accessible forms of colonial knowledge about Cuba. As I have argued, Wormold is already familiar with Britain's colonialist tropes, at times inhabiting Hawthorne's "rocket's-eye view of the world" (47). When he starts to write his intelligence reports, he knows exactly where to look for the kinds of information British intelligence officers will find plausible and acceptable: "With the help of a large map, the weekly number of *Time*, which gave generous space to Cuba in its section on the Western Hemisphere, various economic publications issued by the Government, above all with the help of his imagination, he had been able to arrange at least one report a week" (105).<sup>87</sup> Wormold looks for information on Cuba in official publications and popular Anglophone magazines. Read in light of Greene's long-standing critiques of *Time* and other publications, the magazine represents a biased view of the island-nation's place in the post-war era. *Time*'s devotion of "generous space to Cuba in its section of the Western Hemisphere" is a function of a potential threat of communist infiltration so close to the U.S. The government publications are useful to Wormold because they provide official figures on the various economic industries, mainly sugar and tobacco, that are important to the U.S. and Europe (59). Furthermore, when he uses his imagination to "recruit" agents as informants, he finds names from a list of country club members, which includes prominent members of Cuba's elite class, assigning them particular spheres based on their jobs: economic, political, and technical (59). Their "intelligence" – all information Wormold gleans from

already-existing publications – are categorized in index cards, which will then serve as foundations for further indexing and categorization in London (95). Wormold's participation in the methods of metropolitan information gathering are very similar to those of a regular reader of *Time* magazine: he reads what is available to an English-language audience in the Western Hemisphere. Everything he reads and reports back to London is a confirmation to metropolitan officials of their own importance in shaping Cuba's development, feeding into a fantasy that his readers are more than willing to accept as fact.

The novel equates these fantasies with an element of magic that is both spiritual and grotesque. While Wormold begins his tenure with sober economic reports, he soon graduates to the world of spies, sub-agents, and secret plots. After Dr. Hasselbacher's flat is ransacked and his blue cheese experiment is destroyed, Wormold decides to give his employers exactly what they desire. Dr. Hasselbacher had earlier advised Wormold to lie to the mysterious characters who asked him for information, claiming that they did not deserve the truth or his freedom (58). It is easier to provide "secrets," he reasons, because they carry an element of magic and, thus, inspire blind belief. Wormold often associates magic with Milly's Catholicism. He wants to preserve her belief in "the old familiar logic" at any cost (17), believing it to be a delicate marker of childhood innocence: "He was glad that she could still accept fairy stories: a virgin who bore a child, pictures that wept or spoke words of love in the dark. Hawthorne and his kind were equally credulous, but what they swallowed were nightmares, grotesque stories out of science fiction" (73-4). By shattering Dr. Hasselbacher's delicate and harmless illusions, the shadowy figures inadvertently drive Wormold to create a world in which their wildest dreams are in fact

reality. From this point forward, Wormold takes pleasure in crafting imperial fantasies. He “joyfully encoded,” imagining “big military installations under construction in the mountains of Oriente Province” which are “too extensive to be aimed at small rebel bands holding out there” (74). He also provides drawings of “strange machinery” based on the parts of the newly released vacuum cleaner model named the Atomic Pile (74-5). When Milly asks him if he is becoming a writer, he responds, “Yes, an imaginative writer” (75). Wormold’s self-described “shapelessness” is a perfect container for the imperial fantasies that power the Cold War. By fueling a worldview that places Britain at the center of a global struggle between good and evil, Wormold becomes exactly who they want him to be: “their” man in Havana.

Back in London, the Chief seems almost intoxicated with the possibility of his own Kipling-like protagonist in a Cold War spy novel. The Chief’s identity vacillates between two poles. On the one hand, he is a serious and powerful intelligence chief who looks like “an undertaker” in “a vault, a mausoleum, a grave.” On the other, he is presented as a gentle and child-like romantic who believes in cooking his own meals for guests because no one else would do it with the same amount of care (43, 151). His most distinctive quality is a glass eye covered by a black monocle that he removes periodically (44, 81, 223). The glass eye, when visible, symbolizes the Chief’s innocence and desire to believe in children’s stories, a motif that is underscored by Hawthorne’s use of a children’s book, Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare*, to communicate with Wormold. The novel associates the Chief with childhood: he has a “half-drunk glass of milk” on his enormous desk and, when he removes his monocle, “the eye that he disclosed was made of glass; pale blue and unconvincing, it might have come out of a



doll which said ‘mama’” (43-4). When reviewing Wormold’s drawings, he removes his black monocle as if to enter the realm of endless possibilities: “‘The ingenuity, the simplicity, the devilish imagination of the thing,’” he gushes to Hawthorne and “his baby-blue eye caught the light and made it jig on the wall” (81). When he is done pondering the magnitude of the drawings, which he believes are a new weapon much more powerful, destructive, and, therefore, likely to gain media attention than conventional weapons, he replaces the monocle (82). The Chief’s light-colored “eye” is not only receptive to imperial fantasies of world domination, but is also deeply invested in advancing them. His innocence lies in his almost blind belief in Britain’s ability to continue playing the role of imperial power, even in a country that was firmly within the sphere of U.S. influence.

Furthermore, the Chief’s very active “literary imagination” is easily manipulated (45). In describing Wormold’s character, Hawthorne uses tropes that will trigger his desire for imperial adventure stories, calling Wormold “Old-fashioned” and a “merchant-adventurer.” Once Hawthorne has set up the framework, the Chief, with his glass eye exposed, quickly fills in the gaps. Just like that, “Hawthorne now felt able to relax; the Chief had taken charge. Even if one day he read the secret file, the words would convey nothing to him. The small shop for vacuum cleaners had been drowned beyond recovery in the tide of the Chief’s literary imagination. Agent 59200/5 was established” (45). The Chief transforms Hawthorne’s “merchant-adventurer” into an old “merchant-king” type, a man who belongs to “‘the Kipling age. Walking with kings – how does it go? – and keeping your virtue, crowds and the common touch’” (46). He imagines Wormold with an “ink-stained desk” containing an “old penny note-book of black wash-leather,” “a

quarter gross of india-rubbers,” and “six boxes of steel nibs” (46). He instructs Hawthorne to “find that penny note-book,” which holds the key to deciphering the true essence of the “merchant-king,” whose commitment to a traditional British way of life is stronger than his need for survival in a modern age and whose traits are so desirable that allowances must be made for his idiosyncrasies (47). These are the marks of a genuine character. When Hawthorne tries to reign in the Chief’s imagination, reminding him that Wormold would not go “quite as far back as steel nibs,” the Chief retorts, “I speak metaphorically,” and covers his eye with the black monocle; “the innocent eye had gone back into hiding at the hint of opposition” (46). The Chief’s desire for catastrophic reports about communist activity in Cuba are powered by his fundamental belief in the Global South as an epic adventure-land, ready to be explored, analyzed, and categorized by British agents. Like Kipling, whose novel *Kim* presents the fantasy of an India completely under British control, the Chief sees himself as the architect of a world in which British power is one of the major determining forces despite all evidence to the contrary.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, the fantasy contains an element of magic, which, like Dr. Hasselbacher’s description of a secret, does not need to be explained in order to be believed. The Chief transforms Britain’s collapsing empire into the beginning of a new adventure.

As a result, the more absurd Wormold’s reports become, the more he is taken seriously by those in power. The invention of sub-agents and plots allows bureaucrats in the metropole to fill out information cards, accumulating lines and lines of “intelligence” and regarding the mere act of acquiring, recording, and cataloguing information as a triumph. Nonetheless, Wormold is surprised by the pleasure he takes in acting as a

novelist creating characters: “It astonished Wormold how quickly he could reply to any questions about his characters; they seemed to live on the threshold of consciousness – he had only to turn on a light and there they were, frozen in some characteristic action” (107). Beatrice is particularly taken with one of his characters, a pilot for Cubana airline who drinks to forget the pain of having lost his wife in the Spanish civil war (106). When she starts asking to meet him in person, Wormold hatches an elaborate plan in the bathtub that would end Raul’s fictional existence. He plans to send Raul on a dangerous mission to obtain photographs of the constructions in Oriente and fly them directly to Kingston: “The story was not yet complete. Just as in real life, accidents could happen; a character might take control” (111). Anything could happen to Raul on the flight between Havana and Santiago, but “only one thing was certain: he would not arrive in Jamaica and there would be no photographs.” Wormold’s imagination functions much like that of the Chief’s as he creates characters inhabiting a neo-colonial world where anything is possible for its European protagonists. Wormold’s surprise at the pleasure he gains from inhabiting a world of political intrigue controlled entirely by his own imagination highlights the extent to which fantasies of empire could be counted on to reanimate metropolitan aggression toward the decolonized world.

Just as it seems the fantasy has reached its limits, the novel plays a generic trick on Wormold and Beatrice, veering into the realm of the fantastic. Beatrice’s suspicions about Raul undermine Wormold’s confidence as a storyteller as she pushes him to produce the man he claims as his sub-agent. Wormold’s narration of the journey strikes Beatrice as contrived. She exclaims, ““You haven’t spoken about him as though he were a living man. You’ve been writing his elegy like a bad novelist preparing an effect””

(112-3). However, just as Beatrice is on the verge of uncovering the truth, they run into Dr. Hasselbacher, who invites them back to his apartment for a drink. While at the apartment, the doctor receives a phone call from a mysterious character telling him that a man named Raul has been killed. Beatrice is dumbfounded. Wormold's belief in the power of stories to go in any direction on their own accord takes on an eerie note. He asks himself, "Can we write human beings into existence?" (121) Beatrice decides that they must warn all of Wormold's other sub-agents and informants, who are likely in immediate danger. In his state of supreme confusion, Wormold goes along with her scheme, wondering what could have happened to bring his character to life and believing that some strange coincidence must be to blame (123). Wormold has played his role as a secret agent too well, employing his imagination to create a believable or "natural," as Hawthorne would call it, set of circumstances (23, 39). His creations set off a chain of events that result in the death of at least one man. None of Wormold's closest associates believe he is actually a secret agent: Dr. Hasselbacher calls him a novelist (146) and Captain Segura knows the reports are false (158). Yet, if powerful intelligence agencies are acting *as if* he is, sending him additional staff, changing his secret code, and contributing significant resources to his activities, how could it not be true (147)? Everyone around Wormold takes his role as a spy seriously because the SIS does. Wormold explains to Dr. Hasselbacher, "But Raul – he didn't even exist. You advised me to lie and I lied. They were nothing but inventions, Hasselbacher" (146). Although Wormold wants to believe there is a logical explanation for Raul's death, the novel suggests that the stories he concocted to feed the Chief's imperial fantasies may actually be turning into reality.

Thus, *Our Man in Havana* is fantastic in two ways: first, it echoes Greene's descriptions of Havana as a "fantastic" city where anything is possible for a foreign tourist or resident capable of indulging in the excesses of neo-colonial urban life; and second, it is a flirtation with speculative fiction, where strange events turn what is meant to be a mere fantasy into a reality through potentially supernatural means. Havana as a fantasy land both entertains and petrifies Wormold who comes to see the city as a surreal, empty, and perhaps even haunted landscape. Havana takes on the same imaginary quality that he attributes to Hawthorne and "the cruelties of police-stations and governments" at the beginning of the novel (28). Wormold is only able to see the parts of the city that have been created to cater to foreigners: "To live in Havana was to live in a factory that turned out human beauty on a conveyor-belt. He didn't want beauty. He wanted honesty" (113). When Dr. Hasselbacher is murdered at the Wonder Bar, the city loses all meaning to Wormold: "to each man a city consists of no more than a few streets, a few houses, a few people. Remove those few and a city exists no longer except in the memory, like the pain of an amputated leg no longer there. It was time, Wormold thought, to pack up and go and leave the ruins of Havana" (191). The fantasies of empire are transformed into the haunted portrait of a neo-colonial city. It is not Havana per se that terrifies Wormold but rather the claustrophobia of inhabiting a city in which beauty is seen as a mass-produced illusion for metropolitan consumption, an illusion which he desperately wants to escape. Through his exploits, Wormold realizes that he is in fact a character in a setting whose main quality is providing U.S. and European tourists with a pleasurable vacation from reality. Trapped in a neo-colonial simulation of Havana, he wonders whether he is not the one who might be crazy after all.

### **“Cuba is Cuba is Cuba:” Decoding Political Violence as Anti-Colonial Resistance**

As he travels further into the Chief’s fantasy world, the novel prompts Wormold to read Cuba beyond the lens of his “intelligence” reports now safely filed away in London and as a country on its own terms, with a civil war – in large part fueled by resistance to neo-colonialism – that has hardly registered in the metropole. Wormold’s way out of the Cold War fantasy he enters as a pseudo-spy involves his transformation into a quasi-detective figure. The novel’s Cold War context engenders an atmosphere of paranoia where the differences between what is real and what is fake, fictional and non-fictional, are no longer intelligible. When these categories lose meaning, Wormold is left completely untethered from the world; his initial “shapelessness” is replaced by an absurd parody of the “merchant-king,” a character taken from the Chief’s imagination and imperial British literature. Through the novel’s engagement with the tropes of the detective novel and noir fiction, Wormold gains the ability to read himself *as* a member of Cuba’s neo-colonial class and a participant in the networks of informal imperialism tying Cuba to Britain. One of the novel’s central mysteries revolves around the “disturbances,” which act as coded references to political violence against the regime. In conversations that begin the novel, the characters all seem to accept these acts as a part of everyday life. However, as the novel progresses, *Our Man in Havana* turns these questions into an underlying generic feature, creating a mystery around Wormold’s, and ultimately the reader’s, ability to read Cuba’s political background: who are the perpetrators of these “disturbances” and what, ultimately, are they attempting to disturb? By encoding political violence into the background of the spy plot, the novel casts Wormold as the primary vehicle through which resistance to neo-colonialism is rendered

visible in the context of the Cold War. As the plot of the novel grows in absurdity, *Our Man in Havana* uses the detective genre to counter Wormold's ridiculous predicaments, allowing him to read the clues in his environment through a different lens. Like the "H.H." that stands for Hilton instead of Hawthorne, the form of the novel reveals connections signifying much larger, structural relations of power.

As a British emigrant with intimate knowledge of the city, Wormold serves as a familiar guide for the reader. Although his intelligence reports are fictional, he belongs to the "real" world of vacuum cleaners and police violence that counters the metropolitan desire for much more "imaginative" nuclear plots, military installations, and plans for world domination. Wormold begins his transformation into a detective figure when he cracks the first encoded telegram from Hawthorne, who has chosen Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* as the key to the book-code (36-7).<sup>89</sup> To his surprise, his decoding is successful and the random selection of numbers does in fact yield a mostly intelligible message. Only the final paragraph of the message remained undecipherable; "something had gone wrong either with himself or 59200, or perhaps with Charles Lamb" (54). The random selection of words "had an effect of angry incoherence which worried Wormold" (55). For the first time, Wormold realizes that he must give the people he works for something in return for their money. As one of the many instances of miscommunication and misreading in the novel, the garbled message – which is later revealed to have occurred because Beatrice, his future secretary, had been given the wrong edition of *Tales* – nonetheless communicates to Wormold a sense of urgency and danger about the work ahead of him (92-3). The initial high he receives from successfully decoding Hawthorne's telegram is cut short by his realization of the consequences that could

follow a misstep. The secret language of intelligence agents is only available to him as long as he participates in the game, heeding the messages both explicit and implicit. Fumbling his way through the world of book-codes and cryptic messages, Wormold discovers the dangerous and exciting world of espionage, getting a taste for solving the series of mysteries he will be called on to tackle throughout the novel.

Wormold's departure from Havana inaugurates his role as chief investigator of Cuba's political realities and marks the novel's most self-conscious entrance into the realm of the noir.<sup>90</sup> During this trip, Wormold comes face to face with the "disturbances" he previously only bemoaned as disruptions to his business. When he travels to several towns outside of Havana for business, Wormold most clearly resembles the figure of a detective. In order to justify charging London for his expenses, he renders the local towns intelligible within a Cold War paradigm. His cable to Hawthorne reads: "'On pretext of visiting sub-agents for vacuums propose to investigate possibilities of recruitment port of Matanzas, industrial center Santa Clara, naval headquarters Cienfuegos and dissident center Santiago calculate expenses for journey fifty dollars a day'" (61). Despite the fictitious promise of helpful knowledge to the SIS, this episode provides the largest number of details about Cuba's political situation under Batista. In Santiago, Wormold encounters a city under siege: "He had forgotten how abandoned the streets of Santiago were after dark. Shutters were closed behind the iron grills, and as in an occupied city the houses turned their backs on the passer-by" (64). Located in the Oriente Province, Santiago is the center of the fight between the "usual rebels" in the mountains and the government forces in the cities. As a result, it is frequently subject to road-blocks, unreliable electricity, an "unofficial curfew," military patrols, and arbitrary detainment by



the police (63-5). The darkness of the city is useful as “Any house might contain a man on the run. It was best to hear nothing, and to see nothing was no problem, even when the light came half-heartedly back with a tiny yellow glow on the filament” (64). Comparing Santiago to an “occupied city,” *Our Man in Havana* raises the clear indication of a war-torn land.

The novel’s shift in tone from comedy of errors to noir thriller recalls the earlier episode of violence when a bullet shatters the peaceful operation of tourism on the island. At first, Wormold feels uncomfortable entering this world of “real spies, real police-informers and real rebel agents” (63). Yet, he is conscious of acting as though he were a suspicious character. His normal idiosyncrasies take on a double-meaning in the context of the particularly ominous setting. Wormold is accustomed to sending a letter to his younger sister and nephew in England as well as a postcard to Dr. Hasselbacher or Milly on each of his trips. The isolation he feels in Cuba’s peripheries and the dark political setting give his communications an air of mystery and melancholia:

Whenever he left Havana he dispatched to Milly and Dr Hasselbacher and sometimes even to Lopez bad pictures of bad hotels with a cross against one window like the cross in a detective story which indicates where the crime has been committed. ‘Car broken down. Everything very quiet. Hope to be back Thursday.’ A picture-postcard is a symptom of loneliness. (64)

When he is roughly taken by the police, he must answer for his seemingly suspicious drawing of the cross on a postcard (65). The truth is much less believable to his interrogators than an elaborate story about adultery and a blind husband (66-7). Similarly, the reality of violence and resistance in Batista’s Cuba is too banal to satisfy the capacious imagination of those who destroyed Dr. Hasselbacher’s blue cheese experiment, whoever they may be, and his own employers in London (71). Making

explicit references to a “detective story,” the Santiago episode’s use of the noir genre serves as a generic break in the parody, introducing elements of dark political violence that haunt the landscape.

In his role as quasi-detective, Wormold deciphers for the reader and himself the significance of Cuba’s political background. If Havana is the center of the neo-colony, with its hotel bars, strip clubs, and banks all geared toward making the life of a foreign visitor, whether for business or pleasure, as enjoyable as possible, the rest of Cuba is a world that remains largely unknown to foreigners. Greene was intimately familiar with the capital: “Havana before Fidel came to power in 1959 was a bizarre, corrupt city with its brothels, cheap drugs, gambling saloons, all owned by Las Vegas. Everyone went there for a good time.”<sup>91</sup> Wormold is always somewhat peripheral to this world, existing in a transitory state between foreign tourist and resident. Both too poor and unimportant to enjoy Havana’s greatest luxuries, he is still British enough to be a protected member of the European community – the “untorturable class,” as Captain Segura later explains to him (158-9). Although he does not explicitly verbalize this until much later, Wormold understands the protections that come with British citizenship. Assaulted by the police in Santiago, he exclaims ““I am a British subject, my name is Wormold, my address Havana – Lamparilla 37. My age forty-five, divorced, and I want to ring up the Consul”” (65). However, outside of Havana, his citizenship fails to protect him until he mentions Segura and makes up a story to please his captors (65-7). When he is released, he realizes that they kept his postcard, but decides it does not matter. On his return to Havana, he learns “the rashness of dismissing anything as unimportant” when the postcard is used to ransack Dr. Hasselbacher’s apartment (68). The world of Havana, where Wormold learns

foreigners are “untorturable,” in fact, provides him a very limited picture of the country he lives in (161). As Wormold embarks on an education about how to become a proper secret agent, the novel prompts him and the reader to engage in a parallel investigation of the political realities of life in a neo-colonial state.

As Wormold becomes aware of being read by others as a suspicious character and his own actions take on a deeper meaning than what appears on the surface, he also learns to read his environment differently. Wormold’s first few reports include information gleaned from local newspapers. These reports, he reasons, will be original enough because “it was unlikely that anyone in Kingston or London studied the daily papers of Havana. Even he found a new world in those badly printed pages; perhaps in the past he had depended too much on the *New York Times* or *Herald Tribune* for his picture of the world” (original emphasis, 60). As Wormold shifts his attention from the Anglophone sources that are so easily available to him in neo-colonial Havana, he realizes the sheer number of local events that occur around him without his knowledge. This alone constitutes a “new world” to him and to the intelligence agents who will read his reports. Wormold’s discovery of local news and his belief that no one in Kingston or London would be familiar with them illustrates the extent to which Anglophone travelers and residents could stand apart from those spheres deemed unimportant to their enjoyment of life. Indeed, it seems his strongest connection to Cuba is through Milly. Wormold’s wife raised their daughter Catholic and he promised to keep her that way. Catholicism “brought Milly closer to Cuba than he could come himself” (10). Accompanying her to mass, he learns that “the clergy are preaching all the time against the misuse of science....Father Mendez spent half an hour describing the effect of a hydrogen bomb.

