

ABSTRACT

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AND LIMINAL

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My dissertation examines representations of the diasporic Irish within the varied literary imaginaries of the Caribbean and Latin America and argues that these representations create a literary paradigm surrounding ‘Irishness’. The project begins by offering a racialized historical overview of the Irish commencing with the conquest of Ireland and following up to the modern day. I then relate observations elucidated by this overview to current conceptions of Irish identity while specifying many of the diaspora spaces to which the transatlantic Irish arrived. I utilize a transamerican approach to literature which permits cross-cultural and multilingual readings of texts that would otherwise remain in isolation to each other. Putting my study into dialogue with scholars like Robin Cohen, William Safran, Avtar Brah and Laura Zuntini de Izarra, I define the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘diaspora space’ while seeking to underscore the corollaries between these concepts and representations of the Irish in diaspora. After establishing the ways in which I understand and use these

terms, I employ the works of Victor Turner and Sandor Klapcsik, among others, to lay down my theoretical framework of the liminal and liminality. In doing so I directly interconnect theories of diaspora and liminality which provides a unique theoretical perspective, and later interject my own nascent theory of the 'figure' to better deconstruct the Irish characters under study. Reading a selected corpus of literature from writers such as American-Guatemalan Francisco Goldman, Cuban Zoé Valdés, Jamaican Erna Brodber, Mexican Patricia Cox, American Carl Krueger, and Argentines Rodolfo Walsh and Juan José Delaney, through the liminal process allows me to analyze literature from multiple perspectives while decentering previous literary criticism that has not recognized this multiplicity embedded in liminal readings of narratives. Over the breadth of the project I look to these and other scholars in my efforts to (re)define, dissect, work and wield the terms 'diaspora', 'liminal' and 'liminality' in a variety of fashions, adding to them my own ideas of perpetual liminality, while extracting and examining the representations of 'Irishness' found through each of my textual analyses.

IRISHNESS IN CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE: THE
DIASPORIC AND LIMINAL

By

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Images.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	13
1.1: Irish Emigration; A Racialized Historical Overview.....	13
1.2: Irish Identity and The Irish Diaspora.....	20
1.3 Liminality in the Irish Diaspora.....	27
1.4 Trying to ‘Figure’ out the Irish.....	32
1.5 ‘Irishness’ and Irish Studies in the Americas.....	33
1.6 Fiction as Archive of Diaspora: Transamerican Readings.....	37
Chapter 2.....	42
2.1 Diasporic Irish Liminal Figures: A paradigm of broken families.....	42
2.2 Diasporic Irish Father Figures.....	43
2.3 Diasporic Irish Mother Figures.....	51
2.4 Irish Heritage, Liminal Existence.....	56
2.5 Diasporic Irish Liminal Bodies.....	58
2.6 Space of Perpetual Liminality.....	69
2.7 Narrative Liminality.....	77
Chapter 3.....	83
3.1 The Disruptive Community.....	83
3.2 Moira Sullivan as Diasporic and Liminal.....	88
3.3 Delaney and Walsh: Narrative Liminality.....	93
3.4 Irish-Argentine Communitas and the Imagined Community.....	104
3.5 Representations of the diasporic Irish community in Delaney and Walsh.....	110
3.6 Beyond the series.....	130
3.7 Supplementary Comments.....	131
Chapter 4.....	134
4.1 The Irish in Mexico; El Batallón de los San Patricios.....	134
4.2 Liminality and the Liminal Process in Cox and Krueger.....	148
4.3 Divergence in the final phase of liminality.....	170
4.4 From Clifden to Coyoacán and back again; Irish-Mexican solidarities.....	176
Conclusion.....	181
Images.....	185
Bibliography.....	189

List of Images

Image 1.....	185
Image 2.....	185
Image 3.....	186
Image 4.....	186
Image 5.....	187
Image 6.....	187
Image 7.....	188

Introduction

One of Ireland's most enduring and popular folk-tales is that of *Oisín* in *Tir na nÓg* (The Land of Youth). This particular story in the Fenian Cycle tells the tale of Oisín who “was the poet of the Fianna¹ and loved the beauty of the lakes, the bogs and the mountains, and the creatures of the forest and the sea” (O’Faolain 163). One day, while hunting in the woods around Loch Lene near Killarney, a beautiful woman appeared before the Fianna and their leader, Oisín’s father Finn², atop “a supple, nimble white horse” (Heaney 215). She was called Niamh of the Golden Hair and her father was the king of Tir na n-Og. Niamh had travelled to Ireland in search of Oisín because “reports of his handsome looks and sweet nature had reached as far as the Land of Youth” (215) and she wanted him to be her prince. Overcome by her beauty and the promise of limitless riches, timeless strength and vivacity, Oisín quickly accepted Niamh’s proposal, left his father and the Fianna behind and returned with her to the Land of Youth. Upon arriving to Tir na n-Og Oisín was given a special crown by the king which would protect him from every danger and he was told that he would receive many riches, women to sing to him and men to obey his every command (216). Oisín lived happily in this paradise for the next 300 years, though to him they only seemed like three, alongside his princess, never aging a day, “but at night in his dreams Oisín visited Erin again, and once more took up his old life with his Fenian comrades” (O’Faolain 167). More years passed and then, no longer able to resist the yearning to see Finn and his brothers in arms, Oisín told Niamh that he must

¹ The ‘Fianna’ were small groups of warriors in Irish mythology.

² Also known as Fionn mac Cumhaill.

return to the forests of Loch Lene, if only for a day, to see his family, friends and Ireland once more. Before he departed on their “milk-white steed...on a May morning” (164, 172) Niamh gravely warned him “not to dismount from his steed, or let his foot once touch the soil of Erin, or he would never again see the Land of the Ever Young” (172). With every confidence he would return to Tir na n-Og, he set off and landed upon the shores of Erin in a blink. Riding high upon his horse, Oisín searched all over the grounds he used to hunt with his father and the Fianna but they were nowhere to be found, for they had long been dead and turned to dust. Unaware of this Oisín continued his search further north and along the way came across “many strange new buildings, high and strong and built of stone” (173). As Oisín was going by the Valley of Thrushes he saw a group of churls struggling to lift a slab of rock from a quarry. Almost twice the size of the men below, Oisín “stretched out his arm, and, stooping across them, lifted the slab right out of the rock face” (174). Though successful in helping the puny workers, the strain proved to be so great that Oisín had broken the golden saddle-girth, fallen from his steed and landed his feet on Irish ground. Instantly the mystical stallion bolted and, “as the horrified crowd watched, the tall young warrior...sank slowly to the ground. His powerful body withered and shrank...hopeless and helpless, he lay at their feet, a bewildered blind old man” (Heaney 221). A tragic tale wrapped up in a mini-odyssey, Oisín’s chronicle is also a warning to all those who would venture out from Ireland that, if later, like Oisín, they become overwhelmed by nostalgia and return to Erin, they will only find disappointment and death. Nevertheless, this type of disconcerting attitude towards outward Irish diaspora has done little over the centuries to discourage it. Hence,

traditions have formed in Ireland to cope with the sense of loss and separation associated with diaspora.

Emigration has always been looked at as a decisive rupture with home and kin, analogous to dying. In rural Ireland, dying rituals, codified in the tradition of the Wake, soon turned into another folk tradition, the “American Wake,” as it came to be known, a custom that became widespread in the 1830’s and 40’s during the Famine period. What for some is a natural extension of the ‘Irish wake’, that is, the traditional Irish funerary practice of watching over the recently deceased from the time of death to burial to ensure no evils spirits enter the body, the so-called ‘American wake’ is similar in several ways to the traditional Irish Wake (The Irish Wake). The friends and relatives of the Irishman or woman who is to depart the following morning for the U.S. all reunite and stay awake throughout the night so to enjoy each other’s company one last time. For many people in Ireland, leaving Erin is almost equivalent to the act of dying, and this leave-taking ceremony demonstrates how outward diaspora is commensurate to the lamentations of final loss (American Wake). Even before the ‘American wake’ tradition was widely practiced in small town Ireland, the finality of emigrating had also been considered a decisive rupture with home and kin. Finn knew this and “when he saw his son being borne away from him, he let out three loud, sorrowful shots. ‘Oh, Oisín, Oisín, my son...I will never see you again. You’re leaving me here heartbroken for I know we’ll never meet again” (Heaney 216). Whether it is a mystical journey or the perilous one-way boat trip to America, any outward diasporic traveller from Ireland was assured never to see Emerald Isle again.

However, in a globalized world the possibility to reverse the course of diaspora and explore nostalgia has become a refreshing reality in Ireland.

Beginning in the 1950s officials of Irish tourism saw an opportunity to commodify the Irish-American desire to “return” to Ireland. To stir up emotions of nostalgia and open purses and wallets, a good number of tourist promotional films were produced, such as *O’Hara’s Holiday* and *The Irish in Me*, which relied heavily on narrativization to connect with the target audience (Rains 142). In the latter film-short, produced in 1959, we see a young Irish-American girl named Shelia who travels to Ireland for the first time with no prior knowledge of it. She arrives to Shannon where she is met by her Irish grandfather who she has never seen before. He then takes her across the country to Dublin to explore its history and culture. After spending a very pleasant summer with extended family and meeting new friends her grandfather’s voice-over observes, “Deep in the heart of Ireland, Shelia becomes in spirit what she is in heritage—an Irish girl come home to the land of her forefathers...then the summer is gone. It is time to return home...She takes Ireland with her” (*The Irish in Me* quoted in Rains 142). No longer just another “tourist,” Shelia has reclaimed her Irish roots and reawakened the ‘Irishness’ which had laid dormant inside her until touching Irish soil for the first time. Instead of losing her vitality and spirit like Oisín, Shelia is born anew and has successfully ‘returned to Erin.’ This type of sales tactic that pulls upon the heart strings as if they were laced upon a Clàrsach³ was quickly adopted and imitated by large corporations in Ireland. In 1978 Aer Lingus launched its “Roots Tourism” campaign in which the airline produced posters depicting a map of Ireland having replaced place-names with “local

³ Irish for *Celtic* or *Gaelic harp*.

family names under the heading “This Is Your Ireland”” (132). The decades that followed showed not only a steady increase in Irish-American tourism to Ireland but also an equal rise in the interest of the business-minded Irish to cash-in on the succeeding generations of the Irish diaspora and homebound Irish alike. In 2003 the globally recognized Guinness brewery debuted the latest in their series of television commercials as part of their “Things That Matter” campaign, though aired only in Ireland, called “The Quarrel.” The minute-long advertisement features a young Irishman (played by the budding German-Irish film star Michael Fassbender) who sets out on foot from Dublin, crosses the width of Ireland, jumps off the Cliffs of Moher and swims across the Atlantic past the Statue of Liberty, finally touching ground again in New York city. He then navigates through the city’s busy streets and finds his way into, of course, an Irish-style pub where he walks up to a seated man of similar age and aspect. The man stands, they face each other, and the Irishman says but one word: “Sorry.” The apology is accepted, the two men hug and the quarrel is washed away with a few pints of Guinness. On a superficial level the commercial depicts two men reconciling, “yet on an allegorical level, it conveys much about the Irish attitudes to emigration in the first years of the twenty-first century” (Pine 78). In a way, Ireland and its people have now extended an olive branch to the members of the Irish diaspora had previously been shunned and disregarded. And this message of openly embracing the generations of Irish descendants throughout the world continues to be promoted not only abroad but domestically in Ireland as well. As recent as 2017, Ireland vamped up its tourism campaign titled, “Jump Into Ireland,” which claims, “You don’t just arrive in Ireland, you jump in. [...] From the minute

you're here, you're one of us" (Toursim Ireland Jump). While offering picturesque images from all over the island, the commercial is very effective at portraying Ireland as a vibrant, accessible travel destination. In a final ploy to connect with an Irish-American audience, the voice-over concludes; "You'll feel like you're leaving home to go home" (Toursim Ireland Jump). Again the notion of Ireland being "your home" for the diasporic Irish is a powerful sentiment when bolstered by commoditized nostalgia. Yet, the return home is not only seen as exclusive to Irish descendants born and raised outside Ireland. Being a country, like many European and Latin American nations, totally obsessed with football (soccer), Ireland places heavy cultural and social emphasis on the well-being and fair play of its national side. Curiously, at the start of Republic of Ireland home football matches at Lansdowne Road stadium (renamed Aviva Stadium in 2010), stadium officials, in efforts to whip up the crowd, put on the loudspeakers as the players take the field the 1970's hit rock song "The boys are back in town" by Irish band Thin Lizzy.⁴ As the first lines of the song state, "Guess who just got back today/Them wild-eyed boys that had been away/Haven't changed that much to say/But man, I still think them cats are crazy" (Thin Lizzy). From where they have returned is not important but what is significant happens to be that they have in fact come back to town unchanged and untamed. Thus, there is now a place in the imaginary of modern Ireland for the diasporic Irish, the possibility to reclaim 'Irishness' and be a part of one's ancestral land. However, what does this mean for those descendants of the Irish diaspora who do not or cannot return? What has become of them and their ties to Erin? Is the nostalgic return home an impulse

⁴ It is noteworthy that the band's lead singer, the late Phil Lynott (1949-1986), was a hybrid Irish-Guyanese.

they still feel deep in their hearts, like Oisín? How have they been subsequently represented in the art and literatures of the spaces they now occupy? These questions are the initial underpinnings of the present study.

During my studies in the Spanish and Portuguese doctoral program I was exposed to literatures from a wide range of literary styles by authors from diverse geographic spaces. In several seminars, which had absolutely nothing to do with Ireland or Irish literature, I came across Irish and hybrid Irish characters in short stories and novels by writers I had previously assumed were not familiar with, much less concerned about, the Irish in diaspora. Given my own Irish surname and heritage, I quickly became enthralled by the representations of these fictional diasporic Irish individuals in such distinct cultural/geographic regions. As my course work continued, I realized that I had stumbled upon a large corpus of texts from Caribbean and Latin American authors that portrayed the Irish as part of their different literary imaginaries. After close readings of these texts, a paradigm began to emerge, one that I had not seen in literary scholarship before, which suggested to me that there existed the possibility for a new type of critical analysis of these works beginning with the presence of the Irish. The paradigm I perceived forming was built upon either a diasporic Irish father or mother who would swiftly disappear from the narrative and leave their hybrid Irish son or daughter, always the protagonist of the literary work, to fend for her/himself in a tumultuous space of uncertainty while clinging to some indeterminate form of her/his 'Irishness'. In observing such similarities among texts from very divergent cultural and geographic contexts, not to mention literary traditions, it became clear that creating a dialogue among these works could represent

an important and substantial contribution to our understanding of not only the Irish in diaspora but as well the ways in which they have been written into the literatures of the Caribbean and Latin America. My readings of these texts pointed towards a theoretical framework commencing in diaspora studies in order to examine the catalytic elements of the Irish presence in such remote and unrelated geographic regions. It would then be necessary to analyze the subsequent hybridity of many of these fictional Irish characters and how that relates to their journeys and experiences as diasporic individuals. The only theoretical approach to subjects who are portrayed as hyphenated or divided in some way that has proven to be compatible with my readings comes from studies on the 'liminal' and 'liminality'. But, what are 'the liminal' and liminality besides curious and loaded words? Arnold Van Gennep first put the term into practice at the theoretical level in his study on *rites de passage* (1960), in which he carried out the first analysis of the ceremonies accompanying an individual's "life crises". Van Gennep was keen to point out that in examining any life-crisis ceremony, the validity of a threefold classification of separation (preliminal), transition (liminal) and incorporation (postliminal) would quickly be established (Van Gennep vii). Although Van Gennep used the term 'liminal' sparingly and only defined it through example and not etymologically, his singular piece of research paved the way for future anthropologists like Victor Turner. Turner was a Glaswegian anthropologist who, building directly upon Van Gennep's study, clearly defined the terminologies he used in his works and consequently laid down the first clear framework of liminality as a process. To date Turner has contributed some of the most groundbreaking studies in the field of anthropology concerned with

the liminal and liminality, not to mention his related concepts of ‘communitas,’ which spawned from the same research. Most recently, academics like Sandor Klapcsik have continued the work that Van Gennep and Turner initiated with new approaches to concepts of the liminal and liminality by introducing these theories into literary analysis. For Klapcsik liminality can be viewed as a constant oscillation between social, textual, and cultural positions. Such an interpretation of liminality allows him to analyze literature from multiple perspectives while decentering previous literary and cultural criticism that has not recognized this multiplicity embedded in liminal readings of narratives. In the pages that follow I look to these and other scholars in my efforts to (re)define, dissect, work and wield the terms ‘liminal’ and ‘liminality’ in a variety of fashions, adding to it my own ideas of perpetual liminality, while extracting and examining the ‘Irishness’ found through each of my textual analyses.

In the first chapter I offer a racialized historical overview of the Irish beginning with the conquest of Ireland up to modern day. I then relate these observations to current conceptions of Irish identity while specifying many of the diaspora spaces to which the transatlantic Irish arrived. I also look simultaneously to scholars like Robin Cohen, William Safran, Avtar Brah and Laura Zuntini de Izarra to define the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘diaspora space’ while seeking to underscore the corollaries between these concepts and representations of the Irish in diaspora. Having established the ways in which I understand and use these terms, I employ the works of Turner and Klapcsik, among others, to lay down my theoretical framework of the liminal and liminality. In doing so I directly intermesh theories of diaspora and liminality which provides a unique theoretical perspective, and I later interject my

own nascent theory of the 'figure' to better deconstruct the Irish characters under study. In order to embark on this study, I utilize a transamerican approach to literature which permits cross-cultural and multilingual readings of texts that would otherwise remain in isolation to each other. Therefore, within the premise of this project, I ask of the reader to embrace Spanish and English (even a little Irish at times) not as separate languages talking at one another but rather as a heteroglossia of rich and colorful voices in harmony speaking as one. In other words, this project privileges a multilingual, pluri-cultural standpoint as its principal proposal.

Chapter II encompasses my literary analysis of four works of fiction from throughout the Caribbean and Latin America in which I assert the existence of a literary paradigm built on diasporic 'Irishness' that transcends and transgresses national boundaries. I first examine Francisco Goldman's *The Divine Husband* (2004) in tandem with Erna Brodber's *Myal* (1998). Goldman's extensive novel, set in Guatemala, then in the U.S., portrays the diasporic Irish father of a hybrid Irish-Guatemalan girl who then becomes the protagonist of the work. Similarly, Brodber's *Myal*, which received the Caribbean and Canadian Regional Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1989, begins in Jamaica, crossing back and forth to the U.S., and offers as well a diasporic Irish father of a hybrid Irish-Jamaican daughter who is the novel's main character. Expanding my readings of this paradigm, I then incorporate Zoé Valdés' novel *Te di la vida entera* (1996) and Rodolfo Walsh's short story *Irlandeses detrás de un gato* (1965). Though Valdés' work is primarily set in Cuba and Walsh's tale in Argentina, both authors create a diasporic Irish mother who gives birth to a hybrid Irish individual that will be the center of each narrative. Although several of

these texts have received sparse literary criticism and analysis, I contend that the works of Goldman and Valdés can be put into dialogue with those of Brodber and Walsh who both have a more extensive critical following. My focus on the Irish presence in all these texts serves to rescue these overlooked and undervalued works by reading in all these narratives different journeys through the liminal process, which have yet to be extrapolated and scrutinized.

I narrow my focus in chapter III to discuss in greater depth the entire short story series by Walsh that includes *Irlandeses detrás de un gato*, which I read against contemporary writer Juan José Delaney's novel *Moira Sullivan* (1999). I have chosen these two authors because of their shared Irish-Argentine background, which allows for a more detailed exploration and study of literary representations of the diasporic Irish community in Argentina. As well, I also perceive many of the same paradigmatic narrative structures and motives rooted in liminality found in the texts studied in the second chapter in Delaney's work which, like those of Goldman and Valdés, has received little critical attention and remains underappreciated. In the course of this chapter, I also broaden my theoretical dialogue with Turner to include his concepts of 'communitas,' and consider how his ideas on this category find congruence with my readings of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina.

For the final chapter I shift my attention to two novels based on the historical tale of the St. Patrick's Battalion or Batallón de San Patricio, a group of diasporic Irish soldiers who traded sides during the U.S-Mexican War to fight for the latter. I have selected Mexican author Patricia Cox's *Batallón de San Patricio* (1954) and U.S. author Carl Kreuger's *Saint Patrick's Battalion* (1960) in an effort to compare

and assess their contrasting nationalist perspectives on the same story. In this way the two novels form a cross-border dialogue that I read in juxtaposition to Gloria Anzaldúa's theorizations of *borderlands* and borderlands subjects. Although both works are known to those who have an interest in the story of the San Patricios, neither has received scholarly attention from a literary perspective. With this study I intend to provide analyses of these texts in which I read the San Patricio's experiences through the liminal process and claim that their tale is but another in the literary paradigm of diasporic 'Irishness' in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Chapter 1

1.1: Irish Emigration; A Racialized Historical Overview

As Terry Eagleton whimsically observes in his *The Truth about the Irish*, “no experience has been more native to Ireland than leaving it” (105). Indeed, in the Irish national archive, the written folkloric discourse of the Irish people begins with the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (*The Book of the Taking of Ireland* or more commonly known as *The Book of Invasions*) which narrates the origin and history of the Irish people⁵. As the title suggests, Ireland and its inhabitants begin their national historical narrative as subjects to numerous invasions resulting in their enslavement, exile and subsequent nostalgic longing for the ‘homeland.’ Thus, studies of Irish history and culture are inherently complicated by the transitory, multi-cultural nature of an experience so enmeshed and intertwined with the national literary discourses of varied foreign lands. Sean O’Callaghan in his book, *To Hell or Barbados*, argues that the banishment of the Irish in the mid seventeenth century to principally Barbados as “indentured servants” or “slaves” represents the first wave of mass Irish diaspora.⁶ To

⁵ Steve Garner writes, “The dominant nationalist contention has, since the Book of Invasions, been that the founding group were the Gaels, and that others were absorbed, culturally and racially (with the exception of the British), to produce a homogenous Irish ‘race’ by the nineteenth century...” (69).

⁶ O’Callaghan’s work is controversial because of his categorization of the Irish in Barbados as “slaves”. However, he is not alone in this assertion. As early as 1975, Peter Berresford Ellis published his *Hell or Connaught! The Cromwellian Colonisation of Ireland 1652-1660* in which he analyzes the various forms of servitude that befell the Irish in Barbados, claiming that, “the Irish servant was treated as inferior to the African slave” (150). Hilary Beckles as well explores the parallels and divergences between Irish and African servitude and slavery in her study titled *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715* (1989). Based on these works the U.S. writer Kate McCafferty penned her novel *Testimony of an Irish slave girl* (2003) which tells the tale of Cot Daley, a young Irish girl from the city of Galway who is kidnapped from her native Ireland in the 17th century, shipped off to Barbados and forced to work alongside African slaves. There are, nonetheless, numerous scholars who openly refute this categorization of the Irish. Among them is Donald Harman Akenson who, in *If the*

the same Jill Sheppard asserts that “in addition to the emigrants from England, a number of Irish found their way to Barbados. Their numbers are likely to have been far greater than is suggested by the contemporary evidence, if the trouble they caused the authorities in the next few decades is any criterion⁷” (12). This mass movement of the Irish to Barbados was, for the most part, the result of overt coercion, the necessity for employment or a combination of both. However, this debatably ‘voluntary’ emigration took on a very different character with the rise of one man to power: Oliver Cromwell. Acting as Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1653 to 1658, Cromwell is perhaps best remembered in the Irish collective memory as the most ruthless conqueror to ever step foot on the emerald isle. As T.W. Moody states, “when Oliver Cromwell landed at Dublin with a puritan army in 1649, his mission was not only conquest but also revenge” (202). Cromwell’s initiative was primarily to conquer Ireland but also to rid it of its Irish-Catholic inhabitants. “Named lord Lieutenant of Ireland by Parliament in 1649, Cromwell used 20,000 troops, experienced and well trained, to attack Catholic forces from Ulster to Munster...Cromwell’s army...entered the city [of Drogheda] after a week’s siege and slaughtered almost all Catholics. The few prisoners were transported to Barbados” (Hollis 56). Barbados was obviously regarded by Cromwell as a convenient dumping

Irish Ran the World. Montserrat, 1630-1730 (1997) argues that the Irish in the Caribbean during this period were more often plantation owners than impoverished servants. More recent studies on this issue have become even more polemical. Don Jordan and Michael Walsh’s *White Cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain’s White Slaves in America* (2008) makes claims that many Irish were also transported as slaves from the Caribbean to U.S. colonies like Virginia and Maryland. In opposition to their study Peter O’Neill released in 2016 his work titled *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* in which he attempts to debunk claims that the Irish in the U.S. were ever officially categorized as “slaves”. Thus, this discussion continues to be a point of contention among many scholars in the field of Irish diaspora studies. Although my study does not take a definitive stance on the issue, I use these texts to inform my readings of the literature under study here.

⁷ Sheppard later informs us that “as early as 1644, well before the influx of Irish transported on the instructions of Cromwell began, an act was passed for the prohibition of landing Irish persons” in Barbados (23).

ground for prisoners of war. Indication of this is found in a letter from him to the Speaker of the Parliament of England dated 17 September 1649, referring to the storming of Drogheda: “When they submitted, their officers were knocked on the head; and every tenth man of the soldiers killed; and the rest shipped for the Barbadoes. The soldiers in the other Tower were all spared, as to their lives only, and shipped likewise for the Barbadoes” (Sheppard 18). Cromwell’s affinity for sending the Irish to Barbados was so recurrent that the Irish “made an active verb of it: ‘Barbadoes you’,” which meant to be exiled or banished to Barbados either as an indentured servant or slave (18). The inhumanity with which Cromwell’s revenge was exacted⁸, as Moody affirms, “became indelibly impressed upon the folk memory of the Irish” (202) which is reverberated in this neologism⁹.

Yet, how many Irish were eventually ‘Barbado’d’ and was this in fact their only or final destination? Peter Ellis in his book *Eyewitness to Irish History*, rather than recounting the history of Ireland through his own voice as an author, offers a collection of voices from the island, some recognizable by name and others veiled in anonymity, which serve as historical snapshots that present expressions of individual experiences and biases. In his section on Cromwellian slave trading Ellis fragmentarily includes a report from Father Thomas Quinn to the Vatican in 1656 which reads, “and soon these heretics [English] caused the poor Catholics to be sent

⁸ Besides the massacre and displacement of Irish nationals, Cromwell also appropriated Irish-Catholic landowner’s estates, which were used to pay the government’s creditors, leaving them as prime candidates to be “Barbado’d.” For more, see T.W. Moody’s *The Course of Irish History*.

⁹ This “impression” on the Irish collective memory is so indelible that it has even extended itself into Irish-American popular culture of the present. On the HBO television series, *The Wire* Irish-American police officer Jimmy McNulty, in order to operate undercover, chooses the alias “James Cromwell,” which he explains to his superior who does not immediately understand the cultural/historical reference by saying, “Well, Cromwell was the English fuck who stole my ancestor’s land.” (*The Wire*, season 2 episode 9, 2003) See bibliography, *electronic references*.

in crowded ships to Barbados and the Islands of America, such that those who did not die in the open remained in perpetual servitude. I believe that some 60,000 were sent there..." (121). This is a remarkable amount when compared to the 12,000 total "prisoners of war" as claimed by Sheppard to be banished there only a year earlier (18). The discrepancy here is found between the designations "prisoners of war" and "Catholics" which alludes to the possibility that the criteria to be "Barbado'd" for Cromwell hinged on the simple fact of being an *Irish-Catholic* man, woman or child and to have been an *Irish-Catholic soldier* would have merely expedited banishment or death.

Steve Garner in his book *Racism in the Irish Experience* voices skepticism in response to much of the scholarship dealing with the Irish diaspora when he argues that while "Barbados represented the worst experience by far for the Irish in terms of oppressive practices and regulations", the overemphasis of this particular experience has "slightly distorted the image of Irish settlement in the region" (82). Even though Garner underplays the scrutiny of the Irish as a separate category¹⁰ he does, in fact, elucidate what he refers to as "twin social distinctions" which were "between the Irish and the blacks on the one hand, and between the Irish and the dominant English and, to lesser extent, Scots on the other" (83). Such a distinct categorization of the Irish becomes somewhat muddied while considering the vast mixture of positions the Irish held during the early period of immigration (c. 1612-1700): deported indentured laborers or servants, free laborers, victims of illegal round-ups, or even property owners.

¹⁰ Garner notes that "the only source to count Irish as a separate category was Governor Stapleton's 1678 census of the Leeward Islands (Nevis, Antigua, St. Christopher and Montserrat)" (83).