Those who believe in heaven on earth, he said, are creating a hell—he made it sound that way too—it was very lucid” (5). His U.S. employer Phastkleaners’ boasting of an “Atomic” vacuum cleaner stands in stark contrast to the condemnation of nuclear weapons by Cuba’s religious community. Wormold’s relationship with Captain Segura also arises through Milly. Much to Wormold’s dismay, Captain Segura takes a liking to his daughter. Wormold has access to certain aspects of local Cuban life that lie outside of the neo-colonial sphere of tourism and trade. Yet, he fails to place these elements in the context of a larger world-view until he is thrust into the role of spy.

Facing an assassination plot on his own life, Wormold has to figure out who is trying to kill him while attending the luncheon where the murder will allegedly take place. He is asked to deliver the speech of honor at the European Traders’ Association’s annual lunch, a recognition he would never have received if it was not a ploy to murder him. While at the dinner, Wormold uses clues to decipher who is trying to kill him, and finally puts the puzzle pieces together. Carter, a man posing as his business competitor, is the culprit, though other members of the association are also implicated. Carter reminds Wormold of home and he is associated with the comfort of everything English (176, 182). When Wormold finally recognizes his lisp as the voice he heard speaking to Dr. Hasselbacher on the phone, he feels betrayed by a man he had associated with home (183-4). Failing to kill Wormold, Carter ends up killing Dr. Hasselbacher soon after the lunch, leading Wormold to seek revenge. Wormold’s elaborate scheme involves getting Captain Segura drunk while playing checkers, stealing his gun, and killing Carter while taking him on a nightlife tour of Havana. By solving the murder-mystery, Wormold has finally transformed into a spy: “He stood on the frontier of violence, a strange land he

had never visited before; he had his passport in his hand. 'Profession: Spy'.

'Characteristic Features: Friendlessness.' 'Purpose of Visit: Murder.' No visa required. His papers were in order" (191). However, unlike the spies of the Cold War, Wormold's only motivation is loyalty to his friend: "I wouldn't kill for my country. I wouldn't kill for capitalism or Communism or social democracy or the welfare state—whose welfare? I would kill Carter because he killed Hasselbacher" (193). Embodying the detective's embrace of male friendship above all other attachments, Wormold rejects the ties to anything larger than personal relationships, choosing the individual over the political.

Against these denials, his ability to see himself and Cuba within the larger structural relations of informal imperialism and neo-colonialism is a crucial part of Wormold's transformation in the final stages of the novel. Captain Segura's character cycles in and out of the narrative, appearing at times with Milly and at others in name only. Wormold pretends he is one of his double agents feeding London information about communist infiltration in the police (163). Captain Segura is the primary foil for the "rebels" Wormold encounters in Santiago (63, 65, 111). The Chief does not believe the rebels exist; he thinks they are a convenient excuse for the Cuban government to patrol the airspace above their secret constructions (82). Wherever police sirens are heard in the distance, Captain Segura seems to follow and vague references are made to a "revolution." During a tumultuous night, Milly explains to her father, "'The police were dashing everywhere. You should have heard the sirens. I thought it was a revolution, so I rang up Captain Segura'" (122). In fact, the sirens are a result of Wormold's spy work, which have caused foreign agents to plot assassination attempts against those he named as his sources. *Our Man in Havana* continuously redirects Wormold's attention away

from the revolutionary activities occurring in the background and toward the ridiculous plot of the novel, deferring the moment when these acts of political unrest can be observed and defined with clarity. Yet, the specter of resistance is constantly present. Captain Segura is certain he has enough money to escape to Miami “if there was a revolution” (188). In the meantime, he is preparing a list for the President of possible foreign agents in Cuba who he mockingly calls “poltergeists” or noisy spirits causing disturbances which may actually be perpetrated by naughty children. When Dr. Hasselbacher is shot, Captain Segura will blame “the rebels from Oriente. It will be useful in influencing public opinion. Perhaps it was the rebels” (190). Although he knows that they had nothing to do with the doctor’s murder, the convenience of blaming the unrepresented rebels is impossible to resist. By simultaneously calling forward and obscuring the existence of revolutionary activity in Cuba, *Our Man in Havana* prompts Wormold to understand that this resistance is central to solving a different mystery: the role of Cuba’s political background, however slippery and undefined, in the parodic spy novel.

Following the episode in Santiago, his conversations with Captain Segura about the torturable and untorturable classes in Cuba are some of the novel’s most explicitly political passages. He meets the Red Vulture at the Havana Club, the rival rum producer to Bacardi, where all drinks made with rum are free (157). Wormold wants to know how much Captain Segura knows – or believes – about his work as a secret agent. Over frozen daiquiris and a game of checkers, Captain Segura explains that Cuba is an important location not only because of its proximity to the U.S. but also because “we point at your own Jamaica base. If a country is surrounded as Russia is, it will try to punch a hole

through the inside” (158). He then describes the crucial “class distinctions in torture.”

The torturable are,

“The poor in my own country, in any Latin American country. The poor of Central Europe and the Orient. Of course in your welfare states you have no poor, so you are untorturable. In Cuba the police can deal as harshly as they like with émigrés from Latin America and the Baltic States, but not with visitors from your country or Scandinavia. It is an instinctive matter on both sides. Catholics are more torturable than Protestants, just as they are more criminal.” (159)

The two men laugh over the distinctions as Wormold tries to pretend he is Captain Segura’s confidant before Segura leaves (160). Wormold seems to internalize the distinctions when he observes some tourists in the bar with souvenirs that would never be sold to a local: “They are the foreigners, and of course untorturable” (161). By not even trying to sell him the souvenirs, the sellers have identified him as someone who belongs in Havana. In that moment, alone with his free daiquiri and the rest of the resident drinkers, he finally feels himself “a citizen of Havana” and “all of them were citizens too.” Having been identified as a “citizen” of some kind, Wormold gains what he had wanted so badly earlier in the novel, but did not receive from the sellers on the street who saw him every day: some recognition that his existence in Havana has been registered locally as more than transitory and stereotypically foreign.

Reading himself as both belonging to the class of the “untorturables” and the residents of Havana, Wormold finds his way out of the riddle he first encounters on his trip to Santiago where a drunk man rambles “in the style of Gertrude Stein ‘Cuba is Cuba is Cuba’” (63). His ability to understand the unequal relations that structure life for elite local and foreign residents, including himself, paradoxically allows him to feel at home in Havana. This understanding extends to his analysis of the U.S. rhetoric of cooperation and economic domination in Cuba. At the annual lunch of the European Traders’

Association, where the American Consul-General is called on to speak as the guest of honor, the narrator reports indirectly on his speech as the words cycle through Wormold's mind:

He spoke of the spiritual links between the democracies—he seemed to number Cuba among the democracies. Trade was important because without trade there would be no spiritual links, or was it perhaps the other way round. He spoke of American aid to distressed countries which would enable them to buy more goods and by buying more goods strengthen the spiritual links.... (182)

The free indirect discourse of the passage reveals Wormold's understanding of the global capitalist system that powers the tensions of the Cold War. Without an economic incentive, the "spiritual links" between so-called "democracies" are irrelevant. The tautological framework that without trade there would be no spiritual links and without spiritual links there would be no trade is broken by the howl of a dying dog that has accidentally ingested the poison meant for Wormold. The Consul-General's words echo those of *Nostramo*'s Mr. Holroyd, the U.S. steel magnate who invests in the Goulds' silver mine and delivers one of the novel's most memorable passages: "'We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not. The world can't help it—and neither can we, I guess.'"<sup>92</sup> Mr. Holroyd explicitly connects U.S. capitalist domination and a spiritual inevitability. Greene takes the ideological underpinnings of U.S. power – the relationship between democracy and capitalism – and recasts them as nonsensical rhetoric through the eyes of a British emigrant. While Gould mostly ignores Mr. Holroyd's grand pronouncements, *Our Man in Havana* reveals a world dominated by U.S. power after British agents like the Goulds have transferred their power to U.S. investors. Invoking a noun that lends itself to constant slippage, the phrase "Cuba is Cuba is Cuba" simultaneously reflects the metropolitan inability to see beyond its own self-



confirming definitions of the world and Wormold's desire to arrive at an understanding of the term that breaks the cycle of delusion.

Wormold's previously oblivious approach to global affairs is replaced by an intimate and precise knowledge of the world. When Wormold's time as an intelligence agent comes to an end, he is summoned to the British ambassador's residence in Vedado. Upon entering, he has the distinct feeling that everyone – the ambassador's wife, children, butler, and even landscaper – rapidly retreats from his presence. Wormold is quickly ushered into an "Embassy drawing-room" that strikes him as similar to many other Embassy drawing-rooms, decorated with "a mixture of big inherited pieces and small personal objects acquired in previous stations" (213). He observes the objects from around the world, including a "an odd-shaped pipe" and "a tile" that reminds him of Tehran, "an icon or two" likely from Athens, and an "African mask" possibly from Monrovia. This last object "momentarily puzzles" him. When the ambassador confronts Wormold about his troubling business (something he claims to know nothing about other than that it is something very "distasteful"), he looks away from Wormold and settles his gaze on "the Persian pipe, the Gree[k] icon, the Liberian mask. They were like the autobiography in which a man has written for reassurance only of his better days" (spelling corrected). He tells Wormold that this "distasteful subject" of secret intelligence work interferes with the role of the embassy as the only reliable source of information about the world (214). Surrounded by the collected objects of his work, the ambassador claims ignorance of the subterraneous workings of British foreign policy and makes a case for the embassy as the one trustworthy site of knowledge abroad, which the reader, like Wormold, immediately understands to be an empty pronouncement.

As symbols of British power, the small objects in the drawing room represent locations in the world over which the ambassador, as a proxy for the British government, has intimate, reliable, and approved knowledge. Confronted with these material representations of foreign countries and cultures outside of their original context, Wormold is left to decipher their meaning in their new location: a British ambassador's drawing-room in Havana. He does so with ease and a seemingly expert eye, immediately identifying the tile from what he calls "Persia" and the icon from Greece as though the pipe's "odd-shape" could only be found in Tehran and the icon was clearly Athenian. The specificity of his identifications, down to the cities, implies a strong familiarity with locations abroad as though Wormold, a British emigrant in Cuba, suddenly possessed the ability to decode the entire contents of Britain's imperial epistemological system present in the drawing-room. Yet, when he reaches the African mask, he pauses. The pause, though only fleeting, suggests that the mask's origins have tripped up his ability to locate the object in its place within this system of signification. Only a few paragraphs later, the moment of uncertainty seems to have passed, as we move from Wormold's mind to that of the ambassador's, who easily identifies the mask as Liberian when he trains his eye on the small objects, reading the autobiography of his life through the official histories they represent. However, the ambassador's proclamation of embassies as the only "correct sources of information abroad" is challenged by Wormold's participation in the channels of secret intelligence work through which the major world powers competed for control over decolonized or decolonizing nations. The ambassador's drawing room represents an important location within Britain's official imperial historiography, a key node within the network of imperial power. The objects act as tokens, perhaps even given by

representatives of the countries themselves, that signify strong international relations between nations and erase the unequal state-system within which these relations are structured. Wormold's presence in the drawing-room is completely at odds with such an official history. In the post-Suez era, *Our Man in Havana* captures a period of transformation in which British imperial power has been vastly reduced yet is nonetheless actively implicated in feeding metropolitan fantasies of world domination throughout the Global South, including in the Americas, where U.S. power was usually unchallenged by European nations.

Wormold gains the ability to situate himself, a British citizen in Cuba, within the larger history of first European and now U.S. imperialism in Latin America, much as he earlier places a little man with a bowler hat in his drawings to indicate the scale of his fictional constructions. His actions are curious, for he has already indicated a scale with a line and a corresponding number. Still he feels the need to go further: "Then for better measure he drew a little man two inches high below the nozzle. He dressed him neatly in a dark suit, and gave him a bowler hat and an umbrella" (75). The little man translates the gigantic size of the fictional military constructions into human scale through a creative rather than numerical symbol. A neatly-dressed dark-suited, likely British gentleman who could be a secret agent (or a businessman), the little man is not only Wormold's alter ego, but also the prototype of an upper-class British man whose dress suggests he is a man of power. In other words, he is a paradigmatic figure of imperialism rendered comically legible in a drawing. Wormold draws him almost unconsciously. The novel's investigation of the political landscape in Cuba, including Wormold's trip to Santiago rendered in the mode of a noir thriller, gives him the ability to decipher his own relation

to the class of colonial British men abroad symbolized by the little man in the bowler hat. Thus, he identifies himself as part of the untorturable class (188) and refuses to serve as agent “59200/5 in anyone’s global war” (194). His departure from Havana feels “a little like a deportation,” which, of course, it is (217). Captain Segura has no choice but to expel him from Cuba, which conveniently also allows him and others to claim they have rid the country of a dangerous secret agent. Milly has all of the readily-accessible Anglophone magazines ready for the plane: *Time*, *Life*, *Paris-Match*, and *Quick*. By having London’s imagined “man in Havana” deported from the island, the novel writes Wormold and Britain out of the Chief’s imperial fantasies in Cuba: there is no penny-notebook (163); neither Britain nor the U.S. will stop Cuba’s anti-colonial, nationalist revolution; and Captain Segura will find himself in Miami soon enough.

### **From Havana to London, Indirectly: The Narrative Structures of Informal Empire**

If *Our Man in Havana* begins by carefully delineating the separation between Jamaica and Cuba into two separate spheres of influence (British and Spanish/North American), it ends by revealing the structural ties connecting Britain to Cuba and Cuba to Jamaica. Forced to return to London, Wormold chooses the same route Dr. Hasselbacher had imagined his fictional tourist would take (35). In this earlier episode, a drunk Dr. Hasselbacher intercepts Wormold on his way to see Hawthorne at the Sevilla-Biltmore Hotel for their rendezvous in Room 501.<sup>93</sup> He presents Wormold with two miniature bottles of whisky for his collection, a present brought from Miami by one of his patients (31). After a tour through Havana’s lottery ticket markets – “a serious trade uncorrupted by tourists” – in search of an auspicious number, he insists on accompanying Wormold to the hotel for a drink (32-3). At the bar, Dr. Hasselbacher proclaims to have won \$140,000

simply because he could not confirm until the morning if he had lost (33). His loud proclamations attract the attention of a fellow drinker, a married man with two children named Harry Morgan who works in real estate and flew into Havana that morning on a Delta flight from Miami (34). In the ensuing exchanges, the doctor teases an increasingly aggravated Morgan, insisting that he has made him up and will create an “‘improved version’” (34-5). Dr. Hasselbacher tells Morgan that, if Wormold had invented him, he would “‘have been a happier man’” with an “‘Oxford education’” and “‘a name like Pennyfeather’” (34). He apologizes for being too drunk: “‘That’s why I thought you up in such a banal way: Miami and real estate, flying Delta. Pennyfeather would have come from Europe by K.L.M., he would be drinking his national drink, a pink gin’” (35). Simultaneously foreshadowing and mocking the Chief’s overactive imagination, Dr. Hasselbacher promises to turn Morgan into anything he wants, “‘a painter, a poet – or would you prefer a life of adventure, a gun-runner, a Secret Service agent?’” Morgan’s sense of self is oddly unsettled by a drunk stranger’s ramblings. When Wormold returns to London, he takes K.L.M. flight 396 departing at 3:30AM to Montreal and Amsterdam (214, 217). Wormold’s fulfilment of Dr. Hasselbacher’s imaginary – and antagonistic – travel itinerary highlights the novel’s insistence on the inter-dependence of political, economic, and cultural relations across separate colonial spheres.

*Our Man in Havana* establishes the formal colonial ties between the British metropole and its Jamaican colony through Hawthorne. Throughout the novel, Jamaica is closely associated with Hawthorne, who acts as the primary liaison between Wormold in Havana and the Chief in London. The novel’s first two interludes begin with Hawthorne arriving in London from Kingston (43, 79). As the man in charge of setting up Britain’s

Caribbean network, Hawthorne represents the most direct link between Britain's formal empire and its informal spheres of influence (25, 43). Under British rule since 1655, Jamaica's capital city is the center of Britain's secret intelligence work in the Caribbean because it is situated firmly within its formal empire. In the 1950s, Jamaica was moving towards independence, becoming a part of the Federation of the West Indies in 1958 and gaining sovereignty in 1962.<sup>94</sup> Even so, Hawthorne refers to Jamaica as a British territory akin to "home." He tells Wormold, who has been summoned to meet him in Kingston, that he must be glad to be amongst non-Spanish-speaking people (166). Meanwhile, Wormold is appalled by the state of British possessions, wondering why other empires are able to create much better settlements: "What accounted for the squalor of British possessions? The Spanish, the French and the Portuguese build cities where they settled, but the English just allowed cities to grow. The poorest street in Havana had dignity compared with the shanty-life of Kingston – huts built out of old petrol-tins roofed with scrap-metal purloined from some cemetery of abandoned cars" (165). "Havana's not so bad," he tells Hawthorne (166). Once in Jamaica, Wormold worries that he could be arrested and tried under the Official Secrets Act, highlighting the legal power of the British Empire over its colonial territories even as this power was drastically waning. Both Hawthorne and Wormold interpret Kingston and Havana according to their formal colonial pasts, even as Wormold's uneasiness at being on British territory gestures to a rupture between the idea of "home" and the reality of the colony.

However, Wormold's activities in Havana serve to gradually establish a direct communication channel between Britain and Cuba. The Chief insists on setting up a direct line between Havana and London so that Wormold can bypass both the Consulate

and Hawthorne with urgent messages (82, 102). He sends Beatrice, a secretary, and Rudy, a radio operator, to make sure this happens; as a bonus, he reasons that, if Hawthorne cannot find “the penny note-book” that holds the key to Wormold’s character, perhaps Beatrice can (83). Already unraveling throughout the novel, the linear flow is finally broken by the “Epilogue in London.” Wormold makes the conscious decision to avoid Kingston on his return trip to London, traveling through a less direct and therefore inefficient route. The inefficiency in his travel itinerary is a function of the route’s location outside of the established paths within the formal empire. Wormold has first to go to Montreal and then Amsterdam before finally arriving in London (214-5). By avoiding Kingston and the seat of British power in London’s “Caribbean network,” Wormold is avoiding a potential confrontation with Hawthorne, who would likely have instructions to meet him there. Rudy and Beatrice head to – or through – Jamaica (215). When Hawthorne arrives in London for the meeting, “He looked rumpled as though he had slept in his clothes; perhaps he had been on all-night plane from Jamaica” (221). The presence of a red-eye from Kingston to London illustrates the convenient and well-traveled paths of empire available to Wormold as a British citizen. *Our Man in Havana*’s avoidance of such a route – and creation of a new one – highlight the indirect nature of passages across colonial spheres: traveling from Havana to London cannot be achieved via a direct flight in the way that it can between London and Kingston or Miami and Havana. Wormold’s departure from Cuba and arrival in London by way of Dr. Hasselbacher’s indirect – and more imaginative – route codifies into the novel’s form an Anglo-Latin American relationship that is seldom acknowledged, narratively or

otherwise, yet is central to twentieth-century Anglophone novels mapping the routes of formal and informal empire.

The organization of the chapters into a Havana narrative punctuated by a road trip to Santiago, a flight to Kingston, and three “Interludes” and an “Epilogue” in London points to a history between Britain and Cuba that Wormold is prompted to discover throughout the novel, a set of relations that are obscured by the prominence of U.S. power in shaping Latin American affairs and the corresponding decline of traditional European empires. The presence of Miami as a fifth city in the novel (in addition to Havana, Santiago, Kingston, and London) that is often mentioned but never visited symbolizes the specter of U.S. dominance. Dr. Hasselbacher’s drunken rejection of Harry Morgan as not interesting enough belies a darker indictment on the stereotypical foreign tourist in Havana. His own patient has just returned from Miami with the present for Wormold. While poking fun at the North American, *Our Man in Havana* also calls attention to narratives, both fictional and non-fictional, that fail to challenge the established frameworks of empire by re-telling stories whose principal events and characters only serve to confirm the version of reality most convenient to powerful nations, organizations, and corporations. Rather than centralize a U.S. emigrant’s experience in his country’s own neo-colonial territory, the novel foregrounds a pathetic middle-aged British man whose skill lies in mainly staying out of the way of the powerful. Despite the Chief’s fervent wishes, Cuba is not a setting that allows Wormold to become his Kipling-age protagonist. Yet, the British emigrant’s peripheral status in the U.S. neo-colony paradoxically reveals the underlying relations of empire between



London and Havana, both by exposing an old empire that was lost and a new empire that was shaped in its wake.<sup>95</sup>

The final scenes of the novel, in which Wormold and Carter travel through Havana's dark alleys ostensibly trying to assassinate each other, contain a pause emblematic of this novelistic vision. In the distance, Wormold and Carter, both Englishmen, spot a ship:

They came out into the Atlantic drive: a lean white ship was leaving harbour, some tourist-cruiser bound for Kingston or for Port au Prince. They could see the couples leaning over the rail, romantic in the moonlight, and a band was playing a fading favourite—'*I could have danced all night.*'

"It makes me homesick," Carter said. (206)

Carter, the man who killed Dr. Hasselbacher and would kill Wormold if possible, never reveals what organization hired him, but his work for a competitor against SIS would make him a traitor. Thus, Wormold is shocked to find the assassin expressing homesickness for Nottwich, a fictional English city without a sea, but whose "“pleasure-boats on the river”" looked as large as cruise ships to Carter as a child (206). Carter's longing for Nottwich recalls an earlier scene in the bay at Cienfuegos when a "big white statue in the Paseo" reminds Wormold of Queen Victoria. The disorienting passage emphasizes Wormold's deep sense of nostalgia as he is transported to what seems like a childhood memory of his younger sister or simply an imagination that she might be there in the present (62-3). In both cases, images off or near the Cuban shore evoke melancholic British memories or associations. The ship seen from "Atlantic" drive carrying tourists from one location in the Caribbean to another also conjures up images of a thriving Atlantic world full of ships carrying out various kinds of trade, including the robust slave trade that united Havana to Kingston for centuries.<sup>96</sup> Describing the cruise ship as a

“tourist-cruiser” gestures to the possibility of warships in the distance facilitating this trade. *Nostromo*’s Captain Mitchell tells his captive listener at the end of the novel that the “United States cruiser, *Powhattan*,” was the first to recognize the Occidental Province’s independence from Costaguana, ensuring its right to profit from the silver mine.<sup>97</sup> In its own final scenes, *Our Man in Havana* draws strong associations between cruise ships, war ships, and slave ships crisscrossing the Atlantic and uniting Caribbean cities across centuries of empires, past and present: Havana, Kingston, and Port au Prince are intertwined as much as Havana and Miami, Kingston and London, and – via Wormold’s strange journey – Havana and London.