What we must also consider is that the Irish were no strangers to other parts of the Caribbean archipelago. John C. Messenger, renowned forerunner in Irish-Caribbean studies, claims that “the first Irish settlement in the Americas was established in 1612 near the mouth of the Amazon River, following which colonies containing large numbers of Irish were founded in St. Kitts in 1624, Barbados in 1625, Nevis in 1628, and Antigua in 1632” (28). Above all these Messenger places Montserrat or, “The Other Emerald Isle”, as “the most distinctively Irish settlement in the New World” (13). As well, Messenger expands upon the social positions of the Irish in the Caribbean by adding “political agitators, prison inmates, vagrants, beggars, and exiled priests after 1655” (28). Analogous to the “Barbado’d” Irish, the Irish of Montserrat were subjects of English imperialism and thought of as unruly degenerates. In fact, the animosity between the Irish and their English colonizers is demonstrated when “twice the island [Montserrat] fell into the hands of the French for short periods, and both times the Irish rose against the English and joined the French forces¹¹” (Messenger, 13). Mary Gallagher in writing on “curious connections” among the Irish and mostly the Francophone-Caribbean observes that, “Ireland and the Caribbean also share a history in which displacement, exile, emigration, migration and displacement loom large” (280). Most ‘curious’ in Gallagher’s observation is the repetition of “displacement”, beginning and ending her list of shared attributes. This is quite telling in that the state of movement and

¹¹ O’Callaghan also discusses the movements of the Irish around the Caribbean archipelago, stemming from revolts in Barbados and as later having important impacts on islands such as Montserrat, Cuba and Jamaica. Most interestingly the Irish servants or slaves were able to disperse by ‘slipping away’ during England’s imperialist conflicts with Spain and France, often siding with opposing military forces of England as was the case twice in disputes of ownership of Montserrat and St Kitts. For more see O’Callaghan.

dislocation is what figures so prominently, here redundantly so, in the Irish experience.

The Irish diaspora later reached an historical peak during the 1830s and continued through the “An Gorta Mór” (Irish for ‘Great Hunger’ or ‘Famine’) or Irish Potato Famine which took hold of Ireland from 1845 to 1852, propelling the dislocation of an estimated 2 million Irish (roughly half of the population) throughout the course of this period to almost all parts of the Caribbean and Latin America¹² (Webster Hollis 98). From Cromwellian banishment in the seventeenth century and later the second massive flux in Irish emigration provoked by famine, the seemingly endless stream of Irish nationals now found new hosts in Hispanophone nations, prominently among them in Mexico and Argentina. Further propelled by the slow and bloody realization of Irish home rule, academic discourse on the Irish and ‘Irishness’ underwent a shift from the colonial to the postcolonial. Rather than approaching ‘Irishness’ as a pre-colonial “natural” state or “virginal” culture, it has been evaluated as a post-colonial product intrinsically tied to England and Anglo-Saxon culture. Declan Kiberd in his extensive work titled *Inventing Ireland* analyzes how Irish intellectuals first deduced that the intent of English colonial policy was unnervingly straightforward: “to create a “Sacsá nua darb anim Éire (a new England called Ireland)” (15). The obstacle then for the English was the fact that the Irish scarcely differed physically from their colonizers. Therefore, representations based on the all-encompassing civilized-barbaric binary were then applied to the Irish, starting with their physical appearance: “Clear men they are of skin and hue, but of themselves

¹² The scrutiny of Irish emigration to the United States from the mid nineteenth century and early twentieth century should not be overlooked. In my analysis of the St. Patrick’s Battalion in Chapter IV, I discuss more in depth the Irish-American experience and how it relates to Irish diaspora in Mexico.

careless and bestial” (*History of Ireland*, 1633, quoted in Garner, 77). *Native Intelligence*, a study by Deepika Bahri on the racialization of the Irish by the English, impels us to consider the “difference of the difference” in terms of their “whiteness”. For Bahri, the concept of “whiteness” as defined by the colonial British served as a categorical tool with which to separate themselves from the Irish and justify oppressive and imperialistic acts and reforms upon them. However, the author later goes on to highlight how the Irish case reveals the further complications that the coding of difference can create when applied to reductive formulas of race. Bahri exemplifies this point by elucidating several difference indicators commonly used on the Irish: language, behavior, or visual markers unrelated to color such as their “bad habits”, like laziness and drunkenness, and “lifestyle”, meaning poverty and “mischievous practices” (61). This type of pseudo-racialized discourse sought to not only emphasize the righteousness of the conquest of a supposedly “inferior” race but also to perpetuate pre-established negative stereotypes of the Irish as a people who, without English acculturation to civil modes of behavior, would have remained as inebriated, dimwitted, cultureless heathens undeserving of white skin and the privileges it symbolizes.

Despite rampant admonishment in their own homeland and throughout the United Kingdom, the Irish cleverly took advantage of their physical similarities to the English and “nativized” dominance of the English language once arriving in Argentina, for example. As Edmundo Murray writes, “During most of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, encouraged by their families and community leaders, and favored by their condition of British subjects, nearly 45,000

Irish immigrants contributed to build a community that was atypical within the Irish Diaspora” (9). The ‘favorable’ aspect of British subjugation was that the Irish were able to assume the role of “*Ingleses*”, an ethnic categorization which allowed many Irish to ascend in Argentine society to places of privilege and relative power. Though I will explore the Irish in Argentina in greater depth in my third chapter, over the breadth of this entire project I will analyze how literary representations of ‘Irishness’ have been negotiated under these terms of racialization and to what extent each text under study here stems from and in turn perpetuates a paradigm of the Irish as deviant and unwanted.

1.2: Irish Identity and The Irish Diaspora

Jennifer Slivka, in commenting on ‘Irishness’ and exile, asserts that, “not surprisingly, interrogating definitions of home and Irishness have been appearing more often in contemporary Irish literature” (115). While addressing the impact of not only recurring negative stereotypes of the Irish, I also underscore the importance of the Irish diaspora in the continual construction of a broader and meaningful definition of Irish identity and ‘Irishness’ as they are portrayed in fiction produced outside Ireland. First, however, we must outline the terms ‘diaspora’ and, more narrowly, ‘the Irish diaspora’ to recognize their corollaries with representations of ‘Irishness’. Robin Cohen in his *Global Diasporas* informs us that, “the word “diaspora” is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over). When applied to humans, the ancient Greeks thought of diaspora as migration

and colonization” (ix). In the centuries since¹³, concepts of ‘diaspora’ have proliferated extensively, thus stretching its meaning to account for innumerable cultural, intellectual and political agendas. Rogers Brubaker insists that “this has resulted in what one might call a “‘diaspora’ diaspora’ – a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space” (1). This proves true when we comparatively assess current scholarship concerned with defining and, in some cases, quantifying ‘diaspora’. William Safran, like Cohen, offers several characteristics which members of diaspora communities commonly share such as “a dispersal from a specific “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign regions”, the presence of a “collective memory, vision or myth of their original homeland” and a belief that “they are not— and perhaps cannot be — fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it” (83). Cohen later modifies Safran’s list, although only faintly, and adds to (or in his words “tweaks”) it with his own views such as “a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement,” and more interestingly, “the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism” (23-26). At first glance, the Irish in diaspora would seem to meet with many, if not all, of these criteria. This allows Cohen to categorize the Irish as part of diasporas that can be described with the preceding adjective of “victim,” through which he lays heavy emphasis on the Famine, although as we have seen in previous sections, it was but one especially dramatic and tragic episode in a much larger and complicated

¹³ Stéphane Dufoix reveals that the Greek verb “*diaspeiro* [to disperse or scatter] was used as early as the fifth century B.C. by Sophocles, Herodotus and Thucydides” and that “the modern usage of “diaspora” stems from its appearance as a neologism in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek...in the third century B.C.” (4).

story¹⁴. To this point Kevin Kenny notes that, “Two million people fled Ireland as a result of the famine, but almost four times that number left the country during other periods” (144). Strikingly absent from Safran’s analysis and classification of diaspora communities is any mention of the Irish, an observation that as well troubles Cohen¹⁵. Nevertheless, what is certain is a bitter recollection in the Irish national imaginary of both Cromwellian and Famine-driven diasporas and their ensuing impacts on the Caribbean and Latin American spaces and imaginaries.

What I look to interrogate is the transferal of this memory in the unexpected, peculiarly odd bond to seemingly unrelated countries and cultures which has informed current notions of diasporic Irish identity. As Avtar Brah notes, “the words diaspora, border and politics of location are immanent and mark conceptual connections for historicized analyses of contemporary trans/national movements of people, information, cultures, commodities and capital” (16). Because such analyses deal with ‘commodities’ and ‘capital’, scholarship of late has sought to “cash in” on the growing interest surrounding the diasporic Irish experience and its subsequent narratives. Stephanie Rains in writing on “Genealogy and the Performance of Irishness” believes that “the sustained rise in interest in genealogy during the late twentieth century in fact reflects several genuinely radical shifts in both historical and social conceptions of memory and identity; and these shifts have particular relevance for the Irish American diaspora” (134). Indeed, as the social and cultural panorama of

¹⁴ On this point Cohen waivers somewhat when he compares the Irish diaspora to that of the Palestinians and Armenians which he claims “were propelled by a single set of events”, though “more uncertainly” in the case of the Irish (35). If in fact we are to cite a ‘single event’ as the catalyst for the Irish diaspora, it would more suitably be the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland which predates the Famine by some 200 years.

¹⁵ In his text Cohen rhetorically asks of Safran’s study, “What has happened to the Ukrainians, *the Irish* (emphasis mine), the Italians, the Russians, the Germans or the Kurds – all of whom might have at least as strong a claim to inclusion as some of the peoples he identifies?” (22).

Ireland changes, then so do concepts of ‘Irishness’ and its diasporic permutations. With the election of Mary Robinston¹⁶ in 1990 and her “own emphasis on the Irish nation as expanding well beyond the geographical confines of the island to include all those who had emigrated to the various corners of the world,” Martine Pelletier argues that, “the term ‘Irish diaspora’ gained increasing currency¹⁷” (98).

Due to heightened economic interests in the diasporic Irish experience, cultural critics have begun to rethink the category of Irish identity to involve and integrate Irish individuals in global spaces. For Gerry Smyth “‘Irish identity’ has traditionally been addressed in terms of the factors bearing upon the evolution of the category over time. Much less frequently engaged are the actual spatial factors (such as topography, landscape, movement, proximity, location) which have delimited the composition and evolution of Irish identity” (13). By recognizing space as a factor of ‘delimitation’ when approaching concepts of ‘Irish identity’ we will be able to go beyond the confines of a purely ‘diasporic reading’ and approach literary texts under a broader framework. As Peter Childs maintains, “diasporic identities work at other levels than those marked by national boundaries” (52) and this is certainly true of the diasporic Irish. Filtered through a lens of ‘Irishness’, I read these diasporic Irish identities keeping in mind the framing that Laura Zuntini de Izarra¹⁸ calls “diaspora space,” of which she writes:

¹⁶ Mary Therese Winifred Robinston (1944-) served as the seventh and first female president of Ireland from 1990 to 1997.

¹⁷ Rains to this point instead cites the 1970’s Aer Lingus sales campaign and its play on emigrant Irish nostalgia as being one of the first attempts at “commodifying ‘Irishness’” for a nostalgic Irish-American population and market. For more see Rains, pgs. 133-136.

¹⁸ I have cited Zuntini de Izarra’s succinct definition of “diaspora space” which she has borrowed from Avtar Brah.

the concept of *diaspora space* is distinct from diaspora because it is the intersectional location of three immanent elements — diaspora, frontiers and (dis)location, and it is inhabited not only by diasporic subjects but equally by those who are constructed and represented as ‘indigenous.’ (139)

Zuntini de Izarra’s observations help to inform my reading as to the equal importance and treatment of characters that are portrayed as indigenous while considering and evaluating diasporic subjects. Therefore, in order to comment on ‘Irishness’ in terms of an identity category and commodity, it is imperative to stress again the role of Irish individuals as ‘dislocated’ diasporic subjects whose identity has been constructed from new ‘(dis)locations’ and various attempts at enmeshing themselves with those represented as “indigenous Others” and, therefore, the more legitimate. The lesser legitimacy of the Irish within diaspora space thus weighs heavy in their representations. As such, both Zuntini de Izarra and Brah (198) look to Gloria Anzaldúa’s theorization of border and *borderlands*, which holds much in common with their shared concept of diaspora space, to address the ways in which the inhabitants of these spaces are understood and depicted. I too see several important insights that Anzaldúa’s theories and observations can offer this study. Principally Anzaldúa proposes that:

A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. Los *atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the

troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the “normal” (25).

The ‘vague’ and ‘transitory’ space that is the *borderlands* of which Anzaldúa writes undeniably parallels diaspora space on several levels. Of these the most crucial here is her understanding of its inhabitants as “perverse”, “troublesome” and “half-dead.” Many of the fundamental characteristics of *borderlands* subjects are echoed in established stereotypical representations of the Irish, which were conceived by “indigenous Others” and perpetuated by their self-perceived superiority. Sociologist Steve Garner traces the “hostile depictions of the Gaelic Irish as uncivilized” (72) as far back as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries yet further forward in history, as the Irish became a diasporic people, little changed in terms of their stereotypical representation and vilification. Hellen Kelly approaches such representations of the diasporic Irish in Argentina in terms of ‘deviancy’. She claims that “‘deviancy’ in its variant forms has become, therefore, the most accessible and fruitful approach to assessing levels of integration amongst Irish immigrant communities” (128). Amongst the categories she assesses we find “mental health, disorder, crime and, above all, drunkenness” (128). These, along with other deviancies like infidelity, unruliness and immorality, forge a fixed representation of the deficiency in their roles as functional members of society.

In the introductory chapter to *Questions of Cultural Identity*, cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues that actually:

identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. (4)

Through these representations, then, it should be feasible to underscore how certain literary characters perform their 'Irishness' and highlight the function of these performances in terms of their identity. Subsequently, examining these individual identities within the scope of 'Irishness' will give insight to the different contexts and societies in which they are formed, reside and 'act out' their identities. To aid in this endeavor I turn to Paula Moya whose approach to understanding identities is highly compatible with this theoretical frame. I quote Moya at length because of her clear and concise manner of explanation:

I understand identities to be socially significant and context-specific ideological constructs that nevertheless refer in non-arbitrary (if partial) ways to verifiable aspects of the social world. Moreover, I contend that it is precisely because identities have a referential relationship to the world that they are politically and epistemically important: indeed, identities instantiate the links between individuals and groups and central organizing principles of our society. Consequently, an examination of individual identities can provide important insights about fundamental aspects of...society. (13)

Smyth best summarizes the notions found above when he says, “Identity, that is to say, is never contained in essences; rather, it is maintained through practices; and it is this model of contingent, radically contextualized identity” which is the underpinning focus of this project (13). Nevertheless, these practices are often traumatic and represent formative moments in the identitary struggles of the diasporic Irish. These instants of contact, of finding themselves between two or more worlds, are what place their identities on the fringe. To this point, I suggest a critical consideration of what Hall writes of “The diaspora experience...[which] is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*” (235). As I assert, many of the diasporic Irish in the fiction to be studied here pass on their ‘Irishness’ to their hyphenated offspring who are unfalteringly imagined or born into ‘hybridity’ and liminality, a theoretical state of existence which I define and detail in the following section.

1.3 Liminality in the Irish Diaspora

The adjective “liminal” is defined in three ways according to Sandor Klapcsik: it may mean a “sensory threshold,” something which is “barely perceptible,” or an “intermediate state, phase, or condition” (7). Etymologically Klapcsik traces the word back to “limen,” meaning “threshold” in Latin. He also notes that the field of psychology employs “limen” to express a *limit* beyond which a stimulus is no longer perceptible. Klapcsik’s theoretical framework, which is built upon Victor Turner’s concepts of what he calls “liminality,” both inform my own

framework and analysis of the diasporic Irish as liminal subjects who exist in a state of perpetual liminality. Turner, who originally appropriates, reworks and employs the notions of Arnold Van Gennep¹⁹, defines “liminality” as a “ritual process” in the following three stages²⁰:

The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both. During the intervening “liminal” period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and “structural” type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions. (94)

Even though Turner applies this theory in the analysis of ritual practices of “traditional preindustrial societies,” he comments that, “it becomes clear that the collective dimensions...are to be found at all stages and levels of culture and society” (113). This assertion would then permit his theories to enter into dialogue with my

¹⁹ Arnold Van Gennep (1873-1957) first proposed the concept of “liminal or threshold rites” in his work titled *Rites of Passage* published in 1960 (Turner 21). His research offers the primary theoretical foundation for all subsequent studies of liminal individuals and liminality.

²⁰ Turner here substitutes his own terminology for that used by Van Gennep who employs “*separation*,” “*transition*,” and “*incorporation*” to describe the three phases in a rite of passage (Turner 24).

analysis of the diasporic Irish in fiction, although I caution in anticipation of a divergence between the third stage Turner describes and its realization in the narrative outcomes of the texts to be analyzed. This point will be expounded upon and clarified over the course of my readings and observations of the texts once approaching said stage in each narrative.

Together with the three stages of liminality, most importantly Turner specifies the characteristics of liminal figures:

The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* (“threshold people”) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between... (95)

Klapcsik in his book, *Liminality in Fantastic Fiction*, uses many of the same notions offered by Turner, however he applies them to what he calls “fantastic fiction.” His study is carried out under his own framework composed of four types of liminality: *cultural or institutional liminality* (texts that hover on the brink of mainstream and popular literature), *generic liminality* (texts by authors on the edge of various (sub-) genres), *narrative liminality* (texts in which the reader oscillates among various perspectives, focal points, styles, and intertextual registers), and *thematic liminality* (texts in which the boundaries of the self and the Other are blurred, the human and the mechanical, and most of all, between the real world and the fantastic-virtual) (20). His third category, *narrative liminality*, I seek to expand upon by including texts in which the protagonists constantly shift between the forefront and background of the

narrative, which reinforces their liminal status. Also in using Klapcsik's fourth category, *thematic liminality*, together with Turner's three stages of liminality and liminal personae, I will make use of a multifaceted approach to reading the diasporic Irish that goes beyond stereotypical 'Irishness' and further blurs the line between them and 'nativized' Others. To date, however, little scholarship has been produced that is concerned with the state of the diasporic Irish subject and her/his performance of and relationship to 'Irishnesses', both as it is imagined internally and externally. Given that many diasporic individuals must adapt to new surroundings and cultures, their offspring, the new or first immigrant generation, is often the result of mixed ethnic and cultural backgrounds; in this instance part Irish and part "Other." The "Others" in these cases are in fact individuals of dissimilar cultures who represent ethnicities, social, cultural and racial backgrounds other than 'Irish', and who intermingle and intertwine themselves with, contrast to and often clash with the diasporic Irish. On these points concerned with the "Other" and "otherness" Georg Simmel theorizes that "the stranger...like the poor and like sundry "inner enemies,"...[is] an element of the group itself. His position as a full-fledged member involves both being outside it and confronting it" (1). Michel de Certeau's writings on textual and spatial liminality underscore the "paradox of the frontier", as well as elucidate that "within frontiers, the alien is already there...as though delimitation itself were the bridge that opens the inside to its other" (127, 129). In very similar fashion the diasporic Irish in fiction, whether "full-blooded Irish" or their "half-blooded" diasporic offspring, embody this duality and strangeness of which Simmel

writes and de Certeau highlights as the paradoxical nature the liminal subject epitomizes.

Though this project considers both “full Irish” characters and “half-Irish” characters as equally “othered” individuals, it is imperative to note the distinction between the two. Unlike the case of the full-blooded diasporic Irish parent, the duality of the liminal personae is found in the half-Irish children of mixed ethnic background who are often referred to as the products of miscegenation or hybridity. Michael Hayes in his chapter *Otherness and the Construction of “Difference”* stresses how the presence of such Irish figures constitutes a disturbance in the cultural order when hybridity manifests itself. He notes that this “disturbance [is] applied particularly to materials or groups who were to be liminal or whose status appeared ambiguous” (78). Additionally, Colin Graham further informs this consideration of the role of difference in liminality and the imagining of the diasporic Irish in his work *Deconstructing Ireland*. He claims that, “the liminal status of Ireland means that the ‘disorder’ that is already written into ‘Ireland’ [and the Irish]...makes inevitable a volatility in theorizing [both]” (94). Evidently, “liminal” is a necessary and evocative term for Graham when discussing Irish culture and identity. In the same way that Turner and Klapcsik recognize the liminal status as one of “in-betweeness” and “interstitiality,” Graham understands it as referring to “the marginal sense of existing at the edge of two experiences” (15). Yet, as Michael O’Sullivan believes and retorts, if Irish culture genuinely has become marginal then such a representation, or expression of Irish culture, “must then evoke the experiences of being Western, colonized, white, racially other, imperial and subjugated, but in this “marginal” way,

so that the representation also epitomizes the hybridity, imitation and irony latent in colonial interchanges” (23). His response to Graham’s outlook on the liminal state of Irish identity questions how such a complex configuration of cultural identity is manifested and represented, a point which Graham never explicitly develops.

It is at this juncture that I intervene in the discussion over liminality in Irish identity, a subject heretofore lacking in readings which consider the diasporic Irish experience and the state of liminality as a synergistic relationship. To address and assess diasporic Irish identity as “liminal”, we must join both theoretical approaches in order to situate the fiction under review within the context of exteriority and the illusory simultaneously.

1.4 Trying to ‘Figure’ out the Irish

In my analysis of the diasporic Irish as liminal entities, rather than referring to them as “fictional characters” I employ the term “figure” for several reasons. First, my concept and definitions of the term “figure” begin by understanding it as a multifaceted category with relevance to my contemplations and assertions of the diasporic Irish. My specific use of the word “figure” is informed by the online English dictionary, *Dictionary.com*²¹, which in the twenty-second entry defines it as “phantasm.” Even though this definition is archaic and has fallen into disuse, it is still possible to say that the word “figure” can represent an entity that exists in two worlds, that of the living and that of the dead, and in neither at the same time. In Spanish the word “figura” is defined by the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (DRAE)

²¹ A Random House electronic comprehensive publication.

in the fifth entry as “Cosa que representa o significa otra.” In tandem, these definitions are merged with “liminal” to give a primordial form to my nascent theory of the “liminal figure” based primarily on Turner’s similar ideas of liminality which are “frequently linked to...invisibility” (95). In this state an individual, or liminal figure, can be “indeterminate,” nearly imperceptible yet present, “phantasmagorically betwixt.” Bearing in mind all of the aforementioned definitions, theories, and observations, I seek to underscore this type of displacement and wayward status as a major factor in the construction and performance of diasporic and hybrid Irish identity and ‘Irishness’ in fiction. I therefore couple “figure” with the terms “liminal” and/or “fringe” in order to suggest the presence of a literary paradigm which emerges among the fictional texts to be studied here when read against one another.

1.5 ‘Irishness’ and Irish Studies in the Americas

After centuries of Irish emigration and since the independence of Ireland²², critic Frank Manista, for one, notes a perceptible strain on the ideologies of identity and belonging in the Irish community. He, as does this project, strongly questions what it means to be Irish in the world now and who determines the meaning of being “Irish” (268). ‘Irishness’, in fact, has become a term that, despite numerous attempts by disciplines such as anthropology, history and social studies, to quantify and

²² The Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed into law on 6 December 1921, allowed for the establishment of a “Free Irish State” which did not come into existence until one year later. However, this was only possible after the bloody and grisly Irish War of Independence that took place from 1919-1921. This new independence divided the island into two separate countries; the Republic of Ireland and the separate state of Northern Ireland which remains a part of the United Kingdom. Therefore, I contemplate Ireland throughout this project as the independent nation sometimes known as the Republic of Ireland and its emigres and do not enter into arguments of a ‘unified Ireland’ which would include the Northern territories.

explain its core elements and essence, remains representative of a concept that would describe a national and ethnic identity which is performed in a multitude of ways by an almost equal number of individuals. Scholarship to date in these fields has centered its efforts on various forms of empirical data to examine ‘Irishness’ in diaspora. For instance, anthropological researchers look to ship manifests and land-ownership documents in order to place the Irish geographically and hierarchically within different colonial contexts and spaces. Such seemingly statistically bound efforts, as is the case in O’Callaghan’s work or in that of many articles published by the Society for Irish Latin American Studies²³ (SILAS), speak mostly of the numbers of Irish to immigrate and their economic standing, yet little of the lasting social and cultural impacts of their arrival and presence. Similarly, historical and social studies have often relied on personal correspondence (primarily that of Irish Catholic priests on mission in the New World), English language newspapers of different periods (though mostly published in Argentina during the mid to late nineteenth century), and travel novels by Irish authors (which tend to be read as journals or diaries rather than literary texts), to approach issues of ‘Irishness’. Authors such as Murray and Zuntini de Izarra have both written extensively on the Irish in Argentina and Brazil respectively, yet both are informed primarily by literary texts produced only within those imaginaries, thereby limiting the possibility of a wider cross-cultural literary dialogue in their research. While the anthropological studies of ‘Irishness’ fail to see literature as a valid and vital source for the ‘archive’ of ‘Irishness’, Murray and

²³ The Society for Irish Latin American Studies or SILAS “was founded on 1 July 2003 to promote the study of relations between Ireland and Latin American countries”. The organization’s journal offers a wide array of empirical data which I will reference in subsequent sections of this project. For more visit: <http://www.irlandeses.org/>

Zuntini de Izarra have made the most notable contributions of literary readings in the field. These have served the broader, more all-encompassing archival chronicles of the diasporic Irish experience, though there is still much to be done.

Some literary scholars have already conducted recent studies that have substantiated thematic and theoretical links among Irish and Caribbean authors and their artistic works. Maria McGarrity in *Washed by the Gulf Stream* juxtaposes several elements found in Irish and Caribbean novels alike, such as the image of the house or Big House which she analyzes in *The Big House of Inver* by Irish writers Somerville and Ross as compared to the image of the same in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Dominican author Jean Rhys. McGarrity also finds similarities in the writings of James Joyce and Derek Walcott in terms of the remapping of space each author creates in his own novel (*Ulysses* and *Omeros*) and how this is symbolic of redrawing the lines that delineate culture and identity. Michael Malouf in his book *Transatlantic Solidarities* dedicates an entire chapter, “*After a Sundering*,” to a study of selected works by Walcott, among them *Omeros*, in which he argues that the Saint Lucian poet “turns to Irish sources at a crucial moment of political transition in the 1970s that persists in his later work” (125). Although Malouf focuses mostly on the relations between Ireland and Jamaica, either during the British Empire in Jamaica or throughout modern-day popular culture, the cross-cultural perspective of his readings of political figures like Marcus Garvey to pop-musicians such as Sinead O’Connor have paved the way for more ample readings of the convergences and parallels to be found in texts of all types in Ireland and the Caribbean. In similar fashion McGarrity is able to rescue lesser-known texts from Caribbean and American literatures,

although only those written in English, and inject them into Irish literary studies for critical consideration.

In the Americas we have already mentioned the scholarship of Murray and Zuntini de Izarra which focuses on South America (specifically Argentina and Brazil), yet several more academics have produced scholarship with interest in the connections between Ireland and the American hemisphere. For example, Peadar Kirby in his *Ireland and Latin America: Links and Lessons*, finds commonalities between the Irish and Latin American experiences of colonization as well as highlights substantial Irish contributions to numerous Latin America countries in roles such as soldiers, traders and missionaries. Curiously, however, the major bulk of his research does not refer to literary works to inform such findings; instead he uses editorials, newspapers, songs, and myths to support his claims. Though McGarrity, Murray and Zunitini de Izarra do use literary texts as the basis of their analyses, scholars like Kirby tend to overlook literature as a valuable archival source to their research and the field in general. Due to the growing academic interest in the Irish diaspora in such literarily and culturally rich contexts, such as Argentina and Brazil²⁴, to cite only two, ‘Irishness’ as a category has become a remarkable global commodity in and outside academe. From its performance to its glorification, ‘Irishness’ is found, at least in one form or another, in an astoundingly wide array of cultures and contexts, a fact that has given impulse to a broadening of the approaches necessary to increase and develop its analysis.

²⁴ The ABEI (Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses/Brazilian Association of Irish Studies) is one of the most substantial journals in publication dealing with the Irish in the American hemisphere, therefore warranting inclusion and serious consideration in this study.