## CHAPTER 4

**The Anglophone World and the Contemporary Latin American Novel: Revisiting the “Treasure House of the World” in Juan Gabriel Vásquez’ *The Secret History of Costaguana***

Having started out his life following in the footsteps of the Latin American Boom writers by moving to Paris, Juan Gabriel Vásquez has spent much of his career actively shaping the reception of his works as both Latin American and world literature, connected to the earlier traditions of his homeland but ultimately forging a different path to recognition abroad.<sup>1</sup> Specifically distancing himself from Colombian Nobel Prize Winner and perhaps the most well-known Latin American Boom writer Gabriel García Márquez, Vásquez turns away from the legacy of magical realism and draws on alternative Hispanophone as well as Anglophone traditions as models for his novels about Colombian history.<sup>2</sup> First published in 2007 and translated into English by Anne McLean, his long-time Canadian translator into English, in 2010, *The Secret History of Costaguana* is narrated by José Altamirano, a Colombian exile living in London who begins his story on the day of Joseph Conrad’s death and proceeds to tell the “secret history” behind Conrad’s fictional South American republic of Costaguana.<sup>3</sup> Altamirano claims that *Nostromo* (1904) is really the story of his life and that of his country’s civil war. The “secret history” then refers to the series of nineteenth-century struggles between Colombia and its Panamanian province which eventually resulted in War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902) and Panama’s 1903 declaration of independence with critical encouragement from the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Vásquez’ novel returns to nineteenth-century Colombian history to chart the movement of several concurrent forces towards one of the defining events of the twentieth-century: the 1904 acquisition of the Panama Canal project by the

U.S., cementing a power structure in Latin America that had far-reaching global consequences, some of which extend into the present and shape a set of concerns in contemporary Hispanophone narratives of the Americas.

The Panama Canal, which divided a nation as well as a continent, formally opened in 1914. However, the Panamanian isthmus, then a Colombian province, had long held an important significance in the rapidly shifting world of nineteenth-century imperialist and capitalist expansion. The canal was preceded by a U.S.-financed and operated railroad, which served the increasingly important route between the U.S.'s Eastern shores and its recently-acquired Western expanses. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 propelled the Panamanian isthmus to central importance for U.S. capitalists. As Robert D. Aguirre argues, Panama had long been characterized by an “in-between” quality, serving as an established, if dangerous travel route by foot, mule, and canoe between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. However, the establishment of the railroad came to define the isthmus in the Anglo-American imagination as a place dominated by mechanized mobility. Precipitated by the railroad, Aguirre writes, “The discursive construction of Panama as an in-between zone, the geographical servant of other masters, was constitutive of a bold new order in which the capital needs and settlement patterns of distant powers could redefine, almost overnight, a sovereign territory as a link of empire.”<sup>5</sup> This bold new order serves as the background for the novels discussed in this dissertation, from the depiction of a mining concession made possible by Anglo-American cooperation in *Nostramo* to the neo-colonial island paradise dominated by U.S. interests in *Our Man in Havana*. *The Secret History* highlights the forces that contributed to the construction of this new world order inaugurated by the

Panama Canal, one of the most enduring symbols of U.S. dominance in the twentieth-century.

Beginning with the early nineteenth-century Latin American independence from Spain, *The Secret History* depicts the imperial competition and domestic wars that led to Colombia's loss of its Panamanian province and the simultaneous transfer of rights to a possible trans-oceanic canal to U.S. hands. The characters' personal and intimate histories intertwine with the large-scale trajectories of several empires whose cooperation and competition over a route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans exacerbates the civil wars raging in Central and South America in the aftermath of decolonization. The novel emphasizes a progression of patriarchal figures, both continental in the case of Simón Bolívar and personal in the case of Miguel and José Altamirano, as they attempt and largely fail to maintain coherence and unity within their respective spheres of influence. Just as Bolívar fails to cement a federation of states including Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador named Gran Colombia, so Miguel Altamirano fails to develop a bond with his son José Altamirano, the novel's narrator who, in time, abandons his only daughter, Eloísa.<sup>6</sup> For Altamirano, Bolívar's failure to establish a family of Latin American nations after independence is an allegory – and excuse – for his own inability to maintain a family at the personal level. Eloísa herself becomes a symbol of Panamanian independence which Altamirano is unable to confront, leading to a permanent rupture between the Colombian father and his Panamanian daughter. The novel is written partly as a mea culpa addressed to Eloísa, whose identity only becomes clear as Altamirano reveals the details of his biography, and the "Readers of the Jury," who will judge his actions by the end of the novel. However, it also maintains a third

addressee in the figure of Conrad, whose name appears in various forms throughout the text. Altamirano frames the novel as an attempt to hold Conrad accountable for his “theft” of his own and Colombia’s national history. Reading about Conrad’s funeral from newspapers in London, he recounts the events leading to another, almost simultaneous geopolitical appropriation: the official U.S. acquisition of the Panama Canal project in 1904.

The novel thus begins twenty years later in 1924 London, where Altamirano has taken up exile after betraying his country by aiding the cause of Panamanian independence, not out of a sense of loyalty to his new home in Panama, but rather out of a need for revenge against Colombia’s turbulent national history, which he blames for the death of Eloísa’s mother. His re-telling situates Central America in general and Panama in particular as the site of turbulent global cross-currents that involved Spanish, French, British and U.S. imperial forces geographically pinned to a narrow strip of land with the potential of uniting the Pacific and Atlantic worlds at a crucial moment in history. Like Lawrence’s Mexico in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and Greene’s Cuba in *Our Man in Havana* (1958), *The Secret History*’s Panamanian setting reveals the extent to which the U.S. shaped and occupied neo-colonial spaces throughout the Western Hemisphere, particularly in those nations closest to its ever-expanding boundaries. While *The Plumed Serpent* and *Our Man in Havana* document the later stages of a long process of neo-colonization at the hands of multiple imperial powers in the twentieth century, *The Secret History* begins this story in the nineteenth century at the moment of Latin American independence, showing the immediacy with which U.S. and European interests combined with already-existing colonial classes to entrench social, political, and economic divisions

in newly formed republics. When Altamirano arrives in Colón, a port city on Panama's Caribbean coast and the central setting of the novel, in 1876, he is struck by its cosmopolitanism: "I thought: This is the world" (70). Yet, as the novel progresses, moving back and forth between a bird's eye-view of Colombia's historical development and the twists and turns of Altamirano's life, his initial perception of a global contact zone gives way to a clearer view of the city – and Panama – as an established neo-colony in which French engineers, British sailors, Chinese and Liberian laborers, Panamanian merchants, and various other communities fall within a U.S.-controlled and operated territory powered by the Railway Company and, later, the canal.

Tracing the rise of U.S. hegemony through Colombia's loss of Panama and Panama's near simultaneous loss of the canal, *The Secret History* situates the beginning of the end of British dominance in Latin America in the mid-nineteenth century, long before Conrad's 1904 depiction of British imperialism in the region. The novel locates the engines of colonization in the foreign interventions carried out throughout the century, explicitly equating U.S. rights to the isthmus, granted by the central government in Bogotá, with colonialism (129, 248). Making specific mention of the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1848, giving the U.S. the right to maintain "neutrality" over an Isthmian passage and intervene militarily if need be, as well as the doomed Hay-Herrán Treaty of 1902, which granted the U.S. the rights to a canal zone for 99 years, *The Secret History* identifies key moments in which the Colombian government, alternatively ruled by warring conservative and liberal forces, relinquished its sovereignty over Panamanian territory. The U.S.'s primary conduit for exercising its influence in Colón, separated from the Colombian interior by geographical boundaries, is the infrastructure constructed to

maintain and advance its global commercial interests. In the Atlantic port city, the Railway Company offices, the railway itself, and the harbor admitting passenger and mail steamers as well as warships constitute an extension of U.S. territory in Central America. By extending to a foreign government the right to defend property and passageways on its territory, Colombia effectively abandons its control over a province that is already geographically detached from the national body. In the novel, the first newspapers in Colón are written in English, transactions are conducted in U.S. dollars, and the bars bear the names of U.S. holidays. Before Altamirano confesses to have remained silent as U.S. railroad and consular officials plot with Panamanians to proclaim independence, a “red, white, and blue flag” is raised to signal the beginning of the marine occupation of Colón, protecting both U.S. citizens and property (277-8). *The Secret History* thus equates U.S. presence in Colombia with an act of direct and irreversible territorial colonization through commercial and diplomatic means.

Although the U.S. had made its intentions of keeping European powers out of decolonized Latin America known with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, much of the region, including Northern South America and the continental Caribbean coasts, remained open to competing imperial designs.<sup>7</sup> As *Nostramo*’s representation of Anglo-Latin American agents has shown, British commercial interests were dominant in the nineteenth century. President Monroe’s declarations to Congress in the wake of Spanish-America’s demise marked a clear shift in U.S. foreign policy towards the Western Hemisphere, but it did not alter economic and political relations overnight.<sup>8</sup> In Northern South America and the Central American region, competition between British and U.S. interests was fierce, particularly around the question of a possible canal route across the



narrow strip of land then constituting Colombia's Panamanian province and several smaller republics, including Nicaragua and Honduras.<sup>9</sup> Britain's presence in Central and South America's Caribbean coast already included settlements and formal arrangements that extended beyond its usual informal imperial practices.<sup>10</sup> Although the U.S.'s stipulation of a "non-colonization principle" did not threaten already-existing European possessions, it raised anxieties about future U.S. influence in a thriving British outpost.<sup>11</sup> The events that followed would only confirm these fears. The Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the Gold Rush of 1849 and the spirit of Manifest Destiny – along with U.S. rhetoric around the annexation of Cuba – brought U.S. desires in direct conflict with British presence in Central America, often taking the two powers to the brink of war.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. had more than doubled its territory by 1848, making a trans-isthmian route an economic and political necessity.<sup>13</sup> Although the U.S. strongly considered Nicaragua as a possible location, Britain maintained an effective protectorate over its Atlantic coast, where the British settlement of Greytown was located.<sup>14</sup> When the U.S. negotiated for transit rights over the Panamanian isthmus from the Colombian government through the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846, Britain's dominance in Latin America's Caribbean coast was severely compromised.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, New York entrepreneurs immediately pursued congressional approval of a Central American railroad project.<sup>16</sup> As the novel shows, the railroad laid the foundations of a future U.S. neo-colony.

However, British anxiety about nascent U.S. imperialism reached new heights around the question of a trans-oceanic canal. Following the imperatives of imperial expansion, British and U.S. forces alternatively cooperated and competed for control of Central American republics throughout the nineteenth century. The Clayton-Bulwer

Treaty of 1850 between the U.S. and Britain sought to alleviate the tensions while encouraging the benefits of exploitation.<sup>17</sup> Both powers agreed to abandon the exclusive construction of a canal and to halt further colonization efforts, including by the creation of protectorates, in Central America.<sup>18</sup> Britain had much to gain from a possible trans-oceanic canal uniting its well-developed Atlantic routes with rapidly expanding Pacific ones. In 1858, Anthony Trollope was sent by the British Post Office to evaluate the efficiency of its mail routes in the West Indies and the isthmus.<sup>19</sup> These routes were considered vital to Britain's communication with, and thus administration of, not only its Pacific Canadian territory, but also the furthest reaches of its empire, extending to parts of East Asia and Australia.<sup>20</sup> Incursions on these routes from both authorized and unauthorized U.S. actors were considered a direct threat to British imperialism. For example, when William Walker, part of a private U.S. militia, led a rogue expedition to invade Nicaragua in 1855, Britain offered its imperial protection.<sup>21</sup> When Walker briefly declared himself dictator of Nicaragua in 1860, the *New York Times* complained of the U.S. failure to protect these nations from threat, giving Britain the opportunity to step into the vacuum: Walker "will find Nicaragua under the protection of a Power which he will scarcely venture to oppose" for "England had really secured the right, and assumed the duty of, a practical protectorate over Nicaragua."<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, following the completion of the railroad in 1855, the U.S. expanded its influence in Central America through the Panamanian "Yankee Strip," an "informal zone of influence" that included cities, created largely to serve trans-isthmian travel, including the Atlantic terminal in Colón.<sup>23</sup> In *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), his account of the postal journey, Trollope identifies Colón as an important site of U.S. imperial designs.<sup>24</sup>

Alternatively seen as an opportunity for cooperation and competition between world powers, passage across Central America become a dominant concern for both British and U.S. powers that increasingly saw control of transportation and communication channels – both within and outside their formal boundaries – as central to their survival.

*The Secret History* follows the complicated negotiations between Colombia's warring factions and these imperial powers – including the U.S., France, and Britain – from independence until the War of a Thousand Days presented the opportunity for a decisive U.S. victory over the rights to build the isthmian canal. The proliferation of powers involved in the story of Panamanian independence and the canal reflects the fluid nature of events guiding developments in the novel's setting. The plurality of actors given a role to play in the story – not to mention the dead bodies and inanimate objects which are given a voice – undermines the narrator's desire for "sovereignty" over his "democratic tale," mirroring the loss of Colombia's sovereignty over its territory to "our big brothers, the Grown-up Countries" (54, 75, 235). Altamirano's anxiety over the "chronology" of his tale dominates his narration. Reflecting on how "stories in the world" are all "juxtaposed, touching, intersecting," he writes, "Chronology is an untamed beast; the reader doesn't know what inhuman labors I've gone through to give my tales a more or less organized appearance" (84). The novel's complicated chronology, intertwining Altamirano's exile in London with various characters' travels through and to Colombia and Panama, highlights the impossibility of wresting "a linear tale" from the combination of forces leading to the U.S. control of the Panama Canal. Yet, *The Secret History* nonetheless provides the exact dates of several important wars and treaties, particularly in the final stages of the civil war and U.S. intervention. Although much has been made of

the novel's presentation of competing historical accounts and thematization of the difficulty that comes with narrating the past, it nonetheless builds to a final historical climax situated in the Western Hemisphere's symbolic and geographic center point: the Panamanian isthmus.<sup>25</sup> Altamirano's chronicle of a series of parallel and intersecting "correspondences" moving toward a single point in time conveys a global consciousness of imperialism that includes Britain and Latin American republics as players in a transnational and transimperial system.

As this dissertation has shown, the twentieth-century Anglophone novel incorporates Latin American settings into its corpus in a systematic and extensive way through the works of some of its most well-known and representative practitioners: Conrad, Lawrence, and Greene, to name only the few included here. The U.S. triumph in the Spanish-American War of 1898 represented the culmination of a century of imperial competition centered around the control of decolonized Latin American republics, a history which is rarely acknowledged by critics of British imperialism, particularly in literary studies. As historians have argued, the war was a turning point in U.S. global relations; Cuba became a blueprint for future interventions and increased the need for a canal to manage its imperial possessions.<sup>26</sup> While *Nostromo* identifies a long history of British informal imperialism in Latin America, particularly in the realm of resource extraction, investment loans, and economic development projects, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Our Man in Havana* capture different stages in the long twentieth-century process of anti-colonial revolution against the supremacy of these foreign agents from the perspective of increasingly powerless and marginalized British emigrants. To varying degrees, Conrad, Lawrence, and Greene identify the U.S. as a dominant power while

largely centering British experiences of Latin American spaces. These novels document the development of Britain's imperial imaginary of a region that was characterized by national independence, U.S. neo-colonialism, and anti-colonial revolution long before the era of post-colonial narratives brought these themes to the forefront of the Anglophone novel.

While *The Secret History* veers away from the representation of British experiences of and in Latin America by depicting a multiplicity of imperial and national forces jockeying for control of a route between the Pacific and Atlantic worlds, the novel extends the interrogation of the logic of progress begun most clearly with *Nostramo*'s articulation of "material interests," continued through *The Plumed Serpent*'s critique of "American automatism," and still present in *Our Man in Havana*'s mockery of the so-called "spiritual links" between democracy and capitalism.<sup>27</sup> Drawing and expanding on this tradition, twenty-first century Latin American novelists, including Vásquez, Cuban Pedro Juan Gutiérrez, and Ecuadorian Gabriela Alemán, revise these early Anglophone narratives to highlight the dominance of economic imperialism in the contemporary world. Like the exploitation of the San Tomé silver mine by the Goulds, the separation of a continent to build the Panama Canal, and the transformation of Havana into an extension of Miami, the destruction of a protected forest for the extraction of copper lies at the crux of Alemán's *Poso Wells* (2007) and the chain linking readers and writers from both Anglophone and Hispanophone traditions. This chapter argues that these contemporary representations as well as the long Conradian presence in twentieth-century Latin American letters suggest the presence of an Anglo-Hispanophone literary nexus cemented and evolving across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. If *The Secret*

*History* reveals the existence of an active Anglo-Latin American world-system centered around 1904, Vásquez forms part of an on-going contemporary redefinition of the Hispanophone world's literary traditions, locating them as much in the geographies of British imperialism as in those of the Spanish empire. Uncovering the mutually-constitutive boundaries of the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, these works call for the re-examination of existing fields of literary and cultural studies through the inclusion of languages and locations which have normally been excluded from their purview, shaping the horizon of emerging disciplinary conversations.

### ***The Secret History and Anglophone Histories of Imperialism***

By 1924, when Altamirano begins his "secret history" from his exile in London, both Colombia and Britain have been expelled from the central territory depicted in the novel. Panama has gained its independence from Colombia and the U.S. has established itself as the dominant imperial power in the Central American Caribbean region. As Britain mourns the death of "The Great English Novelist...Jewel of the British Crown," Colombia celebrates the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Boyacá in 1819, a decisive victory in the struggle to liberate New Granada from Spanish rule (3-4). On August 7, Altamirano reads the news of Conrad's death from "all the London broadsheets (their microscopic print, their uneven, narrow columns) spread out over my green leather desktop." While contemplating Conrad's death on the anniversary of an important battle for Latin American independence, Altamirano articulates the novel's opening gambit by directly addressing his readers with a question: "What can a famous novelist have in common with a poor, anonymous, exiled Colombian?" he asks, then imploring, "Readers: have patience" (4). Altamirano will reveal the answer in time, detailing the events that

have turned Conrad into the “man who robbed” this “poor” Colombian exile. Framing the novel in the posture of a narrator “writing back” to the imperial center by revising its canonical representations of the colonial periphery, Altamirano places Britain in the unusual position of a literary and cultural metropole in Latin America, a role normally occupied by Spain and France, as in the case of *Nostromo*, as well as the U.S., as in *The Plumed Serpent* and *Our Man in Havana*.<sup>28</sup> However, he does so via the figure of Conrad, whose Polish background – a biographical fact which is acknowledged by Altamirano on the first page – immediately complicates the identity of the metropolitan opposition. In the course of documenting “the forms and qualities of that theft” committed by Conrad, *The Secret History* goes far beyond its own narrator’s stated aims.

When Altamirano arrives for his self-imposed exile in the British metropole in 1903, he depicts “the chaotic, imperial, and decadent city of London” as a place outside of history: “nothing happened in these lands anymore, everything had already been invented and done; they’d already had all the ideas, all the empires had arisen and they’d fought all the wars, and I would forever be safe from the disasters that Great Moments can impress onto Small Lives” (6). In contrast to Britain, Colombia is a place over-determined by the “Angel of History,” whose every whim causes wars, revolutions, and tragedies, particularly in the form of clashes between the conservative and liberal parties, entangling individuals as they go about their normal course of business (37, 64). As Colombia passes through various phases of its national development, often changing its name and constitution, Altamirano invokes the Angel of History as “the expert puppeteer” that determines when political events will interfere in everyday life, regardless of one’s stated or desired neutrality (67, 208). Situated in the Panamanian

province, Colón is the “embryonic, ambiguous city, this city with no past” that Miguel, Altamirano’s father, travels to in 1854, when the city is only three years old and already experiencing an identity crisis indicative of its membership in the “Schizophrenic Places Club” (35-6). It is known at once as “Colón” by Colombians and “Aspinwall” by the U.S. citizens building the railway, symbolizing the competing national and imperial systems working to define Panamanian territory. While Colón exists in this “embryonic” state where history is only just beginning, London is the place where Altamirano believes he can escape history, because the convulsive political events that define Colombian reality have already occurred.

Yet, it is also the location of a Latin American diasporic community intimately connected that history which he hopes to escape. Altamirano’s final confrontation with Conrad ends the novel with a scene of reading in which the British author reads the future installments of *Nostromo* to the Latin American exile. Conrad and the narrator first meet through Santiago Pérez Triana, the son of a liberal Colombian president who has sought exile in London (86-7). Arriving with neither “North American nor colonial” identity documents, Altamirano immediately seeks friendship and shelter with Pérez Triana, who has just received a letter informing him of Conrad’s need for help with a South American story: “In those days, a Colombian arriving in London necessarily called on Santiago Pérez Triana” (87). Conrad is engaged in the immensely difficult process of writing *Nostromo*, but “London, luckily for him, is full of Costaguanans. Will it be necessary to resort to those men, exiles like him, men – like him – whose place in the world is roving and vague?” (245-6) Pérez Triana meets Altamirano and instantly knows he can offer Conrad something better than a second-hand account or “witness” of the politics of his



country, which he no longer has access to from London. Instead, he can offer Conrad a “victim” of one of the bloodiest civil wars Colombia had seen, the consequences of which were only just arriving on the newspapers aboard the same kind of passenger steamer that carried Altamirano from Colombia’s Caribbean port of Barranquilla to the Thames (85, 95). After hearing his story, Pérez Triana asks Altamirano to come live in his house under the pretense “that all exiles were brothers, that voluntary expatriates and banished refugees were of the same species” (256). He introduces Altamirano to Conrad that November in 1903, leading to the fateful and unreserved revelations of the novel’s narrator. Through Altamirano’s peripatetic episodes in London, *The Secret History* locates the British metropole within an Anglo-Latin American diasporic map rendered visible by the flows of people and information to and from Colombia’s Caribbean ports.

Moreover, when Altamirano finally encounters the text of *Nostromo*, the spaces of London, Colombia, and Costaguana all begin to melt into each other as he walks through the city. When the first installment of Conrad’s tale is published in *T.P.’s Weekly* the following January, Altamirano picks up a copy and delays his reading while going on “a long circular walk around Regent’s Park” as the objects attain an “unreal quality” about them (194). Finally, as “an incipient snowfall began over London and perhaps over all of Imperial England,” he describes the dream-like experience of moving through the imagery of *Nostromo*’s beginning pages while sitting on a bench in Regent’s Park:

I carried on, between oranges and galleons, between sunken rocks and mountains that sink their heads in the clouds, and began to wander like a sleepwalker through the story of that fictitious republic, and I traveled through descriptions and events that I knew and at the same time did not know, that seemed my own and alien at the same time, and I saw the Colombian wars, the Colombian dead, the landscape of Colón and Santa Marta, the sea and its color and the mountain and its dangers, and there it was, at last, the discord that had always been...But there was something missing in that tale: an absence was more visible than all those presences. (295)

That absence is his own. Despite having confessed his own role in the separation of Panama from Colombia, Conrad has failed to mention Altamirano or Colombia by name. He is shocked to see his own life disappear from the pages. When confronted with this omission by Altamirano at his apartment, Conrad angrily explains, “‘It’s the story of my country. It’s the story of Costaguana,’” which he must publish to pay for his wife’s knee operations despite this strange man’s reclamations about his “pathetic life” (297, 299). Altamirano can do nothing but acquiesce when Conrad offers to read the next installments of *Nostromo*. As Conrad reads the story in which “there is nothing, absolutely nothing that you don’t know,” he confronts the reality that he would “go on remembering that afternoon when I disappeared from history by magic, I would go on being aware of the magnitude of my loss but also of the irreparable damage the events of my life had caused us,” referring to his abandonment of Eloísa (300-1). If the beginning pages of *The Secret History* purport to tell the story of a literary “theft” committed by Conrad, the final pages of the novel bring into relief a much larger geopolitical and historical theft – and “loss” – suffered at multiple scales simultaneously following the events of 1904 (4, 301).

Although the novel begins with – and, in some ways, carries out – a revision of Conrad’s *Nostromo*, its wider project of historical narration makes clear that the revision goes beyond the metropolitan Anglophone novel. As Altamirano’s biography shows, *The Secret History*’s “secret history” is largely the story of 1904 and its significance to the development of the contemporary world-system. In this context, *Nostromo* serves as a gateway to a past that was written out of imperial, colonial, and national histories at multiple points throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Nostromo*’s 1904

publication is intertwined with Panama's separation from Colombia via the transference of the rights to a trans-oceanic canal to the U.S.: "The first installment of *Nostramo* appeared in *T.P.'s Weekly* in January 1904, more or less at the same time that the Panama Canal Company sold all its properties to the United States, without a Colombian representative even allowed to participate in the negotiations" (293). Maintaining U.S. power on the sidelines of the novel, *Nostramo* details British control over the economic engine of a South American republic along with the British-funded construction of a railway. By tying the story of British power presented in Conrad's novel with the history of French and U.S. competition in Central America, *The Secret History* provides an account of the geopolitical restructuring which *Nostramo* only hints at. Altamirano's final reclamations against Conrad's "theft," conducted face to face with the novelist on a snowy London evening, decry the absence of a key locus around which a set of geopolitical forces converged to solidify the rise of the American century and the withdrawal of British imperial claims to Latin America. Staged as a scene of Conrad "reading back" to Altamirano the broad outlines of a history which ultimately is not accessible to the British-Polish novelist, the final confrontation is a broader revision of the histories of imperialism, which largely exclude Anglo-Latin American relations and the significance of the Panama Canal, as much as it is a post-colonial re-writing of a metropolitan representation.

In order to revise these histories, *The Secret History* establishes the relationship between its own narrative and those earlier accounts of economic development in Latin America, including Anglophone and Hispanophone accounts in its critique. Undermining his own all-encompassing desire for "sovereignty" over his tale, Altamirano gives

interiority to the bodies and objects which lack agency in *Nostromo*: the laborers and illegal arms that circulate through Costaguana. Miguel first encounters the bodies of Chinese laborers killed during the construction of the Panama railroad while studying in the University of Bogotá, which has banned the use of cadavers for medical research (12). As the “corpses of cholera victims” begin to pile up in the hospital, the clash between the conservative party dominated by the church and the liberal party driven by the forces of “enlightenment” obscures a curious detail: “no one stopped to wonder how the illness had managed to climb to 2,600 meters above sea level or whence it had arrived” (13). When a representative of the U.S. Panama Railroad Company arrives selling the bodies of Chinese laborers, Miguel sees this as an opportunity to advance the “long struggle of Light against Darkness” (15). The purchase of the “foreign dead” is approved and the students begin to dissect them, hoping to learn the locations of particular organs in the body (14-7). Instead, the Chinese laborers begin to speak of changes occurring far beyond Bogotá, connecting the wounds and diseases that killed them to the 1848 discovery of gold in California, the influx of North American travelers arriving at the Panamanian isthmus aboard steamships, and, finally, “the miracle of the railroad.” “We were there,” they say to Miguel, who finds a “splinter of bamboo” in one of the bodies, pointing to suicide as the manner of death (16-7). The body then speaks of the “sadness,” “malaria,” and indignity which killed him: “I, who in life have built the Panama Railroad, in death shall help to finance it, as will the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight dead workers, Chinese, blacks, and Irish, who are visiting the universities and hospitals of the world right now. Oh, how a body travels...” (18). The Chinese laborer’s voice highlights the ruthless efficiency of the capitalist market.

However, Miguel can only read the body as an “emissary from the future, an outpost of progress” and see the “history of the railway as a true epic,” enamored as he is with the ideology of progress.

Meanwhile, the trade in bodies – and the messages these bodies carry – reveals the routes of death and disease created by global economic imperatives. Although Miguel’s belief in progress impedes his ability to register the consequences of development, Altamirano painstakingly documents these effects to revise his father’s distortions. The Chinese laborer’s body also reveals that “the passenger infected with cholera, directly responsible for the two thousand deaths in Cartagena and hundreds in Bogotá, was on board that ship, the *Falcon*,” which had carried hundreds of U.S. gold-seekers from the Eastern seaboard to the port of Colón (16, 18). The devastating effects of the Panamanian jungle and climate on both foreign travelers and local settlers constitutes the “corrected version of El Dorado, this Gold Trail in the process of being opened” (17). The bodies piling up in hospitals on Colombia’s interior have been infected by diseases traveling aboard ships from the country’s Caribbean ports. Yet, neither Miguel’s liberal compatriots nor his conservative enemies can trace the routes traveled by illness and death back to their origins in the railroad project and, even further away, to the California Gold Rush. In addition to the Chinese laborers, Altamirano also traces the life of the smuggled arms that cause so much death. Evoking Conrad’s possible involvement in a gunrunning operation off the coast of Colombia as well as an episode in *Nostromo* in which Decoud facilitates the trade in arms for Sulaco’s revolution, Altamirano asks, “What do rifles know of us?” (75) The reader follows the journey of the Chassepot rifle, allegedly smuggled to Latin America aboard the French ship, the *Saint-Antoine*, as it

travels across the Atlantic, ending with a long list of the things Conrad “doesn’t know” (75-83). After arriving in Colombia, “the Chassepot and the one thousand two hundred and ninety-two like it are taken to the port in mule-drawn carts and loaded onto the *Helena* steamship, whose Pacific route comes from California, via Nicaragua, and has as its final destination the port of Lima, Peru” (78). The rifles change many hands and travel the world as their bullets pierce body parts, mirroring the routes traveled by Gould and Decoud in *Nostramo* as they seek to build commercial, cultural, and political pathways between Europe and the Americas.

The novel’s focus on the human cost of both legal and contraband trade – the ways in which goods such as rifles move through the world over many transactions, eventually resulting in bullets “burning nerves, scorching tendons, crossing through carpal tunnel the way a boat crosses a canal” – underscores the many things “Korzeniowski doesn’t know at that moment” (82). Conrad’s many unknowns involve events as geographically and temporally distant as the eruption of Mount Pelée in 1902, which destroyed the thriving port city of Saint-Pierre, Martinique, to which the *Saint-Antoine* first sailed in 1876 with Conrad aboard. As Conrad “carries on not knowing things,” *The Secret History* builds connections between these gaps in knowledge and the series of events leading to the loss of Panama and the canal: “He doesn’t know that the coast-line of Saint-Pierre will not ever be the same, at least not for him, for the city known as Old Paris will be erased from the map in a quarter of a century, completely obliterated like an undesirable historical fact (but this is not the time to speak of that disaster)” (83). The destruction of Saint-Pierre in 1902, just as the U.S. engaged in its final deliberations over whether a canal should be built across Panama or Nicaragua,

brought home the risks of building in volcanic territory. The novel, then, associates the eruption in Martinique with the eventual decision by the U.S. to avoid Nicaragua, which was known for having several active volcanoes, increasing the imperative to secure a concession from the Colombian government over a Panamanian route.<sup>29</sup> The novel details the events leading up to the break-down of the complicated negotiations between Colombia and the U.S., implicating Panamanian journalists like Miguel, who portrayed a distorted view of reality to French shareholders and readers, in the eventual loss of the Panamanian province and the canal.

The rise and fall of the French canal company is a key part of Altamirano's revisions. The French hold over the canal begins as one of the many "correspondences" detailed by the novel (83). Just as Conrad celebrates his nineteenth birthday aboard the *Saint-Antoine* as it sails back to Marseille, another ship, "the steamer *Lafayette*, flagship of the French West Indies line" searches "through the Colombian Darien Jungle for the best place to open an inter-oceanic canal, which some – in Paris, in New York, in Bogotá itself – have begun to call That Fucking Canal" (84). When they return six months later without any certainty about a possible canal, Miguel proceeds to represent their mission as a resounding success (106). When the expedition secures a concession from the Colombian government for "the exclusive privilege, valid for ninety-nine years, to construct the Fucking Canal" and the U.S. refuses to share the knowledge from their own expeditions with the French, Miguel writes that all of the negotiations are proceeding according to plan (120). Finally, when the head of the French expedition declares, in front of "the representatives of more than twenty countries" meeting in Paris, that Panama is the only possible place for a canal, no one really cares to question the

assertions supported by the “heroic figure of Ferdinand de Lesseps, maker of Suez” (123-4). All the news from Panama – that is, Colombia – have been positive. De Lesseps’ arrival in Panama marks the beginning of a new era, mockingly historicized as a “Very Important Visit” (125). Miguel joins the French press office as a writer for the *Bulletin du Canal Interocéanique* (130), which will conceal from shareholders in France the unprecedented difficulties encountered in the construction of the canal over the next decade: the number of dead French engineers and their families ravaged by yellow fever (139-40); the effects of earthquakes, fires, and civil wars (142-3, 160); and the staggering sums of money required to make even minimal progress in the face of these difficulties (161-2). Filling in the gaps of what Korzeniowski and *Nostromo* do not know, Altamirano also revises national and imperial histories which constructed narratives of development that directly led to the U.S. acquisition of the canal project.

As the “Historian of Parallel Lines,” Altamirano claims it is his duty to “trace an itinerary” which continually weaves together the various strands of his narrative at key points in time. When the London *Economist* finally exposes the web of deceit connecting the French canal project to information networks in France and Latin America, it is too late to save the company and the canal (171-2, 178). However, this is not the only event which spells the end of Miguel’s dream. Altamirano “understood that the world had stopped being my father’s, or that my father had stopped belonging to this world, when in the space of a few days two decisive things happened: in Bogotá they reformed the Constitution; in *The Economist* they published the famous denunciation of the press” (171). The two parallel events connect Colombia to Britain as symbols of a double-pronged attack on the “cause of progress” (172). As the conservative party re-writes the



constitution to include God as the “source of all authority,” the London paper deals an irreparable blow to the very symbol of modernity – and Altamirano’s career. When, having given up all hope of continuing his journalistic career, Miguel plans a trip across the Chagres river to see the remnants of his life’s work, another man plans a trip up the Congo River, continuing the parallelisms between Colombian and British spheres.

Structured in the style of a monthly journal, Altamirano recounts the journey of his father and Conrad, changing from one to the other every month. In November, Miguel travels into the Panamanian interior on the train to see the machines abandoned in the jungle (195). He is later found dead in the belly of an excavator (197). The next month, Conrad returns from his own river journey and sees Brussels differently: it is now “the center of a slave-holding, exploitative, murderous empire” (195). The parallel developments occurring to the Panamanian journalist and the British sailor in the intertwined journal mirror the novel’s tracing of Colombian and British affairs as part of the same wave of attacks leading to the destruction of the French canal project.

Altamirano addresses his narration of these multiple intersecting stories and “correspondences” to various audiences at different points: Readers of the Jury (or Dear Reader), Eloísa, or Conrad (also Korzeniowski or Joseph K.). These multiple addressees underscore the novel’s portrayal of the overlapping relations of empire and colonization in Panama, which are symbolized by the multiplying routes of travel, trade, and exploration. In contrast to the linearity of Miguel’s fantasy of progress and movement toward the future, these multi-directional relations and multiple addressees render sequential ordering impossible. *The Secret History* revises the journey in *Heart of Darkness* by connecting Conrad’s trip up the Congo river to Miguel’s trip on the

Chagres. Although the primary colonial relations in *Heart of Darkness* exists between two territories and waterways, the river journeys in *The Secret History* include multiple waterways across Colombia, Britain, and the Congo. The novel first draws a comparison between the Thames in London and the Magdalene river which traverses Colombia's interior and ends in its Caribbean basin. Altamirano comments on the irony of finding himself on the Thames after being conceived aboard a British steamer while his father was traveling up the Magdalene river on his way to Panama (45). When Altamirano finally travels to London, he travels on "the passenger steamer *Hood*, of the Royal Mail, that plied the Barranquilla-London route, from the mouth of the Magdalene to the belly of the Thames" (291). Altamirano's recourse to tracing parallels which move simultaneously toward an endpoint – 1904 – but intersect and separate at various places in the narrative communicates the geopolitical reality of the Panamanian setting: the sentiment of overlapping sovereignties and competing territorial claims to the Central American land as well as comparative territories and pathways, including the Suez Canal. Altamirano's sense of "living in two countries at once" or "crossing an invisible border over and over again" due to the U.S. occupation of the railroad zone (100) and the "waving of flags of the two signatory nations" (239) over the failed Hay-Herrán Treaty are signs of this multiply claimed territory.

By the end of the novel and his narration, Altamirano purports to be getting closer and closer to relating the exact moment of the robbery committed by Conrad, a theft which occurs in very close textual proximity to the story of the U.S.'s involvement in negotiations over the rights to the construction of the Panama Canal with Colombia. One of the ambassadors sent to represent Colombia in the U.S. is José Vicente Concha. Over

the course of the negotiations, he suffers a mental breakdown “and the port authorities in New York were forced to restrain him in a straitjacket while he shouted at the top of his lungs words that no one understood: *Soberanía, Imperio, Colonialismo*” (237). The words emphasize the ambassador’s inability to communicate in English (to the detriment of the Colombian party’s interests in the negotiations) and the larger context in which both Colombian and Panamanian factions ignored the threat posed to their mutual interests by the power of its Northern neighbor. Ambassador Concha dies soon after his return to Colombia, muttering incoherently about the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846, in which the U.S. promised to safeguard Colombian sovereignty against threats posed by independence movements in its Panamanian province in exchange for the rights of transit and ability to build the a railway across the isthmus.<sup>30</sup> When the Colombian ambassador has his breakdown, the U.S. has reversed course and is considering advancing Panama’s push for independence in light of Colombian obstinacy over the terms of the canal.<sup>31</sup> The climax involving Altamirano’s confrontation with Conrad over the narrative theft is preceded by the U.S. “theft” of the key Colombian province and, soon after, the rights to the Panama Canal.

Emphasizing Panama’s absorption into the competing colonial spheres of the Latin America’s Caribbean world, *The Secret History* locates political and military power aboard various ships, which operate as extensions of territorial space. Miguel and José Altamirano both understand the importance of “Gringo ships” as the symbols of colonial domination in the independence era (161, 234). Foreign ships are often named in rapid succession to emphasize their sheer number and importance in directing Colombian affairs: “Under the paternal vigilance of the USS *Galena* and the USS *Shenandoah*, under

the irrefutable authority of the USS *Swatara* and the USS *Tennessee*, works on the Great Trench tried to carry on” (161). During an earlier episode of the final civil war, “four captains – two North Americans, one English, and one French – who had assumed the role of mediators to avoid possible damage to the railway system” help to negotiate a standoff between conservatives and liberals over Panama (222). Negotiations occur aboard “the British cruiser *Tribune*” (223). U.S. steamships linger “like a ghostly presence” off the coast of Colón, a constant reminder of what was soon to be an “occupied city” (220, 223). “Five military vessels from four different nationalities” are anchored in Colón’s bay (226). Ultimately, the War of a Thousand Days, which was finally settled on the USS *Wisconsin* on November 12, 1902, was

...special for having been resolved from start to finish in the bowels of foreign ships. Generals Foliaco and De la Rosa did not negotiate aboard the *Próspero Pinzón* but on the HMS *Tribune*; Generals Foliaco and Albán did not negotiate on the *Cartagena*, which arrived around the same time in Colón, but on the USS *Marietta*. After the surrender of my Schizophrenic City, where did they arrange the prisoner swaps? Not on the *Almirante Padilla*, but on the *Philadelphia*. And last but not least: ...where was the negotiation table that led to the Treaty?...It was not on board the Liberal *Cauca*, or on the Conservative *Boyaca*: it was on the USS *Wisconsin*, which was neither one nor the other but was much more....(234-5)

Altamirano finally arrives at the crux of his narrative: the U.S. desire to resolve the civil war in favor of Colombia’s conservative government for the express purpose of resuming “negotiations pending on the Panama Canal” (236). The help which the Colombian government accepts is contingent on agreeing to U.S. terms over the canal. When it fails to grant these terms, the U.S. finds a willing and vulnerable negotiating partner in the Panamanian independence movement.

As the presence of multiple imperial ships shows, the events of 1904 constitute the closure of an era of intense competition and cooperation between U.S. and European

powers centered on the crucial issue of a possible canal that would unify the Atlantic and Pacific worlds. While the novel is framed as a revenge narrative against an author, the broader routes of informal and formal imperialism are woven into a tale of continuing colonization in Latin America that revises the dominant narratives of imperialism in Anglophone histories. Altamirano's loss of power over his narrative, both in terms of what he sees as Conrad's theft and his own deviation from his stated intentions, mirrors Colombia's loss of its territorial sovereignty over the course of the nineteenth century, finally culminating in the events of 1904. As the Royal Mail steamer sails away from Colombia's Caribbean coast with Altamirano aboard, the U.S. simultaneously sends its own Pacific fleet to protect Panama from future Colombian attempts to recapture its province, thus marking the beginning of an intense period of U.S. interventions following the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898 (291). While the British effectively relinquish their informal and sometimes formal imperial claims to Latin America's Caribbean world, the U.S. asserts its right to defend the routes of global trade by formalizing its rights to defend the "neutrality" of current and future passages between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The histories, geographies, and languages of the Americas enter British metropolitan space through Altamirano's London-based narration of what Conrad and *Nostromo* fail to know and capture. In the process, *The Secret History* renders visible the global circulation of goods, people, and information that tie the production of *Nostromo* and the history of the Panama Canal to a single world-system of Anglo-Latin American relations. Vásquez' use of an alternative Anglophone literary tradition to challenge the national and imperial histories of both British and Latin American spheres is part of a growing trend in contemporary Hispanophone letters of the Americas.