1.6 Fiction as Archive of Diaspora: Transamerican Readings

Given the way in which the Irish have been dispersed throughout the globe for more than five centuries, the field concerned with Irish Studies is, understatedly, enormous. This is evidenced further as the Irish appear and reappear as part of the national and fictional imaginaries of numerous countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. However, as Zuntini de Izarra states, “Irish immigration to South America [and the Caribbean] has been studied from few historical perspectives and very little has been done to trace contemporary Irish literary diasporic voices in this geographical location” (137). More specifically, the Irish and ‘Irishness’ have emerged in countries such as Cuba, Jamaica, Argentina, Guatemala, and even Mexico. However, the hole or void I perceive in the archive concerned with the diasporic Irish and ‘Irishness’ as part of the literary imaginaries of various countries within the American hemisphere deserves our critical attention. Therefore, I seek to fill in, albeit only in part, the emptiness in Irish diaspora studies with readings and analyses based on fictional texts written in both English and Spanish. To allow for this type of broader comparative reading and analysis I look to expand upon Ralph Bauer’s notions of ‘American hemispheric studies²⁵’ to encompass what Ariana Vigil more precisely calls a ‘transamerican’ outlook which “privileges the realm of thought and creativity” (193). Vigil as well notes that, in contrast to “hemispheric frameworks” which are “often linked to developments toward continental integration under NAFTA”, the “transamerican approach can better account for non-state-

²⁵ The “hemispheric turn” in American literature, as Ralph Bauer claims, “has manifested itself in virtually all the subdisciplines of American literary and cultural studies” (235). This is to say that ‘American’ no longer represents the United States-centered imperialist mode of study but rather it now seeks to include Caribbean and Latin American cultures and literatures within a single yet broader field of study.

sanctioned interactions” (193). In using the prefix *trans*, originally a Latin preposition meaning ‘across’, ‘beyond’, ‘over’, and ‘outside of’, *transamerican* would denote that which crosses over the Americas and goes beyond the confines of national borders. Alfonso de Toro explains that, “el prefijo *trans* no implica una actividad que diluya u oscurezca las diferencias culturales... [ni tampoco] se refiere a una nivelación de la cultura ni favorece el consumo, sino que se entiende como un diálogo desjerarquizado, abierto y nómada que hace fluir diversas identidades y culturas en una interacción dinámica” (23). This is certainly true of the diasporic Irish who *transverse* global spaces, making their experience readable not only as *transamerican* but also *transnational*. Aihwa Ong in her book *Flexible Citizenship* examines the practices of transnationalism which she sees as alluding to “the *transversal*, the *transactional*, the *translational*, and the *transgressive* aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination” which are incited and enabled by “the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space” (4). The social practices of the Irish in diaspora have been notably shaped by both diaspora and transnational experiences which in turn inform representations of these same experiences. Khachig Tölölyan in the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora* observes that, “diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment” (5). The concept of diaspora is related to that of the transnational because they both depend upon movements and communications which cross over national boundaries, however, the difference resides in the fact that the transnational tends towards official state relations while diaspora tends to create affective relations which are rarely state sanctioned (Weimer 24). Thus, the diasporic Irish are ‘transnational’ in that they originate from one nation

(Ireland) and journey into foreign host nations often in search of ‘official’ sanctuary while also maintaining a strong emotional bond to their homeland. Consequently, because the literary corpus I will examine stems specifically from various nations in the American hemisphere, we must categorize such readings as ‘transamerican’ given that none of the texts were produced in nor represent other regional diasporic spaces because they strictly follow the migratory movements of the Irish. This framework, then, is what Susan Gillman cites as a “cosmopolitan polyglot way of working with literature” (329) that permits comparative, cross-cultural and multilingual readings of fictional literature with more extensive implications in the fields of both literary and Irish studies. By focusing on certain fictional character’s ‘Irishness’ as the main commonality amongst the chosen texts, I hope to show that despite differences of each text’s national and cultural context of production, the diasporic Irish they portray are liminal figures whose presence complicates and disrupts the idea of national identity which is generally understood as monolithic. In order to accomplish this, I will probe into how these characters are constructed as ‘Irish’ and/or ‘half-Irish’ and in what ways their representations are informed and shaped paradigmatically by notions of diaspora and liminality in the literatures of the American hemisphere.

Due to its complex and daunting nature, any analysis of Irish identity in literature is replete with complications. Hence, it would be of little gain, or perhaps impossible, to conduct this study on the premise of addressing the grossly broad question, “What does it mean to be Irish?” The futility of such an endeavor is readily evidenced when one engages in a comparative reading of the vast amount of literature on the subject and quickly finds little consensus. It is, then, more fruitful to ask,

“How has ‘Irishness’ been defined and represented in literature thus far?” Then, more narrowly, “In what ways have the diasporic Irish, their hybrid Irish offspring and ‘Irishness’ been represented in transamerican fiction, both by non-Irish authors and hyphenated Irish authors alike?” As well, “how do liminality and the liminal process play out in these narratives as part of a traceable literary paradigm?” Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore, examine and analyze the ways in which the diasporic Irish and their half-Irish offspring have been represented as ‘figures’, and how their identities, experiences and ‘Irishness’ and performed in a relatively broad body of literary texts produced in transamerican spaces.

The ensuing sections further narrow in focus within these categories in fiction to underscore the resulting “liminal figuredness” as a recurring element that not only haunts and defines these diasporic Irish and half-Irish literary figure’s identities but also enhances their phantasmagoric appearance in their respective societies and resultant imaginaries. Using the theories derived from literary, diaspora and liminal studies combined with my own interpretations of and contributions to these theorizations, I begin my primary transamerican readings in the ensuing chapter of four works of fiction which, although composed in very distinct contexts, societies and cultures, in common use a half-Irish figure, the products of Irish diaspora, as their protagonist and often depict their experiences, emotions and ‘Irishness’ in uncannily similar ways. Another feature these texts share is their authorship by ‘non-Irish’ or half-Irish writers who offer diverse perspectives and imaginings of the diasporic Irish experience. Comprising the list of primary literary texts in the first chapter we have Francisco Goldman’s *The Divine Husband* (2004), Erna Brodber’s *Myal* (1998), and

Zoé Valdés' *Te di la vida entera* (1996) and Rodolfo Walsh's *Irlandeses detrás de un gato* (1965). Throughout this chapter, I have ordered the list in this fashion for several reasons; first, Goldman's and Brodber's works are both originally written in English and portray Irish fathers, whereas Valdés' and Walsh's writings are in Spanish and offer depictions of Irish mothers. Secondly, this ordering chronologically follows the temporal setting of each novel beginning in Guatemala circa 1860, to Jamaica at the turn of the twentieth century, then to Cuba in the 1930s and finally in Argentina less than a decade later. Lastly, all authors use in common the diasporic Irish figure in the role of parent to the respective protagonist in each work and often duplicate their experiences, motives and eventualities over the course of their narratives. Hence, I argue that these representations are intrinsically linked to stereotypical or stock concepts of 'Irishness' which invariably culminate in the 'writing off' or 'killing off' of the diasporic Irish figure which is facilitated by their liminal status. These diasporic Irish characters that they have created are imagined paradigmatically as wayward figures whose 'abnormal' behaviour gives birth to their half-Irish offspring in a state of inherent liminality. In first reading the diasporic Irish parent figures I ask; "In what ways, similar and dissimilar, have the diasporic Irish, their hybrid Irish offspring, and 'Irishness' been represented in the fiction under study here?" More importantly, what do their experiences share in common and how are these narrative portrayals paradigmatic of 'Irishness' as a liminal state in a broader context?

Chapter 2

2.1 Diasporic Irish Liminal Figures: A paradigm of broken families

I have decided to focus on ‘Irish’ characters in particular as a result of my readings of a number of texts from different regions of the Americas which all seem to have protagonists with, first and foremost, one Irish parent who serves as a pivotal point of departure in their ensuing formation as literary figures. When read against each other with ‘Irishness’ as the associative literary motif, we are able to appreciate the peculiar connections, perhaps often nearly imperceptible links that in turn create a tangible paradigm among the texts to be discussed despite their obvious dissimilarities of cultural/temporal contexts and languages of publication. In what follows I offer my interpretations of these texts that have yet to be explored for their elements of the diasporic Irish in liminality. This is to say that I conduct close readings of the ‘diasporic Irish figure’ in each work, creating a transamerican dialogue, which, as I argue, permits us to understand diasporic Irish figures and the representations of their experiences and performances of ‘Irishness’ in a more profound, intertextual and conversant manner. To begin, I claim that there exists a curious and undeniable connection within these representations of the diasporic Irish parents as ‘figures’, despite their relatively brief and minor roles in each text, which in fact creates an overarching paradigm among these literary works. The parallels in their construction are so strikingly similar that a critical comparison is evidently warranted. In an effort to offer possible responses to questions outlined in previous sections and support my assertion of a literary paradigm rooted in diasporic Irish

parentage which flourishes in hybrid Irish figures, I observe the ways in which they perform or embody classic negative stereotypes of ‘devious Irishness’ as well as emphasize the effects of the “diasporic Irish experience” and its corollaries of exile and marginalization. What allows for such a fragile relationship to be fabricated is that at least half of the fibers which lend form and substance to the thread I will weave through my argument are metaphorically composed of ‘Irishness’. The Irish parent of each text’s protagonist, who is the product of hybridity between the Irish and other ethnicities of host nations, will be analyzed underlining the salient commonality of their Irish origin, along with their diasporic state and liminal existence. But, what is it that makes them “liminal” per say? Throughout this project I will use Turner’s three stages of liminality as an ‘overlay’ with which to read the narratives under review. In setting each text against the stages of liminality I contend that the course of these narratives parallel the liminal as a process which, unlike Turner’s model, rarely end in a consummate passage beyond liminal status, thus more closely resembling a perpetual state of Klapcsik’s thematic liminality.

2.2 Diasporic Irish Father Figures

According to Eagleton, “the Irish novel returns recurrently to those who are both home and away, present and absent simultaneously. Its most definitive condition is that of a misfit, idealist or outsider trapped within a claustrophobic social order” (215). More narrow in focus Declan Kiberd, in his chapter on *Fathers and Sons: Irish-Style*, detects a leitmotif of the “unreliable, inadequate or absent” Irish fathers in the works of “second-rate” Irish writers in their representations of Irish father-son

relations (127-129). It would seem, however, that Eagleton's overview of the Irish novel and Kiberd's leitmotif have become more a paradigm in the transamerican context, one not limited to the writings of Irish authors nor strictly to Irish fathers and sons but one that also informs non-Irish authors' writings on Irish fathers and their hybrid offspring of either gender. Francisco Goldman's (born 1954 in Boston Massachusetts to a Catholic Guatemalan mother and Jewish-American father) epic novel, *The Divine Husband*, which took seven years to complete, is an historical-fiction novel loosely based on the poem "La niña de Guatemala" by famous Cuban poet José Martí. It tells the story of "a beautiful girl who fell in love with him, but is said died of a broken heart when he married another woman" (Bach 18). While intermingling fact and fantasy Goldman portrays the father to his protagonist, María de las Nieves (his own version of "la niña de Guatemala") as an Irish-American father, "the Yankee immigrant Timothy Moran" (19) whose "surname apparently revealed [his] Irish origin" (122). After traveling from New York to Guatemala circa 1860, he continues his diasporic travels and we are quickly confronted by an Irish figure that is represented as 'troublesome' and who breaks with the confines of the 'normal', thus simultaneously bringing to the forefront his 'abnormal' and reprehensible behavior:

"So Timothy Moran had fallen in love with an Indita...over whom [he] lost his head and heart and even, one could say, eventually his life...By his scandalous behaviour in Amatitlán, Timothy Moran had turned his wife, Elsa, into the subject of awful ridicule and humiliation. Having abandoned her in the most public way, he was spied going about

everywhere with his pretty little aborigine, who was soon pregnant. Just days after the infant girl was born, Mrs. Elsa Moran committed suicide...the mood in the town turned violent against Mr. Moran. Many of the white foreigners and criollos vowed to kill him, in order to make an example of him. So Timothy Moran and his family fled, not immediately into the mountains but to Mazatenango...until the truth caught up with him and then he did flee into the mountains.” (181-182)

An *‘atrasado’*, Moran continually trespasses borders, both physical and ethical, and is endlessly persecuted by “white foreigners and criollos” because he exemplifies the deviant, disturbing comportment so readily associated with the Irish. In exile while “intending to start a coffee farm [and having] barely even begun to clear the land” he is abruptly killed “from a mule kick to the stomach” (19). His morbid or, for some, ironically just dismissal from the novel coupled with negative stereotypical behaviour symbolizes the traditional and pervasive “anti-Irish prejudice” of which scholar Michael Hayes warns (82). Subsequently, it is only through the vague recollections and dialogues of María de las Nieves with other characters that we are informed further of his ‘Irishness’ in vilifying terms. In one instance she is explicitly asked by Mack Chinchilla, one of her love interests, about her father who, she claims, is “a New York Irishman...of some sort of another” (311) even though earlier in the narrative she had recalled that “he’d been born in New York, he was a Yankee²⁶” (122). In response Mack “would repress his [negative] feelings about the

²⁶ Goldman seems to employ María de las Nieves’ hazy memories to further cloud Moran’s ‘Irishness’. Whether Moran was born in Ireland or New York appears to be irrelevant because both he and his

Irish of New York²⁷” (311), something which Goldman’s incarnation of Cuban poet José Martí does not²⁸. The poet aims his animosity of the Irish at a “red-haired, bloody-kneed walker, who keeps falling because he is more asleep than awake, poor man, he is surely Irish.” This prompts Martí to inquire if Moran was “a black-haired Irishman, or a red-haired” to which María de las Nieves replies, “castaño, or chestnut, and Martí said, “The red-haired ones tend to be the roughest”” (445). To inform his portrayal of Moran, and the Irish in general, Goldman appears to pull from his own youth where he was “raised in this very white, Irish and Italian neighbourhood” (Bach 14). Though his novel is, as Vigil suggests, quite readable as “transamerican literature” (191) because it merges voices from North and South, Anglo and Latino, Goldman clearly replicates the unchanging stereotypes of the Irish and stocks Moran’s character with “other personal artefacts, [such as] a burlap sack filled with bottles of Irish whiskey” (19). Moran seemingly embodies what is known as an “Irish Traveller” or “tinker” (Harper, 101-102). These “Irish Travellers” or “tinkers” immigrated to the United States in the 1840’s escaping the starvation of the Irish Potato Famine...settled in upstate New York...[and] moved south where they specialized in horse and mule trading” (19). On a broader scale, Goldman reproduces what Hayes argues is “the negative stereotyping of Irish Travellers which became

daughter are considered and treated as symptomatic of ‘Irishness’ by Goldman’s entire cast of characters.

²⁷ It is notable that previously in the same conversation María de las Nieves points out that Mack had “turned down the petition of a group of would-be colonists from Ireland who wanted a land grant for a farming colony” and also underscores another prominent character’s (Minister Gasteel) disdain for the Irish who he refers to as “the White Indians of Ireland” (308).

²⁸ Interestingly Valdés’s novel also makes reference to and comments on the renowned poet. While observing his statue in New York one character muses: “siento tristeza por este Martí tan ecuestre, y tan cagado de gorriones, tan meado que no da más... y con su cara de hacerse el que no rompía un plato, y rompía la vajilla completa...era mujeriego como él solo” (149-50). Although this point is not integral to this study it is noteworthy that, like the diasporic Irish, Martí should as well appear as part of these two distinct fictional worlds.

dominant in the public discourse of the latter part of the twentieth century that, in particular, can arguably be viewed as an extension of a deeply inculcated anti-Irish tradition, a more extreme version of the anti-Irish “Othering” tradition which existed during the centuries of British colonization” (82). Hence, Moran can be read as a diasporic Irish father figure who reaffirms centuries-old stereotypes in three distinct spaces; Guatemala, New York and the imaginaries of the other characters in the novel. Goldman thus utilizes the Irish stock, for both its genetic attributes and as a literary device, to construct from it Moran and his subsequent hybrid Irish offspring. In beginning his diasporic journey, Moran commenced the liminal process by separating himself from not only the set of social/cultural norms but also from fixed and secure geographical spaces. Yet, because Moran was killed he is now a mere phantasm and so it will be María de las Nieves who must carry on in the diasporic liminal process her father initiated but could not complete.

Jamaican sociologist and novelist Erna Brodber (1940-) in her novel *Myal*, like many of the writers under study here, deliberately mixes fiction and historical material in order to explore social possibilities and/or recreate the emotional dimension of historical experience (Walker-Johnson 48). Her prose, however, replicates the Jamaican colloquial speech of the lower and middle classes which often results in uncomfortable grammatical structures that complicate a straightforward reading of her work, adding to its ambiguities. First set in Morant Bay, Jamaica close to 1900, Brodber’s novel tells the story of Ella, the “half black, half white child” who is styled as “an alabaster baby... the poor little pickney”²⁹ (6-7). Though her mother is Jamaican, her father is “Ralston O’Grady, one of those Irish police officers whose

²⁹ *Pickney*; non-pejorative Jamaican slang for “child.”

presence the authorities must have felt, kept the natives from eating each other” (6). From the outset of the narrative “poor pink O’Grady, dissonant as a skinned bull” (6) begins falling into the stereotypical paradigm, like Moran, as an immoral and soon-to-be absent diasporic Irish father figure. Quickly Mary Riley, his Jamaican housekeeper and “wife’s...belly drew attention to O’Grady. He and it became a sign of misbehaving Irish policemen and O’Grady was transferred to where Mary knew not” (8). Yet, as Shalini Puri elucidates, the events in O’Grady’s life are narrated in the passive voice which implies a lack of authorship by O’Grady over his own actions which “are inscribed in a larger text” (105). Just as with Moran, O’Grady is portrayed as incapable of controlling his primal sexual impulses and is caught breaking social and moral norms. His “misbehaving” (8) and improprieties with a savage local are deemed perverse and morally inexcusable, thus he is extricated from the narrative and his daughter’s life. Within the diasporic space of Jamaica under English colonial administration, as Puri points out, “O’Grady is not absolutely powerful: indeed, his Irishness limits his position...to one of functionary” (105). Similar to Moran, the evaluation of O’Grady as dissolute is levelled against him by other “whites”, more precisely the British. Deepika Bahri comments on the racialization of the Irish by the English and impels us to consider the “difference of the difference” in terms of their “whiteness” (61). For Bahri, the concept of “whiteness” as defined by the colonial British served as a categorical tool with which to separate themselves from the Irish and justify oppressive and imperialistic reforms upon them. Bahri exemplifies this point by elucidating several difference indicators commonly used on the Irish: language, behaviour, or visual markers unrelated to color such as their “bad habits”,

like laziness and drunkenness, and “lifestyle”, meaning poverty and “mischievous practices” (61). This type of pseudo-racialized discourse sought not only to emphasize the righteousness of the conquest of an allegedly ‘inferior’ race but also to perpetuate pre-established negative stereotypes of the Irish in diasporic spaces. In assessing Brodber’s novel *Ulrike Erichsen* attests to the contrary that “Brodber very deliberately avoids setting up any of the well-known binaries like...colonizer/colonized” and therefore evades as well “the trap of racial stereotyping” (90). However, by not considering O’Grady’s ‘Irishness’ and taking into account the long tradition of this type of negative stereotypical representation of the Irish, is not the opposite exactly what has happened? Has Brodber simply reiterated the same negative English colonial discourse of the diasporic Irish via O’Grady? Has she blurred the line between the Irish and the English to a point of misrepresentation? Or to the contrary, through these representations is she challenging the reader’s understanding of these prejudices and discrepancies? The distinction between the Irish and their English colonizers is often unclear for many and, as well, quite challenging to neatly resolve. While commenting on the novel’s exploration of “the border of power and powerlessness”, Puri parallels this binary struggle to O’Grady and Mary’s relationship and asks, “Is it an instance of not-quite-rape by a not-quite-colonizer?” (106). The insinuation that O’Grady has ‘not-quite-raped’ his spouse who is “a most upright woman...[that] didn’t object too strongly to giving O’Grady wife” (Brodber 8) seems incongruent with their mutually consensual relationship and O’Grady’s truly powerless position as a pawn in the English colonial administration³⁰. As a diasporic Irish liminal figure, O’Grady slips between the polar

³⁰ Despite evidences to the contrary and some speculation as to O’Grady’s real ‘power’ as a colonial

opposites of powerful/powerless or colonizer/colonized and falls out of the narrative. His daughter, Ella, then inherits her father's liminal status and with it a residual disdain for him: "Funny, she never met O'Grady in all her travels. Ella wasn't sad about that. She didn't think she would like him" (11). Her distaste for her father is not unusual because "the Irish father was often a defeated man... [who] had lost face... because [he] had compromised with the occupying English in return for a safe position as policeman or petty clerk" (Kiberd 380). So, like María de las Nieves, she has become estranged and abstracted from her Irish father and must face the next phase of liminality without him.

Just as Goldman, who has also relied upon similar stock representations of the diasporic Irish as unwanted Irish Travellers to construct María de las Nieves' father and then do away with him, Brodber as well has converted O'Grady, like Moran, into a symbol of abandonment and absence. For O'Grady, perpetual exile in diaspora is the only resolution to his disruptive presence; for Moran it is death. As such both are 'figured' as initially present, implanting their 'Irish stock' in their offspring, then quickly become 'phantasmagoric' entities while passing from the first to second stage of the liminal process. These Irishmen can only haunt the subsequent events in their children's lives because they are lost to these narratives in liminality. Markedly it is their 'Irishness' which acts as a crucial element in the liminal process and influences the unstable position in which María de las Nieves and Ella now find themselves.

subject, not a colonizer himself, Puri insists that Ella is "born of a forcible colonial coupling" (99). Nevertheless, my readings here have cast doubt upon the "forcible" nature of O'Grady and Mary Riley's relationship, understanding it as more a product of convenience.

2.3 Diasporic Irish Mother Figures

In the previous novels we have examined two diasporic Irish fathers and their daughters who, because of their eerily similar representations, begin to give shape to a literary paradigm within a transamerican perspective, which suggests that the diasporic Irish father figure is inevitably deviant and then absent. In other words, they are cast into liminality with no hope of concluding the liminal process. While they do pass through the first stage of the liminal process, both vanish in the transition to the second stage, and thus their journey toward assimilation and reaggregation is left to be completed by their half-Irish offspring. Yet, can the same be said for diasporic Irish mother figures? How are they ‘figured’ into this paradigm? Are they able to go through more of the liminal process than their male counterparts? The leitmotifs or clichés of Irish fathers elucidated by Kiberd seem to indicate that those of Irish mothers would have little or no similarity. Indeed, the cliché in Irish literature of the “over-intense, clutching relationship between mother-and-son... [which] suggests something sinister about the Irish man, both as husband and father” (129), as he puts it, shares little with the relationships of diasporic Irish mothers and their offspring in transamerican readings save one commonality: Kiberd underscores that Irish “women sought from their sons an emotional fulfilment denied them by their men, and that suggests that their husbands had failed as lovers” (129). It is not so much in the search for ‘emotional fulfilment by their sons’ that we shall find points of comparisons among diasporic Irish mothers but in the failure of their husbands as lovers and in the consequences of these Irish women’s narcissistic pursuits for emotional fulfilment from other individuals.

According to Catherine Davies, Cuban author Zoé Valdés (1959-), “has made a reputation for herself by criticizing the Cuban government and writing novels that some would call erotic and others pornographic” (224). Described as “a noisy novel that recreates the sounds of Havana’s streets” with an “eschatological lexicon that abounds in her texts” (Ramsdell 113), *Te di la vida entera* presents the protagonist Cuca often referred to simply as “la Niña,” (14) whose Irish mother and family are described in the following way: “oriunda de Dublín, pero allí solamente vivió sus primeros dos años. Los abuelos maternos de Cuca se trasladaron a Cuba acompañados de tres retoños hembras, también con la esperanza de enriquecerse en asuntos de carne de caballo” (14). Although the author offers a brief yet somewhat detailed migratory family history focused on Cuca’s Irish heritage³¹, she conspicuously omits other details of Cuca’s mother, her name most strikingly. Perhaps lost in the transitory whirlwinds of diaspora, her name becomes superfluous in the face of her readily recognizable stereotypical ‘Irishness’. Her deviancy and partial anonymity facilitate her inevitable absence; “la progenitora de cabellera roja y revuelta, y de ojos marinos, [quien] se empeñó en continuar su carrera como actriz, o declamadora, de mala muerte, y se separó del padre chino de la Niña Cuca. Se echó un amante de dieciocho años, y si te he visto ni me acuerdo” (14). Echoing Moran and O’Grady, Cuca’s mother is victim to her own sexual impulses and equally unable to suppress them. Hence, she abandons her family as is paradigmatic of a diasporic Irish liminal parent figure. To this Nanne Timmer emphasizes that in various plots of Valdés’ works “the identification with, and separation from, the mother is crucial”

³¹ The reader is only told that Cuca is the daughter of “un chino fondero que había viajado de Cantón a México. En México se cambió de apellido y vino a Cuba a hacer fortuna” (Valdés 14).

(198). Indeed, the sudden and unexpected departure of her mother leaves Cuca “tan falta de cariño. Sobre todo el cariño de una madre” (Valdés 20). Though under highly dubious circumstances, both Moran and O’Grady attempted to become devoted spouses and fathers until they were ‘disappeared’, and so, the motives for their departures can be read as forces from the external and not as voluntarily self-enacted. Conversely, Cuca’s mother looks to realize herself outside the familial sphere, chasing after her self-indulgent fantasies, both professional and sexual. In abandoning her family, she not only initiates the liminal process but also demonstrates active control over herself and her conscious decision to break from the set of social confines. Wayward and adrift in liminality, Valdés has extricated Cuca from the narrative and subsequently pulls Cuca haplessly into the liminal process³².

Of the four authors under analysis in this chapter, Argentine author Rodolfo Walsh (1927-1977) would seem the most likely to be readable as ‘Irish’ because of his paternal Irish ancestry yet, ironically, his short story series on the Irish, his most intimate and semi-autobiographical works, have been grossly under-read in terms of their representations of the diasporic Irish. The author himself was quoted as saying in regards to this series, “es cierto que son diferentes de los otros” (Walsh 5). Nevertheless, much scholarship on Walsh to date has been plagued by lackluster criticism when addressing his ‘Irish texts’³³. For instance, Horacio Verbitsky in the prologue to *Cuentos*, the first collection specifically featuring the “*serie de Los*

³² Though the novel centers mostly on the events surrounding Cuca’s life, Valdés briefly details her sibling’s destinies; two remain with the Chinese father while he “prestó los otros dos [Cuca y uno de sus hermanos] a la madrina negra” (Valdés 15).

³³ Ana María Amar Sánchez in her *El Relato de los Hechos* first noted the lack of academic attention given to Walsh’s works as early as 1992 when she wrote, “Hay pocos estudios sobre la obra de Walsh: con excepción de algunos prólogos y reseñas, sólo dos artículos...trabajan desde la crítica literaria su producción” (141).

irlandeses” in complete form, comments on almost every other work written by Walsh except the short stories at hand and concludes that, “*Operación Masacre* lo eleva a otra región, a una cumbre que sólo habitan los libros nacionales. Es nuestro *Facundo*, y una incursión solitaria al futuro” (12). Similarly, the great Mexican writer José Emilio Pacheco in his *Nota preliminar: Rodolfo J. Walsh desde México*, which prefaces Walsh’s *Obra literaria completa*, feels that “el ciclo de los irlandeses constituye probablemente el núcleo de la obra que, a falta de mejor término, podemos llamar “imaginativa” de Walsh” and that “esta literatura íntima...no es menos social ni menos política que *Operación Masacre*” (6). Pacheco, like Verbitsky, appears equally awed by Walsh’s landmark novel and misconstrues the intimate and autobiographical underpinnings which motivate these stories as being simply ‘imaginative’. More recently, the 2007 El Aleph edition of *Los irlandeses*, with a forward that entails a succinct interview between Ricardo Piglia and Walsh, was printed with “Los oficios terrestres” first, inexplicably confusing the original narrative and intertextual coherence of the series that begins with “Irlandeses detrás de un gato”, followed by the aforementioned story and closing with “Un oscuro día de justicia”. Finally, the title of Eleonora Bertranou’s 2006 study *Rodolfo Walsh: argentino, escritor, militante* plainly summarizes the prevailing type of uniform readings given to Walsh’s work. Although Bertranou generally addresses the Irish presence in Argentina, her consideration of Walsh’s Irish series is only in relation to his genealogy and she fails to offer substantive literary reflection on the series, concluding inferentially that “hemos visto en este trabajo como influyó en la vida de Walsh el desarraigo de sus antepasados irlandeses” (170). With all of the above, it

would appear then that the 'Irish series' has not been presented with sufficient attention by many critical scholars and therefore the 'Irishness' that Walsh weaves into his writings has thus far been misread.

In the first story of the series under review here, "Irlandeses detrás de un gato", Walsh portrays a young boy, "el chico que más tarde llamaron el Gato" (87) who is Irish on his maternal side and Argentine on the paternal. His mother, originally from Cork and now residing in Argentina (presumably in the late 1930's/early 1940's³⁴), is only presented by her surname; O'Hara. Nevertheless, the lack of a first name 'figures' her as incomplete, only 'half-here', though slightly more 'complete' than Cuca's mother, yet equally as betwixt. Analogous to Cuca's mother, O'Hara "...sin explicación, se volvió la puta del pueblo, pero una puta piadosa, una verdadera puta católica..." (91-92). O'Hara, mirroring Moran and Cuca's mother, is guilty of infidelity and leaves her maternal image to be "pisoteada por los hombres que siguieron..." (92). Again, it is the unbridled promiscuity of the diasporic Irish parent that violently ruptures the family nucleus and sets in motion the liminal process for her son. Deserting him at the Instituto Fahy, an isolated Catholic school for poor Irish boys and orphans outside Buenos Aires, "...lo paría por segunda vez, cortaba un ombligo incruento y seco como una rama, y se lo sacaba de encima para siempre" (88). As David Viñas points out, O'Hara is emblematic of "las madres borrosas...(a

³⁴ It is commonly believed amongst Walshian readership that many of the temporal, geographic and experiential content of the 'Irish series' come from Walsh's own life. The author himself studied at two "colegios irlandeses," first at one in Capilla del Señor in 1937 and then at the Instituto Fahy de Moreno from 1938-40. The author has also commented that, "Claro, bueno, en la serie de los Irlandeses...evidentemente hay una recreación autobiográfica pero quizá, no tan estrecha como podría parecer" (9). Notably Walsh inverts the Irish parentage of el Gato from his own, perhaps in an effort to more clearly separate his fiction from his true biography. For more see Ricardo Piglia's interview with Walsh included in *Los Irlandeses* (1967-1973, pgs. 7-14). Also see "El 37" en *Rodolfo Walsh Cuentos Completos* pgs. 481-487, which will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

las que se ama y en las que se caga)” (171) who are often present in the stories of Walsh and here so most glaringly. Curious then, that she, Moran, O’Grady and Cuca’s mother all embody blurred, diasporic Irish liminal figures, who have now been written into a phantasmagoric state resulting from their suspect acts and deviant Irish nature. Since these aberrant forms and perversions are seen as a degradation of moral standards, the diasporic Irish figure must be done away with or must do away with her/himself, for there is no place of permanence for the flickering and errant, for these Irish mothers and fathers adrift in liminality. In her absence, O’Hara’s ‘Irishness’, like that of the other three diasporic Irish parents, has become a haunting element which will now constantly loom about her son’s understanding of himself and his uncertain place in the world. Also, el Gato, like his counterparts, must confront and navigate his way through the liminal process by himself.