### **Alternative Traditions: The Anglophone World and Contemporary Latin American Novels**

The legacies of this history are present in the novels of Pedro Juan Gutiérrez and Gabriela Alemán, two contemporary Latin American writers who also use Anglophone works and histories as the starting point for their own novels about capitalist imperialism. First published in Spain in 2004 and then in Britain in 2010, Gutiérrez' *Our GG in Havana* (2004) chronicles the adventures of a character referred to as GG, who turns out to be two characters: George Greene and Graham Greene.<sup>32</sup> Set in 1955, the novel begins by telling the story of a Graham Greene impostor who arrives in Havana with a British passport and is confused for the writer by an admiring hotel attendant. Following the premise of Greene's *Our Man in Havana*, this impostor is unwittingly embroiled in a murder-mystery that involves several competing intelligence agencies and criminal organizations with both ideological and non-ideological motives. Based on H.G. Wells' 1904 short story set in Ecuador, "The Country of the Blind," Alemán's *Poso Wells* (2007) combines a story of violence against women and environmental exploitation by global capitalist forces in the midst of one of Ecuador's democratic election cycles.<sup>33</sup> *Poso Wells* is Alemán's first novel to appear in English translation. Originally published in 2007 by a national press in Quito, the novel gained international exposure in the Hispanophone world through publication in Madrid in 2012.<sup>34</sup> *Poso Wells* was translated into English by Dick Cluster, who proposed the book idea to several U.S. publishers before finding success with a publishing house in San Francisco that issued the book in 2018.<sup>35</sup> Additional twenty-first century Latin American novels which treat the histories, traditions, and spaces of the Anglophone world include Argentinian Rodrigo Fresán's *Kensington Gardens* (2003), Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Dream of the Celt*

(2010), and Colombian William Ospina's *El año del verano que nunca llegó* [*The Year of the Summer that Never Came*] (2015).<sup>36</sup> While these texts vary widely from each other, they point to the emergence of an alternative tradition in Hispanophone letters.

Gutiérrez' *Our GG in Havana* inverts the colonial relationship of the British writer's representation of a Latin American setting and replaces it with a Latin American writer's representation of the British author and novel. Although Greene was not in Havana in 1955, he made several trips to the Cuban capital between 1954 and 1956 which inspired his later novel and forms the central subject of Chapter 3.<sup>37</sup> In Gutiérrez' version of the story, Greene decides to go to Havana when he finds his name implicated in a murder in Cuba. Drawing on Greene's decadent experience of "Batista's Cuba," *Our GG in Havana* embroils the author in the neo-colonial exploits of the U.S. and the Cold War games of the 1950s.<sup>38</sup> Meeting several shady characters over the course of the brief novel, Greene finally finds himself kidnapped by a man with an Italian name known only as "the Magician," who tells him that he must never write about the darker aspects of Cuban life or he will be literally fed to the sharks:

"Here everything is perfect, Mr Greene. The people are happy and friendly, the women are beautiful, families are happy, the poor live well, the politicians love democracy and freedom, we don't have thieves or pickpockets, people don't commit suicide, everyone is educated and healthy. Cubans always smile at life because this is a paradise. Do you understand me now?" (146-7)

Greene understands clearly the threat to his life and takes the first plane out of the country. Echoing *Our Man in Havana*'s representation of a troubled yet intoxicating neo-colonial landscape, *Our GG in Havana* turns London's MI6 man in Cuba into a Cuban account of Graham Greene in Havana. By drawing on Greene's reputation as an anti-American writer whose novel about Cuba has generally been dismissed as nothing more

than an “entertainment,” Gutiérrez embeds a critique of present-day social conditions and economic exploitation in *Our GG in Havana*, challenging both national and imperial narratives.

Set in various locations in Ecuador in 2006, *Poso Wells* makes use of the Wells short story to create a link between the myth of a natural Ecuadorian past and a present-day nightmare as the blind men from the short story are now hunting, kidnapping, and raping young women in underground tunnels snaking beneath the settlement of Poso Wells. When they kidnap a politician, they are thrust into the spotlight of a bizarre election-year theatre involving a corrupt businessman-turned-presidential candidate and the coming apocalypse of an environmental catastrophe. Although the election has brought attention to the mystery, women have been disappearing from Poso Wells for decades. The mystery positions the present-day reader as a detective investigating not only what the blind men might have to do with modern Ecuador, but also what H.G. Wells is doing in the novel. Varas, a young journalist writing a story about the missing women (which his editors have no interest in) and the spectacular electrocution of several male presidential candidates during an event in Poso Wells (which his editors are very interested in), follows the “trail of Wells” to a library in Guayaquil, where he discovers “a book of travel writing by an Englishman who had been in Ecuador toward the end of the nineteenth century” (26). He also finds an article in an Ecuadorian newspaper written in 1950 by another Englishman named Binns who had been searching for the village of the blind men mentioned by Wells. The article is written by Binns in an attempt to locate a reader who might know something about the civilization’s whereabouts, but it seemingly receives no response throughout the years. The novel connects Wells, Binn,



and Varas through the acts of traveling, writing, and reading, as Varas wonders, “What happened between 1880 and 1950? What happened between then and 2006?” (29).

Although Varas wants to know the relationship between the blind men of the 1880 and 1950 texts and the men who appear in Poso Wells today, the novel suggests an underlying relationship between the networks of readers and writers connecting Britain to Latin America – and vice versa – by motivating acts of storytelling across the centuries. Varas’ archival research mirrors the novel’s work in excavating and re-imagining Anglo-Latin American textual relations.

Through the examination of “material interests” in contemporary Latin America, *Poso Wells* connects the archives of nineteenth-century European travel writing and twentieth-century Anglophone modernism to contemporary Hispanophone narratives of the Americas. The businessman running for president, Andrés Vinuena, is in the process of securing a 300,00-acre concession from the Ecuadorian government, which he hopes to soon be leading, for a Canadian investment company headed by Mr. Holmes when he is suddenly kidnapped by the five blind men. Holmes is, by this point, an archetype of the mild-mannered, respectable, yet villainous global capitalist figure most clearly exemplified by *Nostromo*’s Mr. Holroyd and repeated in various forms throughout the novels of this dissertation. We see echoes of this character in *Our Man in Havana*’s American Consul-General, who gives a rambling speech about the importance of trade and “the spiritual link between the democracies” (181) or in *The Secret History*’s description of Colonel James Shaler, the U.S. superintendent of the Railway Company, who declares that the construction of the Panama Canal is crucial to the advancement of “independence and progress.” ““Mark my words, Altmirano, mark my words: the Canal

will be built and we're the ones who'll build it,'" he exclaims, presumably in English since the novel makes clear that he still knows no Spanish (268). In the Spanish text, Shaler's "*mark my words*" appears Italicized in English, emphasizing the importance of both his nationality and the imposition of an Anglo-American world-view on the novel's Colombian setting, a multi-lingual characteristic that is irreproducible in the English version.<sup>39</sup> *Our GG in Havana*'s FBI agent Robert Tripp, who warns the British novelist and former (perhaps still current) MI6 agent Greene not to get involved with any organization in the "chaotic and sinful city" (52), also fits into this literary mold, echoing the logic behind Charles Gould's belief in "material interests" above all else: "Disorder could disrupt the economy and the peace in this country. No disorder can be allowed" (80). As Gould predicted, the protection of profit and economic development would result in the imposition of social and political order at any cost.

In the twenty-first century setting of *Poso Wells*, Holmes is an investor hoping to make money by securing a concession reminiscent of the San Tomé silver mine forced on Charles Gould's father in the nineteenth-century. He is working through Vinuenza's company, the Eagle Copper Corporation, much like Mr. Holroyd works through the Goulds. After his release by the blind men and while campaigning for president as the candidate clearly chosen by God to lead Ecuador, Vinuenza secures the first concession for Holmes: 20,000 acres for \$110,000 to be owned by the Canadian investors indefinitely and with only them as the bidders present at auction (129). Unfortunately for Vinuenza and Holmes, news about the concession named Eagle I and Eagle II has leaked and caused an uproar. The entire deal is now in question, the election is the next day, the women in the tunnels have been discovered, the blind men have fled into the forest, and a

volcano seems to be on the verge of eruption. Amidst the collision of these parallel narratives, a group of British bird-watchers cycle through the final pages of the novel admiring the Ecuadorian ecology as birds fall from the sky. The series of at once diverging and intertwining stories converge around the possible end of the world due to the volcanic explosion, the very reason the blind men left their mythical Wellsian paradise for the tunnels of Poso Wells. Meanwhile, Holmes is frustrated by the civil resistance to the possible destruction of the “cloud forest” in the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve, a protected area in Ecuador which was the subject of development interests funded by the World Bank and derailed by protests in the 1990s (129-30). “Peasants and environmentalists” caused problems for the investor everywhere he went, “but he found the Latin Americans to be the most exasperating,” because they “had no vision for the future. They didn’t understand progress” (142-3). The words “progress” and “order” are repeated with remarkable consistency and regularity across these Anglophone and Hispanophone novels, marking the existence of an ideologically consistent world-view articulated by these characters and interrogated by the literatures of Anglo-America.

However, Holmes is ultimately unfazed by the likely collapse of the deal. He has many deals in place throughout Latin America and the world. There are his investments in gold mining which had destroyed the “Andean glaciers in Pascua Lama” (143) and the recently completed “accord between Chile and Argentina to convert the summit of the Andes – he had enjoyed this description in one particular newspaper – into a virtual country open to multinational mining companies, a sort of no-man’s-land without taxes or royalties to pay.” Unlike the faltering Ecuadorian deal, his latest venture was an

official agreement, “signed and sealed between two nations,” and thus inviolable (156). Yet, Holmes is not giving up on Ecuador for he possesses satellite images “in a full range of brilliant colors” of all of the mining deposits in the country. As Mr. Holroyd proclaimed over a century earlier, it is a question of when, not if:

It was just a question of time, of waiting for the right government to come to power, convincing enough investors, publicizing the benefits, and getting the credulous inhabitants of the country to believe them. He could do all that in a single day’s work, but not today, not now, sometime in the future. Ah, the future! The future opened before him, a vast potpourri of opportunities. He found his seat and, once buckled in, asked the stewardess for a glass of champagne. (156)

Thus, *Poso Wells* continues the story begun in *Nostramo* about the expansion of global capitalism through the institution of neo-colonialism in Latin American republics, a process made possible by the intimate cooperation between foreign agents and local elites. Just as Gould could count on the support of Don José Avellanos and Shafer benefits from Miguel’s blind devotion to the canal, Holmes relies on a man from this elite class: Andrés Vinuena, who, like many others, is “inclined to sell the subsoil rights to their entire country, without hesitation, for the right amount” (143). In *Poso Wells*, Mr. Holroyd becomes Señor Holmes (115).

These novels show that the Anglophone world’s literatures and cultures offer an alternative tradition for Latin American writers representing the relationship between past and present, colonialism and neo-colonialism, imperialism and global capitalism, and national and global histories in their works. Latin American authors representing these Anglophone writers and their texts engage with a common tradition that was neither the direct legacy of a formal colonial power as in the case of Spain nor of the dominant economic and military presence in the Western Hemisphere as in the case of the U.S. Given Britain’s role as a primarily informal imperial power that aided in the destruction

of Spanish colonialism and was sidelined by the U.S. in the twentieth century, the Anglophone lens in Latin American writing allows for an examination of global capitalist exploitation that can be traced back to the beginnings of the neo-colonial system and the break-down of national sovereignty in the nineteenth-century. Reading across twentieth-century Anglophone novels and their twenty-first-century Latin American intertexts highlights a pathway across two spheres normally studied independently and considered to belong to different worlds: these contemporary novels reveal the urgency of acknowledging Anglophone and Hispanophone texts as part of a single world-system dominated by economic forces that do not operate within territorial boundaries and are the source of looming environmental, social, and political catastrophes. Weaving together a literary event (the publication of *Nostramo*) with a geopolitical one (the U.S. acquisition of the rights to the Panama Canal project), *The Secret History* plots 1904 as a defining date in the history of Anglo-Latin American relations, uniting these two literary-political spheres to each other through their shared belonging in a modern imperial world routed through the Americas since its inception. Although these contemporary narratives, including *Our GG in Havana* and *Poso Wells* among others, form a crucial part of the Anglo-Latin American literary sphere this dissertation theorizes, connections between the Anglophone world and Hispanophone writing are not solely twenty-first century phenomena.

### **Conrad in/and the Twentieth-Century Latin American Novel: Towards an Anglo-Latin American Literary Sphere**

*The* final section of this chapter suggests the addition of another date: January 2004, when Vásquez claims he began to write the pages of his own novel after completing the first Spanish-language biography of Conrad, capping a century of

Hispanophone writings and re-writings of not only Conrad's Latin American novel, but also of the novelist himself. In interviews, Vásquez evokes Jorge Luis Borges' essay, "The Argentine Writer and Tradition" (1957), to argue against a territorial conception of literature:

The idea of a Latin American literature was interesting while those who did it were re-writing a continent, or better yet bringing it to life through fiction. Nowadays, Latin American literature is a correct determination from the point of view of the dictionary: to say that *Kensington Gardens* and *In Search of Klingsor* are literature is to say that Lassie is a dog; but to say that they are Latin American literature is more difficult, for the demonym [or gentilic] refers to their authors and nothing more.<sup>40</sup>

Rather than focus on these provincial notions of identity, we should return to Borges' final argument, which he paraphrases as, "Everything that we Latin American writers do happily will be a part of the Latin American tradition."<sup>41</sup> In this sense, Vásquez' use of Conrad and *Nostramo* is part of a long tradition in Hispanophone letters seeking to challenge narrow, often nationalist definitions of what could and could not be considered Latin American literature. Conrad has been central to this tradition as the model of a transnational and multilingual writer who moved from the peripheries to the central of metropolitan culture and from a marginal to a dominant language. In this movement, he became embedded – as both Polish and British – in the fabric of his adopted language and national literature. He was also a sailor who may have disembarked on South American shores and, much later, wrote a novel about the region, creating a myth about both his life and his fictional geography. As his presence in various Latin American texts shows, Conrad and his works have circulated with remarkable consistency throughout the twentieth-century, becoming emblems of a long-running debate about the very character of what it means to be "Latin American," a fraught question that extends into twenty-first century representations of colonial legacies, national traumas, and capitalist exploitations.

The previous section's contemporary Hispanophone novels absorb the histories of multiple empires and colonial spaces into the representation of a world-system that moves beyond two traditions into the space of a third: an Anglo-Latin American sphere that belongs to the spaces between dominant frameworks, histories, and languages. This section shows that those twenty-first century narratives represent the continuation of a tradition which they are helping to redefine.

*The Secret History* forges a connection between *Nostramo* and the Panama Canal which suggests that traditional academic frameworks for understanding Anglophone and Hispanophone spheres fails to explain a world-system in which these two entities form part of the sphere. The Spanish text of *The Secret History* collapses the differences between the identities of Conrad and Altamirano: "Conrad and Altamirano, two incarnations of the same José, two version of the same destiny."<sup>42</sup> By equating Joseph to José, Altamirano begins his project of enacting revenge on the author for stealing the story of his life. However, this equation also performs another function in the novel: it adds to the long list of translations of Joseph Conrad's identity in Latin American literatures. The transformation of Conrad's identity from his birth name, Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, to the Anglicized Joseph Conrad – and the various stages of this name's development in concert with Conrad's adoption of English as his main language of writing – is a central theme of the novel. Vásquez utilizes the name's transformation as a parallel symbol of Colombia's history. Colombia too, along with its "schizophrenic" Panamanian province, changes its name or goes by multiple names throughout the novel. Altamirano equates the birth of this "Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski" with the birth of his "twin soul" or "doppelganger."<sup>43</sup> As Conrad is born in Polish territory under

Russian occupation to a revolutionary father, “at the same time, another child also named José” is mocking the “Spanish oppressors” in his drawings.<sup>44</sup> The novel adds another name to Conrad’s identity: “Jozef” and “Joseph” become “José,” uniting “Conrad” and “Altamirano,” “Britain” and “Colombia,” and “Poland” and “Panama.” Thus, *The Secret History* translates Conrad’s already translated name into Spanish, reading the Polish-born British author – whose transnational identity is multiply located in the world – into a figure that also belongs to and in the contemporary Latin American novel.

Vásquez’ use of Conrad’s name as a symbol of his global and, therefore, translatable identity, draws on a long tradition in twentieth-century Latin American letters which has defined the author as a destabilizing and malleable force in self-containing and fixed metropolitan cultural systems. Well-known examples include works by Jorge Luis Borges, Ricardo Piglia, and García Márquez. Borges features Conrad – or a version of Conrad – as a character and *Nostromo*’s geography as setting in the short story “Guayaquil,” published in 1970 as part of the collection, *Brodie’s Report*. The Argentinian writer Piglia, whose essay on Witold Gombrowicz, Borges, and the Argentine tradition illuminates several aspects of the Conradian presence in Latin American literature discussed here, makes a reference to Conrad in his 1980 novel *Respiración artificial* [*Artificial Respiration*], which also references a character from Malcom Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* (1947). Conrad also makes a surprise appearance in the final pages of the García Márquez’ *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985). Their various representations of Conrad across the twentieth century serve as a testament to the symbolic power of the British-Polish author’s biography, including his early life in exile and his later transformation into a British citizen and English-language writer.



Additionally, along with the complex historical referents and narrative structure of *Nostromo*, the possibility that Conrad set foot in Colombia and Venezuela during his early Caribbean voyages has powered a set of mythical representations of the author. For these Latin American writers, the question is not so much about the specific histories Conrad used to create his fictional Costaguana or where exactly he disembarked in South America, but rather what fictional uses these set of stories can serve: what literatures, territories, and histories can *Nostromo*, Costaguana, and Conrad himself inspire and engender for Latin America's quest to define its own cultural character in the context of overlapping colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial histories?

Vásquez's short 2004 biography of Conrad, the first of its kind available in Spanish at the time, highlights the appeal of the writer for many Latin American figures.<sup>45</sup> Published by a Colombian press, *Joseph Conrad: El hombre de ninguna parte* [*Joseph Conrad: The Man from Nowhere*] frames Conrad's life as a series of ruptures and Vásquez as a Quixote-like dreamer of literary figures such as Joyce and Pessoa, but most consistently Conrad, who is stationed in Barcelona.<sup>46</sup> He begins the biography by listing Conrad's many "ruptures:" by 8, Conrad was exiled and had lost his mother; by 12, he was an orphan and felt strange in his homeland; by 17, he had decided to become a sailor despite never having seen the sea; by 32, he began to write a novel in English; by 37, he decided to become a writer (9). For Vásquez, the biographer, each one of these instances is an example of Conrad's voluntary or involuntary disconnection from an old life and the beginning of a new one. The narrative style of *The Secret History* is already present in *The Man from Nowhere*. At times, Vásquez calls attention to the work of the biographer in constructing a person's identity according to certain desires. Conrad's name, for

example, is a double-edged sword, for it would be easy to transform his abandonment of his Polish last name into “a perfect symbol, one of those which is so pleasing to biographers” of the author’s turn away from the national romanticism of his father and his homeland.<sup>47</sup> Vásquez also calls attention to the pacing of the biography, a technique which he carries into the voice of Altamirano, who is obsessed with the narration of events according to his desired order. “But let’s not get ahead of ourselves,” he cautions himself and the reader when the story seems to jump too far forward in time.<sup>48</sup> By laying bare the methods behind the re-construction of identity – a theme that is reinforced by Conrad’s own representation of his life and his writings – Vásquez prefigures the project of *The Secret History*.

*The Man from Nowhere* includes a section on *Nostromo* which would be particularly interesting to the Colombian and broader Hispanophone readership of the biography. Vásquez names Colombia as the definitive source for Costaguana, and asserts that Conrad disembarked in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela: “Sulaco owes much to Cartagena, don José Avellanos owes much to Santiago Pérez Triana, son of Santiago Perez, the liberal who had occupied the presidency of Colombia before Aquileo Parra” (20). Vásquez refers to Costaguana as “the Banana Republic *avant la lettre*” and recounts Conrad’s reliance on his vague memories as well as Perez Triana’s *De Bogotá al Atlántico*, published in English as *Down the Orinooco in a Canoe* (1902) with a prologue by R.B. Cunninghame Graham (54). The beginnings of *The Secret History* can be found in *The Man from Nowhere* as the “Author’s Note” to the novel attests. In the note, Vásquez presents various potential starts to the novel at different points in his personal reading history. First listing *Nostromo* (which he read in 1998 in Belgium), Malcolm

Deas' "El *Nostromo* de Joseph Conrad" in *Del poder y la gramática* (which he read in 2000), and an article by Alejandro Gaviria in the journal *El Malpensante* (which he read in 2001), Vásquez prefers to place the beginning of his novel in 2003, when he was writing "a brief biography of Joseph Conrad" (303). Furthermore, by tracing the writing of the first pages of the novel to January, 2004, exactly 100 years after the publication of *Nostromo* in *T.P.'s Weekly*, Vásquez positions his novel as the direct heir to a Conradian legacy which has circulated throughout Latin America in the twentieth century. As the title suggests, *The Man from Nowhere* reinforces a reading of Conrad's identity as global: multi-cultural, transnational, and multi-lingual. It thus raises the tantalizing possibility, explored by Borges, García Márquez and others, that, if Conrad belongs to no place in particular, he can belong to Latin America as much as anywhere else, including the British empire. Thus, the Anglophone world's traditions, which Conrad's life and works have been called upon to define, are also Latin American or, at the very least, not uniquely Anglophone at all, for they can be found and understood in Hispanophone literatures as well.

Exemplifying this point, the article referenced by Vásquez in the Colombian magazine *El Malpensante* explores Conrad's travels in South America. As many Conrad biographies, including the short one written by Vásquez, have suggested, it is possible that the author disembarked in South America during his earliest Caribbean voyages aboard French ships. Published in December of 2000, Gaviria's article, "De un posible Joseph Conrad en Colombia" ["On the Possibility of a Joseph Conrad in Colombia"], describes the likelihood that Conrad set foot in Colombia and, if so, the route he may have taken.<sup>49</sup> According to Gaviria, Conrad would have had the opportunity to travel to

South America while on his third trip to the Caribbean aboard the *Saint-Antoine*, which sailed from Marseille to St. Pierre in 1876. Although the exact details and dates are conjectural, Conrad may have been aboard a separate steamer headed to Venezuela and then Colombia (with a stop in the Port of Colón) carrying illegal arms to conservative Colombian rebels supported by the Delestangs, who also ran arms to Carlists in the Mediterranean, the subject of a long episode in the semi-biographical *The Mirror and the Sea* (1906).<sup>50</sup> Conrad would have joined the *Saint-Antoine* at a later stop, either in St. Thomas or Port au Prince, in its return trip to Marseille. Using the information presented by several Conrad biographers as well as Conrad's own letters about his time in what he terms "Central America," Gaviria makes a convincing case for the likelihood that Conrad spent at least some brief days in various ports of Caribbean South America. However, much of the power of this early and shadowy episode in Conrad's life lies in the myths that the mystery has engendered.

The possibility that Conrad may have spent time in Colombia has served as the foundation for a connection between the author and Colombian literatures, first with García Márquez and then with Vásquez. In *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), Conrad appears as a passing figure involved in an arms deal with Lorenzo Daza, the father of Fermina Daza, the protagonist's main love interest. Newspapers have recently published information about Lorenzo Daza's many illicit activities throughout the years, including his possible involvement as an "intermediary between the government of the liberal president Aquileo Parra and a Joseph K. Korzeniowski, of Polish origin, who was delayed here many months on the crew of the merchant ship *Saint Antoine*, with a French flag, trying to determine a confusing arms deal."<sup>51</sup> Korzeniowski, the narrator mentions,

would later become renowned in the world as “Joseph Conrad.” Conrad’s beginnings as Korzeniowski is an important connection between his later identity as a British author and Latin American history. Conrad would have arrived in Colombia while still employing his Polish birth name, navigating on French ships and not yet on the British vessels of his later sailing career. Like Vásquez, García Márquez makes use of certain aspects of Conrad’s early biography and Colombia’s history, including the fights between the liberal and conservative parties, to weave a fictional Conradian thread through his own novel. In fact, Altamirano terms the Conrad’s journey in *Love in the Time of Cholera* an “absurd version of his sojourn on the Colombian coast” (83). The continuous chain of storytelling, whereby one novelist embeds pieces of Conradian myth from another novel in his own tale, becomes the source of a literary tradition created across generations of writers involved in the creation and recreation of cultural world-systems.

Moreover, Conrad’s presence extends beyond Colombia to other national traditions in Latin America. Argentinian writers like Borges and Piglia have also found inspiration in Conrad’s transformation of metropolitan British culture. Borges’ short story, “Guayaquil” (1970), names Conrad as the “most famous historiographer, the captain José Korzeniovski” of “that Caribbean republic” presumed to be *Nostromo*’s Costaguana. Although Costaguana is never itself named, the narrator, another historian, begins the short story by decrying his inability to see “the peak of Higuerota mirrored in the water of the Golfo Plácido” and to “never make my journey to the Western State [Estado Occidental].”<sup>52</sup> He was hoping to go to “that Caribbean republic” to read a letter purported to be from Simón Bolívar to General José de San Martín about their 1822 meetings in Guayaquil, Ecuador, a decisive episode in Latin America’s fight for

independence (390).<sup>53</sup> The meetings between the two leaders are the subject of historical conjecture, with little knowledge remaining of what transpired. Borges makes use of this gap in the historical record to inscribe the records of another meeting onto the famous events of 1822. This meeting involves two historians – the narrator and a man named Zimmerman – competing to see who will go to “a certain Caribbean republic” (393) to read the letter that may contain some information on what happened between Bolívar and San Martín during those fateful days. The letter was discovered “in the files of the distinguished historian don José Avellanos, whose *Historia de cincuenta años de desgobierno* [“A History of Fifty Years of Misrule”] was itself initially believed lost (under circumstances which no one can fail to be familiar with), then discovered and published in 1939 by his grandson, Dr. Ricardo Avellanos” (391). The grandson has offered the letters to Argentina out of a hatred for his own country’s current government. The narrator emphasizes his own identity as a native of Latin America, whose ancestors have fought in the wars independence. Meanwhile, he describes Zimmerman as a “foreign-born historian driven from his homeland by the Third Reich and now an Argentine citizen” (391-3). Zimmerman, however, establishes his dominance over the narrator by convincing him that he would not want his name associated with a letter that will certainly not “contain the whole truth” (394), turning the narrator’s narrow claim to a native identity into a liability.

In “Quayaquil,” Borges extends Conrad’s fiction by making Sulaco the capital of a currently-existing neighboring Caribbean republic and the letter a relic found in Don José Avellanos’ papers by his grandson. He references *A History of Fifty Years of Misrule* as a historical text, mirroring Conrad’s “Author’s Note” to *Nostromo*. Although

the immediate matter before the reader is who was chosen to go read the letter in Sulaco, the place and documents in question lead to the fictional world of another novel. In the Spanish text, the narrator names Conrad as a historian of Latin America, perhaps translating his name into the Spanish as “José Kozeniovski,” a spelling which is corrected (or re-translated) into “Józef Korzeniowski” by the English translator of Borges’ works, Andrew Hurley.<sup>54</sup> The indeterminacy of Conrad’s name, which seems to shift from language to language with seeming ease throughout these fictions, highlights the thematic and formal concern with fixing identity. Conrad’s presence as a historiographer of Latin America renders the enterprise of pinning down the correct version of events futile. Not only is Conrad’s identity in question (is he the Polish Korzeniowski, the British Conrad, or altogether a different figure?), but so is much of the historiographical record of the Latin American independence movement. What actually happened between Bolívar and San Martín is inaccessible both to present readers and the characters of the story. Framed by Borges’ story about the tantalizing possibility of recovering important information about a mythical historical event, Conrad becomes a symbol for the desire to establish an origin story from an ultimately unknowable, compromised, and contested past. Yet, this impossibility becomes a source of creative production, giving rise to both *Nostromo* and “Guayaquil” as part of the same struggle to tell and re-tell historical events. Although the narrator’s claim to the letter is undermined by his investment in the notion of historical truths and authenticity, Borges’ use of Conrad, Costaguana, and Avellanos’ text shows that fictional archives can become the source of real histories and tradition.

Engaging in a debate that connects Borges and Vázquez, the Argentine writer Ricardo Piglia uses Conrad as a model for thinking about writing that does not conform

to accepted traditions. Writing about the Polish exile living and writing in Argentina in the 1940s and 1950s, Witold Gombrowicz, Piglia discusses the possibility that Gombrowicz is the Hispanophone world's version of a Conradian figure: he asks, "What would have happened if Gombrowicz had written *Transatlántico* in Spanish? That is, what would have happened if Gombrowicz had fashioned himself after Conrad? (a Polish man who, as we all know, changed languages and helped to define modern literary English)." <sup>55</sup> Gombrowicz left Poland in 1939 on what he believed would be a short trip to Argentina. <sup>56</sup> However, when Germany invaded Poland shortly thereafter, he remained in Argentina until 1963. In 1947, he engaged in a collaborative translation of his first novel, *Ferdynand* (1937), into Spanish, writing a first draft in a language he barely knew and had learned from acquaintances. <sup>57</sup> He wrote *Trans-Atlantyk* (1953) in Polish while in exile in Argentina. <sup>58</sup> Piglia's novel *Artificial Respiration* (1980) evokes Gombrowicz through the character of Tardewski, a Polish friend of Marcelo Maggi, who holds epistolary conversations about his own biography and history with the narrator, Emilio Renzi. <sup>59</sup> During wide-ranging conversations with Renzi about the nature of Argentina's literary tradition, Tardewski mentions his Polish compatriot "Korzeniowski, the Polish novelist who wrote in English. A renegade, to tell you the truth, a romantic of the worst kind." <sup>60</sup> Describing Conrad as an example of a writer who "lives in another tongue," a defining feature of the modern novel, Piglia's essay "Does the Argentine Novel Exist?" (1986) implicates Conrad in a debate about language and its ability to define the boundaries of collective identity. <sup>61</sup>

For Piglia, Poland is a comparative national and cultural space to Argentina because of its marginal position relative to other Western European countries. Thus,



Gombrowicz' writings address the question of what it means to write literature from a marginal cultural position. His identity evokes comparisons to Conrad partially because of their shared Polish background and decision to write away from their homelands. However, unlike Conrad, Gombrowicz continued to write in Polish throughout his life, leaving Piglia to imagine what a Spanish written by him would sound like. Nonetheless, Piglia considers his novels to be some of the greatest writing that has appeared in Argentinian literature.<sup>62</sup> Gombrowicz' style is marked by a distance and estrangement from Polish, which renders *Trans-Atlantyk* almost untranslatable.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the Spanish of two Argentinian novelists, Roberto Arlt and Macedonio Fernández, sound like exiled tongues. Gombrowicz' collaborative translation of *Ferdydurke* is, for Piglia, the model for an Argentine novel constructed from the mixture of cultures, languages and traditions (56): "The Argentine novel would be a Polish novel: that is, a Polish novel translated into a future Spanish, in a café in Buenos Aires, by a band of conspirators led by an apocryphal count" (57). Echoing the openness of Borges' conception of what constitutes Argentine writing in "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," Piglia imagines an Argentinian novel originally written in Polish and rendered in a Spanish which belongs to the future of the language. Gombrowicz does not have to write in Spanish – as Conrad did in English – in order to capture the same possibility of transforming a language as a speaker who comes to it from a position of estrangement and comes to embody essential elements of its cultural identity. Framing Conrad and *Nostramo* as part of a Hispanophone tradition in Latin America allows for a reconsideration of the Anglophone world as an object of study that does not centralize imperial geographies and histories, but rather locates metropolitan spaces as transition points within a network of peripheries

across which writers living between dominant traditions forge the future of languages and literatures.

### **“Imperium in imperio:” Contemporary Histories and Literatures of Economic and Cultural Imperialism**

By positing the existence of an Anglo-Latin American field, this dissertation argues that alternative Hispanophone traditions are central to understanding Anglophone histories and literatures. As this chapter has shown, *The Secret History* advances a long tradition in twentieth-century Latin American literatures of problematizing both Conrad's novels and his identity. Between the publication of *Nostramo* in 1904 and the early writing stages of *The Secret History* in 2004, geopolitical developments have overturned key features of the U.S.-oriented world order that began to coalesce soon after Latin American independence, displacing Britain's economic dominance in the region. The Mexican and Cuban revolutions, depicted in *The Plumed Serpent* and *Our Man in Havana*, were perhaps the strongest rejections of this foreign interference in the national life of Latin American republics. As Chapter 3 has discussed, the Panama Canal returned to near-full Panamanian control – so long as the “neutrality” of the canal is maintained – in 1999 under the terms of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties closely followed by Greene. Anglophone writers have captured these Latin American developments, weaving them into a global narrative of nineteenth and twentieth-century British imperialism that has normally been excluded from dominant accounts of the Anglophone novel. Yet, the gaze has also been trained on these novelists as Latin American writers have incorporated Anglophone authors and texts into the creation of a tradition in the aftermath of colonization. In this context, Conrad has served as an important touchstone for writers like García Márquez and Borges interested in transnational identities which seem to

belong, however strangely, in multiple languages and locations. Building on this tradition, contemporary Hispanophone authors of the Americas turn to Anglophone novels to call attention to the continuing threat of colonial legacies, whether cultural or economic, advanced by global capitalist forces in the name of corporations, nations, and institutions. As the literary model of this economic imperialism, the San Tomé silver mine reproduces itself in various forms throughout these narratives: “Imperium in imperio,” as Don José Avellanos called it, and concession after concession.<sup>64</sup>

The proliferation of these concessions points to horizons beyond the Anglo-Hispanophone nexus of this dissertation. As the U.S. considers its own vulnerable sovereignty in the Trump era and Britain redefines its identity in the age of Brexit, geopolitical relations face large-scale reorganizations with unknown economic and cultural ramifications. Filling a power vacuum, increasingly powerful nation-states and their representatives compete for control over vulnerable communities in the Global South. China’s economic investments in Latin America, for example, mirror the same patterns of economic exploitation detailed in *Nostromo*, *The Secret History* and *Poso Wells*, underscoring the need for a continuous investigation of the ideologies of “progress” and “development.”<sup>65</sup> As *The Secret History* reveals, the bodies of Chinese laborers who died in the construction of the Panama railway have stories to tell. The transnational exploitation of these laborers who constructed the routes of global trade must be considered alongside, not separate from, the Chinese investments shaping Latin America’s economy today. In 2013, Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega granted the Hong Kong Nicaragua Development Group (HKND), led by billionaire Wang Jing, a concession to build a canal which was estimated to cost \$50 billion.<sup>66</sup> The project has yet

to materialize and activists in Nicaragua are calling for its cancellation. Meanwhile, these are not merely economic matters. They involve complex geopolitical calculations by nation-states. In contrast to Panama, Nicaragua remains a steadfast ally of Taiwan, reaping economic benefits from challenging China's territorial claims to the island.<sup>67</sup> In the context of these shifting developments, *The Secret History* helps to frame the totality of the Sinophone world's Latin American horizons, which includes the long history traced here of concessions, loans, and investments in territories mapped by overlapping and competing sovereignties. The Anglo-Latin American novels of this dissertation point to the silent histories and possible futures rendered visible by the study of relations formed at the crossroads of multiple cultural, linguistic, and imperial world-systems, where the complex colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial ties shaping world affairs are often hiding in plain sight.

## END NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

---

<sup>1</sup> Anibal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern-world system," *International Social Science Journal* 44.4 (1992), 549.

<sup>2</sup> Cedric Watts, "Nostromo in T.P.'s Weekly," *Yearbook of Conrad Studies* 3 (2007), 97.

<sup>3</sup> This study makes use of Wallerstein's definition of world-systems as "systems, economies, empires *that are* a world (but quite possibly, and indeed usually, not encompassing the entire globe). This is a key initial concept to grasp. It says that in 'world-systems' we are dealing with a spatial/temporal zone which cuts across many political and cultural units, one that represents an integrated zone of activity and institutions which obey certain systemic rules," 16-7. See Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke UP, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> These earlier comparative studies – and calls for further comparative study – have served as an invaluable resource for this project. They include Malcolm Deas, "El *Nostromo* de Joseph Conrad," *Del poder y la gramática: Y otros ensayos sobre historia, política y literatura colombianas* (Bogotá: Tercer mundo editors, 1993); Jennifer L. French, "Martin Decoud in the Afterlife: A Dialogue with Latin American Writers," *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008) and *Nature, Neo-Colonialism and the Spanish American Regional Writers* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005); and Mariano Siskind, "Images of South America in Some Texts of Joseph Conrad," *Conradiana* 33.1 (2001). Ngugi writes, "In Gabriel García Márquez's 'Hundred Years of Solitude,' the sweep of history and dictatorships that litter the social landscape of the novel reminded me strongly of 'Nostromo,' Conrad's complex epic about an imaginary South American republic. García Márquez's title even seems to nod at the fictional historical tome contained within Conrad's novel: 'Fifty Years of Misrule.'" See Ngugi, "The Contradictions of Joseph Conrad," *New York Times* (21 Nov 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/21/books/review/dawn-watch-joseph-conrad-biography-maya-jasanoff.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), 2, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, 16-7.

<sup>7</sup> Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Quijano and Wallerstein, "Americanity as a concept," 594.

<sup>9</sup> In contrast, there are a few key studies of nineteenth-century Anglophone writing and the cultures of the Americas, including Robert D. Aguirre, *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005) and *Mobility and Modernity: Panama in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Imagination* (Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2017); Rebecca Cole Heinowitz, *Spanish America and British Romanticism, 1777-1826: Rewriting Conquest* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010); and Jessie Reeder, *The Forms of Informal Empire: Britain, Latin*

---

*America, and Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, Forthcoming). For an early example in twentieth-century literature, see Ronald G. Walker, *Infernal Paradise: Mexico and the Modern English Novel* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> Luz Elena Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2007), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America*, 2, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America*, 17-8.

<sup>14</sup> Elena A. Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana: War, Trade, and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Williamsburg: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and U of North Carolina P, 2018), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 2, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 11. As Schneider writes, “In the early eighteenth century, the British-dominated slave trade to Spanish America and the contraband traffic that accompanied it led to conflicts with Spain that precipitated a cycle of wars. The Spanish monarchy sought exclusive political and commercial control over its overseas territories, yet, to its dismay, the local dynamics of these wars led to even more regional autonomy and integration.”

<sup>17</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 8, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America*, 23. The exclusion of *Our Man in Havana* in such a wide-ranging survey is not the issue. However, the explicit use of the novel’s status as an “entertainment” as the reason points to a pattern of dismissal that is present in other studies of the novel. Although Ramirez devotes a long footnote to the novel, she explains the lack of a chapter focus as a function of her adherence to “the notion of what constitutes a good and well-written story, which is why I have foregone anything more than a passing mention of *Our Man in Havana* (an ‘entertainment’), even though I dedicate an entire chapter to Greene’s other Americanist works.”

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Hull, *British Diplomacy and US Hegemony in Cuba, 1898-1964*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 4.

<sup>22</sup> Hull, *British Diplomacy and US Hegemony in Cuba*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ernesto Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada’s Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* (Durham: Duke UP, 2016), 79.

<sup>24</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 76, 79, 81.

<sup>26</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 52.

<sup>27</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 43-4.

- 
- <sup>28</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 113.
- <sup>29</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 1-2.
- <sup>30</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 2-3.
- <sup>31</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 54-5.
- <sup>32</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 56.
- <sup>33</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 3.
- <sup>34</sup> Lanny Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2010), 1.
- <sup>35</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago*, 2.
- <sup>36</sup> Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago*, 1-2, 11-2.
- <sup>37</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 16; Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 10. For a transimperial framework that brings together the U.S. and Spanish imperial spheres, see Gayle Rogers, *Incomparable Empires: Modernism and the Translation of Spanish and American Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 2016).
- <sup>38</sup> Bécquer Seguí, "The Transatlantic Turn," *New Approaches to Latin American Studies: Culture and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2018), ed. Juan Poblete, 206.
- <sup>39</sup> For the foundational study of the Atlantic as a world, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993). Gilroy posits the oceanic network as "one single, complex unit of analysis" containing "the political and cultural histories of black Americans" and black Europeans, 15, 17. For a critique of the largely monolingual framework of transatlantic studies, see Ignacio Infante, *After Translation: The Transfer and Circulation of Modern Poetics Across the Atlantic* (New York: Fordham UP, 2013).
- <sup>40</sup> Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," *Cultural Studies* 21.2-3 (2007), 240-70.
- <sup>41</sup> Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, 10-4.
- <sup>42</sup> Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 8.
- <sup>43</sup> Recent studies have begun to close the gap between Anglophone and Hispanophone literary and cultural histories. For an example that includes Britain and Spain, see Gayle Rogers, *Modernism and the New Spain: Britain, Cosmopolitan Europe, and Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 4. Rogers traces the development of an extensive Anglo-Spanish network that, at times, included South America in a European project of international cosmopolitanism.
- <sup>44</sup> Furthermore, it is "a world having its own pantheon and prizes, its own favored genres, its own distinctive traditions and internal rivalries." See Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004), trans. M.B. DeBevoise, 117.
- <sup>45</sup> For additional information on these writers, see Drewey Wayne Gunn, *American and British Writers in Mexico, 1556-1973* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1974).

---

<sup>46</sup> Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 25.

## CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> Some accounts of this history include Alistair Hennessy and John King, eds., *The Land that England Lost: Argentina and Britain, A Special Relationship* (London: British Academic Press, 1992), Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1993), and Graham D. Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Some accounts of this history include Alistair Hennessy and John King, eds., *The Land that England Lost: Argentina and Britain, A Special Relationship* (London: British Academic Press, 1992), Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1993), and Graham D. Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Major novel critics throughout the twentieth-century have analyzed Joseph Conrad's non-linear narrative chronologies. See Fredric Jameson, "Romance and Reification: Plot Construction and Ideological Closure in Joseph Conrad," *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981), 264, 272, 278-280; Edward W. Said, "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*," *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 23, 28-29; and Ian Watt, "Marlow's Inquiry: The Roles of Time and Narrative Impressionism," *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1979), 286-304.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed description of these trans-Atlantic modes of knowledge, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008). As Chapter 4 shows, Conrad's representation of a South American republic resonated with modern Latin American writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges, who had to negotiate their fraught relationship to European cultures as they set out to write a particularly American literature. For an analysis of Borges' engagement with *Nostromo* in the short story "Guayaquil," see Jennifer French, "Martin Decoud in the Afterlife: A Dialogue with Latin American Writers," *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), eds. Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins, 66. Future references cited parenthetically.

<sup>6</sup> Conrad himself spent very little, if any, time in continental Latin America, perhaps landing briefly in Colombia and Venezuela during his early voyages. For more information, see Watts, "Joseph Conrad's Life," *A Historical Guide to Joseph Conrad* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), ed. John G. Peters, 23, 40; Watts, "A note on the background to 'Nostromo,'" *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunningham Graham*, 37; and Jeffrey Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 35.

<sup>7</sup> He likely read non-fiction travel and adventure narratives for additional details, including G.F. Masterman's *Seven Eventful Years in Paraguay*, E.B. Eastwick's



Venezuela, and Ramón Páez's *Wild Scenes in South America*, as well as newspapers and periodicals. Scholars have uncovered many similarities between the novel and these works. See Watts, "Joseph Conrad's Life," *A Historical Guide to Joseph Conrad*, 32. For a comprehensive list, also see Watts, *A Preface to Conrad* (London: Longman House, 1993), 140-8.

<sup>8</sup> C.T. Watts, *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969), 19.

<sup>9</sup> Watts, "A note on the background to 'Nostromo,'" *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, 37-42. Pérez Triana is referenced in letters between Conrad and Graham.

<sup>10</sup> Watts, "S.P. Triana," *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, 207-8.

<sup>11</sup> Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *The Secret History of Costaguana* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Watts, "31 Oct 1904," *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, 157.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Knight, "Britain and Latin America," *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume III, The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 122: "British formal imperialism was not unknown in the Americas South of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Bits of Central and South America were painted red, but almost by definition these were not bits of *Latin America*." British Guiana in continental South America is often considered a part of the Anglophone Caribbean rather than Latin America because its territory was controlled by the British instead of the Spanish Empire.

<sup>14</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 113.

<sup>15</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 114-5. *Nostromo* captures clearly the racial tension between creole elites, mestizo leaders, and indigenous groups.

<sup>16</sup> Luz Elena Ramirez, *British Representations of Latin America* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2007), 93.

<sup>17</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 37; Edward Eastwick, *Venezuela: Sketches of Life in a South American Republic, With a History of the Loan of 1864* (London: 1868).

<sup>18</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 58.

<sup>19</sup> Knight, "Britain and Latin America," *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III*, 122-144, 124.

<sup>20</sup> In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, first published in 1917, Lenin associated the word "imperialism" with the highest (and last) stage of capitalism in which rival capitalist powers, lacking the domestic resources and labor required to make use of their abundant capital, divided the world into formal and informal colonies necessary for their continuous economic growth. This chapter uses Ania Loomba's definition of "neo-colonialism" to describe the presence of an informal imperialism in Latin America long after formal decolonization: "Neo-colonialism" refers to a situation in which "direct colonial rule is not necessary for imperialism in this sense, because the economic (and social) relations of dependency and control ensure both captive labour as well as markets for European industry as well as goods," 11. However, these definitions are often

context-specific; Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 10-12.

<sup>21</sup> James E. Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham: Duke UP, 2014), 24-5.

<sup>22</sup> Watts, *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xvii.

<sup>24</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xix, xviii.

<sup>25</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xviii.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Collits takes issue with Said's identification of the quote that "governing [Latin American republics]...is like plowing the sea" as belonging to Conrad and not the novel's creole characters and Latin American independence leaders: "What Said objects to – the idea that native Latin Americas have no culture of their own, and are incapable of governing themselves or even of responding to any form of governance – is certainly a disabling prejudice. But it is not Conrad's," 148. For the full discussion, see Collits, *Postcolonial Conrad*, 148-9.

<sup>27</sup> Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern-world system," *International Social Science Journal* 44.4 (1992), 549.

<sup>28</sup> Watts, "Letter 49" (26 Dec 1903), *Joseph Conrad's Letters*, 149.

<sup>29</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *The Dawn Watch: Joseph Conrad in a Global World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 278.

<sup>30</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 123, 117. A clear and consistent image of nature associated with the continent was popularized by Alexander von Humboldt's writings, including *Views of Nature* and *Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of the Indigenous Peoples of Americas*, and *Personal Narrative*. She writes, these were "the books that continental and Spanish American reading publics were reading, reviewing, excerpting and discussing in the 1810s and 20s."

<sup>31</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 123. Pratt writes, "Though deeply rooted in the eighteenth-century constructions of Nature and Man, Humboldt's seeing-man is also a self-conscious double of the first European inventors of America, Columbus, Vespucci, Raleigh, and the others. They, too, wrote America as a primal world of nature, an unclaimed and timeless space occupied by plants and creatures (some of them human), but not organized societies and economies; a world whose only history was the one about to begin."

<sup>32</sup> Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981), 264.

<sup>33</sup> John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6.1 (1953): 1-15; Williams Roger Louis, ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976); Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*; and P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914* (London: Longman, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer French, "Martin Decoud in the Afterlife: A Dialogue with Latin American Writers," *Conradiana* 40.3 (2008), 251.

---

<sup>35</sup> French, “Martin Decoud in the Afterlife: A Dialogue with Latin American Writers,” 247.

<sup>36</sup> French, “Martin Decoud in the Afterlife: A Dialogue with Latin American Writers,” 253-4.

<sup>37</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), trans. Constance Farrington, 152.

<sup>38</sup> Fanon, “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness,” 153-4, 172, 174, 201; “Concerning Violence,” 97.

<sup>39</sup> Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” 97.

<sup>40</sup> Fanon, “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness,” 148, 161-4, 176, 183.

<sup>41</sup> Mariano Siskind, “Images of South America in Some Texts of Joseph Conrad,” *Conradiana* 33.1 (2001), 3.

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 2009), 63. Introduction by Cedric Watts.

<sup>2</sup> Gayle Rogers, “Translation,” *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism* (New York: Columbia UP, 2016), eds. Eric Hayot and Rebecca Walkowitz, 249-50.

<sup>3</sup> L.D. Clark, “Introduction,” *The Works of D.H. Lawrence: The Plumed Serpent (Quetzalcoatl)* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Wai-Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Quetzalcoatl* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), xvii. Edited by N.H. Reeve. Once settled, Lawrence was unable to begin work on a novel in New Mexico, despite wanting to complete one while in America. In 1923, he wrote in a letter to his mother-in-law, “I always had the idea I should like to write a novel here in America. In the United States I couldn’t begin anything. But here it will probably go well. I have already written ten chapters, and if only the good Lord helps me, I shall have the first complete sketch done by the end of June.” He managed to complete a significant re-writing during a second short stay in the country in 1924, before his increasingly acute illnesses forced the couple’s departure from the Americas altogether the next year (xii-xiv).

<sup>6</sup> In Oaxaca, Lawrence completed the second and final draft of the novel (which this chapter takes as its main text). For a detailed account of his life in the U.S. and Mexico, see David Ellis’ *D.H. Lawrence: Dying Game, 1922-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), the third and final installment of *The Cambridge Biography*. The differences between drafts are primarily described in “Re-writing ‘Quetzalcoatl’” (213-220). Additionally, Ross Parmenter re-traces Lawrence’s steps in Oaxaca in *Lawrence in Oaxaca: A Quest for the Novelist in Mexico* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books,

1984).

<sup>7</sup> John Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider* (New York: Counterpoint, 2005), 286. He also corresponded and attempted to meet with the archeologist who had recently discovered a fresh set of ruins there. From these excursions and his extensive reading, Lawrence created the religion of Quetzalcoatl, a deity represented by a feathered serpent which serves as the central symbol of rebirth in the novel.

<sup>8</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 309, 367-9.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Knight, "Latin America," *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), Volume IV, eds. Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, 628-9.

<sup>10</sup> Knight, "British Attitudes Toward the Mexican Revolution 1910-1940," *Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics, and Culture in Britain* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1996), ed. WM. Roger Louis, 273.

<sup>11</sup> Knight, "British Attitudes Toward the Mexican Revolution 1910-1940," 278-80. The British deplored their inability to act as imperial aggressors, but they would not go against the wishes of the U.S. The U.S. would not intervene to restore the Porfiriato partially because Woodrow Wilson regarded the revolution as a legitimate popular uprising. However, he did interfere heavily with subsequent governments. For a brief but detailed history of U.S. involvement in the Mexican Revolution, see Herring, "'Bursting with Good Intentions': The United States in World Affairs, 1901-1913," *From Colony to Superpower*, 390-8.

<sup>12</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 437, 439-40.

<sup>13</sup> Jennifer L. French, *Nature, Neo-Colonialism, and the Spanish American Regional Writers* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005), 7-8, 16.

<sup>14</sup> French, *Nature, Neo-Colonialism, and the Spanish American Regional Writers*, 26-7.

<sup>15</sup> For a bibliography of Anglo-American representations of Mexico, see Dewey Wayne Gunn, *Mexico in American and British Letters* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, 1974). It is not limited to the Mexican Revolution, but is a valuable starting point for books on this topic. For a more complete literary history, see Gunn's *American and British Writers in Mexico: 1556-1973* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1974).

<sup>16</sup> Knight, "Latin America," *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 626-7.

<sup>17</sup> Gayle Rogers, "The Circulation of Interwar Anglophone and Hispanic Modernisms," *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2012), eds. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, 461-477.

<sup>18</sup> Rogers, "The Circulation of Interwar Anglophone and Hispanic Modernisms," 466-7.

<sup>19</sup> Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, xxi.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, "The Suppression of *the Rainbow*, 1915," *D.H. Lawrence: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 182-196. Meyers details the circumstances that may have led to the investigation of the Lawrences for both obscenity

and espionage, including his scandalous marriage to Frieda, a German woman, and a damaging report by Ford Maddox Ford (formerly Heuffer) on Lawrence's pro-German views.

<sup>21</sup> Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, 164.

<sup>22</sup> Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, 182-4, 281-2, 238-9; Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey, and John Worthen, eds., "Introduction," *The Works of D.H. Lawrence: Studies in Classic American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), xliii-xlv.

<sup>23</sup> Meyers, *D.H. Lawrence: A Biography*, 204. For a time, the Lawrences, eager to leave England, were denied passports. Finally, in 1919, they were again granted the right to travel.

<sup>24</sup> Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, 242, 252-3, 255-60.

<sup>25</sup> Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, 288.

<sup>26</sup> Howard J. Booth, "'A Call and an Answer': E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, and English Modernism," *A History of the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), ed. Gregory Castle, 153-4.

<sup>27</sup> Drewey Wayne Gunn, "The Expatriate Scene," *American and British Writers in Mexico: 1556-1973* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1969), 76.

<sup>28</sup> Gunn, *American and British Writers in Mexico: 1556-1973*, 79-80.

<sup>29</sup> Rachel Adams, "Women of the South Bank: The Mexican Routes of American Modernism," *Continental Divides: Remapping the Cultures of North America* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), 101-148, 147.

<sup>30</sup> Adams, *Continental Divides*, 105, 109; for a full consideration of how the modernist culture of Mexico City revises notions of Anglo-European "tradition," also see Adams, "Tradition," *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, 233-247.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Modernity and Periphery: Toward a Global and Relational Analysis," *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization* (Albany: State U of New York P, 2002), ed. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, 35. Original emphasis.

<sup>32</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996), 161. English modernism, Gikandi has argued, was produced by "a crisis of belief in the efficacy of colonialism, its culture, and its dominant terms – a progressive temporality, a linear cartography, and a unified European subject."

<sup>33</sup> F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1979), 71-3. Leavis complains that Kate's decision-making is unconvincing, leading to the ultimate failure of the novel's vision. Similarly, Frank Kermode faults Kate's character for failing to break up "the unacceptable hieratic posturing of the narrative," in *D.H. Lawrence* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 118.

<sup>34</sup> Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1990), 250. Originally published in 1970. As Millet has argued, Lawrence seems to associate relations between the sexes

in general and sexual relations in particular with the politics of patriarchal systems, or a politics of “male supremacy,” championed to varying degrees in many of his works. In his later novels, this obsession with masculinity would make use of “primitive” religious systems to create a totalizing patriarchal spiritual order under which Kate’s personality is subsumed.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weekes, “Decolonising imagination: Lawrence in the 1920s,” *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), ed. Anne Fernihough, 71. Kinkead-Weekes writes, “‘Quetzalcoatl’ is only half as long and altogether more exploratory, being more consistently filtered through the questioning, and questioned, consciousness of Kate – whereas in the later novel the founders, and the foundation and elaboration, of a new religion and politics hold centre stage for long unquestioned stretches, and Kate seems certain to capitulate at the end.” Like others, he points to these differences as preventing the novel’s greater acceptance in contemporary critique and posits that, “if we could read ‘Quetzalcoatl’ without preconditioning,” it might be read alongside later anti-colonial writers.

<sup>36</sup> For Lawrence, the “primitive” was a shifting and fluid concept, varying throughout his novels and interacting with contemporary modernist conceptions in unusual ways. Marianna Torgovnick details the evolution of the primitive from a domestic association with miners and the working-class to a more traditionally modernist conception of the “feminine” (and sexualized) exotic and, finally, to *The Plumed Serpent*’s “masculine” noble savage figures who challenge Western civilization’s misguided ideals of individualism and democracy, including the emergence of an independent modern woman. See Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1990), 159-174.

<sup>37</sup> Josephine McDonagh, “Place, Region, and Migration,” *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume III, The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 364, 370.

<sup>38</sup> David Ellis, *D.H. Lawrence: Dying Game, 1922-1930*, 68. The novel was included in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*, published first in 1923 after undergoing revisions based on his experiences in New Mexico, 76.

<sup>39</sup> The people of mixed Indian and Spanish blood wield the most power since, other than the indigenous population, they are the most numerous. Toussaint explains, “Now you mix blood of the same race, and it may be allright. Europeans are all Aryan stock, the race is the same. But when you mix European and American Indian, you mix different blood races, and you produce the half-breed. Now, the half-breed is a calamity. For why? He is neither one thing nor another, he is divided against himself. His blood of one race tells him one thing, his blood of another race tells him another. He is an unfortunate, a calamity to himself. And it is hopeless.” Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, 56.

<sup>40</sup> David Fitzpatrick, “Ireland and the Empire,” *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), ed. Andrew Porter, 498-9.

<sup>41</sup> Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, race, and empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 41.

<sup>42</sup> Cheng, *Joyce, race, and empire*, 84; Greg Winston, “‘Reluctant Indians’: Irish Identity

---

and Racial Masquerade,” *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), eds. Maria McGarrity and Claire A. Culleton, 156.

<sup>43</sup> Cheng, *Joyce, race, and empire*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> David Ayers comments on the racial and cultural mixture that pervades the novel: Kate “is a white European as far as the Mexicans are concerned, but her nation is on the fringes of modern, industrial Europe.... Not only is Kate a culturally mixed proposition, but her two principal informers, Ramón and Cipriano, are themselves of mixed cultural allegiance, with a European and Christian education and degrees from Columbia and Oxford,” 206-7. In *English Literature of the 1920s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999).

<sup>45</sup> Deborah Epstein Nord describes the Anglophone novel’s use marriage to unite different regions within the national community, particularly between a character from Britain’s Celtic fringes and a visitor from its metropolitan center (327-8). In “Spaces and places (I): the four nations,” *The Cambridge History of the English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), eds. Robert L. Caserio and Clement Hawes, 325-40.

<sup>46</sup> Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), xi.

<sup>47</sup> Joshua Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), 7; Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 15-6.

<sup>48</sup> Josephine McDonagh, “Place, Region, and Migration,” *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume III, The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 361-2; Epstein Nord, “Spaces and places (I): the four nations,” 325-6; Dominic Head, “Novelistic complications of spaces and place: the four nations and regionalism,” *The Cambridge History of the English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 714.

<sup>49</sup> Pratt, “Modernity and Periphery: Toward a Global and Relational Analysis,” 40.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of Lawrence’s regional novel, see Steven Matthews, “English Regional Fiction and National Culture,” *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume Four, The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), eds. Patrick Parrinder and Andrzej Gasiorek, 512-4.

### CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> When asked whether he regretted writing *Our Man in Havana* as an “entertainment,” Greene responded, “Not in the least. I think that *Our Man in Havana* is a good comic novel. The object was not to talk about Cuba but to make fun of the secret service. Havana was merely the background, an accident – it had nothing to do with my sympathy for Fidel.” See Marie-Françoise Allain, *The Other Man: conversations with Graham Greene* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 57. Elsewhere, Greene insisted, “Alas, the book did me little good with the new rulers in Havana. In poking fun at the British Secret Service, I had minimized the terror of Batista’s rule.” Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 257.

---

<sup>2</sup> Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 257.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba: Our Man in Havana?", *NWIG: New West Indian Guide* 82.3/4 (2008), 185.

<sup>4</sup> Allain, *The Other Man*, 59. However, Greene contradicts himself at different points throughout his career. See Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba: Our Man in Havana?" Footnote 2, 186.

<sup>5</sup> Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba," 185-6.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007). Introduction by Christopher Hitchens. Originally published in 1958. Cited parenthetically.

<sup>7</sup> Greene served in the SIS (MI6) for approximately four years between 1941 and 1944. He was first stationed in Sierra Leone and then in London. Neil Sinyard, *Graham Greene: A Literary Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 4; Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 246.

<sup>8</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 309, 336.

<sup>9</sup> James N. Green, Thomas E. Skidmore, and Peter H. Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," *Modern Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 121.

<sup>10</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 122.

<sup>11</sup> For a timely and detailed analysis of this history reframed through the lens of imperial interdependence rather than comparison and difference, see Elena A. Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana: War, Trade, and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Williamsburg: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and U of North Carolina P, 2018), 9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 122-3; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 288, 309-10.

<sup>13</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 309.

<sup>14</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 313-4.

<sup>15</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 123-4.

<sup>16</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 128-30. After leading a military coup to prevent the presidential election of 1952, Batista, who had already ruled Cuba in the 1930s and 40s, allowed U.S. interests to dictate the direction of the Cuban economy, giving large corporations lucrative contracts and allowing foreigners to own much of the land. He also suspended the Cuban constitution, limited the freedom of the press, and tortured political opponents and protestors, eventually causing the U.S. to withdraw its support by the end of his rule. See Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 686-7.

<sup>17</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 219-21, 307-8, 326.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas D. Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana: Heinz Lüning and Nazi Espionage in Latin America*, (Lexington: The UP of Kentucky, 2008), 46.



- 
- <sup>19</sup> Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 47.
- <sup>20</sup> Norman Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene, Volume III: 1955-1991* (London: Random House, 2004), 131-2; Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 47, 141-2.
- <sup>21</sup> Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 123-4.
- <sup>22</sup> Schoonover provides a detailed comparison between Lüning and Wormold. See Schoonover, "Chapter 7: Graham Greene's Man in Havana," *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 141-54.
- <sup>23</sup> Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 50.
- <sup>24</sup> Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 248.
- <sup>25</sup> Christopher Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana: The Story Behind Graham Greene's Cold War Spy Novel* (New York: Pegasus, 2019), 4-5.
- <sup>26</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 13-4.
- <sup>27</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 130-1; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 687.
- <sup>28</sup> Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba," 193-4. For a complete history of Matthews' role, see Anthony DePalma, *The Man Who Invented Fidel: Castro, Cuba, and Herbert L. Matthews of the New York Times* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006).
- <sup>29</sup> Much like those British agents he would mock in the novel, Greene was oblivious to the "sad political background of arbitrary imprisonment and torture" under Batista. He decided to travel outside of Havana, where much of the media stayed, while writing the novel: "Strangely enough, as I planned my fantastic comedy I learned for the first time some of the realities of Batista's Cuba. I had hitherto met no Cubans. I had never traveled into the interior. Now, while the story was emerging, I set about curing a little of my ignorance," Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 248-9.
- <sup>30</sup> Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 252.
- <sup>31</sup> Sherry, *The Life of Graham Greene, Volume III*, 138-9.
- <sup>32</sup> Joseph Conrad, "53," 31 Oct. 1904, *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969), Ed. C.T. Watts, 157.
- <sup>33</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 135; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 687-8.
- <sup>34</sup> Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba," 197.
- <sup>35</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 674-5.
- <sup>36</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 676-7.
- <sup>37</sup> Christopher Hull, "Our Arms in Havana: British Military Sales to Batista and Castro, 1958-59," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 18 (2007), 596-7.
- <sup>38</sup> Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 255-6.
- <sup>39</sup> For his letters about this foreign policy blunder, see "Cuba's Civil War" (*The Times*, 3 Jan 1959), an untitled response (*The Times*, 6 Jan 1959), and "Dr Castro's Cuba" (*The*

*Times*, 21 Feb 1962) in Greene, *Yours etc.: Letters to the Press*, selected and introduced by Christopher Hawtree (London: Reinhardt Books, 1989), 74-56, 109-11. His trip to Santiago and the Foreign Office's claim to ignorance inspired the novel. He concluded, "either the Foreign Office or the Intelligence Service had amply merited a little ridicule," Greene, *Ways of Escape*, 256-7.