2.4 Irish Heritage, Liminal Existence

The preceding two sections have discussed in detail both diasporic Irish father and mother figures across a wide-ranging body of fiction read from a transamerican perspective while contemplating each narrative as a journey through liminality. In doing so it has become evident that each author has imagined and created in their writings Irish parents whose diasporic movements catalyze the liminal process for themselves and their hybrid offspring. Because their deviant behavior and unwanted characteristics of ‘Irishness’ disrupt the host societies in which they briefly reside, Moran, O’Grady, Cuca’s mother and O’Hara are incapable of completing the liminal process and thus become castaways in diaspora spaces and lost in the liminal.

Subsequently, their hybrid children, the four half-Irish protagonists, María de las Nieves, Ella, Cuca and el Gato, are born into what Gerry Smith calls “the grey area where established narratives of identity and authenticity come under pressure, where the things which we use to differentiate self from other, past from present, presence from absence, are tested” (144). Hence, I read their narratives as commencing during the second phase or intervening “liminal” period in which the characteristics of the subject are ambiguous. As liminal *personae* or “threshold people” they are necessarily ambiguous and elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space (Turner 95). Concordantly, I argue that each protagonist’s liminal state is conveyed in three ways; first, via the body as a site for liminality, second, by the indeterminate or in-between diaspora spaces they occupy geographically and lastly, by the way in which each slips in and out of the role of protagonist in their respective narratives. Throughout my analysis I once and again will reiterate Turner’s outlook on liminality as being, “of course, and ambiguous state...[which] may be for many the acme of insecurity, the breakthrough of chaos into cosmos, of disorder into order...the scene of disease, despair, death, suicide, the breakdown without compensatory replacement of normative, well-defined social ties and bonds. It may be *anomie*, alienation, *angst*...” (46). The lives of the diasporic Irish liminal parent figures unquestionably follow on courses commensurate to what Turner describes, passing from a state of pulsating stability to that of ghostly uncertainty. With this more elaborate understanding of liminality at the forefront of my readings, I contemplate the ways in which the hybrid Irish figures’ liminality is manifested and I emphasize their function in the creation of subsequent *borderlands*

or liminal spaces and question in what ways these spaces are ones of perpetual unease and imminent danger. Due to such observations these *borderlands* or liminal spaces can then be categorized as “dangerous terrain” where different combinations and displays of sexual and physical violence and a sense of helplessness, as well as identity manipulation and misappropriation, are ever-present (Anzaldúa 34-5). The subjective ambivalence of liminal spaces causes these subjects to be identified and identify themselves in various manners resonating with both Anzaldúa’s descriptions of *borderlands* inhabitants, “the mongrels, the mulattos, the half-breeds, the half dead” (25), as well as Turner’s concepts of *liminal personae*, “the betwixt and between” (95) who are alienated and reside in the shadows of death.

2.5 Diasporic Irish Liminal Bodies

The physical portrayal of each half-Irish liminal figure is symptomatic of the hardships of an individual caught in liminality. As Jorge Duany writes “under some circumstances, a group’s ‘physical’ characteristics (particularly physical appearance, including skin color, hair texture, and facial features) are construed as primordial and socially significant” (233). Just as the Irish were set apart by their English conquerors for their “apparent” physical and behavioral differences, each text here offers a half-Irish protagonist, the consequences of diaspora and products of hybridity, equally described with peculiarly distinct physical characteristics that distinguish and marginalize her/him from the surrounding ‘indigenous’ population. For instance, Goldman describes María de las Nieves as “damp-cinnamon-colored and skinny as a puppet made of hinged sticks, with...thin, straight, rust-streaked hair of Indio-Yankee

miscegenation [whose] swampy mud-hued eyes which, like those of an intelligent drunkard's, seemed always to be intensely staring outward, inward, and nowhere at the same time" (4). Her oddness is, in great part, the result of 'miscegenation' which the author elucidates through her opaque eyes that, like her hybrid identity, metaphorically capture in focus the external and internal yet are blurred and dizzied by the simultaneity and jumbled convergence of opposing imagery. Imbuing her with such abstract traits, Goldman highlights her physiology as a form of tangible in-betweenness, the embodiment of the interstice. This seems to create a paradox between her physical form and her name, "Mary of the White Snows" (18) or simply "Snows" as Wellesley Bludyar continually refers to her, because snow is a symbol of purity, of pure whiteness, yet Goldman represents her body as distorted and tainted. Despite such a seemingly bizarre appearance, María de las Nieves is seen as exotic and she is desired by several of the novel's male characters, among them renowned Cuban poet José Martí, Minister Gastreel, Wellesley Bludyar and Mack Chinchilla whom she eventually marries (456). Such a sizeable number of possible suitors can be read as an allusion to the promiscuousness we have found in other diasporic Irish women (i.e. Cuca's mother and O'Hara). María de las Nieves', nevertheless, is a peculiar case as she begins as a very "pure, innocent virgin" who then transforms remarkably throughout the course of the narrative. As a young girl she makes a pact with her best friend Paquita to protect their virginity: "You will remain a virgin until I no longer am one myself.' 'Sí, sí, claro, I promise'" (5). María de las Nieves keeps this pact for some time until she begins to regret her choice of abstinence. "She felt sure that their mutual vow of virginity, which her nun's martyrdom would make lifelong for both,

must be weighing terribly on her old companion. Then she would release her from it” (60). However, in ‘releasing’ her from it María also releases herself from her previously self-imposed confines which then allows for Maria de las Nieves to become pregnant and set in motion the histrionic mystery surrounding the unborn child’s paternity. The first and most likely candidate as father to María de las Nieves’ daughter, Malthide, is Martí despite his disdain for Irishmen like Moran, which echoes the age old English imperialist anti-Irish rhetoric. Once her pregnancy becomes readily noticeable her reputation is left in the mud as far as many of her peers are concerned (83) yet it does not dissuade any of the other pretenders. Minister Gastreel, while fetishizing her ‘Irishness’, is most disappointed when, “One day at the legation [he] had announced: “Today is Saint Patrick’s Day, Señorita Moran. Shouldn’t you be wearing a shamrock in your hat?” (122). Her reaction is one of “incomprehension”, resulting in an inability to externally manifest or reconnect with that half of her ethnic heritage which resides within her phantasmagorically. Slightly embarrassed by his presumption, Minister Gastreel “jovially replied, “Well, you are noticeably lacking in the Irish sentiment, Señorita Moran”” (122). What Minister Gastreel fails to comprehend is that she is also lacking a tangible and meaningful connection to her ‘Irishness’ because she is in the throes of liminality.

The penultimate on the list of would-be-lovers, First Secretary of the Foreign Office and co-worker Bludyar, flirtatiously refers to María de las Nieves as, “O Virgin of the Snows” of which “she thought, a pícaro, that Señor Bludyar. During their idle hours at the legation, she’d let herself converse too freely and vainly” (93), which again serves to hint at her excessively liberal sexual behavior. Later the reader

finds that María de las Nieves is able to wield her sexuality like “some incomprehensible and poisonously effective Latin female strategy for seducing poor Bludyar by slowly eroding his manliness and spirit so that he wouldn’t be able to regain his senses before she entrapped him forever...amid a domestic quagmire of half-breed offspring” (224). Yet he, like many of the other men in her life, is incapable of holding onto or sustaining a relationship with María de las Nieves whose name belies her sexuality, though he did once write to her “when it was many years too late” and later “died alone, in Norfolk” (413).

Mack, whom we have already noted as holding a palpable animosity towards the Irish, is further frustrated by María de las Nieves’ yearning to “find an Irish husband like my own papá” (311). Still the specter of her father motivates María de las Nieves’ impulse to join herself with an Irishman, which would symbolize a way of reclaiming her own Irish ancestry. However, her hybridity may hinder the fulfillment of this wish; “There is not one of them who will mistake you for a daughter of Erin, thought Mack jealously; they’ll be more likely to call you an African monkey. Though in the little upturned nose, the jaunty elasticity of her lips, and even the perky ears, he thought, one might divine a trace of Irish ancestry, if tipped off to it before” (311). The paradox of her Irish-hybridity is that she is, on the one hand, the object of sexual lusting and carnal possession yet, on the other, ‘miscegenated’ to the point that she cannot be strictly categorized as Irish or Guatemalan, therefore, too liminal to be totally accepted and ‘possessed’ by other individuals, those who would classify and fetishize her.

Eerily comparable to María de las Nieves is “Little Ella [who] was in truth like an alabaster baby. The poor little pickney even had blue eyes which mercifully changed to a more ordinary light brown as she grew. But the mouth and the skin and the hair didn’t change much at all” (Brodber 7). For Brodber’s protagonist these rarified and, at times, lamentable traits remain immutable signs of her Irish hybridity and even in her own eyes “the mirror was showing a clash, not a joining of cultures and there went...a telling blow to her faith in the intrinsic beauty in the meeting of unlikes” (15). The now fatherless “half black, half white child” (7) who was “tall and slim” with hair “a delicate shade of ginger” (10) embodies both internally and externally generated forces which “pull against each other to create a sense of social disorientation” (Walker-Johnson 49). Though Puri suggests that the novel includes an “affirmation of the productive powers of hybridity” (105), she also recognizes that “Ella is not-quite-black-enough for most blacks to be comfortable with her...[and] not-quite-white-enough” to fully enjoy the ‘privileges of whiteness’ (99). Here we must recall the negative connotations, like those associated with “miscegenation” and “half-breed,” that the term hybridity carries. Robert Young reminds us that during the colonial period of the British Empire “Both [language and sex] produced what were regarded as ‘hybrid’ forms (Creole, pidgin and miscegenated children), which were seen to embody threatening forms of perversion and degeneration and became the basis for endless metaphoric extension in the racial discourse of social commentary” (5). Hybridity, then, is readable as another element in the diasporic Irish experience which serves to further marginalize and vilify half-Irish individuals, casting them deeper into the liminal. However, her hybridity is in fact “productive” when

understood as a commodity. “With her hair and colour she could get far,” (Brodber 26) Mrs. Brassington observes while contemplating Ella’s enrolment in a predominantly Afro-Jamaican school. However, “She wasn’t bright. Definitely wasn’t bright. And was strange. More, people still didn’t know what to do with her” (26). In Anzaldúa’s terms, Ella is comparable to the “*mestiza*” because she “faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a darkskinned mother listen to?” (100). Despite being known as “the soft-skinned scattered-brained child” (20) Ella decides to use her strangeness and liminal state advantageously. Travelling to Baltimore on holiday, “Ella had trotted pass the immigration clerk...with nary a glance and come into the United States of America as white” (43). Shortly after she meets her love interest and future husband Selwyn Langley, an American “from a long line – long for America – of chemists, manufacturers of herbal medicines and today doctors and travelling medical lecturers” (42). It is he who “explained to her in simple terms that she was coloured, mulatto and what that meant” (43). What this meant, in clearer terms, was that as a liminal figure Ella was easily malleable to become whatever the external cultural and societal forces surrounding her wanted her to be and this allowed her to transform herself into what she believed could best serve her ambitions. Selwyn, for example, teaches her the skills of “powdering and plucking the eyebrows...straightening of the hair” and even “the habit of shaving her armpits” (43). So pliant is Ella that she also becomes even more taken by the idea of a heightened sense of ‘whiteness’ which she attempts to reclaim through her ‘Irishness’ by rewriting her own history³⁵; “Just one teeny little

³⁵ Evelyn O’Callaghan offers a feminist reading of this pivotal moment in Ella’s development as a literary figure in which she believes that it is Selwyn who “proceeds to rewrite her” (72) and not Ella

lie: her parents had come from Ireland, had succumbed to a tropical disease and she had been left by them” (43). In this exaggeratedly “Irish” version of her familial background and childhood, Ella not only writes out the ‘blackness’ of her Afro-Jamaican mother but also paradoxically erases her father who is presumably still alive somewhere in the world while reconstructing herself as completely Irish over his ‘not-so-dead-body’. The new ‘totally Irish’ version of Ella now complies with Selwyn’s fetishized vision of her and is so irresistible that he took “her innocence with her hymen in return for guidance through the confusing fair that was America” (43). In this Ella finds pleasure and the promise of a future with solidarity and security in the arms of a respectable man and so, “Ella was hooked and she liked the drug” (43).

Paradigmatically, María de las Nieves and Ella share several racialized features, such as their eyes, that reveal their strange corporeal compositions. Often thought of as ‘windows to the soul’, their eyes allow the reader instead to peer directly into their hybridity and observe the contentious meeting of ‘unlikes’ which are linked back to old stereotypes of the ‘dim-witted’ Irish. Also, their abnormal bodies have difficulties with the procreative process. As liminal entities they are phantasms, the half-dead, who struggle to reproduce life. María de las Nieves does mother several children, first Mathilde presumably fathered by Martí, but later sadly miscarries the unborn child of her husband Mack (Goldman 460). Ella is also impregnated by her husband, Selwyn, and as she “swells with a phantom pregnancy”

who actively rewrites herself. Though it is Selwyn who “wanted her to be full Irish girl” and equally “could make a story live”, Ella is the one whose “soul told her there was no harm in” creating a fantastic and distorted version of her past because “the truth could hardly make an appearance and embarrass anyone” (Brodber 43). Therefore, it would seem just as plausible to read Ella as much more complicit and active in the rewriting of herself than what O’Callaghan proposes.

which never comes to term, she “exhibits symptoms of ‘the divided self’” (O’Callaghan 72) that are demonstrated by the “long conversations between her selves” (Brodber 84) that she holds. Their physical hybridity is intensified by their liminality which ultimately limits the functionality of their bodies because of the indeterminate state into which they were born and cannot escape nor seem to overcome.

Valdés, in slight contrast, chooses to develop other physical features in Cuca Martínez that would set her apart³⁶. We find that her feet are like “tronco[s] de llanta” (25) which are planted under a “frágil cuerpo [de una] adolescente [que] parecía aún más delgada, endeble y enfermiza” (23). In reading Valdés’ novel, Aldona Bialowas Pobutsky believes that “if the corporeal surface is the door to subjectivity, then the author’s characters speak more via their uncontrollable bodies than through their actions” (112). Certainly this is the case for Cuca who “caminaba con un meneo, muy propio de su paciencia china y de su pasión dublinense contenida, que era un p’ aquí, p’ allá, de allá p’ acá que ponía duro al más blando” (62). In rhythm with the streets of La Havana, Cuca figuratively sashays along a fine line between her internal hybrid identity and an external Cuban identity which, like a metronome fixed on one meter, incessantly upholds the underlying beat of unchanging societal norms. Her hypersexualized body is indeed unique and Valdés elaborates upon her physical description while enhancing her libidous development: “Su aspecto físico se había desarrollado de manera sensacional... usaba talla treinta y seis de ajustador, lo que quería decir que poseía unas tetas al gusto de cualquier consumidor... la cintura era de

³⁶ Valdés in an interview has stated she is “disarmingly frank in her descriptions of the female body and female reproduction” (qtd. in Davies 215).

avispa, las caderas sobre lo anchitas, el fondillón parado como el de una negra, muslos duros y largos, piernas torneadas, tobillo fino. Pero pies grandes...” (61).

Cuca stands out so much so that on the night of her first outing to a dance club, at the age of sixteen, she meets “Juan Pérez, y [le] dicen Uan, por lo de *one* en inglés” (Valdés 48) who, for her, is indeed “*the One*.” Like María de la Nieves and Ella, Cuca is an object of sexual desire and also a desiring subject and after having Uan under her skin for eight years (86) she exclaims, “¡Al diablo la telita definitiva y definitiva, el himen destinado a la primera noche de matrimonio” (88). Once again, the female liminal Irish figure readily dismisses the traditional sexual conventions which would dictate how and why she is to use her body for intercourse and procreation. Madeline Cámara has also commented on the author’s employment of the female body:

“podemos afirmar que el cuerpo femenino erotizado y real en Zoé Valdés, está dotado de expresividad, de voz propia... desde la memoria de sus orificios, de sus fluidos, de sus más básicas y a la vez sublimes funciones como la de procrear otra vida” (72).

Having given herself unabatedly to Uan, “salió embarazada dos veces, y él pagó una fortuna por los abortos clandestinos” (91). On the third occasion she is able to bring her pregnancy to term and gives birth to her daughter, María Regla, despite previous opposition by Uan. In this way she has re-appropriated control over her sexualized body by consummating procreation and, at the same time, demonstrating the power to control her own destiny. However, this moment of self-assertion and felicity is fleeting just as Pobutsky notes that also, “Cuca’s attractiveness is surprisingly short-lived” and her physical decline proceeds with “horrificing velocity” (113). The toll for such fleeting liberty is paid for in full by the flesh of this hybrid Irish liminal figure.

Feminist theorist Mary Douglas has brought to light that “the unconventional physique becomes even more threatening to the community if it is besieged by maladies; its defining qualities intensify and threaten to spread onto the healthy sectors of society” (qtd. in Pobutsky 114)³⁷. Now infertile due to clandestine abortions and the subsequent removal of her ovaries, Cuca’s sterility and increasing ugliness have resulted in not only her decay and putrefaction but also her marginalization to the fringe of the community. Again, parallel to María de las Nieves and Ella, Cuca’s interminable existence in the liminal irrevocably disrupts the natural functionality of her body and she is prematurely perceived by society as “anciana” and a “vieja delincuente, escoria, rata de cloaca” (Valdés 177-78).

Lastly, we must examine the protagonist that Walsh has constructed and developed in *el Gato*, the only male protagonist within the paradigm of this study³⁸, as a liminal figure who exhibits a “rostro [que] era como un limón inmaduro espolvoreado de ceniza” (Walsh 87). As previously noted, *el Gato* is the product of the second mass wave of the Irish diaspora, an Irish-Argentine hybrid that has been long forgotten by his Argentine father and now discarded by his Irish mother. He is also an eleven-year-old teetering on the border between childhood and adolescence and his “manera de moverse extraña e inhumana” coupled with “un cuerpo sinuoso y evasivo” (87) underscore the physical attributes of a liminal figure. *El Gato*, in the same way as María de las Nieves, Ella and Cuca, is constructed on a miscegenated body that brings to the forefront his strangeness and alterity; “Pero lo que más impresionó a los que realmente se atrevieron a inspeccionarlo fue el largo, largo

³⁷ For more on Douglas’s theory on the body and communities see her work *Purity and Danger*.

³⁸ Though *el Gato* is the only male protagonist within this literary paradigm, his gender is of little or no consequence when contemplated as a hybrid diasporic Irish liminal figure.

cuello, y la forma en que se arrugaba cuando ladeaba de golpe al cabeza, y el espectro, el fantasma, la adivinada y odiosa sombra de un bigote gris. Era feo el Gato” (97). However, as a masculine liminal figure at an all-boys Irish Catholic school, the issues of sexual desirability or violence and promiscuity do not appear. In their place the author underscores physical violence and helplessness, which can be found just as easily in the sexual act, and an intensified sense of persistent peril and persecution, combined with his own liminal state, as the negative forces his protagonist must face³⁹. From the onset of the narrative el Gato perhaps displays the most readily readable signs of a liminal figure; “Era alto, y sin embargo podía parecer mucho más pequeño gracias a un solo movimiento, en apariencia, de la cintura y de los hombros, como si no tuviera huesos a pesar de su flacura. Todo esto resultaba inquietante y ofensivo” (88). The author intensifies the liminal aspects in el Gato’s physiology, his ability to stand out or quietly vanish, while at the same time exposing how ‘unsettling’ and ‘offensive’ his presence is. Yet, as María de las Nieves, Ella and Cuca are continually chased after by the men surrounding them and become the targets for sexual aggressions, el Gato is hunted like an animal of prey and eventually captured, cornered and beaten up by the same group of orphaned Irish boys who play the role of gatekeepers, interrogators and bullies in the Instituto Fahy; “tendido sobre el pasto...terriblemente golpeado como estaba...el alma del Gato estaba llagada y sellada para siempre” (116). Thus, for the female half-Irish figures their bodies represent oddness and the site of sexual violence and physical torment while for the

³⁹ Again Anzaldúa’s theoretical description of *borderlands* subjects finds resonance in these half-Irish figures. Though her observations are of “*La mojada, la mujer indocumentada*” (34) in the southwestern United States, the dialogical possibilities of her theories go beyond this particular group of Chicana women.

male half-Irish protagonist, his body is equally strange but provokes only physical violence and torment without a sexual component. This suggests that their Irishness, as well as their liminal figuredness, heavily outweighs issues of gender as the motivations for the dreadful treatment of which they are involuntary recipients.

2.6 Space of Perpetual Liminality

Having established the troublingly hybrid physical construction of each half-Irish protagonist's body and physical features, which emblemize their liminal existence through the physiological and convert them into vulnerable objects of physical and sexual violence, we now examine the geographic spaces they inhabit as having transformed from simply diaspora spaces to liminal zones of unending instability. In order to do so we must now read them under the terms and conditions of the final stage in the liminal process. The third and ultimate phase, "that of reaggregation or reincorporation, represents the consummation of the passage. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more...s/he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards" (Turner, 94). For the diasporic Irish parents studied here, their liminal journey began in diaspora and continues unresolved given that Moran is abruptly killed while O'Grady, Cuca's mother, and O'Hara all vanish as well from the narratives under unfavourable circumstances. This is to say, the reader is never witness to their consummation of the passage, but instead to their demise or decadence, or in Turner's words, liminality for them has become the scene of death or the breakdown of social ties and bonds (46). Hence, in great part because these Irish

parents are written paradigmatically into the liminal as phantasmagorical diasporic figures, they pass down to their half-Irish offspring an interstitial Irishness which hinders the completion of the liminal process. This type of unresolved liminality was first observed by Arpad Szakolczai who introduced the concept of “permanent liminality” (219). According to Szakolczai, this concept is inherently paradoxical, if not a contradiction in terms because liminality is defined by Turner as a temporary situation. However, he also proposes that liminality can become a “permanent condition when any one of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame” (220). As I argue, the narratives under analysis here become “stuck” in the third stage and offer no true reaggregation or reincorporation for the half-Irish figure (much less for their Irish parents). As well, I have chosen to substitute the word ‘perpetual’ in place of Szakolczai’s use of ‘permanent’. This differentiation may seem miniscule, however, in the place of ‘permanent’, which implies a state of ‘solidification’ or ‘petrification’ like an old tree no longer capable of growth or movement, I give preference to the term ‘perpetual’ which implies some form of movement or a state which is ‘perpetuated’ by ongoing actions. A more appropriate analogy we may find in science fiction. Many sci-fi comics, television series and films over the years have dealt with the concept of *time dilation*, an observable phenomenon in which time elapses at a different rate as measured and perceived by observers moving relative to each other or from different positions relative to a gravitational mass or masses. In popular media the concept is much easier to grasp for the non-scientific and is best demonstrated through a simple example: a spaceship full of explorers from earth arrives to an alien planet in a distant

solar system. However, because this strange world is smaller than Earth, revolves faster and around a much larger star and therefore is exposed to higher forces of gravity, the observers aboard the spaceship perceive the on-goings of the planet below as passing at a rate so slow that they almost appear to be frozen in time. Thus, the interactions of the aliens on the surface or even the growth of indigenous plant life are seen as occurring not in freeze frame, but in a frame-by-frame progression. As readers and assessors of subjects in liminality, like the astronauts in orbit above this planet crawling through time, we are able to witness the events in the lives of liminal individuals as if they were caught in a time dilation field, a place where time does not halt but slows almost to the point of motionlessness. Thus, the external (and often internal) forces that continuously drive the liminal state are dynamic and at constant play and never stagnant nor inanimate, hence they must be understood and observed accordingly.

Róisín O’Gorman notes that “the liminal then holds a promise of growth, change, and possibilities that can come into actuality” (103); however, for each of these four half-Irish protagonists the liminal process is necessarily frustrated before its consummation, in large part due to their geographic instability. At this pivotal stage Turner points out that “the passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas...On the other hand, the spatial passage may involve a long, exacting pilgrimage and the crossing of many national frontiers before the subject reaches [her]/his goal” (25). Turner’s reference to

the pilgrimage of a liminal figure is clearly demonstrated in María de las Nieves' constant geographic dislocations. As an infant she is brought from Amatitlán to Mazatenango and then into the mountains in her father's attempt to escape his past misdeeds. Then, shortly after her father's death and while in the care of "the black servant from British Honduras, Lucy Turner, and her mother, "the young Indian woman Sarita Coyoy" (19), she is adopted by Juan Aparicio, a white coffee farm owner, and his family. After just two years in her new adoptive home, she is then sent away to the Convent School of Nuestra Señora de Belén in the capital city. Never entrenched, María de las Nieves continues traversing spaces and later immigrates as an adolescent to New York, perhaps chasing after the ghost of her father whom she can only vaguely recall or even unconsciously attempt to retrace his diasporic steps. These events heighten the sense of elusiveness surrounding her and moreover, as is "typical of Goldman, there are mysteries to solve" in his writings that her wanderings implicate. One such mystery here is the paternity of María de las Nieves's daughter (Bach, 19). Yet, like her liminal status, this mystery is never explicitly (re)solved and as the author himself points out, "María de las Nieves ends up being quite proud of the fact that the question follows her everywhere for the rest of her life" (qtd. in Allen 79). Subsequently María de las Nieves moves to a farmstead in Brooklyn with Mack, then two years later relocates with him to Wagnum, Massachusetts (456). This location, her final destination in the narrative, is quite appropriate for a half-Irish liminal figure as it "resembled a forsaken old English village in a haunted forest...[which] still seemed a castigated place of shame and poverty" (457). It would

seem fitting, then, that her story would come to a ‘close’ (Goldman never overtly ‘ends’ her story) in an infamous space of scarcity occupied by other phantasms.

In Ella’s case, bi-racial status is a point of constant tension which forces her to be adopted by the creole priest Reverend William Brassington and his wife, Maydene, a “well-meaning but obtuse white woman” (Khair 122) and moved from Morant Bay to the village of Grove Town as a young girl. Despite moving to a less populated area, the village as a whole, including her peers, has marginalized her, demonstrating that she has yet to find a place of acceptance and solidarity. Still in her adolescence, Ella travels on holiday to America, and as previously discussed, marries Selwyn Langley and moves to Baltimore. Sadly, her husband soon grows tired of his plaything, their marriage fails, her pregnancy begins to go awry and she once again finds herself sickly and listless back in Jamaica. Now having returned pregnant and ‘zombified’ to the village of Grovetown, Ella undergoes a myalist⁴⁰ ritual in which she “gives birth to a white, still doll, flesh without will” thus exorcising its “zombifying properties” (Puri 109) and, perhaps, a demonized version of ‘Irishness’, an ‘Irishness’ created with her deceitful ambition, from her body. However, though this ritual was intended to do away with the forces that had severed Ella’s link to her community and her indigenous self, in giving voice to “the half [that] has never been told” (41) she loses her other half, her Irish half and therefore remains fragmented and incomplete. Although Michelene Adams perceives in Ella a syncretism which “essentially signifies unification and reconciliation” (172), in fact, she has seemingly been

⁴⁰ Myalism, as explained by Monica Shuler, is the “first documented Jamaican religion cast in the ‘classical’ African mold” and initially was used by Jamaicans to protect themselves from “European sorcery” (66). Practiced by the community, it is a socially oriented ritual which battles against the spiritual emptiness of individuals such as Ella who are caught in liminality.

transformed into a hollow vessel; “With her hymen and a couple of months of marriage gone, there was a clean, clear passage from Ella’s head through her middle and right down the outside” (Brodber 80). Hence her ‘zombification’, what Reverend Simpson explains to Ella as having the knowledge of her original and natural world taken away from her and left an empty shell. She has been made into one of the “duppies, zombies, living deads only capable of receiving orders from someone else and carrying them out” (107). Despite this we later are informed that, “She had studied. She had gone to far places... [before she] came back to Grove Town” for the last time (96). Much earlier in the narrative, Ella, in an internal dialogue with herself, first explores her own reality as she ponders the word ‘cusp’; “Her personal word. She said it under her breath. “Cusp”. “Cusp” was a word that delighted her from the day they met. “A point where two curves meet,” the dictionary had said...The meeting of two disparate points” (13). Collette Maximin believes that Brodber “lays emphasis not on distinctiveness as fixed identity but on distinction as a social process” (58), yet, once Ella’s narrative has played out she is never able to reach the ‘cusp,’ a place where her two halves could meet in equality and harmony while coexisting in a space without the looming shadows of her hybridity and diasporic Irish liminality.