<sup>40</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 687; Hull, "Our Arms in Havana," 602.

<sup>41</sup> Greene, *Yours etc.*, 135-6.

<sup>42</sup> Sinyard, *Graham Greene: A Literary Life*, 3-6.

<sup>43</sup> Greene, *Yours etc.*, 74-5.

<sup>44</sup> Greene, *Yours etc.*, 249.

<sup>45</sup> A copy of the heavily redacted files can be found in Uncategorized Boxes in the Harry Ransom Center archives at the University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 18-23 June 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Relatedly, *The Comedians* (novel, 1966) is set in Haiti and *Monsignor Quixote* (novel, 1982) is set in Spain. For an analysis of Greene's Mexican, Argentinian, and Panamanian works through an Anglo-Latin American or "Americanist" framework, see Luz Elena Ramirez, "Graham Greene's Americanist Vision: Mexico, Argentina, and Panama," *British Representations of Latin America* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2007), 145-67.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), Eds. Jacques Berthoud and Mara Kalnins, 16, 19, 34. Originally published in 1904.

<sup>48</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 185.

<sup>49</sup> Conrad, "Author's Note," *Nostromo*, 409. The "Author's Note" was published in 1917.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the name's origin, see Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 377.

<sup>52</sup> Accessed 18-23 June 2018. These letters are available at the Harry Ransom Center's Graham Greene archives at the University of Texas at Austin. The collection comprises approximately 140 letters. About 10 of them have been published in *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2007), Ed. Richard Greene. See Mike Hill and Jon Wise, *The Works of Graham Greene: A Reader's Bibliography and Guide*, (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 71. For a description of Diederich letters found in various archives, see Hill and Wise, *The Works of Graham Greene, Volume 2: A Guide to the Graham Greene Archives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 103-4, 128-30. Some excerpts have also been published by Diederich in *Seeds of Fiction: Graham Greene's Adventures in Haiti and Central America 1954-1983* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2012). Letters will be cited parenthetically by date.

<sup>53</sup> Hill and Wise, *The Works of Graham Greene, Volume 2*, 133, 137, 140-1.

<sup>54</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 24.

<sup>55</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 25-6.

<sup>56</sup> Hill and Wise, *The Works of Graham Greene, Volume 2*, 128-9; Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 5.

- 
- <sup>57</sup> Michael Korda, *Another Life: A Memoir of Other People* (New York: Random House, 1999), 314.
- <sup>58</sup> Korda, *Another Life*, 324.
- <sup>59</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 98.
- <sup>60</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 97, 198.
- <sup>61</sup> Norman J. Padelford, "The Panama Canal and the Suez Crisis," *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1921-1969)*, Vol. 51 (April 25-27, 1957), 11.
- <sup>62</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 676, 733.
- <sup>63</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 98.
- <sup>64</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 101-2.
- <sup>65</sup> Grace Livingstone, "Reagan and the Central American Tragedy," *America's Backyard: The United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 79.
- <sup>66</sup> "New Regime, Old Methods," *Time* 121.4 (24 Jan 1983), <https://login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=54224650&site=ehost-live>.
- <sup>67</sup> In this interview, he showed photographs of a particular bomb used by U.S. troops called the Mickey Mouse, a reference to an accusation by Sandinista leaders that American-made bombs were being hidden in either lunch boxes or dolls by the contras. Korda, *Another Life*, 322.
- <sup>68</sup> Bernard Diederich, George Russell, and James Willwerth, "Nicaragua's Elusive War," *Time* 121.14 (4 April 1983), [login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=54225141&site=ehost-live](https://login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=54225141&site=ehost-live).
- <sup>69</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 104-5.
- <sup>70</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 106.
- <sup>71</sup> Diederich, *Seeds of Fiction*, 216-8.
- <sup>72</sup> Diederich, *Seeds of Fiction*, 244. Diederich also states it "was later confirmed" that the ambassador had died of natural causes, though it is unclear where he received this confirmation.
- <sup>73</sup> In January 2019, Sánchez Cerén denied the charges and retained a lawyer to fight the case. Nelson Renteria, "Salvadoran president must testify over 1979 diplomat disappearance: court," *Reuters* (11 July 2018), Ed. Paul Tait, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-elsalvador-president-diplomat/salvadoran-president-must-testify-over-1979-diplomat-disappearance-court-idUSKBN1K10BM>; "El Salvador government rejects court ruling on kidnapped envoy," *BBC* (12 July 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-44794535>; "Presidente salvadoreño nombra abogado en proceso por desaparición embajador," *El Siglo* (16 Jan 2019), <https://elsiglo.com.ve/2019/01/16/presidente-salvadoreno-nombra-abogado-en-proceso->

---

por-desaparicion-embajador/.

<sup>74</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 254-5.

<sup>75</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 274-5.

<sup>76</sup> Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 272-3.

<sup>77</sup> These pieces have been published in a collection which includes many of Greene's key essays and contributions: "Lines on the Liberation of Cuba" (1961), "Return to Cuba" (1963), and "Shadow and Sunlight in Cuba" (1966). See Greene, *Reflections* (New York: Viking, 1991). "Fidel: An Impression" (1966) is included as "The Marxist Heretic" in Greene, *Collected Essays* (New York: Penguin, 1993). Greene's "Havana Journal" is available at the Georgetown University Library; Hill and Wise, *The Works of Graham Greene, Volume 2*, 201-2.

<sup>78</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Cuba: Key Colony, Socialist State," 99.

<sup>79</sup> John Dinges, *Our Man in Panama: The Shrewd Rise and Brutal Fall of Manuel Noriega* (New York: Random House, 1991), x.

<sup>80</sup> Dinges, *Our Man in Panama*, 163.

<sup>81</sup> Dinges, *Our Man in Panama*, 147.

<sup>82</sup> Dinges, *Our Man in Panama*, 308, 312.

<sup>83</sup> This episode may be based on the death of a New Jersey tourist, in what Hull considers to be a "rare rebuke" of the U.S. in the novel (115-6). Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 115-6, 280.

<sup>84</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 671.

<sup>85</sup> Anglo-American cooperation in Cuba was critical. During the war, British spies could only operate in Latin America with F.B.I. approval. See Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 46.

<sup>86</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 591.

<sup>87</sup> Schoonover states that Greene also owned a "high-quality, large, detailed map of Havana for 1942," which he mysteriously acquired. Schoonover, *Hitler's Man in Havana*, 147.

<sup>88</sup> As Edward Said notes, "Kipling assumes a basically uncontested empire," 134. See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 134-5.

<sup>89</sup> Although the 1807 children's book *Tales from Shakespeare* was written by brother and sister Charles and Mary Lamb, only Charles is mentioned. Wormold has the Everyman Edition.

<sup>90</sup> Critics have pointed to the dramatic shift in tone between the Santiago chapter and the rest of the novel. For example, see Hulme, "Graham Greene and Cuba," 199-200.

<sup>91</sup> Greene writes, "It was only in the mountains, where Castro's rebels were already gathering, that the situation was serious," 57. See Allain, *The Other Man*, 57.

<sup>92</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 58.

<sup>93</sup> In the novel, the hotel name is rendered as “Seville-Biltmore Hotel,” perhaps a misspelling, 26. Situated in Old Havana, it opened in 1908 and was built in a Spanish-Moorish architectural style. Greene preferred to stay here or at the Hotel Nacional during his trips. In November 1957, he began writing his novel while staying in Old Havana as modern hotels in the new district of Vedado rose around him. For a description of the hotel’s significance, see Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana*, 96, 113. Today, the hotel is named “Hotel Sevilla Havana” and is owned by a national company. A plaque outside of Room 501 pays homage to the novel in three languages: “Graham Greene English writer. In his novel ‘Our Man in Havana’, he located one of his character in this room At the end of the 50’s.” See picture below.

<sup>94</sup> Howard Johnson, “The British Caribbean from Demobilization to Constitutional Decolonization,” *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), Eds. Judith Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, 619-20.

<sup>95</sup> Critics have pointed to the sense of loss present in Anglophone works set in Latin America employing the perspective of a British character or characters. See, for example, Ramirez, “Graham Greene’s Americanist Vision,” 146.

<sup>96</sup> Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, 3.

<sup>97</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 349.



Plaque outside Room 501 in Hotel Sevilla Havana (February 2017). See footnote 93.

<sup>1</sup> Juan Gabriel Vásquez' six novels written while living in Europe, including Barcelona for 13 years, with dates of publication and translation into English (if available) are: *Persona* (1997), *Alina suplicante* (1999), *Los Informantes* [*The Informers*] (2004/2008), *Historia secreta de Costaguana* [*The Secret History of Costaguana*] (2007/2010), *El ruido de las cosas al caer* [*The Sound of Things Falling*] (2011/2012), and *Las reputaciones* [*Reputations*] (2013/2016). Vásquez returned to Colombia around 2012; Rita de Maeseneer and Jasper Vervaeke, "Un fósforo en la oscuridad. Conversación con Juan Gabriel Vásquez," *Confluencia* 28.2 (2013), 215.

<sup>2</sup> Jess Row, "A Conversation with Juan Gabriel Vásquez and Jess Row," *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 48 (2015), transcribed by José Chavarry, 131-2.

<sup>3</sup> Vásquez, *The Secret History of Costaguana* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2011). Originally published as *Historia secreta de Costaguana* (Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2007). All references will be cited parenthetically using the English translation unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> James N. Green, Thomas E. Skidmore, and Peter H. Smith, "Colombia: Civility and Violence," *Modern Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 197-8.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity: Panama in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Imagination* (Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2017), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Gran Colombia also included present-day Panama. Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Colombia: Civility and Violence," 194.

<sup>7</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), 151-6.

<sup>8</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 157, 164, 219; Robert C. Harding, *The History of Panama* (London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 54.

<sup>10</sup> In Central America, the British controlled a sizeable territory known as the Miskito Kingdom off Nicaragua's Caribbean coast and maintained the Crown colony of British Honduras, now known as Belize. In South America, British Guyana was the cause of several border disputes with neighboring republics, particularly Venezuela, throughout the nineteenth century. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 307.

<sup>11</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 156-7.

<sup>12</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 180, 201, 214, 218.

<sup>13</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 176, 218.

<sup>14</sup> Harding, *The History of Panama*, 22, 18; Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Central America and the Caribbean: Within the U.S. Orbit," 98; Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 37; and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 220.

<sup>15</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 45. The Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty guaranteed these rights in exchange for U.S. protection of Colombian sovereignty against foreign invasions ostensibly for the maintenance of the route's "neutrality." Harding, *The History of Panama*, 17.

---

<sup>16</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 2, 67; Harding, *The History of Panama*, 17-9.

<sup>17</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 219.

<sup>18</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 54-5. Kubicek writers, "Substantial state aid in the form of mail contracts also enabled venture capitalists to establish expensive ocean-going steamship enterprises. By 1850 subsidized lines organized to run to schedules were operating in the North Atlantic, the West Indies, South America, and the Mediterranean – with an extension by way of the Suez isthmus and Red Sea to India and China, and the Western Pacific," 250. The Suez Canal opened in 1869, 252. Robert Kubicek, "British Expansion, Empire, and Technological Change," *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), eds. Andrew Porter and Wm. Roger Louis, 247-69.

<sup>20</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 62-4.

<sup>21</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 221. These militias were known as "filibusters."

<sup>22</sup> "The British in Nicaragua," *The New York Times* (27 Aug 1860), <https://www.nytimes.com/1860/08/27/archives/the-british-in-nicaragua.html>. No author listed.

<sup>23</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 25,

<sup>24</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 71-2.

<sup>25</sup> On the novel as a "historiographical metafiction" (288), see Ricardo Carpio Franco, "La reconstrucción paródica del pasado histórico: intertexto y metaficción en *Historia secreta de Costaguana*," *Literatura: teoría, historia, crítico* 12 (2010), 259-94.

<sup>26</sup> Harding, *The History of Panama*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 87; D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, (London: Wordsworth Classics, 2009), 83; and Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 181.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the "writing back" genre in post-colonial literature, particularly in the mode of "re-writing" canonical works, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2nd ed., 32, 96, 190. First published in 1989. Specifically addressing the legacies of the British Empire, *The Empire Writes Back* identifies post-colonial Anglophone literatures which "asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the imperial center," 2.

<sup>29</sup> Phillipe Bunau-Varilla, a Frenchman and Chief Engineer for the canal project under Ferdinand de Lesseps, helped to steer U.S. attention away from Nicaragua by reminding Congress members of the country's volcanos. The U.S. had already threatened to begin construction in Nicaragua if Colombia rejected, as they did, the terms of Hay-Herrán Treaty of 1903. Eager to recoup as much of his investment in the canal project as possible, Bunau-Varilla encouraged the badly-damaged French company to sell its rights to the U.S., which agreed to purchase the project as long as Colombia agreed to its terms.

However, when the Colombian treaty fell through and the time came to negotiate a treaty between Panama and the U.S., he oversaw the almost immediate transfer of the canal from the French company to the U.S. government through the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1904. See Harding, *The History of Panama*, 28, 32; and Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Central America and the Caribbean," 97-8.

<sup>30</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Colombia: Civility and Violence," 197.

<sup>31</sup> Green, Skidmore, and Smith, "Colombia: Civility and Violence," 198.

<sup>32</sup> Pedro Juan Gutiérrez, *Our GG in Havana* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), trans. by John King, 31, 58. Originally published as *Nuestro GG en La Habana* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2004). English translation cited parenthetically unless otherwise noted. Gutiérrez is known outside of Cuba for his *Dirty Havana Trilogy: A Novel in Stories* (1988), which was originally published in Spain and has been translated into English. The trilogy and his later novels are almost exclusively set in central Havana, where Gutiérrez has always lived. See Jorge Ruffinelli, "Pedro Juan Gutiérrez (Cuba, 1950)," *The Contemporary Spanish-American Novel: Bolaño and After* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), eds. Will H. Corral, Juan E. Castro, and Nicholas Birns, 151-5.

<sup>33</sup> H.G. Wells, *The Country of the Blind and Other Selected Stories* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007), ed. by Patrick Parrinder, 322-47.

<sup>34</sup> Will H. Corral, "Greater Andean Region," *The Contemporary Spanish-American Novel*, 208.

<sup>35</sup> Gabriela Alemán, *Poso Wells* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2018), trans. by Dick Cluster. Originally published as *Poso Wells* (Quito: Eskeletra Editorial, 2007). Cluster explains his translation and marketing of the novel in "Literature Is the Minefield of the Imagination: An Interview with Gabriela Alemán," *Los Angeles Review of Books* (17 July 2018), <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/literature-is-the-minefield-of-the-imagination-an-interview-with-gabriela-aleman/#!>. The novel's path to English translation underscores the difficulty experienced by Latin American authors, particularly women, who are published first within their national spheres. Many of the most well-known anthologies introducing Latin American writers to larger audiences have excluded women. For example, the short-story anthology *McOndo* (1996), compiled by Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, lacks writing by women, 10; Corral, *The Contemporary Spanish-American Novel* 10, 209. Alemán herself is not given an entry in the anthology cited here, but is referenced in the critical introduction to the "Greater Andean Region," which includes only one woman as a featured author out of fourteen, a fact which is acknowledged by the critical introduction as an unfortunate feature of the male-dominated literary field of this particular region of Latin America. See Corral, "Greater Andean Region," *The Contemporary Spanish-American Novel*, 208, 210-1.

<sup>36</sup> Rodrigo Fresán, *Kensington Gardens* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), trans. by Natasha Wimmer. Originally published as *Jardines de Kensington* in 2003. Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Dream of the Celt* (New York: Picador, 2013), trans. by Edith Grossman. Originally published as *El sueño del celta* in 2010. William Ospina, *El año del verano que nunca llego* (Bogotá: Random House, 2015), untranslated.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Hull, *Our Man Down in Havana: The Story Behind Graham Greene's*



---

*Cold War Spy Novel* (New York: Pegasus, 2019), 85-109.

<sup>38</sup> Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 248-9.

<sup>39</sup> Vázquez, *Historia secreta de Costaguana*, 258.

<sup>40</sup> Raúl Rodríguez Freire, "Literatura y Distorsión: Entrevista a Juan Gabriel Vázquez," *Nuevo Texto Crítico* 24-25 (2011-2012), 209.

<sup>41</sup> Borges' words have been translated as, "Anything we Argentine writers can do successfully will become part of our Argentine tradition." Jorge Luis Borges, "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings* (New York: New Directions, 1964), eds. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, 184. Translated by James E. Irby. Originally published as "El escritor Argentino y la tradición," *Discusión* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1957), 161.

<sup>42</sup> The English text renders the phrase as "two incarnations of the same Joe," 55. Vázquez, *Historia secreta de Costaguana*, 59; *The Secret History of Costaguana*, 55.

<sup>43</sup> Vázquez, *Historia secreta de Costaguana*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Vázquez, *Historia secreta de Costaguana*, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Freire, "Literatura y Distorsión: Entrevista a Juan Gabriel Vázquez," 203.

<sup>46</sup> Vázquez, *Joseph Conrad: El hombre de ninguna parte* (Bogotá: Panamericana Editorial, 2004, back cover. The inside flap contains a more straightforward description of Vázquez' biography.

<sup>47</sup> Vázquez, *Joseph Conrad: El hombre de ninguna parte*, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Vázquez, *Joseph Conrad: El hombre de ninguna parte*, 59.

<sup>49</sup> Alejandro Gaviria, "De un possible Joseph Conrad en Colombia," *El Malpensante* 27 (2000), [https://www.elmalpensante.com/articulo/2802/de\\_un\\_posible\\_joseph\\_conrad\\_en\\_colombia](https://www.elmalpensante.com/articulo/2802/de_un_posible_joseph_conrad_en_colombia).

<sup>50</sup> Conrad, "XL–XLV: The 'Tremolino,'" *The Mirror and the Sea: Memories and Impressions* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 266-90.

<sup>51</sup> Gabriel García Márquez, *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 424. Originally published in 1985.

<sup>52</sup> Borges, "Guayaquil," *Obras completas II: 1952-1972* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2010), 734; critical edition annotated by Rolando Costa Picazo. Translated into English by Andrew Hurley in *Collected Fictions* (Viking: New York, 1998), 390. Originally published in *El informe de Brodie [Brody's Report]* in 1970. References will be cited parenthetically using the English translation unless otherwise noted.

<sup>53</sup> Borges, *Obras completas*, Note 236, 768.

<sup>54</sup> Borges, *Obras completas*, 734; *Collected Fictions*, 390.

<sup>55</sup> Ricardo Piglia, "¿Existe la novela Argentina?" *Crítica y Ficción* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Siglo Veinte, 1990), 51.

---

<sup>56</sup> Marzena Grzegorzczuk, "Formed Lives, Formless Traditions: The Argentinean Legacy of Witold Gombrowicz," *Gombrowicz's Grimaces: Modernism, Gender, Nationality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 140.

<sup>57</sup> Piglia, "¿Existe la novela Argentina?" 54; Grzegorzczuk, "Formed Lives, Formless Traditions," 141.

<sup>58</sup> Grzegorzczuk, "Formed Lives, Formless Traditions," 146.

<sup>59</sup> Piglia, *Respiración artificial* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2001), 23. Originally published in 1980.

<sup>60</sup> Piglia, *Respiración artificial*, 110; Grzegorzczuk, "Formed Lives, Formless Traditions," 148.

<sup>61</sup> Piglia, "¿Existe la novela Argentina?" 52.

<sup>62</sup> Piglia, "¿Existe la novela Argentina?" 49, 50.

<sup>63</sup> Piglia, "¿Existe la novela Argentina?" 52.

<sup>64</sup> Conrad, *Nostromo*, 83, 99.

<sup>65</sup> China signed 19 trade accords with Panama in 2017 alone. Agence France-Presse, "Nicaragua's US\$50b rival to Panama Canal 'going ahead slowly' as funding evaporates and Chinese investor keeps low profile," *South China Morning Post* (22 Feb 2018), <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/americas/article/2134250/nicaraguas-us50b-rival-panama-canal-going-ahead-slowly-funding>.

<sup>66</sup> Aguirre, *Mobility and Modernity*, 4. Parts of the contract may be voided due to lack of progress by September 12, 2019. Raquel Carvalho, "Activists renew calls for controversial US\$50 billion Nicaragua Canal project to be cancelled as Chinese tycoon's cash runs dry," *South China Morning Post* (30 June 2019), <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/3016639/activists-renew-calls-controversial-us50-billion-nicaragua>.

<sup>67</sup> Panama broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2017 to establish ties with China, the second biggest user of its canal after the U.S. Cindy Sui, "Panama cuts ties with Taiwan in favour of China," *BBC* (13 June 2017), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-40256499>. Ortega accepted a \$100 million loan in early 2019 for "humanitarian considerations." Ismail Lopez and Yimou Lee, "Loan of \$100 million from Taiwan gives lifeline to Nicaragua's Ortega," *Reuters* (19 Feb 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nicaragua-protests-taiwan/loan-of-100-million-from-taiwan-gives-lifeline-to-nicaraguas-ortega-idUSKCN1Q903T>.