Cuca at the age of fifteen must leave her birthplace, “Santa Clara, ciudad de la antigua provincia de Las Villas, hoy Villa Clara⁴¹,” (13) to go to La Habana and is left in the care of “la madrina negra, María Andrea” (15) where she rooms with “la Mechunga y la Pechunga,” who, though fond of men and women equally, constantly “engage in full-blown lesbian coupling” (Pobutsky, 112) in her presence. Though she is already in a seemingly chaotic environment, Cuca is nonetheless portrayed as a

⁴¹ It is noteworthy that even the original name of the province of her origin has also changed.

disruptive force upon her arrival to this new home in La Habana, a scene which Valdés describes humorously:

--¿Quién se tiró ese peo, tú?

--¡Yo no fui, tú! –exclamó protestona la Mechunguita toda despeinada, con la pasa planchá de jabá alborotada. Al fin repararon en la Niña Cuca...

--¿Y de dónde sacaron a la cara de culo esta, tú?

--¿Y yo qué sé, tú? ¿El peo ese fue tuyo?

Cuquita asintió, aún más miedosa, imaginándose violada por las dos tortilleras, digo, bisexuales.” (22)

Cuca’s upsetting presence is symbolized by an act of flatulence and the declamatory dialogue that follows. In the words of Peter Burke and Jan Stets in their book *Identity Theory*, “We must learn the identity of the others with whom we would interact. They must be labeled symbolically [named] and thus given an identity. We, too, must be identified or have an identity” (13). Most interestingly this interchange identifies Cuca with an unpleasant orificial expulsion, a fart, a phenomenon which can or not be audible, pungent or scentless, tangible yet invisible. Valdés, in this instance, does not hesitate to equate the abject with the liminal and again uses bodily functions to add another layer to her half-Irish protagonist’s figure. Uprooted and semi-vacant, as discussed earlier, Cuca seeks refuge in the arms of Uan, a seductive older man who impregnates then abandons her. Alone again, Cuca drifts back and forth between Santa Clara and La Habana, and begins to erode in her liminal status, prematurely becoming “vieja, desdentada y fea” (Valdés 14). We see here that her story is one of

steady decay, a withering away due to a prolonged presence in the liminal from which she cannot find an exit.

The space el Gato inhabits, the Instituto Fahy, “cale en las zonas más pesadillescas de la violencia” (Lago, 61) and serves as a contentious liminal zone for “...la gente de su raza, a la que su padre no pertenecía, y de la que su madre no era más que una hebra descartada (Walsh, 89). El Gato’s arrival is also quite liminal; “En realidad, allí no tenía nada que hacer, porque era a fines de abril y las clases habían estado funcionando un mes entero” (87). Just as his story begins in the second phase of liminality, so does his presence at the Instituto Fahy, a space distinguished by its “paredes terribles, trepadoras y vertiginosas” (89), where he is seemingly dropped into a system that had already begun without him. In fact, Walsh highlights its interstitial aspects with the repetitive use of the color ‘grey’, undoubtedly a symbol of the liminal given that it is the half mixture of black and white or, in other words, the clash of pure light and absolute darkness. As well, the vast space of the courtyard where we first meet el Gato is covered in “la penumbra⁴²” and “la propia naturaleza oculta del recién venido, lo impulsaba a permanecer distante y camuflado, con su cara gris y su guardapolvo gris” (87). However, as with the other three protagonists, his residence in this particular space is ineludibly finite because he will supposedly finish his classes and graduate one day. However, as I shall demonstrate, there is not to be the promise of a place of permanence outside the liminal waiting for him beyond the walls of the Instituto Fahy and the insularity of the Irish community in Argentina⁴³.

⁴² ‘Penumbra’ defined by the DRAE as, “Sombra débil entre la luz y la oscuridad”.

⁴³ In the following chapter I will expand my readings of the “Irish series” to include “Los oficios terrestres” and “Un oscuro día de justicia” as well as the unfinished fourth story in the series “Mi tío

In sum, each half-Irish protagonist is unable to find reaggregation or reincorporation because they are all trapped in spaces of perpetual liminality. Though they may move and shift in search of a place of stability and permanence, none can find the way in which to perform a final and definitive act that would consummate their journey over a threshold and through to the completion of the liminal process. In a sense, each has become caught in a space-time which has caused them to painfully lag in the liminal. As the first generation of diasporic Irish hybrids, these liminal figures have also lost one of the essential characteristics of diasporic peoples that Safran and Cohen underline; the retention of a collective memory, vision or myth of their original homeland. Another word often used to describe this diasporic element is 'nostalgia'. In the place of a romanticized nostalgic return to the 'old country', these diasporic Irish liminal figures remain in the unending and unachievable struggle to incorporate themselves as members of their host communities.

2.7 Narrative Liminality

Klapcsik's theoretical understanding of narrative liminality is based on the premise that there is a constant oscillation between narrative perspectives, focal points and styles, to name a few. What he seems most concerned with is the hesitation or inability of the reader to choose between competing narrative perspectives in works that present these types of disorienting voices and registers. Each text under study here also features multiple moments in which the narrative voice and/or perspective decenters the focus from the diasporic hybrid Irish liminal figures as

Willy, que ganó la guerra". I will offer a more in depth analysis of many of the elements being discussed here, in particular Walsh's recurrent use of the color 'grey'.

protagonists and explores the events in the lives of characters that would remain as merely secondary without these ‘refocusings’ in the narrative. Yet, while Klapcsik interprets “this ironic oscillation in the reading process [as] a foremost element...of liminality” (21), I contend that narrative liminality can also be found in the narrative act of ebbing the diasporic Irish liminal figure into a supporting role or even completely shunning them at times, then suddenly having them resurface to the frontlines of the narrative. Cheryl Herr argues that, “most writers on Ireland sooner or later put forward one trait that they see as definitive of the “Irish mind” or the “Celtic consciousness... a fatal divisiveness and “emotional oscillation,” a “split-mindedness” that becomes a genius for “dispersion and disconnexion” (6). This is to say that, when read under the terms of narrative liminality, each figure becomes even more emblematic of the flickering and half-dead attributes which define liminal entities because of their vacillating roles and disconnections from the main narrative over the breadth of the plot. Therefore, I assert that these liminal Irish figures often appear as specters, nebulous entities which can be seen intermittently but never apprehended.

As previously noted in this chapter, Goldman’s novel can be considered an epic, almost exhaustive, due to its substantial length and the abundance of minute details the author provides. Over the course of eight chapters and an epilogue, which total 465 pages, the author goes as far as to divide these chapters in smaller sections that do little to make the novel more digestible.⁴⁴ Thus, when Goldman nuances almost every character that appears in the narrative, he necessarily neglects María de la Nieves for long periods of the story. With that, it should not surprise the reader that

⁴⁴ For example, the first chapter has 18 such mini-sections while the final chapter a comparably modest 5.

Goldman pays great attention to Martí and María de las Nieves's other male suitors as well as to her life-long friend Paquita and, in doing so, the reader can be confused at times as to which character the narrative voice is focused on. One such instance is found in the epilogue, a superfluous chapter which demonstrates an incapacity on Goldman's part to definitively finish the novel. While the author attempts to bring to a close the stories of so many characters at once, the reader can become easily dizzied between the overlapping events in the lives of María de las Nieves, Mathilde, Paquita, Martí and Mack Chinchilla, all of whose narratives culminate in less than fifteen pages. One interpretation of this example of narrative liminality suggests that it is María de las Nieves' hybrid and diasporic liminal 'Irishness' which has bumped her out of focus and the protagonist's role at various points in the novel. The reader, like many of the men who chase after María de las Nieves, is constantly challenged by the oscillation in narrative perspective and therefore is frustrated in any attempt to lock in on her as the singular stand-out figure in the novel⁴⁵. Another possible reading would suggest that the author has been overambitious in this project and his absence of restraint has only served to negatively confound the narrative and befuddle his readership.

Over the course of *Myal*, Brodber also disorients the narrative perspective from Ella as the protagonist by shifting her in and out of the narrative. For instance, although the novel begins with a detailed and colorful description of Ella, she is notably absent from chapters 4, 5 and 6. For these three chapters the author develops characters like Maydene Brassington who cares for Ella and the former "district

⁴⁵ As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, Goldman claims to have based his novel on Martí's poem "La niña de Guatemala", however he has titled it *The Divine Husband*, which again implies that María de las Nieves may not be the central character in the narrative.

constable...[and] incorruptible” practitioner of obeah Mass Levi (31). As well, Ella appears as a mere shadow throughout chapters 10 and 11, in which she is only mentioned in absentia. These moments of narrative liminality in the case of Ella reinforce the claims of scholars like Puri and Tabish Khair who both argue against reading *Myal* as a Bildungsroman. Puri states, “as a story of education and coming to consciousness, the novel functions at least partly in the tradition of the Bildungsroman. However, it does not proceed in the linear fashion of the traditional Bildungsroman” (99). Khair echoes this point when he cautions that, “there are other, deeper, problems with considering *Myal* a Bildungsroman [...] [because it] does not display a basic characteristic of the European Bildungsroman: a centred, individual character whom the narrative follows all the way through from point one to the end page” (122). With modest radicality I suggest that it is narrative liminality, bolstered by Ella’s own hybrid and diasporic liminal ‘Irishness’, which sees her slip through cracks in the narrative and prevents her from being read as the singular protagonist from beginning to end. Although the novel ends with an optimistic outcome for Ella, after having overcome her ‘illness’ and ‘zombified state’, a concept “she was [still] grappling with” (108), she then becomes “Miss Ella, the new female school teacher...This time her staring had a clearer pattern” (96) [...] “She stepped out into the dark cold. She had to finish her scheme” (107). Nonetheless, we are never witness to the finality of her ‘scheme’, nor to her liminality, but instead to another one of her steps in the ‘dark cold’ of the liminal.

In *Te di la vida entera* Valdés plays with a multilayered narrative voice, that of “el mismísimo cadaver de María Regla Pérez Martínez,” that is, Cuca’s daughter

(344) which speaks out from the dwindling world of the dead. Turner here would remind us that liminality as well “may be the interstitial domain of domestic witchcraft, the hostile dead, and the vengeful spirits of strangers” (46)⁴⁶. As such, the reader is confronted by confusion while attempting to center in on Cuca as a protagonist because, in short, she is but a ghost in a ghost story told by another ghost of which the fictional narrative voice, who also identifies herself as *Habanera*, reminds us coldly that, “yo sólo transcribo el dictado de un cadáver” (280). This narrative structure dominates the novel except for the fifth chapter, which is narrated by Uan while living in New York. Not only does this particular chapter represent a jarring shift in the narrative voice but also in the geographic perspective of the novel from Cuba to the U.S. Just as with María de las Nieves and Ella, the ability to read Cuca as the sole protagonist comes into question due to these narratively liminal moments in the novel. Although scholars like Lea Ramsdell have asserted that Valdés “resorts to the bolero...to structure her novel and the development of her main character” precisely because Cuca’s life “mirrors the heart wrenching scenarios contained in many boleros” (116), she overlooks these moments of narrative liminality that impede such a clear-cut approach to the text. In writing of Cuca and her daughter as decaying corpses or ghostly entities who reside in the limbo between the living and the dead, this perspective that Valdés offers from the beyond through the voice of Cuca’s dead daughter necessarily reiterates these phantasmagoric traits which produce an undeniable sense of narrative liminality.

⁴⁶ Turner bases this observation “in tribal, etc., society” (46). There is an openness found in much of his theoretical work, here so in the use of “etc.,” which allows for multiple interpretations. In the same, though he refers to “vengeful spirits of strangers” we can, in the case of Cuca and her daughter, substitute ‘stranger’ for ‘kin’.

As has been the case throughout this chapter, Walsh's short story "Irlandeses detrás de un gato" and its protagonist el Gato have stretched the paradigm I seek to establish among these texts when read for the diasporic liminal 'Irishness' in each literary Irish figure. Despite the fact that el Gato is the only male hybrid Irish protagonist in my study it has still been possible to establish a dialogue between his representations and the other female hybrid Irish protagonists under review. Nonetheless, in order to comprehend the narrative liminality found in Walsh's writings we must expand our readings to include the 'complete Irish series', which continues in "Los oficios terrestres," then ends with "Un oscuro día de justicia"⁴⁷. However, I take on this task in the following chapter in which I offer my readings and observations of the 'Irish series' as a whole. It suffices for the moment to put forward the idea that Walsh's 'Irish series' does in fact vacillate in its focus on el Gato to explore events in the lives of other Irish-Argentine boys at the Instituto Fahy, which places el Gato next to the reader in the role of observer and not protagonist. In the next chapter, I too shift my focus from the four texts studied here and take a more narrowed aim at the phenomenon that is the Irish diaspora in Argentina as a liminal community.

⁴⁷ Often referred to erroneously as "El ciclo de los irlandeses", this body of work is not a 'cycle' of stories at all because it never comes 'full circle' due to the author's unscrupulous murder by the Military Junta. In fact, before his death Walsh was quoted in an interview as saying, "yo calculo a muy grosso modo que la historia puede crecer, pero yo no quiero darle un crecimiento infinito. Es probable que la historia final la integren seis o siete historias que constituyan una novela hecha por cuentos" (12). Although the series was never finished in the author's eyes, we as readers only have these three complete stories as components to a larger, unfinished conglomerate novel.

Chapter 3

3.1 The Disruptive Community

On March 3rd, 2015, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (*An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála*) issued the country's official 'global diaspora policy.' At last, in 2015, receive "the first clear statement of Government of Ireland policy on the diaspora which recognises that Ireland has a unique and important relationship with its diaspora that must be nurtured and developed" (4). In this document the Irish government outlines its strategies to "recognise," "connect with" and "support" as well as "facilitate engagement with" the Irish diaspora (5). While attempting to define "Who are the Irish diaspora" (16), the government claims that "some estimate that the Irish diaspora may total as many as 70 million people. There is no clear evidence to support this figure, but it certainly runs into the tens of millions" (16). As is well known, the highest concentration of the Irish diaspora can be found in the United States where an estimated "35 million claim a degree of Irish heritage," and yet, "other Irish communities are to be found all over the world, diverse in their size and composition, from some 7,000 first-generation Irish in the United Arab Emirates to more than 500,000 people of Irish descent in Argentina" (17). Patrick McKenna, in his article "Irish migration to Argentina," attests that "the first Irish to set foot on what was to become Argentina were probably the three Galwaymen who were part of the crew on Magellan's voyage to discover a route to the Pacific...in 1520" (63). As discussed in chapter I, the next few centuries saw the Irish migrate both voluntarily, mostly in search of employment, or as indentured

servants, which was the direct result of the English subjugation of Ireland and its people. However, in Spanish America the Irish were often able to elude English oppression, much in thanks to the Bourbon kings of Spain: in 1785 they recruited to Buenos Aires one hundred Irish butchers and tanners because of their renowned skills in the trade, where they are claimed to have begun the meat industry (McKenna 66-67). At the beginning of the 19th century, and after the failed British invasion of the river Plate basin in 1806-7 in which a large portion of the troops involved happened to be Irish conscripts,⁴⁸ some 200 Irish immigrants were recruited as skilled laborers to be employed in public works and arrived to what was then the new town of Belgrano, located just outside the city of Buenos Aires (69). Nevertheless, it was not until the fifty-year period between 1825 and 1875, years that also encompassed the Great Famine in Ireland, that the Irish migrated in substantial numbers. Yet, the exact number of Irish who immigrated to Argentina remains disputed. McKenna contends that “the generally accepted figure is 30,000.⁴⁹ Its source is a letter from Fr Fahy⁵⁰ to the Archbishop of Dublin in 1864... a figure which includes the Argentine-born children of the migrants and would exclude all out-migration, deaths and those (admittedly few) who were outside his congregation” (80). Although this number may not be precise, the now 500,000 or more Irish descendants as recognized today by the

⁴⁸ McKenna informs us that a sizeable portion of these soldiers “either deserted or were captured upon arrival to Buenos Aires” and that many “were to live in the negro areas of San Telmo” (69). In the following chapter, I will discuss in greater depth the role of the diasporic Irish as military figures, especially in Mexico.

⁴⁹ Ema Wolf and Cristina Patriarca claim that there were only 20,000 Irish in Argentina by the end of the 19th century (105). Despite this discrepancy, it is safe to assume that the Irish diaspora community in Argentina was by all accounts large and steadily increasing.

⁵⁰ Father Anthony Dominic Fahy (1805-1871) was an Irish Dominican missionary/priest and leader of the Irish community in Argentina from 1844 until his death. The school that Walsh’s protagonist attends, the semi-fictional version of the institute in which the author himself was enrolled for several years and still stands to this day, is named in his honor.

Irish government are a testament to the vitality of the Irish diaspora in Argentina⁵¹. The presence of such a large and storied Irish community in the diaspora space of Argentina suggests the existence of either a distinct Irish cultural imaginary in Argentina, a hyphenated Irish-Argentine identity and imaginary or perhaps both. This brings forth several questions: How do these individuals define and represent themselves and their community? What does their ‘Irishness’ mean in terms of their Argentininess? Most importantly, what do transamerican liminal readings reveal in the narratives of these Irish-Argentine individuals and their diaspora community?

Another way to frame my question is put forward by one of Ireland’s most celebrated writers, James Joyce. In his short story “Eveline,” tells the tale of Frank, a “kind, manly, open-hearted” Irishman who has returned on holiday to the old country from Buenos Aires where he has emigrated and “fallen on his feet” (32). During his brief visit Frank falls in love with the young Dubliner Eveline whom he plans to marry and whisk away to Argentina where “he had a home waiting for her” (31). Nonetheless, at the moment when she is to board the “night-boat” (31) bound for South America with Frank, “a bell clanged upon her heart,” (34) leaving her paralyzed by fear of the unknown. Thus, Eveline proves to be incapable of abandoning her family and homeland, so Frank returns to Buenos Aires alone. The story that Joyce does not tell is that of the experiences of Frank, and the many diasporic Irish like him or their descendants, as they sought to establish a new Irish diaspora community in Argentina. Now, who is to tell us the ‘disruptive’ stories of

⁵¹ Another factor which may have permitted and encouraged Irish emigration to Argentina is found in the nation’s 1853 Constitution in article 25 which states, “El Gobierno federal fomentará la inmigración europea; y no podrá restringir, limitar ni gravar con impuesto alguno la entrada en el territorio argentino de los extranjeros que traigan por objeto laborar la tierra, mejorar las industrias, e introducir y enseñar las ciencias y las artes” (271).

the Irish diaspora community in Argentina that Joyce did not? David Spurr, in his forward to *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses* believes that the book's author Jorge Edmundo Murray does so "with clarity, historical mastery, an eye for detail and an ear for anecdote... [by having] written the definitive account of Irish-Argentine literature" (ix). Although Murray's work is quite comprehensive and eloquent, it is, in his own words, "a discussion about the literature in Argentina" (xi), unlike Joyce's *Dubliners* which is a masterpiece of fictional short stories. What is more, Murray is a literary critic and academe, not a creative writer like Joyce who was almost exclusively dedicated to producing creative fiction. Therefore, in order to explore the stories that Joyce did not leave us, it may be more congruent and fruitful to explore texts written by other authors with proposals more similar to that of Joyce. In this way we may discover the stories by Irish-Argentine authors that they have imaginatively penned about the diasporic Irish in Argentina. For these narratives I look to Rodolfo Walsh's collection of three short stories posthumously titled *Los irlandeses*⁵² and Juan José Delaney's (1954-) novel *Moira Sullivan*. Both are Argentine-born authors of Irish heritage who each pull from personal experiences and intimate images to portray the Irish diaspora community in Argentina through their fiction. Yet, how do we first read these narratives? Or more immediately, how have these narratives been read thus far by scholars and critics?

⁵² The three short stories in the series were published separately and not as a single work until years after Walsh's tragic 'disappearance' on March 25, 1977. They were originally published as follows: "Irlandeses detrás de un gato" in *Los oficios terrestres* (1965), "Los oficios terrestres" in *Un kilo de oro* (1967), and "Un oscuro día de justicia" in its own edition in 1973. The fourth and unfinished story in the series, "Mi tío Willy, que ganó la guerra", is available as a typed transcript in *Ese hombre y otros papeles personales*, pgs. 229-238. Walsh's untimely demise truncated what was to be for the author in his own words, "[una] historia final [que] la constituyan seis o siete historias que constituyan una novedad hecha por cuentos, todos episodios transcurridos en un año hasta el último día en el colegio" (59).

As discussed in the previous chapter, Rodolfo Walsh's "Irish series" has been utterly under-read from an 'Irish perspective'. Even though many serious writers and critics have offered reflections and commentaries on his body of work, preferring to fixate on his standout nonfiction novel of investigative journalism and personal perilous militant acts, there remains a void in scholarship from the lack of attention given to Walsh's strong and tangible connection to his Irish roots. The case of Juan José Delaney is much simpler than that of Walsh; Delaney remains a severely under-read author to date in spite of his own attempts to disseminate his literature.⁵³ One of the few serious scholars to give any measure of attention to his body of work thus far has been Zuntini de Izarra, who writes, "Delaney transcends the theme of geographic dislocations and explores the inner human conflicts that arise not only out of the duality of the self but mainly out of the encounter of two cultures producing an art of his own or "cross-border writing" where reality, diaspora history and fiction are in constant tension" (1). Delaney, like Walsh, has produced texts which detail simultaneously the inner and outer tensions of a community caught in the interstice between two cultures. In my approach to the selected works by Walsh and Delaney, I believe it is crucial not only to keep each author's 'Irishness' at the forefront of my readings but also to make use of current theorizations of the concept of communities and their relevance to the Irish diaspora. Before I delve into these texts in search of what they may tell us about the Irish diaspora community in Argentina, I shall first offer my readings and discussion of Delaney's novel *Moirá Sullivan* (1999) within

⁵³ The clearest example of Delaney's desire to publicize his work is the self-titled webpage juanjosedelaney.com.ar in which he offers biographical information along with personal photographs and reviews of some of his texts in both English and Spanish.

the framework of the liminal process and, like the four hybrid Irish figures in chapter II, the three ways in which the eponymous protagonist's liminal state is conveyed.

3.2 Moira Sullivan as Diasporic and Liminal

Moira Sullivan, Delaney's first novel, tells the story of an Irish-American silent film script-writer whose life began in "Pottsville (querida y pequeña ciudad de la estadounidense Pennsylvania)" (12) before she left her family behind and moved to New York where "se había empeñado en aclarar a sus amigos neoyorquinos que su familia jamás había integrado la sociedad secreta de los Molly Maguires, mafia irlandesa que desde la ilegalidad procuró controlar el negocio minero en Pennsylvania" (13). Though clearly not entangled with one of the most unpleasant of Irish diaspora groups, her family history is not unlike that of many Irish sojourners of the mid-nineteenth century: "Empujados por la Gran Hambruna, sus abuelos habían llegado de Irlanda al promediar el siglo XIX. Sus padres –Moira O'Rourke y Frank⁵⁴ Sullivan (originalmente O'Sullivan, pero con tiempo la "o" cayó como a ella se le habían ido cayendo dientes y cabellos)" (13). Much like the four hybrid Irish figures discussed in the previous chapter, Moira, too, has been shaped by the wayward and flickering⁵⁵ nature of her Irish parentage; "El papel de la escandalizada niña frente a

⁵⁴ Curiously, Delaney introduces an amount of possible intertextuality with the use of the name "Frank." The allusion here would be to the character of the same name in Joyce's short story titled *Eveline* whom we have already discussed. One distinguishing attribute of Joyce's 'Frank' that Delaney replicates in his own is that he was "elegante...había sido un *self-made man*" (13). This subtle reference suggests on one hand the undeniable presence of Buenos Aires in the Irish literary imaginary at the turn of the century and on the other the seemingly boundless influence of one of Ireland's foremost thinkers and writers on "Irishness."

⁵⁵ As in the case of Delaney, I, too, borrow cautiously and respectfully from the writings of James Joyce. Throughout this project I use his phrases, "grey [and] impalpable" and "wayward and flickering" which appear in his short story "The Dead" (see *Dubliners*) at a moment in the narrative in which Joyce, via his protagonist Gabriel, is contemplating metaphorically 'Irishness' as something

la madre adúltera prematuramente estropeada por el tiempo no fue un mero accidente en su vida” (17). Once again, the infidelity of the Irish mother creates a rift in the nuclear family filled with silence. Strikingly similar to Cuca, Moira has also been left longing for her mother’s affection after this definitive “ruptura con su familia” (19) which has now transformed her link to her ‘Irishness’ into something grey and impalpable: “Precisamente ahora le volvía a la mente una vieja canción irlandesa que solía cantarle la madre. Ya no recordaba las palabras. Qué raro. No recordaba las palabras” (21). Without the immediate bond to her Irish parents, her mother estranged and her father like a “viejo y sabio búho que cuanto más ve y escuchaba, menos habla” (14), Moira starts to show the signs of listlessness and the memories of her Irish upbringing fade as she begins to flounder in uncharted seas, initiating the liminal process. This distinguishes Moira from the other hybrid Irish liminal figures because they all were born into a state of liminality as hybrid Irish figures, the liminal process having already begun, while it would seem that Moira, who falls under the hyphenated ethnic category of Irish-American, commenced the process on her own.

In Moira’s state as a liminal subject, we are able to observe the ways in which her body becomes the site for liminality. Most notable throughout this study have been the eyes of each hybrid Irish liminal figure that serve as ‘racialized’ Irish features. For María de las Nieves they are described as “mud-hued” and like those of a drunkard “staring outward, inward, and nowhere at the same time” (4). In the case of Ella they changed from a light blue “mercifully to a more ordinary brown” (7).

inapprehensible because “the solid world itself... was dissolving and dwindling” (224), which alludes to its phantasmagoric nature. Indeed, my nascent theory of “fringe figures” and observations on Walsh’s use of the color ‘grey’ owe much to Joyce’s approaches to and reflections on the Irish and Irish identity.

These particular details, however, differentiate them both from Moira, who is not the product of hybridity and is described as "pelirroja, blanca y de textura regular, dueña de unos profundos ojos azules que siempre trataban de espiar detrás del telón de la vida" (44). It is quite interesting that Delaney and Goldman both use the eyes symbolically to express the ostensibly shared impulse of these Irish fringe figures, hybrid or not, to scrutinize their surroundings, staring at everything and nothing simultaneously or using them in an attempt to 'peer behind the curtain of life'. Under distinct conditions to those of María de las Nieves, Ella and Cuca, Moira as well falls in love with a man, the German immigrant Konrad Storm, whose surname is representative of the tumultuous life he led, which in turn, meant a premature death "que los separó antes de que pudieran conocerse totalmente" (26).

Unlike the creators of the other hybrid Irish daughter figures, Delaney offers the scene of her deflowering in a slightly more romanticized manner: "Una lámpara enferma iluminaba los preliminares del acto. Era virgen y la conmovió no la visión del cuerpo desnudo de quien amaba sino la sucinta e inesperada revelación de que también él lo era" (26). In contrast to María de las Nieves, Ella, Cuca, or even el Gato, Moira's body is not one spawn from miscegenation with an inferred sense of insecurity, nor is she in the grasp of a domineering man who seeks but to sculpt her with his will and stake claim upon her with his phallus. Rather, because of her hyphenated and not hybrid identity, she is able to remain on par with her male counterparts and experience fully reciprocal love, a positioning and sensation that eludes the other hybrid Irish figures, most likely because of their faintly heightened fringe identities and liminal status.

At the genesis of their fringe existence, liminal figures like Moira and the other hybrid Irish figures come into the world in a state that emphasizes partiality, multiplicity and liminal cross-cultural spaces (Heather Smyth 4). The void left by the absence of their Irish parent or parents is in reality a space filled with perpetual liminality. Born in 1904, the second of five children, “el primero de los cuales murió prematuramente” (13), Moira leaves behind the dysfunctions with her family in 1924 on her “escandaloso y definitivo viaje a Nueva York” (19). Much like we have seen in Cuca’s estranged familial relations with her parents and siblings, “de sus hermanos hacía muchísimos años que [Moira] no sabía nada. Ignoraba, incluso, si vivían” (13). Again, the separation from her family represents the primary destabilizing event in the liminal Irish figure’s life. Consequently, the better part of the first half of the novel centers on Moira’s relationship with her first husband Konrad and her life as an aspiring artist in New York. Only three years after arriving in New York Moira’s plans for a life of solidarity with her husband are derailed after Konrad “murió como todos, de la misma manera que había nacido, es decir: solo” (99). Her husband’s death, and perhaps the estrangement from her family, “construyeron un impacto de tan poderosa repercusión que, aturdida, se dejó llevar por “las olas de la vida”” (55). Delaney draws out an appropriately ironic metaphor to portray the anchorless acts of a diasporic Irish liminal figure.

The next year passes outside the reader’s view then Moira’s narrative resumes just as she meets her soon-to-be second husband Irish-American Cornelius Geraghty, “hijo de la inmigración, a punto de cumplir treinta años, se empeñaba en protagonizar

el sueño americano que su padre, destruido por la cirrosis⁵⁶, no había logrado concretar” (101). In whirlwind fashion Moira falls for Cornelius and, because of his work, follows him to Buenos Aires, a place thought by the diasporic Irish to be filled with “Nativos. Indios. Salvajes. Aventuras. Desafíos. La posibilidad de crecer...” (102). This last point, ‘the possibility for growth’, is a common motivator in the Irish diaspora and ever present in their narratives. For Moira it represents a catalytic moment in the second phase of liminality. Though now remarried and in the process of resettling, Moira passes into a state of perpetual liminality once she arrives in Argentina; the omniscient narrative voice observes, “la señora Moira Sullivan de Geraghty, norteamericana de origen irlandés, recién llegada a un país remoto de lengua y cultura también remotas, dos veces inmigrante, quizá tres” (104). With her familial ties already broken, she realizes that, “la aventura de sumergirme en Sudamérica, implicaba una ruptura más” (116). Fittingly it is here in this new diaspora space that her identity will face challenges and scrutiny and also where her awareness of and interest in ‘Irishness’ comes to the forefront of her concerns and narrative. Like María de las Nieves, Ella, Cuca and el Gato, Moira has shifted geographically over the course of the novel which has left her on the fringe of Argentine society and culture: “De manera que porque no quiso, no pudo o no supo, eligió marginarse de la magia castellana. Se proponía ser respecto de Buenos Aires y del país todo, lo que ya venía siendo del mundo general: apenas una turista, una extrañada y sorprendida turista” (104). Delaney expresses her perpetual liminal status in terms of a tourist, an individual who travels and wanders the globe but in her case

⁵⁶ Once again the stereotype of the over-exuberant Irish drinker surfaces, this time via Geraghty’s Irish father.

without a home pulling her back into its warmth and familiar comfort, which intensifies the importance of her geographical and psychological dislocations. The author informs us, however, that Moira's modality of behavior is self-proposed, thus a self-imposed marginalization due to her lack of desire and/or ability to acculturate and terminate the liminal process.

3.3 Delaney and Walsh: Narrative Liminality

Thus far, Delaney's novel *Moira Sullivan* has proven to be comprised of and exhibit many, if not all, of the elements of the diasporic hybrid Irish offspring as liminal figures unable to complete the liminal process. If, then, we deduct Moira's non-hybridity from the equation and still take into account the difficulties her hyphenated status represents in terms of her assimilation, we have in hand yet another text in the paradigm of broken diasporic Irish families and diasporic Irish progeny who embody the liminal and endure both spatial and emotional displacements. With that said, what remains is to analyze the novel for its elements of narrative liminality as outlined in the previous chapter. In doing so, I will concurrently extend my readings for the same elements in Walsh's 'complete' "Irish series" in order to demonstrate that both el Gato and Moira fluctuate in their respective roles as protagonists creating an undeniable sensation of narrative liminality.

For *Moira Sullivan* Delaney has chosen to implement a postmodern fragmentary style in which he uses a variety of narrative techniques and discourses to recreate Moira's narrative perspective through a stream of flashbacks. Not only that, but he also skillfully vacillates between a traditional third person omniscient voice,

the epistolary form through Moira's letters to her parents and her friend Allison in America and entries from Konrad's diary which offer a distinct narrative perspective. The author even weaves into the narrative fragments of silent film screen plays written by Moira and the corresponding sheet music composed by Konrad to add another layer to an already complex and experimental narrative style. The diary entries penned by Konrad are only decipherable as such if the reader is sufficiently attentive to pick up on the subtle clues Delaney sprinkles into Konrad's voice as narrator. To do so, the reader must keep in mind that Konrad is a musician and his diary includes the music he has written along with occasional references to Moira in absentia. In one entry the German musician summarizes his anxieties as an immigrant and asks himself, "¿Quién descubre que estos cinco compases encierran y concentran aspectos medulares de mi vida? Nadie. Quizás, Moira" (69). Some of Konrad's other diary entries also mention Moira from his unique perspective as her husband and a German immigrant in a predominantly Irish immigrant city, yet they offer little insight to Moira's experiences as a liminal Irish figure. When Delaney does return Moira to the forefront of the narrative, after some disorientation from the reader's perspective, the author "also reflects the doubleness of the Irish mind which goes beyond the analytical dialectical reasoning of either/or and shows the Irish constitutive experience of both/and" (Zuntini de Izarra 143). Herr echoes this observation and denounces this technique as being 'essentialist' or an 'oversimplification' of the efforts at self-definition when she argues that, "various forms of doubling are frequently put forward as somehow intrinsic to Irishness, as are a strong "sense of place" and a "funerary" obsession" (6). Moira is denied a strong

sense of place because, as previously discussed, she chooses to act like a tourist of the world without a delineable home or national bequest. Her sense of place is also put into question because of Moira's slippage in and out of the role of singular protagonist. Just as the reader must suddenly follow Konrad's stream of consciousness in his personal log, Moira also follows swiftly behind Cornelius to Buenos Aires, demonstrating that she has little control over her own narrative.

The 'funerary obsession' which Herr mentions is another aspect that we have observed in diasporic hybrid Irish liminal subjects. The ghost of María de las Nieves' father seems to haunt her throughout her life and Cuca is in fact herself a ghost whose narrative is communicated by her dead daughter. The phantasmagoric also plays an important role in Moira's story. Using an imaginary telephone, Moira has imaginary talks with her dead husband and this, according to Zuntini de Izarra, is what allows Delaney to successfully employ "broken language to construct a literary image which metonymically represents her broken feelings and the process of resignification of her own life through the ritualistic action of calling the dead" (145). Yet, the 'resignification of her life' that Zuntini de Izarra points to may instead be a revelation of her moribund liminal figuredness. As I before noted, Moira elects not to learn Spanish upon arriving in Argentina but rather sets out to study German in what can be read as an attempt to maintain and augment her communication with her dead husband. Her enjoyable daily routine of taking German lessons with Frau Ingrid Hartleben and trying to dominate "la lengua cuya posesión venía persiguiendo desde tanto tiempo atrás", gives insight to her state of heart and mind: "sólo pertenecí a un hombre, Konrad Storm, quien todavía está conmigo" (111). With this, we must ask if

it is Konrad who has returned from the dead to be alongside his love or has Moira passed over into the realm beyond?

In the same narrative block we learn that, “Más que la lengua germana fue esto lo que mejor aprendió Moira de aquella vieja experimentada [Ingrid]: *la certeza de que los muertos no son tales, que es más fácil convivir con ellos que con los vivos*” (113). Not only does her German instructor elucidate the confluence between the realms of the living and the dead but she also teaches Moira how to be conscious of and apprehend the voices of the dead as well as her own. Delaney as well fragments Moira’s letters to her mother and friend Allison, leaving many incomplete and never mailed. These vacant intervals and unsigned, unsent *epistolas* imitate the interrupted howls of the dead in unrest. The lone communication Moira is sent, though there is no clear evidence it is received, comes from Allison in 1955, however, there are several innuendos in it which put into question Moira’s place among the living. Uncertain if the letter will reach her friend in Argentina, Allison does not write at length and her overall tone is dark while she focuses on “la muerte de tu [de Moira] virtuoso padre” who had gathered his remaining children and “desde la cama les sirvió un *bourbon*...Bebieron y ahí nomás murió” (139). Allison ends her somewhat gloomy correspondence with, “Si aún vives, escíbeme” (139). Nonetheless there is never a response written and though we are informed that Moira later spent time in an “asilo” or “Hogar de Ancianos” (152) before her death, she already had one foot in the grave and both feet in the liminal. Interestingly, in the course of moving with her husband outside the city, “cuando pasaron por Junín no superaron la tentación de meterse en el pueblo para darse una vuelta por el cementerio” (133). Perhaps spurred on by the

Irish fixation on death, “pasearon así por los caminos de muerte o vida eternas, por entremedio de las tumbas cuyos epitafios, en inglés y en castellano, no dejaron de impresionarlos: “Not dead, Only sleeping”” (133). Meandering amongst the graves of the diasporic Irish, like tiptoeing on a high wire through a cloud, Moira in her liminality again drifts between this world and the next, amid the living and the dead.

Delaney paradoxically yet fittingly concludes his novel open-endedly: “*Slán agat*⁵⁷, che!... *No hay final... Moira. Moría. Moira moría...No hay final... Morir es olvidar y ser olvidado... No hay final... ¿No es maravi-...?*” (154). The author’s use of the imperfect past tense in Spanish, “*moría*” (*she was dying*) and not the preterite “*murió*” (*she died*), implies that Moira’s death was not sudden and definitive like the men in her life⁵⁸ but instead an indefinite process, a drawn-out decay like that of Cuca, which places her at the center of the narrative in the reader’s consciousness and simultaneously in its oblivion.

In order to establish narrative liminality in Walsh’s work I now broaden my readings to encompass all three texts in the ‘Irish series.’ In the previous chapter I observed and offered my analysis of “*Irlandeses detrás de un gato*,” in which I suggested that Walsh’s series of short stories, when read as a whole, would reveal a narrative style commensurate in its use of liminality to that of the other texts under review here. A generic reading of “*Irlandeses detrás de un gato*” points to a traditional use of the third person omniscient narrator that begins the saga solely focused on el Gato and his surroundings. However, in this first story the author does allow the

⁵⁷ ‘*Slán agat*’ is Irish (Gaelic) for ‘goodbye.’

⁵⁸ Besides Konrad and her father’s death, Cornelius also meets an abrupt end when, while riding a horse in the countryside, he becomes “*alocado*” and lost: “*Los peones...enseguida encontraron a Cornelius boca abajo, abrazado a la tierra. Sus ojos petrificados mantenían la indescriptible mirada de la cabalgata*” (137).

narrative focus to shift at times and the reader is faced with equally rich details of some of the other stand-out Irish boys, all recognizable by their Irish surnames, who are in pursuit of el Gato with every intention of ‘initiating’ el Gato into their domain. We meet Murtagh, Mullahy and Mulligan, three instigators that interrogate el Gato in an attempt to force his hands to combat. In dialogue with el Gato, the latter explains, “no tenés que pelear conmigo, Gato, yo podría hacerte tiras con una mano atada. Vas a pelear con Rositer, que no tiene más que un buen juego de piernas, pero no pega con la zurda, y al fin y al cabo es un pajero” (93). Rositer, like many of the other lower-rung boys such as Dolan, Kiernan, Geraghty and ‘el pequeño Dashwood’, to name but a few, all fill in the spaces in the narrative that el Gato as a liminal figure cannot. Pata Santa Walker, for example, “tenía una pierna más corta que la otra, terminada en un botín monstruosamente alto, rígido, inanimado como un tronco muerto que arrastraba al caminar, y una noble cara afilada y olivácea de ojos visionarios” (101). Detailed and ironic descriptions such as this one set the tone and stage for more elaborate characterizations in the stories to follow. As such, they move the reader’s attention from el Gato and refocus it on those who would otherwise have remained as merely members of the supporting cast, endowing them with substance and narrative significance. In addition, we find an unexpected, momentary break from the third person omniscient narration when an unidentified voice cries out, “¡Fogoso Gato! ¡Tu terrible desafío aún vibra en *mi* memoria, porque *yo* era uno de ellos!” (99 italics mine). The sudden appearance of this anonymous narrator in the first person leaves the reader wondering who this voice is supposed to represent, and then, will it resurface. The fact that this voice as well calls back through time, ‘still vibrates in my

mind...I was one of them,” cleverly bends the temporal continuity of the narrative without breaking it.

The second work in the series, “Los oficios terrestres,” begins not by resuming the trials and tribulations of el Gato, who has survived, though not unscathed, his first day at the Instituto Fahy, but starts presumably a year later⁵⁹ with him alongside the reader observing the frustrations of el pequeño Dashwood. El pequeño Dashwood has now moved to the frontlines of the narrative and it is el Gato who plays a supporting role. This fact is intensified by another unsettling alteration in the narrative voice, which unexpectedly changes from the third person omniscient to that of the first person through the use of the pronoun ‘nosotros’ (*we*), the indirect object ‘nos’ (*us*) and the possessive ‘nuestros’ (*ours*): “La caritativa Sociedad *nos* amaba, un poco abstractamente es cierto, pero eso es porque *nosotros* éramos muchos...*nuestros* padres anónimos y dispersos, y en fin, porque nadie sino ella pagaba por *nosotros*...las Damas en persona vinieran a celebrar con *nosotros* el día del Cuerpo de Cristo” (18, italics mine). Clearly, this cannot be the narrative voice of el Gato because just a few paragraphs before this we read that, “el Gato meramente ladeó la boca, prendió un pucho y apoyó el largo cuerpo contra la pared” (17). El Gato is always described and represented from the third person omniscient point of view, which again raises the question; whose narrative voice is this speaking out from the future standpoint of ‘we’? Has Walsh inserted himself in the series in ‘Borgean’ fashion or is it the narrative voice of another, anonymous Irish boy in the Instituto

⁵⁹ If, as I noted in footnote 34, Walsh uses his own life and experiences as a template for this series in which he studied at the “Instituto Faghi de Moreno” from 1938-40 (56), and by the date given in the first paragraphs of this text, “el día siguiente al de Corpus Christi, el año 1939” (18), then approximately one year has passed for el Gato.

Fahy, perhaps the same that cried out in the first story in the series? Unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence to claim one possibility as more plausible than another but, just the same as his investigative novels, here Walsh's innovative play with narrativity "ha flexibilizado los límites del género, tratando de escapar al encierro de la fórmula" (Amar Sánchez 141). What is certain, then, is that Walsh experiments, intentionally or not, with narrative liminality in his efforts to expand the genre of short stories and its modes of narrative representation.

While continuing to construct *el Gato* Walsh writes that, "seguía tan flaco, alto y elusivo como la tarde en que llegó al Colegio, pero un poco más saludable, astuto y seguro de sí mismo" (Walsh 25), and we find him settled into and more comfortable with his position among the ranks of orphaned and poor Irish boys. As the title of the text implies, before him awaits an *oficio terrestre*, which is quite simply to take out the trash with the help of *el pequeño Dashwood*. Once the chore is completed, Dashwood, who longs to return to his mother who he "amaba por encima de todas las cosas y la extrañaba cada, cada noche" (17) and for a life outside Fahy, abruptly leaves, despite the fact that "no había camino a la vista, pero sabía que se estaba yendo para siempre" (33). *El Gato* plays witness to Dashwood's act of self-exile as he disappears "entre los tardíos visitantes de la niebla" (33) and without control over his own narrative, is helpless to take meaningful action⁶⁰ that would influence that of another. Even though Dashwood is able to cross over into the void that is the world outside the Instituto Fahy, *el Gato* is not because, for one, the

⁶⁰ *El Gato* does take some action though its meaning is lost on his counterpart. Grudgingly "el Gato hizo algo que no quería hacer...sacó un pañuelo y empezó a desatar el nudo que guardaba su única fortuna: tres monedas de veinte centavos...Se guardó una de las monedas, dio las otras dos al chico que las tomó y siguió su camino sin darle las gracias" (34). The compassions of a liminal figure would seem to be thankless deeds.

‘Colegio’ represents his space of perpetual liminality and his time there has made him, “indeseado, refractorio [e] indeseante” (34).

The sense of narrative liminality only increases in Walsh’s final story, “Un oscuro día de justicia.” The final chapter begins with the narrative focus on a new character, el celador Gielty, “un loco” who, while in prayer, does not pray to God “sino a sí mismo y su flaqueza y su locura” (65). Not only the most imposing boy at the Instituto Fahy because of his ‘bull-like stature’, he is also imposing in the narrative as his actions, like organizing “peleítas” (68) displace el Gato in the narrative focus and replace him with the likes of Gielty. Because of this Gielty’s voice is heard, through dialogue, in the first person while he moves and manipulates the smaller, weaker boys like pawns in his sadistically planned battles cynically referred to as “el Ejercicio”: “Porque esto debe quedar entre ustedes y yo, hijos míos, y ¿quiénes van a pelear?” (69). Another individual who rises out from the multitude of characters is el pequeño Collins, perhaps filling the small fissure left by el pequeño Dashwood. Collins, who has been hand-selected by Gielty to combat el Gato, is repeatedly defeated by his adversary and desperately searches for an end to his ongoing torment. Again narrated in the first person but now from Collins’ perspective in the epistolary, the feeble boy writes to his uncle: “Sinceramente espero, mi querido tío Malcolm, que vengas a salvarme del celador Gielty, que está loco y quiere que me muera, aunque yo no le hice nada, te lo juro mi querido tío Malcolm” (80). His pleas in the first person not only elevate the tension of Collins’ plight with Gielty but also serve to refocus the reader away from the thoughts, feelings and actions of el Gato. For these we may read them through El Gato’s aggressions upon Collins; systematic

and indifferent. The narrative continues in much the same way with el Gato on the fringe of the events in the Instituto Fahy while Gielty, Collins and tío Malcolm are on the center stage. Walsh opts so much in favor for “el empleo de las formas semi-marginales de la literature cultivada” (De Grandis 109) that he goes as far as to unexpectedly give voice to Malcolm, his external perspective expressed from within the boundaries of the Instituto Fahy. Coming to the defense of his nephew, and that of other boys like him, to defeat Gielty in his own vicious game, Malcolm arrives at the Instituto Fahy with the odds stacked in his favor. After landing several crushing blows upon his rival, Malcolm becomes momentarily overconfident and expresses in the first person at this crucial juncture via his gestures to the crowd, “saludando a la derecha, y saludando a la izquierda y saludando especialmente al centro, donde vos estabas, mi querido sobrino Collins, por quien vine de tan lejos” (Walsh 92). Once more Walsh gives voice to yet another character in the first person, this time Malcolm, in aside. Via this declaration Walsh reveals the long distance Malcolm has traveled, a distance which indicates how isolated the Instituto Fahy is from the outside world. As Malcolm takes center stage in the narrative, Gato has faded almost imperceptively into the background of the narrative and deeper into liminality. During the final confrontation between Gielty and tío Malcolm “el Gato refractario se retiraba a una segunda línea desde donde aún podía ver sin perjuicio de escapar” (92). From the second lines el Gato’s presence or absence becomes a point of less scrutiny. It is also on the second lines of the narrative that the author leaves his hybrid Irish liminal figure free from prejudice to find escape amidst the empty space of the pages yet far from impervious to the effects of the liminal.

It bears repeating that “Un oscuro día de justicia” was not intended to be the final story in Walsh’s Irish series. Of the remaining three or four stories the author had planned to write, Walsh was only able to begin one before his heartrending demise. This story, “Mi tío Willy, que ganó la guerra,” exists as an unfinished manuscript written fragmentarily in Walsh’s own hand in English and Spanish. In what was to be the next episode in the Irish saga, Walsh again displaces el Gato from the role of protagonist and focuses on Willy who goes off to fight in the first World War and arrives in Cairo in 1916 (229). In the author’s words, “Es una historia contada por los chicos en una circunstancia especial: están enfermos en la enfermería. Hay una peste de escarlatina y un chico cuenta la historia de un tío que va a pelear a la guerra mundial, entonces la historia ahí se le escapa” (59). Again narrated from the first person, this “chico” remains nameless and therefore it is very difficult, if not impossible, to claim he is el Gato, much less determine to whom this nameless voice may belong. What is certain is that the boy narrating has intimate knowledge of his uncle’s adventures and psychology: “As I told you then, my uncle Willie’s trip to Egypt took many days, for it was a slow ship and an old ship, and not like the ones he sailed on when he was a purser in the Star Lines, so it was a melancholic state of mind that he recalled them...” (235). With an established decline in his presence and participation in the series and no evidence here of El Gato’s voice or unique perspective, we may safely speculate that Walsh has departed from his original protagonist. It would seem, then, that in the transition from the third to the fourth story el Gato has indeed become lost in the liminal, passing from the second lines of the Irish series to the crevices between the lines⁶¹.

⁶¹ The only other story Walsh had contemplated is mentioned in his interview with Piglia. Walsh

We have seen in this section and those preceding it that narrative liminality is a literary technique that influences and (re)shapes our readings of hybrid Irish liminal figures. By constantly fluctuating the narrative attention from the hybrid Irish liminal figure as protagonist to feature and explore secondary characters, each author has intensified the liminal status of the hyphenated Irish figure in relegating her/him to the fringe of the narrative. In the section that follows I probe deeper into this marginal or liminal zone created by the Irish diaspora, specifically in Argentina. To do so, I continue to develop my readings and analysis of *Moira Sullivan* and the ‘Irish series’ as representative texts of what I call the ‘disruptive community’ or, in more elaborate terms, the Irish diaspora as a disruptive liminal community in Argentina.

3.4 Irish-Argentine *Communitas* and the Imagined Community

Together with his theories on liminality and liminal personae, Turner introduces his concept of “*communitas*” which he proposes as “a relational quality of full, unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities” (Babcock 12). According to Turner, *communitas* “breaks into society through the interstices of structure, in liminality, at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority” (Turner 128). He goes on to rationalize his use of the term ‘*communitas*’ in place of ‘community’ to distinguish “this modality of social relationship from an “area of common living” (96). In doing

states, “Hay otra historia probable con la intervención y participación del diablo, también en la misma enfermería” (59). Although no manuscript, draft or otherwise, was ever found of this installment, it is notable that the author had in mind to include Satan and perhaps even the underworld. If this were to be the case, then the Instituto Fahy, the “enfermería” and the world at large would be cast into a sort of ‘biblical liminality,’ trapped in the interstice between Heaven and Hell.

so, Turner argues that the emergence of *communitas* does not represent an erasure of structural social norms from the consciousness of its participants but instead underscores the ways in which it symbolizes the negation or inversion of normative structures in which those participating in it are commonly involved (47). To bolster his framework and definition of the category, Turner looks to the work of Martin Buber, who uses the terms ‘*communitas*’ and ‘*community*’ inversely from his own standpoint. Buber writes, “Community is the being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but *with* one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from *I* to *Thou*. Community is where community happens” (Buber in Turner 127). What is most relevant for Turner in Buber’s definition is how he illuminates the spontaneity, immediacy, and concrete nature of *communitas*, as opposed to the structuralized, institutionalized and abstract nature of social structure. In Turner’s later works he was able to identify three distinct and not necessarily sequential forms of *communitas* which he called *spontaneous*, *ideological*, and *normative* (47). The first, *spontaneous communitas*, he defines as “a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities, a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction” (47). He contends that in these moments of spontaneity individuals experience “a flash of mutual understanding” in which the individual feels a direct relation to others on the existential level and therefore places “a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or pretentiousness” (48). *Ideological communitas* Turner outlines as “a set of theoretical concepts which attempt to describe the interactions of spontaneous *communitas*” (48).

Here he places strong emphasis on language and culture to mediate the immediacies experienced in *spontaneous* *communitas* and contests that “it is not team-work in this flow that is quintessential, but “*being*” together, “*being*” the operative word, not “doing”” (48). Although these two categories are paramount to Turner’s anthropological work, I look primarily to his third category, that of *normative communitas*, to aid in my own theoretical approach to literary studies and the texts under review here. This type of *communitas* is recognizable as a “‘perduring social system,’ a subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships or spontaneous *communitas* on a more or less permanent basis” (49). Turner later clarifies that the origins of these groups are related to “freedom,” liberation,” or even “love,” and that they often feel a sense of vulnerability in the face of institutionalized groups surrounding them. Therefore, “they develop protective institutional armor, armor which becomes the harder as the pressures to destroy the primary group’s autonomy proportionally increase. They “become what they behold” (49). As I will assert, the Irish diaspora community in Argentina can be read most closely as a *normative communitas* in liminality because of its forgone necessity to posture itself as separate and counter-normative or disruptive. As well, the challenges it faces in doing so have resulted in the construction of metaphorical armament, which serve to shield it and its members from the cultures without.

Despite what would seem to be a well-developed, comprehensive theoretical category, Turner’s concepts of *communitas* have come under fire over the years since he first published them. The main complaint has been that his categories are too far reaching and that any attempts to combine his modalities will always be threatened by

structural cleavage or ever the suffocation of *communitas* (50). In an effort to assuage the tensions around her late husband's theories, his widow and fellow anthropologist Edith Turner published her own work in which she specifically addresses many of these grievances. Appropriately titled, *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*, E. Turner⁶² offers her own understanding of what *communitas* is. Worryingly, she begins her book by stating, "The characteristics of *communitas* show it to be almost beyond strict definition, with almost endless variations" (1). Beyond this extremely inexplicit opening, she goes on to state that *communitas* is something, "Not yet externalized—this puts a finger on both the conundrum of the futuristic component of *communitas* and on its invisibility" (3). Having continued her husband's work E. Turner admits that "present findings show *communitas* to be further still from strict definition than in Turner's time, with innumerable variations" (3). Though this may seem disheartening for academics who would choose to enter into dialogue with Turner's concepts, E. Turner sheds a light of hope on such an opaque outlook. Mostly reiterating the words found in Turner's original texts, E. Turner illuminates the category in observing that, "*Communitas* can only be conveyed properly through stories" (1). Although her book explores *communitas* in festivals, music, work situations, times of stress or disaster, in revolution and even in nature, she has broadened the applicability of *communitas* to include personal and shared narratives. It is this new expanse that E. Turner proposes which permits a dialogue with literature that I intend to explore and exploit in Irish-Argentine literature.

⁶² From this point forward I will refer to Edith Turner as E. Turner in order to distinguish her voice from that of Victor Turner.

Both Victor and Edith Turner have contributed much to theoretical approaches on communities and *communitas* via their respective anthropological work and subsequent studies, however, there is still opportunity for further elaboration if we bring other theorists into the conversation. One such scholar in the related fields of political and historical sciences is Benedict Anderson who, in his benchmark work *Imagined Communities*, proposes that “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (6). For Anderson, a community (or a nation which he claims is an “imagined political community”) is always imagined as ““*limited*” because it has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other communities” (7). For Turner, however, *communitas* “exists in a kind of “figure-ground” [...] and the boundaries of each of these...are defined by contact or comparison with the other” (Turner 50). Inherent in Turner’s model is a dynamic contrast of members in one group to those of another, or an entire group in contrast to the whole of another, and not an active opposition of one to the other. This is similar to what Anderson argues when he states that “no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind” (Anderson 7). A nation or a community, like a *communitas*, recognizes its sovereignty yet must simultaneously compare and measure itself against Others in order to affirm and reaffirm its unique identity and place in the world. Nevertheless, although Anderson does not imply conflict between two separate imagined communities, he does state that members of a particular nation or community do not envision a day when all members of the human race will join them, forming one all-encompassing global community sharing the same outlooks and values (7). *Communitas* diverges on this point because it is not

constructed upon the classic “in-group vs. out-group” opposition but rather a *communitas* unlocks “people’s sense that it is for everybody—humanity, bar none” (E. Turner 5).⁶³ In the case of the Irish community in Argentina we shall observe that the Others occupy the spaces to either side; on the one there is the Argentine society and on the other (side of the Atlantic) homogeneous and insular Ireland. Diasporic hybrid Irish liminal figures, because they remain as liminal, are incapable of experiencing the ‘sense’ of which Turner speaks and therefore seem to behave at times, but not always, more congruently with Anderson’s understanding of the community as limited and, in some ways, obstinately segregate.

Much like Turner’s *communitas*, Anderson’s imagined communities contain an element of conceived “deep, horizontal comradeship” (7). Anderson believes that it is ultimately this type of “fraternity” which inculcates and inspires its members to put the community before and above all, even to the extreme of making the ultimate self-sacrifice. In the same vein E. Turner asserts that, “*Communitas* is togetherness itself...[it] is exciting; it makes people able to organize and work together” (Turner 4). In both *communitas* and imagined communities there is an emphasis on connectedness or an invisible bond which motivates and gives meaning to the actions of their members. Here again, conversely, *communitas* and imagined communities depart at a key juncture; in *communitas* “people see each other face to face. All the little details matter” (4). This is to say that liminal personae can form *communitas* while engaged in the liminal process, in a way ‘sharing their liminality.’ In an

⁶³ Turner also underscores that when liminality is “socially positive,” it signifies or implies, “a model of human society as a homogenous, unstructured *communitas*, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of the human species” (47). Therefore, like Anderson, Turner believes that only homogeneity and the absence of a structured *communitas* would allow for a utopian synchronous existence.

imagined community Anderson emphasizes that it is *imagined* “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them” (6). Yet the abstraction between members that Anderson points to does not disallow a sense of communion, but it does negate the ‘joyous’ interpersonal communication among all its members which is a crucial element in *communitas*. Thus, it has become clear that there are certain observable phenomena in the theoretical frameworks of both *communitas* and imagined communities which may serve to better examine and analyze the diasporic Irish liminal community in Argentina. Of course Victor and Edith Turner as well as Anderson never used their theories to approach fiction, much less to evaluate and critique the Irish diaspora. Hence I argue that when read as a group of liminal personae or a *communitas* in liminality, the diasporic hybrid Irish community disrupts not only strict interpretations of both Turner’s and Anderson’s theories but equally problematizes the monolithic national imaginary of the host country (Argentina in this case) and the homeland (Ireland). Because of this, we must keep in mind that in establishing this new dialogue between their theories and literary texts represents a step into unexplored territory. Bravely yet soberly, we must forge ahead.

3.5 Representations of the diasporic Irish community in Delaney and Walsh

We have established in the previous two chapters that the Irish diaspora underwent several massive waves of exodus, first in the seventeenth century after the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland and more recently, in the nineteenth century during the Great Potato Famine. For obvious reasons we need not dissect, it was not until the

latter period that the Irish began arriving into the Southern Cone. It is Murray who writes that “during most of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, encouraged by their families and community leaders, and favored by their condition as British subjects, nearly 45,000⁶⁴ Irish immigrants contributed to build a community [in Argentina] that was atypical within the Irish Diaspora” (9). What was “atypical” of the Irish diaspora in Argentina is multifold. To begin with, the Irish almost exclusively emigrated to former English colonies, such as the English speaking isles of the Caribbean, Canada and Australia⁶⁵. The largest former English colony of all, the United States, was, and for many still is, undoubtedly the mecca for the Irish diaspora⁶⁶. However, after centuries of English imperialism and subjugation, the diasporic Irish sought to elude the pseudo-racialized discourse and subsequent oppression they had endured under British rule. To this Michel Hogan reminds us that, “America was an English derivative society, and to the Irish it appeared that the traditional Anglo bias and hatred against the Irish was simply carried over into the United States” (103). In Argentina, however, the ‘favorable’ aspect of British subjugation to which Murray refers was the fact that the Irish were nativized⁶⁷

⁶⁴ This is the highest estimate my studies have revealed thus far. See footnote 49.

⁶⁵ The Irish government’s document on diaspora policy informs us that “The Irish diaspora in Canada, as measured in the 2011 Canadian census, was just over 4.5m or roughly 14% of the total Canadian population. In their 2011 census, over 2 million people in Australia said they were of Irish descent which equates to over 10% of the total population” (17).

⁶⁶ The Irish government’s document on diaspora policy also offers some striking statistics regarding Irish emigration and diaspora in the U.S. The graph chart on “Diaspora Populations in the United States compared to Home Country Populations” illustrates that the Italian diaspora population, for example, registers at 29.5% compared to its home population. The Irish in the U.S. as compared to Ireland’s home population is a staggering 550.5%. Numerically the closest group in size to the Irish diaspora in the U.S. are the Polish at 59.3% (17).

⁶⁷ I introduce the term ‘nativized’ to refer to the fact that, before the English conquest of Ireland, the Irish were monolingual native speakers of Irish. Even though Irish is still taught in school at all levels and the language remains ever present all over Ireland in official documents and signage, it is no longer widely spoken in the quotidian, especially in larger cities. The Irish have thus become a bilingual people for whom English is now the primary language of communication.

speakers of English and, consequently, able to assume the role of “*Ingleses*” within a Spanish-speaking society, an ethnic and social (mis)categorization that allowed many diasporic Irish to ascend in Argentine society as landowners and achieve economic stability.

In the second half of *Moira Sullivan* the title figure has emigrated to Argentina with her second husband, Cornelius, who still has there “algunos parientes cuyos abuelos o padres se llegaron de Irlanda a causa de la Gran Hambruna de 1847” (Delaney 102). Because of his relatives’ success, Buenos Aires appears to truly hold the possibility of growth for the average Irish emigrant like Cornelius. Making the long trek and difficult transition, Moira is now not only face to face with the Irish diaspora community in Buenos Aires but a part of it. A geographical shift such as this represents the solitary point of convergence from Anderson’s perspective with Turner. Here Anderson praises Turner by stating that he has “written illuminatingly about the ‘journey’, between times, statuses and places, as a meaning-creating experience” (53). Anderson goes on to substitute ‘pilgrimage’ for Turner’s modal journey, which in his use of the word carries a religious connotation⁶⁸. On what is to be the last leg of her own journey, Moira acts as witness and narrator to what meaning the diasporic Irish experience has created. Well aware of the clever scheme implemented by the diasporic Irish in search of upward mobility in Argentine society, the author utilizes several of Moira’s letters to her friend Allison to observe and critique her surroundings. In her first letter from Buenos Aires to her pen pal back in the U.S., Moira writes of the superior status of the English: “Es notable la influencia

⁶⁸ Another possible definition of ‘journey’ is exemplified by the statement: ‘life is viewed as a journey.’ This would omit any religious connotation or context replacing it with an existential outlook.

de los ingleses, en cuyas manos están los ferrocarriles, frigoríficos y no pocas compañías comerciales” (105). Through Moira’s reflections the parameters of the social hierarchy in Argentina are defined and because she understands them from a liminal diasporic Irish perspective within this diasporic space, her awareness of and interest in ‘Irishness’ becomes central in her discourse. In her letters Moira’s tone also seems to covet the advantages and riches of the English, which was a common sentiment found in the Irish diaspora. This outlook demonstrates that the English emigrants do not enter into the diasporic Irish *communitas* because as E. Turner reminds us, “During this time, people find each other to be just ordinary people after all, not the anxious prestige-seeking holders of jobs and positions they often seem to be” (4). Clearly, then, in Moira’s eyes the formation of any type of *communitas* with English sojourners is not to be for she ‘imagines’ them as ‘others’, not as ‘us,’ or more succinctly, as those who already have the advantages and securities to which the Irish aspire.

In another letter she writes to Allison dated almost a year later, Moira comments at length on the Irish community in Buenos Aires. With more time and experience in and around the diasporic Irish of Argentina, Moira’s observations are profound and saturated in emotion:

Sé que te costará entenderlo pero a este remoto punto del cono sur se llegaron desde la segunda mitad del siglo pasado y hasta principios de éste, miles de irlandeses perseguidos por la Hambruna y seducidos por el mito según el cual aquí las calles estaban pavimentadas con oro. “¿Oro? ¡Orín!”, se burlan en precario castellano los recientes amigos de Cornelius, aunque es muy evidente

que sienten gratitud hacia un país que los ha recibido con generosidad y simpatía. Además, tal como ocurre allá, es difícil que quien tenga deseos y voluntad de progreso no encuentre aquí posibilidades de desarrollar sus talentos. Hablo de los irlandeses, pero en realidad son muchos los pueblos que se han congregado en la Argentina. Debo decir que los hijos de Erín se jactan de haberse integrado con el resto de la población, la verdad no es exactamente así. Tienen sus propios colegios, sus propios templos y su club, y quien comete la osadía de casarse con un “nap” (¿napotliano y por extensión italiano?) o con un “gushing” (derivado, probablemente, del verbo inglés *to gush*, que significa hablar con excesivo entusiasmo, y que es un neologismo para aludir a los gallegos y también por extensión a los españoles), se aíslan o son lenta pero inexorablemente segregados. En verdad esto ocurre con casi todas las comunidades extranjeras que se han radicado acá: árabes, armenios, ucranios y, muy especialmente, judíos. Para no hablar de los británicos que a su injustificado desdén agregan cierto cinismo ancestral. Curiosamente los criollos sienten una secreta admiración por ellos, aunque públicamente manifiesten lo contrario. Por otro lado, sé de colegas de Cornelius que, siendo de origen irlandés, se hacen pasar por ingleses para progresar en sus empleos. ¡Les parece más distinguido! ¿Puedes creer eso? A mí todo esto me resulta indigno. (109)

Her letter is revealing in many aspects. First, Moira notes the fallacy in the ‘boasting’ by the ‘sons of Erin’ who believe they have integrated with the rest of the population. She bases this commentary on the observation that they have their own schools,

temples, clubs and that to marry outside of the Irish community would be reprehensible. In this Moira expresses that ‘Irishness’ indicates, in reality, separatist and homogenous practices, which she also notes are characteristics of almost all the foreign communities in Argentina. Moira’s disillusionment with the Irish community in Argentina is not unwarranted as she condemns their xenophobic and questionable practices. Kiberd deduces that the intent of English colonial policy in Ireland was straightforward: “to create a new England called Ireland” (15). Delaney represents the diasporic Irish as a post-colonial product intrinsically tied to England and Anglo-Saxon culture and underscores their appropriation of the language and tactics of their former colonizers. The Irish diaspora community in Argentina that Delaney portrays here can be viewed as one which imitates English colonial policy in their attempts to “create a new Ireland called Argentina.” Such behavior proves to be incongruent with Turner’s *communitas* which he argues “tends to be inclusive” and that it is social structure which “tends to be exclusive, even snobbish” (51). In their endeavor to forge a space for themselves within diaspora space and liminality, the diasporic Irish have indeed ‘become what they behold’ and have thus imagined themselves parallel to, not coterminous with, ‘othered’ communities.

Interestingly in her letter Moira also touches on a phenomenon which as well has been repeatedly underlined in scholarship related to the Irish diaspora in Argentina; that of “passing oneself off as English” and not Irish. Brian McGinn in his article notes that “Argentines commonly referred to all English-speaking foreigners, including Irish, Scots and Welsh, as ‘Ingleses’ (English)”. What could seem to be a simple lexical folly is in fact what Donald Harman Akenson argues was the crucial

element that “was made possible by the willingness of the Protestant portion of the Irish cohort to disguise itself as “British” or, in dire circumstances, even as English” (5). Rather superficially this would suggest that anyone who spoke English could be considered or pose as “English,” but this does not account for why the Irish wouldn’t openly claim or embrace their ‘Irishness.’ As Murray states, it was much easier for the Irish to align themselves with the bourgeoisie class in Argentina if they identified themselves as *ingleses*. He also says, “the Argentine bourgeoisie was the chief factor on welcoming ingleses (English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh) to Argentina” (114). Given the warm reception that the English received from the bourgeoisie class in Argentina, the Irish used their linguistic ability and almost indistinguishable physiology from the English advantageously and were able to circumvent being thrown indiscriminately into the undesirable lower rungs of working class immigrants. However, this came at the cost of publically concealing their Irish heritage and distinctiveness and only accepting it behind closed doors within the confines of normative *communitas*. Kelly, in her extensive study titled *Irish ‘Ingleses’*, argues that, “the adoption and application of the term ‘*Inglés*’ by the Irish community was fundamental to its cultural and social development. The subjective and at times contradictory nature of an Irish ‘*Inglés*’ identity frequently fractured the community and highlighted ideological and aspirational divisions within its ranks” (xvi). This, as Moira exclaims, is a shameful act which, in contradiction to the nature of *communitas*, only bares fruit in professional, not personal or communal spheres. There is no joy to be found in this deceit for, in the words of Dereck Walcott, “What is hidden cannot be loved” (Nobel Lecture).

Unsatisfied with his life in the city and, like many diasporic Irish, determined to become a landowner, Cornelius acquires “tierras en General Pinto, no para convertirlo en campesino... sino para que contara con un oasis que atenuara las agitaciones de la gran ciudad” (120). On their way to meet up with Cornelius’ cousins who still live in the provincial town, he and Moira travel deeper and deeper into Irish diaspora space⁶⁹. While passing through the town of Junín, “pueblo lleno de irlandeses”, a sign that reads “ALMACÉN DE RAMOS GENERALES DE ABRAHAM MULLINS” (125) grabs hold of their curiosity, prompting them to stop and look around. The owner and store’s namesake upon hearing, “las palabras de Cornelius –en las que se percibían el agudo irlandés y el inglés filtrándose por entremedio de un castellano ortopédico” (125) becomes all too pleased to share his own family’s story of Irish heritage. Mullins’ tale again replicates that of many diasporic Irish; his father, Charlie, who spoke very poor Spanish (even worse than Cornelius as he points out) was keen to find a woman in his life⁷⁰ (126). Well aware of this, Charlie’s friends “armaron la joda que terminó originando la felicidad (126). Believing he was about to meet one of “las irlandesas recién llegadas” who worked as “institutrices o maestras de inglés,” his “compinches... conchabaron a una muchacha hebrea, también hija de la inmigración, educada con un esmero que incluía el idioma

⁶⁹ Delaney seems to plot the course of their journey beginning in Buenos Aires and passing through several towns or provinces which are historically Irish, although the exact route is never explicitly revealed. Nevertheless, departing from the capital city and heading west-northwest one could feasibly pass through “the town of Mercedes, the “Irish capital of Argentina”” (Murphy 172), O’Higgins, Junín, and Lincoln before arriving in General Pinto.

⁷⁰ It is noteworthy that Charlie, in search of guidance, visits “Father Fahey, el capeilán de los irlandeses reciénvenidos” with such frequency that the priest “terminó eludiendo sus visitas” (126). This is of course the same priest for whom the Instituto Fahy in Walsh’s ‘Irish series’ is named and the real Instituto Faghi de Moreno Walsh attended, again corroborating what a prominent figure he is in the Irish-Argentine imaginary.

inglés. La lengua, la roja cabellera y los profundos ojos celestes de la *garrahalya*⁷¹ la convertían en una irlandesa casi perfecta, si las hay” (126-7). Immediately fooled and taken by her beauty, Charlie and Deborah Kogan, “Kogan y no Hogan como le había mentido al principio,” got married in a flash at the civil registry (127). Just as we have seen with María de las Nieves, Ella, Cuca and el Gato, hybridity is a common element in the offspring of the diasporic Irish because, consciously or not, they coupled with natives as well as other immigrants. In the words of Turner, “One wants to make the Others, We” (51). In the case of the Irish in Argentina this reveals somewhat of a contradiction or paradox. Moira’s letters to Allison lead the reader to believe the diasporic Irish are completely insular in their liminality and against intermingling, yet Mullins’ heritage and that of the other hybrid Irish offspring in this study debunk such a notion. In way, then, Moira’s ‘journey’ is not only geographical and physical but also metaphysical as it serves to enlighten her comprehension of the diasporic Irish community and the ways in which they bring ‘others’ into the fold of their normative *communitas* through hybridization.

Before continuing on their way Mullins advises Moira and Cornelius that, should they pass by the neighboring town of de Rojas, they must stop to eat at “la fonda “San Patricio”” which serves “un exquisito Irish stew con dumplings” (128). They follow his recommendation and, as to be expected with any Irish restaurant or pub, “sus paredes ostentaban símbolos como tréboles, hadas y gnomos, arpas, propagandas de cervezas como Guinness, Harp y Murphy, y de whiskey Jameson”

⁷¹ Irish (Gaelic) for ‘young girl’ or ‘muchacha’ (Delaney 127).

(130)⁷². It is here that Moira meets Nelly Maguire, the owner of the San Patricio who she assumes is Irish: “¿Cómo estás tú? en castellano, según había creído adivinar, sino en gaélico, de acuerdo a lo que la mujer se apresuró a especificar. Toparse con un discurso celta en medio de la pampa sudamericana conmovió a los esposos Geraghty. Pero esas palabras eran lo único que Nelly Maguire –así se presentó- había heredado de la vieja Irlanda. Las usó intuyendo el origen de sus visitantes. “You have an Irish face, You’re Irish”, sugirió Moira. “Tendré la cara irlandesa, pero no soy irlandesa. Perdí las lenguas de los irlandeses, el gaélico y la impuesta. En realidad no sé qué soy” (130). The response that Nelly gives instantly destabilizes Moira’s concept of ‘Irishness’ which seems to be contingent upon certain physical features and a basic knowledge, at least, of Irish and English. For Nelly, any amount of ‘Irishness’ as part of her identity is undefined and confused rather than, as in the case of Moira, a basis for communal solidarity and sense of heritage and self. This moment seems to break from the notion of identity in which Greg Stone suggests that “a person’s identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself” (Stone in Burke 38). Although Stone emphasizes the “appearance and performance of one’s identity in interaction” (38), which is what Moira perceives, Nelly is unable to convene with her in terms of ‘Irishness’ because she does not see herself as ‘Irish,’ despite the fact that the former has already attempted to establish an ‘Irish identity’ in the latter without

⁷² In the first half of the novel while in New York Moira and Konrad meet in and later frequent “Mulligans Place”, an Irish pub which resembled a “speakeasy” because in the times of Prohibition its basement, “camuflado detrás de cajones vacíos, incansables alambiques producían el néctar que inspectores y policías de origen irlandés, debidamente atendidos, no querían ver” (41). Given the already noted propensity of the Irish to drink in excess, it should not be surprising that pubs figure so prominently as places of reunion for the Irish in diaspora.

success. Hence, within this diasporic space, while Moira has much less trouble maintaining her 'Irishness' than does Nelly, they are both liminal individuals with fringe identities. Nonetheless, when the two begin to talk about 'Irishness', they have entered into a dialogue that is taking place in "a fugal space 'in between each other' which is a communal space. They explore an 'interpersonal' reality: a social reality that appears...as if it were in parenthesis aesthetically distanced, held back, yet historically framed" (Bhabha 58). Through their conversation there exists an attempt to instantiate the links between them; however, the resulting 'link' appears initially frustrated due to Nelly's unstable identity. Yet later Nelly "se tomó la libertad de sentarse junto a ellos" (131) and instantiates a discourse about her family's migratory history. In this moment the ephemeral walls of social structure are broken down, "no one bothers about regulations...Communitas has given them this gift" (E. Turner 4). This 'gift' is that of unbridled communication, of a mutual likeability and each of their personalities "stands out in 3D" (4).

After her time in the province Moira has observed and collected more bits of data on the Irish-Argentine diasporic experience, "las que [fue] recopilando tras conocer a amigos y parientes de Cornelius...y también en sus reuniones sociales o religiosas (que para ellos son lo mismo)" (137). Following Cornelius' death and now back in Buenos Aires Moira pens her final letter to Allison in which she offers up her final impressions of the "colectividad irlandesa" (137). Moira notes the Irish tendency to leave the capital city, as if in a perpetual diaspora which took them into the pampas to "dedicarse a la agricultura y a la ganadería, principalmente la cría de ovejas" (137). The practices of agriculture and sheep farming are staples in Irish labor and trade,

thus Moira's reflection can also be read as more evidence of the diasporic Irish compulsion to replicate their homeland in this diaspora space while simultaneously detaching it from 'others' and making it that much more liminal. The "hiberno-argentinos"⁷³, as she refers to them, also relied on print media to reinforce the autonomy of their group. Moira mentions the well-known Irish-Argentine periodical of the time, "'The Southern Cross'⁷⁴ [que] los mantiene unidos y aislados, quién sabe hasta cuando" (138). Thanks in great part to this particular weekly publication written in English with a pro-Irish slant⁷⁵, the diasporic Irish were able to create a unified field of exchange and communication. This, according to Anderson, allowed members of speech communities like the diasporic Irish in Argentina 'who might [have found] it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, [to become] capable of comprehending one another via print and paper" (44). It also allowed them to see their identity reflected in a tangible, fixed medium, which in turn helped to solidify their community as singular and liminal.

The diasporic hybrid Irish as a speech community is as well a point of interest and criticism for Moira. In dismay she exclaims, "¡Y qué decir de su lenguaje? Lo que hablan es una misteriosa conjunción de inglés, gaélico y castellano. Te agarraría un ataque de sólo escuchar frases como "I'm afraid the food won't *alcanzar*" o "You are a bloody old *degenerado*". [...] Lo cómico es que los irlandeses argentinos tratan de preservar su unidad cuidando la lengua inglesa, ¡que no es la propia!" (138). Her

⁷³ "This is the name frequently given to Argentines of Irish origin and is derived from the word Hibernia, which comes from the Roman name for Ireland" (Cruset 49).

⁷⁴ *The Southern Cross* "was founded on 16th January 1875 by Dean Patrick Dillon," (About Us) a Roman Catholic priest and active politician born in Co. Galway, Ireland. It is considered "as the community's first organ of expression" (Korol 149) and was so adamant in its pro-Irish views that it "would burn everything British, except coal" (Pennington 283). It remains in print to this day.

⁷⁵ This may refer to publications with a sympathetic view towards Irish home rule or total independence from Great Britain.

disdain stems from the apparent irony of the circumstances and the distorted forms to which they have given way. However, as Turner notes, “among those of the same speech community, nonsense speech facilitates mutual love and virtue... Thus the expansive tendencies of *communitas* may touch off a repressive campaign by the structurally entrenched elements of society, which leads in turn to more active, even militant opposition by the communitarians” (51). Although there did exist opposing discourse at the time in the form of the newspaper *The Standard*⁷⁶, Moira is certainly not one of these ‘structurally entrenched elements’ of Argentine nor Irish-Argentine society. In her own words, “Si no fuera porque opté por estar sola, podría tratar de conocerlos mejor” (138). Opting for the solitary over the communal may for Moira be less of an option and more of an imposition placed upon her via her status as a liminal figure. Incapable of establishing genuine and enduring connections with other members of the *communitas*, she remains adrift and indeterminate until the last fragmented word of her narrative is written. Hence, like a figure caught in liminality, Moira has floated in and around, never out of, the diasporic Irish community and left it as she found it; in the liminal.

1937 was a watershed year in the life of Rodolfo Walsh and he was barely eleven years old. In what is perhaps his utmost personal work, a short story simply titled, “El 37,” the author recalls with astounding accuracy the events that would (re)shape his life. “Recuerdo el día: 5 de abril de 1937. Los cambios fueron tan

⁷⁶ *The Standard* was the first English language periodical in Argentina which ran from 1861-1959 and “during its long existence [had] been a steady supporter of British interests” (Pennington 282). Widely considered in the diasporic Irish community as an ‘anti-Irish’ or ‘pro-English’ publication, its founders, the brothers Michael and Edward Thomas Mulhall (both born in Dublin), are often referred to as ‘traitors.’ For more information on newspapers of Irish origin published in Argentina see Jorge Cernadas Fonsalías article “The Irish Struggle for Freedom as Seen from the Pampas. The formation of the Irish Free State and the Perception of the Irish-Argentine Community (1916-1922).” *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*. SILAS 7:1, (March 2009): 31-37.

rápidos, violentos, que hasta hoy me asombran. Todo estaba mal, absurdo equivocado” (481). The day in question in fact marked his arrival to Capilla de Señor, “un colegio de monjas irlandesas”, where he would spend a year then later pass over to “el Instituto Faghi de Moreno” from 1938-40. Both were strictly run Catholic schools for the sons (often orphans) of poor Irish immigrants in Argentina (Walsh 56). Written from the first person in his own voice, “El 37” reads like a nostalgic diary entry in which Walsh reveals his most intimate feelings and reflections of these pivotal years in his adolescence. Unlike the protagonist of his ‘Irish series’, el Gato, the author’s first pummeling did not come at the hands of the other Irish boys in the school but from “*miss* Annie”, one of the nuns and teachers who Walsh remembers as, “una viejita sádica, miserable” (483). From this moment on, violence became a constant component in Walsh’s life, whether he welcomed it or not. It was also a time that marked the beginning of his own journey into the liminal. In an anecdote the author includes about his English class with a new teacher, *miss* Jennie, Walsh describes the method she used to academically stimulate and hierarchically situate her pupils in class: “[*miss* Jennie] había dibujado en una gran cartulina blanca el Cielo y el Infierno: arriba, a la izquierda, estaba Dios Padre con su barba flotante y los brazos abiertos: abajo, a la derecha, se desgañitaba Satanás entre horribles llamaradas. En el espacio libre navegaba una bandada de veinte o treinta palomas pinchadas con alfileres. Se suponía que las palomitas éramos nosotros...No tardé en encabezar la flotilla celestial y tocaba ya los faldones del Creador cuando cometí algún horrible crimen, que he olvidado. Mi palomita se precipitó de cabeza en el fuego” (485). Floating in between the divine and the infernal, Walsh found himself pushed down

into the dark space of liminality. Because of this the author recalls, “No hice amigos, fui un extranjero” (485). With such a tumultuous experience in a liminal space and himself permeated with the attributes of a liminal figure, quite clearly Walsh’s ‘Irish series’ was fueled by his own intimacies and nightmares⁷⁷.

Over the breadth of the ‘Irish series,’ Walsh imagines and represents the Irish community in his fiction exclusively through the Instituto Fahy, his semi-fictionalized version of the isolated Catholic school for poor Irish boys outside Buenos Aires he attended in reality. Upon arriving at this bubble world, el Gato, his liminal hybrid Irish protagonist, suddenly finds himself “al borde del patio enumerado, inmerso, hondo como un pozo, rodeado en sus cuatro costados por las inmensas paredes que allá arriba cortaban una chapa metálica de cielo oscureciente” (89). The image of insularity that is the Instituto Fahy is reinforced by “esas paredes terribles, trepadoras y vertiginosas” (89) that separate it and its inhabitants from the external world. Within the confines of its walls el Gato becomes one of “los ciento treinta irlandeses” (89). This precise number Walsh reiterates again three times in “Un oscuro día de justicia”⁷⁸ (65, 75, 91) and by doing so, he strictly delineates the exact number of members who comprise this interstitial community. To further intensify the claustrophobic and apprehensive sensation of this communal diasporic Irish space, Walsh employs the terror of ever-immanent violence, not only from without but also

⁷⁷ In the first chapter I contend that many great critics and writers such as Pacheco, Verbitsky and Bertranou, to name only a few, have failed to truly ‘read the Irish’ in the ‘Irish series’, overlooking the intimate nature of the collection. Although I do not wish to be overcritical of their respective works for they are all accomplished scholars in their own right, I maintain that not one of them has offered critical readings of and reflections on Walsh as an Irish-Argentine writer, *Irish* being the operative word. Here I hope to at least begin to refocus, not rewrite, our understanding of Walsh and his literature.

⁷⁸ Curiously, however, there is no specific reference to the exact number of ‘130 irlandeses’ to be found in *Los oficios terrestres*.

from within, and informs the reader that “[el Gato] les temía [a los otros chicos irlandeses] intensamente, como se temía a sí mismo, a estas partes ocultas de su ser que hasta entonces solo se manifestaban en formas fugitivas, como sus sueños o sus insólitos ataques de cólera” (90). Unlike Moira who finds a contradictory solidarity among the diasporic Irish she meets, el Gato encounters disturbing reflections of himself, of his “Irish self,” in the faces and movements of his counterparts. However, much the same as Moira, el Gato is surrounded by members of an Irish community in a diasporic space which serves as a buffer zone between them and those who cannot, and therefore, do not form part of their community. As we noted previously, the Irish in Argentina would often pass themselves off as ‘ingleses’ in attempts to secure more prestigious positions in professional and public spheres. Yet, within the sanctity of the Instituto Fahy the discourse of its members reveals their true loyalties and concepts of who is ‘we’ and who are ‘they’ and the strategies they use to antagonize ‘others.’ As the “130 irlandeses” sit down for lunch one afternoon, feasting upon a seemingly endless banquet, “el obispo Usher” enters the dining hall to offer a few words of grace and camaraderie: “Bueno muchachos...me alegro comprobar que tienen estómagos tan capaces, y solamente espero que no sea necesario usar la sal inglesa que guardamos en la enfermería...cosa que sería de mal gusto...sin mencionar su dudoso patriotismo” (21). Obispo Usher’s humorous words, “detonando una enorme explosión de risa...renovada en círculos de incontrolable camaradería... [hizo que] el pueblo entero [volviera] a alzarse en un solo impulso de amor y de adhesión” (21). E. Turner would remind us here that these diasporic Irish have not necessarily formed a *communitas* per se, but instead instantiated “‘solidarity’ which is a bond between

individuals who are collectively in opposition to some other group...[the] unity in one group depends on the opposition of the alien group for its strength of feeling” (5).

However, as we have evidenced in Victor Turner’s writings, in normative *communitas* it is not uncommon for a group to use such tactics of isolation to ensure its permanence. In colloquial Irish speech to say, ‘the old enemy,’ is to refer to the English and in Turner’s words, if a normative *communitas* “did not “behold” their enemies, they would succumb to them” (49). The Instituto Fahy, then, has proven to be an exclusive diaspora space for the Irish in Argentina, one that, because of its precarious position in the world, resides steadfastly in the liminal.

What other symbols does Walsh employ that could be read as representations of the liminal status of the Instituto Fahy and its members? Guillermo Samperio comments that, “zonas grises de la realidad argentina bañan la literatura de Rodolfo J. Walsh” (36). As I also noted in chapter I, Walsh repeatedly uses the color ‘grey’ throughout the series to symbolize the in-betweenness of the Instituto Fahy and its inhabitants. This color is utterly fitting because it is the result of the meeting between polar opposites: white and black, day and night. In “Irlandeses detrás de un gato,” el Gato is portrayed with a “cara gris” (87) that carried an “odiosa sombra de un bigote gris” (97) on a head with “manchas amarillas y grises” (95). What is more, el Gato arrives at the Instituto Fahy in “la penumbra⁷⁹” wearing, like all the other boys⁸⁰, a “guardapolvo gris” (87). The author even writes that el Gato, “Parecía más enfermo, ladino y gris, incómodo para mirar” (95), heightening the sense of his alterity and strangeness through a grey, sickly mestizo exterior. Once and again Walsh recurs to

⁷⁹ See footnote 42.

⁸⁰ The ‘guardapolvo gris’ is not mentioned again until “Un oscuro día de justicia” when it is Gielty who is featured wearing his own (90, 92).

this color to symbolize not only el Gato's liminal, betwixt state but also to construct a similarly opaque image of the Instituto Fahy and its environment. Before reaching the climax of the "Irlandeses detrás de un gato" we see how, "el Gato se movía sin moverse, se deslizaba casi imperceptible y resbaloso y gris" (108). The movements of a grey and liminal body are not enough to escape capture and castigation, thus one of the boys rips off a piece of his grey overcoat, "y ese gran pedazo de tela gris fue llamado la Cola del Gato y llevado en triunfo desde entonces como un trofeo" (106). A sign of victory also becomes an emblem of what is held in the highest regard: the solitary moment anyone has been able to clutch and hold onto a piece of the liminal.

Later, in "Los oficios terrestres," the anonymous first person plural narrative voice has also attributed the grey and liminal status of el Gato to all of the one hundred and thirty Irish boys: "éramos muchos, indiferenciados y grises" (18). Each one of these Irish boys, including el Gato, has entered into a state of liminality and this is expressed again by the unknown first person plural narrative voice when it observes that this position is, "dejándonos de nuevo desmadrados y grises, superfluos y promiscuos, bajo la norma de hierro y la mano de hierro"⁸¹ (23). Motherless, like Cuca and Moira, El Gato and equally the interns of the Instituto Fahy are subject to the vagueness we have seen once and again directly associated with hybrid Irish diasporic liminal figures. Nonetheless, it is still el Gato who is the most symptomatic of a grey and liminal status as he remains, "indiferente y gris en la mañana indiferente y gris" (28). Even the nature that surrounds him begins to echo his irrelevant and

⁸¹ In our readings, 'hierro', may take on another level of significance beyond that of the well-known metaphor of the 'iron fist.' If we consider that 'iron' in its raw material state is grey in color, then it can be argued that Walsh has again managed to incisively add another level to the metaphor by reiterating the color he uses to portray liminality.

bleak nature. The same happens to el pequeño Dashwood who runs away from the Instituto Fahy and vanishes “entre los tardíos visitantes de la niebla” (33), which is to say in the middle of a hazy, grey fog, in an allusion to his uncertain, cloudy present and future.

There are several more moments that the Instituto Fahy itself is again described in the same opaque terms. We are informed through vivid imagery that, “el suelo era de piedra, grandes lajas de pizarras grises o celestes, pulidas por el tropel de las generaciones” (98). This diaspora space or liminal zone is permeated by the same grey characteristics as its inhabitants. Another way to read this relationship between the Instituto Fahy and figures like El Gato is to consider it a symbiotic one. Perhaps the greyness of its residents has transferred upon it their opacity and liminality and simultaneously the inverse is at play, the Instituto Fahy casting a grey shadow over the ‘130 irlandeses.’ Such a harmonious sharing of these attributes is observed in “la ascética belleza de cada piedra gris empinada en cada piedra gris hasta confundirse con el cielo de peltre⁸²” (30). The bleeding together of El Gato, the ‘130 irlandeses’ and the Instituto Fahy emphasizes the sense of liminal personae who inhabit an equally liminal space, all together in isolation.

In the final story, “Un oscuro día de justicia,” Walsh extends the community to include individuals who reside outside the Fahy, but their ability to make positive contributions is scrutinized as they do not demonstrate the greyness or liminality of it and its occupants. As previously mentioned tío Malcolm comes to the Instituto Fahy and is projected to defeat Gielty hands down. However, at the decisive moment in

⁸² ‘Peltre’ is defined by the DRAE as, “aleación de cinc, plomo y estaño.” Here it is employed metaphorically by Walsh to represent the color ‘grey.’

their battle Malcolm unwisely gives his opponent a brief instant of opportunity which Gielty uses to brutally best the outside invader and at that moment, “el pueblo aprendió que estaba solo, y que debía pelear por sí mismo...y que de su propia entraña sacaría los medios, el silencio, la astucia y la fuerza” (52). With this authorial comment, Walsh reveals the impenetrable insularity of the Fahy, of “el pueblo,” and that those outside its closed walls are powerless to correct the aberrant structures within. Sylvia Lago believes that Walsh utilizes violence among the members of this community to transform “el mundo dentro del colegio [en] el primer ring que los adiestra, inexorablemente, para la agresividad posterior que cada uno deberá enfrentar” (62). While Lago suggests that the “130 irlandeses” are learning survival skills for a life after their time in the Instituto Fahy, I believe this does not enter into Walsh’s series and therefore it holds little meaning beyond the immediate for hybrid Irish liminal figures like El Gato, Gielty or any of the rest. Roberto Esposito in his writing on *communitas* argues that there are two faces of it which should be uppermost in mind when discussing such phenomena. He states that, “*communitas* is simultaneously both the most suitable, indeed the sole, dimension of the animal “man,” but *communitas* is also its most potentially disintegrating impetus for a drift in meaning of that dimension of the animal “man.” Seen from this point of view, therefore, the community isn’t only to be identified with...the common “thing,” but rather is the hole into which the common thing continually risks falling, a sort of landslide produced laterally and within” (8). For Esposito, then, *communitas* threatens subjectivity because it represents a threshold which cannot be crossed nor left behind and at the same time a cavity into which individuality risks falling and

being lost. Under these terms the *communitas* within the Instituto Fahy has been brought down in this landslide and its members act as a savagely violent collective with little or no power as individuals to drag themselves from the liminal abyss. Much like in Anderson's model, the community is above all and this, in turn, generates colossal sacrifices on the part of its members. Walsh has demonstrated these sacrifices to be made upon the bodies of hybrid Irish diasporic figures through the sacrament of inner-community conflict.

3.6 Beyond the series

Although never finished, the fourth installment in the series “*mi tío Willy que ganó la guerra*” would have represented an imaginary escape through the life of an individual outside the restrictions of the Instituto Fahy. Willy's fantastic journey beginning in Egypt, taking him to Greece and ending with his “dying dialogue with the priest” (229) in an undetermined location could have represented a complete rupture from the course of the Irish series as it was left off in “*Un oscuro día de justicia*.” The setting, ‘*una enfermería*,’ may still be inside the Instituto Fahy and therefore the interned boys would never have left its confines. However, this would have allowed Walsh to explore, through fantastic imagination, the wanderings and adventures of a diasporic Irish individual whose life serves as an inspiration for something new and bold, a glimpse into the exterior world for the young patients in the sick ward. Nonetheless, like the intervention made by tío Malcolm, tío Willy's involvement in the series turned out not to live up to such lofty expectations. Hence, “*el ciclo de Los irlandeses*” was and never will be a ‘cycle’ at all. Interrupted and

incomplete as the narratives are, Walsh could not bring the narrative full circle and instead we have the stories of liminal hybrid Irish figures caught in a grey zone which is itself trapped in time. Michael McCaughan in his inimitable study, *True Crimes: Rodolfo Walsh*, visited the Instituto Fahy in the early 2000s. His impressions are unequivocally marked by a space untouched by the passing of time or onset of modernity. McCaughan observed that even, “the fittings are identical to the first day the school was opened in 1930; the only concession to modern days is a boiler, hot water having replaced the cold water purgatory of yesteryear” (34). As well, the ‘colegio’ still has an overwhelming Irish presence, one readily appreciable by the list of Irish surnames which comprise the list of currently enrolled students. Perhaps Walsh was more prophetic in his portrayal of the Instituto Fahy and its pupils than he could have ever known or had been thought possible before now.

3.7 Supplementary Comments

Joyce ends his short story “Eveline” with the image of Frank as he leaves Ireland and Eveline’s eyes, like the cold eyes of a stagnant and unforgiving Irish nation, “gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition” (34). For Joyce, the vacancy of emotion in her stare represents the irreparable rupture diaspora has created between the diasporic Irish and the homebound Irish in Ireland. At the other extreme, while Argentina “grappled with forging a sense of nation state,” the Irish diaspora community “struggled equally to reconcile its own internal conflict in reasserting an Irish identity” (Kelly 157) and subsequently disrupted the formation of a monolithic Argentine nation state and singular concept of ‘Irishness.’ Thus, neither Walsh nor

Delaney employs his fictional characters to evoke nostalgia for the homeland, much less a dramatic return to it. Instead when read against each other and through a lens of 'Irishness', we find that each author has chosen to elucidate the inner-workings of a disruptive community, a community in an unresolved conflict with its own insular in-betweeness. On his part, Delaney portrays Moira as an Irish-American in the course of a never-ending diaspora which evokes perpetual liminality. As she is never truly settled in one place nor able to be, Moira drifts aimlessly and it is only her scattered letters which offer a modicum of tangible observation. However, even these are incomplete and broken; thus we as readers are challenged to fill in the spaces which would complete the images of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina that Moira did not. Because the motif of death and the phantasmagoric factor so heavily in Delaney's novel, we are left with the sense of having read a chronicle-style obituary rather than a diaspora novel. Hence, the author has successfully balanced historical fiction and the genre of ghost stories, the fixed and the betwixt, in a way that informs as much as it begs further inquiry. What is certain is that Delaney represents the Irish diaspora community as a liminal group which has yet to resolve its dysfunctional dealings with 'others' and take the final step into reaggregation and out of liminality.

Walsh, in much the same way, depicts a microcosm of the Irish diaspora community in Argentina and intensifies even more so the sensation of inescapable claustrophobia among its members. Although Moira's life is lived in full color, El Gato, his classmates and the Instituto Fahy dwell in pure grey without the vivid extremes of the rainbow to offer relief to their monotonous and mind-numbing environment. It should be no surprise, then, that the sole form of stimulus and release

for pent-up angst comes in violent outbursts among fellow members of the same insular community. El Gato may be fixed in one place, his diasporic wanderings behind him, yet his liminal state is perpetual for there is no escape, no world outside the Fahy for him or the '130 irlandeses.' The use of narrative liminality, as we have seen, serves to underscore the liminal state of these hybrid Irish figures in both works. The disruption caused by the shifting of focus in each narrative also causes not only a disruption in the manner in which we read their stories but also the ways in which we understand the Irish diaspora. Generally considered a stable and archetypal diaspora group, the Irish diaspora can instead be viewed as a perpetually liminal, deviant community whose narratives challenge the ways in which we have contemplated them thus far.

Chapter 4

4.1 The Irish in Mexico; El Batallón de los San Patricios

From the previous chapter focused on the Irish-Argentine community and its representations in literature as a liminal, disruptive community, I now turn my attention to the diasporic Irish in Mexico. Such a shift in concentration almost inevitably brings us to read about el Batallón de San Patricio or the Saint Patrick's Battalion.⁸³ The story of this group of downtrodden, emigrant Irish men who changed alliances during the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848) to fight for the latter, is one that had been largely forgotten or overlooked by North American historians until recent years. Any references to the group found in historical texts in the decades before the 1980s were always very brief and convoluted.⁸⁴ Historian Mark Day in his documentary from 1996 titled, "The San Patricios," begins by addressing this issue when he states that, "History has labeled them traitors and misfits who betrayed the flag of their newly adopted country, but others revere them as heroes. To this day Mexicans honor them each year with a special ceremony [because these Irish

⁸³ Besides el Batallón de San Patricio, there are few Irish or hybrid Irish offspring to have made a recognizable impact in Mexican culture and society. One notable example is Irish-Mexican architect Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982), son of Irish painter Cecil Crawford O'Gorman and Mexican mother Encarnación O'Gorman Moreno. His murals, which cover the four sides of the *Biblioteca Central* (approximately four thousand square meters) of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), are still celebrated and considered national treasures to this day.

⁸⁴ Some early references we find in Robert Selph Henry's text, *The Story of the Mexican War*, published in 1950. Henry first comments passingly on the San Patricios' motives for deserting, reasoning that, "the life of a soldier was hard and monotonous and army discipline harsh and rigid" (45). They only appear twice more over the breadth of his work; once in reference to their skill with guns at the battle of Churubusco (342) and lastly in regards to the punishments they received after being caught, tried and convicted of desertion (368). It was not until 1984 that Dennis J. Wynn wrote a manuscript, *The San Patricio Soldiers: Mexico's Foreign Legion*, which provided more detailed and carefully documented research focused on the battalion. He later used this material for his dissertation in history. See bibliography.

soldiers] came to their defense in Mexico's darkest hour" (Day). Although Mexico lost the war with the U.S., Day elucidates how their story still plays an important role in the political, historical and cultural imaginaries of the nation as a victim of American imperialism and the unwarranted invasion and appropriation of much of its territories. Dedicated in September of 1959, a large marble plaque in the Plaza San Jacinto, located in the San Ángel⁸⁵ neighborhood in the south of Mexico City, reads, "En Memoria de los soldados Irlandeses del heroico Batallón de San Patricio mártires que dieron su vida por la causa de México en la injusta invasión norteamericana de 1847."⁸⁶ This touching memorial demonstrates the nostalgic space the San Patricios occupy in the Mexican national narrative for their honorable and sacrificial acts and, "every year in Mexico there are two days where the San Patricios are celebrated, September 12, the anniversary of the execution of the soldiers who were captured, and March 17, Saint Patrick's Day" (Salas 1). During these ceremonies, as evidenced in Day's video-documentary, the names of the Irish members of the San Patricios are read aloud and after each one the multitude of spectators shouts, "¡Murió por México!"⁸⁷ The members of the San Patricios have long been remembered as defenders of the oppressed and martyrs in both Mexico and Ireland. Yet, how have academics and artists approached such an emotionally charged narrative ringing with so many political, historical and cultural undertones? Needless to say, the political tensions between the U.S. and Mexico have only built up in the almost 170 years since this initial confrontation. It thus remains a point of contention among the two

⁸⁵ Although since 1931 the official name of the town has been Villa Obregón, the old name persists.

⁸⁶ The plaque was designed by sculptor Lorenzo Rafael, son of Patricia Bustamante Cox whose novel, "Batallón de San Patricio," will be thoroughly analyzed in this chapter.

⁸⁷ Here I prefer to cite Day, who offers videographic evidence with audio of these ceremonies, instead of Robert Miller who writes the choral exclamation as, "Murió por la patria" (183).

nations. For the U.S. it is a shameful manifestation of imperialist destiny and, therefore, one to be conveniently disremembered or, worse yet, recalled in half-truths of self-vindication. But for Mexico the loss of its territories represents a severed limb and the blow to the nation's pride and abstraction from many of its citizens remain looming wounds which will not heal. Amid all this, the story of the San Patricios is one still shrouded in a type of mysticism and fantastic speculation that has increased not only the interest of cultural and literary studies but also historical inquiry.

In recent years there have been three notable historians to concern themselves with researching the San Patricios. The first, Robert Ryal Miller, released his study, *Shamrock and Sword*, in 1989. Miller's is the first work of serious historical scholarship on the San Patricios that offers empirical evidence, illustrations and photographic evidence, with an objective narration which takes the reader through the most important political and military events surrounding all who were involved on both sides of the conflict. As well Miller includes an appendix with a roster of known San Patricios, their birthplaces, dates of desertion and a cross next to the names of those who were convicted of treason and hung to death by the U.S. armed forces. Near the end of his study Miller dedicates the final chapter to addressing the "myths and realities" of the San Patricios. Here the author argues that the legend of the San Patricios had been augmented and distorted in 1960 when the federal mint in Mexico City issued silver medals honoring the battalion (Van Wagenen 177). These medals immediately came under high demand and so did the accompanying pamphlet which told a highly fictionalized version of their story. The colorful brochure portrays them as a unit of "Irish Catholics who fled Protestant persecution in Ireland and settled in

San Patricio, Texas” (Miller 184). It also claims that these Irish emigrants were forced to fight against Mexico by Stephen Austin⁸⁸, overlooking the fact that he died a decade before the start of the war (184). Due to so many inconsistencies and his own desire for historical accuracy, Miller concludes that the tale of the San Patricios is not, “as it has often been depicted in Mexico, a romantic tale of gallant Catholic Irishmen...rather...it is a woeful story of naïve and bewildered young men...many of whom were tempted by alcohol and opportunism” (184). However, what Miller himself has overlooked are the rich and meaningful contributions these types of fictionalized narratives make not to our rational and empirical understanding of history, but to our emotional and imaginative connection with the past and those who have since passed on.

The second work, *The Irish Soldiers of Mexico* (1997), was written by Michael Hogan, seemingly with a pen in one hand and his heart in the other. In the preface to his book Hogan explains that his interest in the San Patricios emerged from a brief article he once read by Fairfax Downey, published in 1956, entitled “The Tragic Story of the San Patricio Battalion” (11). Disillusioned by garbled facts and Downey’s own biased point of view, Hogan began to conduct his own research in Mexico on the San Patricios beginning in 1989 (12-13). Well aware of Miller’s previous research, Hogan differs from this earlier work by approaching not only Mexican sources of historical data, whereas the bulk of Miller’s research was focused on U.S. sources, but also giving a close examination of the San Patricios in combat. By doing so Hogan argues that this is “especially instructive because we see them,

⁸⁸ Stephen Fuller Austin (1793-1836) is known as the “Father of Texas” for leading the first successful colonization of what is now the state of Texas.

not as a ragtag group of deserters, but as a disciplined and inspired fighting unit” (14). The author, like Miller, includes photographs of important landmarks in Mexico where the San Patricios participated in hostilities. However, unlike Miller, Hogan’s images are less academic in their aspect and he even appears in one himself, giving it an undeniable touristic quality. Although Hogan’s study is less subjective than Miller’s, the former has clearly done extensive research in Mexico and from a Mexican perspective which has helped to balance the historical archive and discourse on the San Patricios.

The final study in this trinity of contentious historicity is Peter Steven’s *The Rogue’s March*, published in 1999. Stevens, much like Hogan, relies on emotional and heroic jargon to appeal to the reader’s empathies. Chapter and subchapter titles such as, “To Attain My Former Rank or Die,” “In High Disgrace the Holy Banner of St. Patrick,” or “Back from the Lips of Fame” reveal the author’s melodramatic exuberance. Yet his, like the other two texts, unvaryingly follows the course of the San Patricios from the moments leading up to the war and ends with similar reflections and commentaries from a present-day perspective. When read against one another, these three historical texts form a veritable Bermuda triangle of factual counterpoints and patriotic passions. It is easy for a reader to become entangled and disoriented since there is no single, definitive version of the story of the San Patricios that would withstand all historical scrutiny.⁸⁹ For this project, I see these texts as valuable resources that inform our historical understanding of the San Patricios, each

⁸⁹ Though Hogan asserts he has greatly diverged from Miller in his approach to the study of the San Patricios he still states that, “I acknowledge my huge debt to Robert Ryal Miller, whose book... is the definitive work to date” (13-14). Likewise, Michael Van Wagenen feels that Miller is, “the foremost scholar of the San Patricios” (177). It is also noteworthy that Miller and Stevens are interviewed on camera in Day’s documentary while Hogan does not appear at all.

in its own unique and respectable way. However, because my project is centered on literary representations of the diasporic Irish in the Caribbean and Latin America as liminal figures, I will only make reference to these texts as they help to answer some of the historical and social questions raised in literary production pertaining to the San Patricios.

Before we enter into our literary analysis of fictional representations of the San Patricios, it is important to address some of the motivating factors for the battalion's inception as elucidated by Day, Miller, Hogan, Stevens and similar scholars. Hence, the question is quite simple; why did these Irishmen change allegiance and uniforms in the midst of the U.S.-Mexican War? Unfortunately, the possible answers are not as straightforward as the question. As noted in the previous chapter, Hogan comments that the Irish who arrived in the United States during the mid-portion of the nineteenth century often found a nation that was unwelcoming and even hostile towards their presence. Not only was this the result of an anti-Irish sentiment that had carried over from across the Atlantic to colonial America but it was also propelled by several other factors. First of all, during the period of the Great Famine, of the 8 million inhabitants of Ireland, 3.5 million Irish lived in total destitution and their only means of salvation was immigration (Day). In his documentary Day cites James Hack Took, a British Quaker of the period, who claims, "I have visited the wasted remnants of the once noble Redman and explored the Negro quarters of the enslaved Africans but never I have I seen misery so intense or physical degradation so complete as among the dwellers of the bog holes of Ireland" (Day). Arriving in such a miserable state as immigrants certainly did little to impress,

much less win over, the already established and controlling groups in the U.S. Newspapers and magazines at the time, “portrayed these newcomers as ne’er-do-wells with simian features” (Day) and this only served to heighten animosities towards the diasporic Irish. As enlisted soldiers, the Irish would often face incommensurate “official” punishments for trivial offenses. Stevens asserts that, “while most officers and noncoms applied ironfisted discipline...the foreign-born soldier, especially if he happened to be Irish or German, automatically received a harsher sentence than a native American would for the same offense” (52). Even before deserting it must have seemed to these diasporic Irishmen that native-born American soldiers were already their adversaries and not their allies.

Another crucial factor was their Catholic religion. Anglo-America was decidedly Protestant and these “Nativists linked papist immigration to crime and rising moral decay” (Stevens 25). Ironically, the price of religious freedom in America would have cost the Irish their Catholicism. This same Nativist prejudice was widespread in the American army. As Miller points out, “Irishmen were disparagingly called “micks” or “potato heads”—and discriminated against, often being passed over for promotion” (161-2). Mexico, to the contrary, was and still is, a Catholic country, which has led many scholars speculate that the familiar sound of church bells calling to mass across the border were like a siren’s song to weary and lost sailors for the Irish soldiers in the U.S. army. Well aware of their shared religion Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794-1876), the eighth president of Mexico, released a handbill in April 1847 that appealed to the supposed bond among Catholics: “Irishmen—Listen to the words of your brothers, hear the accents of a Catholic

people...Sons of Ireland! Have you forgotten that in any Spanish country it is sufficient to claim Ireland as your home to meet with a friendly reception from authorities and citizens? Our religion is the strongest of bonds...May Mexicans and Irishmen, united by the sacred tie of religion and benevolence, form only one people” (quoted in Stevens 221-222). Also, because of “the absence of Catholic chaplains in the United States Army...priests in Mexico [had] an unusual opportunity to influence Catholic soldiers who were in American forces” (Miller 157). However, having their Catholic beliefs and faith played upon by Mexican politicians and priests was not the only reason for them to defect. The diasporic Irish were to be discriminated against in America for racial reasons as well. Noel Ignatiev in his book, *How the Irish became White*, tells us that, “They [the Irish] came to a society in which color was important in determining social position. It was not a pattern they were familiar with and they bore no responsibility for it” (2). For the diasporic Irish it was a matter of urgency to try to come into the fold of “whiteness” in order to ensure much needed advantages in a competitive, capitalist society.⁹⁰ Obviously, this was no simple matter. The diasporic Irish “commonly found themselves thrown together with free Negroes...and [they] developed a common culture of the lowly” (2). In the words of Art McDonald, “becoming white [would mean] losing their greenness i.e. the Irish cultural heritage and the legacy of oppression and discrimination back home” (5). However, many diasporic Irish seemed less concerned with a legacy they were attempting to leave behind and more so with redefining themselves in a new society. As Anzaldúa observes of North American society, “the only ‘legitimate’ inhabitants are...the

⁹⁰ Ignatiev dedicates a single paragraph specifically on the San Patricios in which he declares his beliefs that they were chiefly, “motivated by solidarity between Catholics, opposition to slavery, promises of land, and romance... [to fight] on Mexico’s side during the War” (161).

whites and those who align themselves with whites” (25-26). The justification of racial superiority is one that, sadly, helped shape the geographic and social parameters of the U.S. as it is to this day. To support claims of the non-white status of the Irish, many turned to science to provide irrefutable evidence. This tactic is explained in detail by Hogan:

Phrenology was a popular pseudo-science in the 1840’s and, besides the Negro, only the Irish were subjected to the degree of degradation and reductionism which was applied to the Mexicans. With the Irish, the more respectable science of physiology was invoked as well. The short full figures of the Irish indicated they were “inactive, slothful and lazy.” This was a stereotype also applied to Mexicans. The coarse red hair of the Irish showed that they were “excitable and gushing.” Their ruddy complexions indicated they were selfish, with “hearty animal passions.” Irishmen of this period are variously described as having a “hanging bone gait...the low brow denoting the serf of fifty descents...dark eyes sunken beneath the compressed brows” with a look of “savage ferocity” (97-98)

Based on this “scientific evidence” the diasporic Irish, like the Negro or the Mexican⁹¹, were part of an inferior race, a non-white race, which was unworthy of the social categorization of “white” and all the advantages that came with it. These age-

⁹¹ The American hegemonic national discourse in favor of the expansionist war also promoted these types of notions of white superiority. Day offers evidence from *The Illinois State Register* which at the time published the following: “Mexicans are reptiles in the path of democracy, they must either crawl or be crushed.”

old stereotypes, which have appeared once and again over the course of this project, seem to have followed the Irish in whatever diaspora space they occupy.

The final and most common of these stereotypes is the Irish propensity for alcohol. Unsurprisingly, this affinity for the drink comes up again as a motive in their desertion and subsequent formation of the San Patricio Battalion. Peadar Kirby cites North American historian Richard Blaine McCormack who sharply concludes that, “it was not religion or material gain which lured them over but drink!” (104). With a modicum more of objectivity Michael Connaughton in his article on the San Patricios notes that there are, “other prejudiced opinions...[which] assert that alcohol was their primary incentive” (55). The main sources for such claims are the scattered U.S. military court transcripts from the trials of the captured San Patricios. In attempts to avoid the gallows for their desertion, many former members of the San Patricios astutely blamed poor judgment induced by alcohol as the reason for their abandonment.⁹² If we take into account that officially accepting any other “true motivation” for their traitorous acts would have resulted in their death, then, as Kirby asserts, “such transcripts are hardly the most reliable source for their true motives” (104). Of course, with all of these factors at play simultaneously, it is most likely that they all influenced each diasporic Irishmen to a varying degree, but ultimately to continue a liminal journey they had begun by leaving Ireland. Therefore, I contend that the tale of the San Patricios is one which can be read through the liminal process just as we have done in the previous chapters of this study with the narratives of the diasporic Irish in numerous diaspora spaces and literary imaginaries.

⁹² Miller offers evidence which claims that, “of seventy-two San Patricios who were captured by Americans and brought to trial near Mexico City, twenty-nine claimed drunkenness as their excuse for being absent without leave” (151).

There is no shortage of fiction, semi-fictional or even historical literature about the San Patricios. In 1999 there was even a Hollywood film production titled, *One Man's Hero*, starring Tom Berenger as the enigmatic leader of the San Patricios, John Riley. This movie, like Daniel Molina Álvarez's 2002 epistolary novel, *Memorias de John Reilly (Batallón de San Patricio)*, uses this key figure and organizer of the San Patricios as its protagonist. Both of these works relate the story of the San Patricios from Riley's perspective as catalyst for and unfaltering hero of the battalion. Yet, according to Miller, "very little biographical data is known about Riley, and existing facts are conflicting...[and] one of the confusing factors about John Riley...are variations of spelling of his surname" (26). Miller offers U.S. Army records that refer to John Riley as, "Riely, Reilly, O'Rielly" and likewise documents from the Mexican military list him as, "Juan Reyle, Reley, Reely y Reiley" (26). This lack of consensus even as to his name is symbolic of the mysticism surrounding him and all of the San Patricios which has allowed their story to be tremendously dramatized. What is widely accepted to be known about Riley is that he was born on the outskirts of the small west-coast town of Clifden in County Galway, Ireland, sometime between 1812 and 1817 (26). He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1845 (26) and by April of the following year had recruited 48 Irishmen to fight with him under the Mexican flag (Hogan 41).⁹³ Described as tall, broad shouldered, muscular with a ruddy complexion, dark hair and blue eyes, Riley without a doubt represents the archetypal hero figure that a tale such as the San Patricios would need to appeal to a wide, international audience. Nevertheless, for my study I have chosen two literary texts which place Riley in a space of narrative liminality and bring to the frontlines

⁹³ By August of that same year, as Hogan claims, that "number had swollen to over two hundred" (41).

other members of the San Patricios as their respective protagonists. The first work is Mexican author Patricia Bustamante Cox's novel *Batallón de San Patricio* written in Spanish and published in 1954. Cox, who is a first generation hybrid Irish-Mexican born in Oaxaca in 1911⁹⁴, only became interested in the San Patricios when she accidentally happened upon a small plaque commemorating them in the Convent of Churubusco, the site where the battalion made its final and unsuccessful stand against American troops.⁹⁵

The second novel I will analyze in tandem with that of Cox was written by American novelist, screenwriter and film producer Carl Krueger. His work, titled, *Saint Patrick's Battalion*, was first published in 1960 in English and failed to gain the readership that Cox's novel did at the time and to date, has continued to be the lesser known text. Krueger, who is credited as having written and produced four films about the U.S. military and several wars in which it was involved,⁹⁶ departed somewhat from his usual patriotic perspective to complete his work on the San Patricios. This is rather strange because, unlike Cox who had an ancestral interest in the Irish in

⁹⁴ Baptized as Manuela Bustamante Cox, she is better known by her pseudonym Patricia Cox. However, Ruben Vasconcelos Beltrán in a 2015 article names her as "Marianela Bustamante Cox" (Vasconcelos). Also, although she was born in Mexico Van Wagenen in his study categorizes her as "an Irish immigrant" (176).

⁹⁵ The small Convent, located in the historic Coyoacán neighborhood of Mexico City, still stands to this day. It now houses the "Interventions Museum" (*Museo de las Intervenciones*), which chronicles the different foreign assaults on Mexican territory since declaring its independence as a nation in 1810. In the same neighborhood two streets have been named in honor of the San Patricios: Calle Mártires Irlandeses and Calle Irlanda. Appearing in an interview in Day's documentary, which he dedicates to the author in the final credits, Cox recalls that a security guard at the Convent recognized Irish features in her, such as Cox's blue eyes and light skin tone, and asked her if she was a foreigner. The author replied, "Soy mexicana con raíces irlandesas," and this was enough for the watchman to show her to the obscured commemorative plaque for the Irish soldiers. This moment inspired Cox not only to pen her novel but to also organize and participate in annual ceremonies dedicated to the San Patricios until her death in 1996.

⁹⁶ (1908-1978): His film credits as screenwriter/producer include: the documentary short *Thunderbolt* (1947), and the feature length films *The Golden Gloves Story* (1950), *Sabre Jet* (1953) and *Comanche* (1956) (Carl Krueger).

Mexico, Krueger wrote in the “Author’s Note” of his final novel, *Wings of the Tiger* (1966), that, “to a novel I could add personal views of pure Americana—views I believe not only to be my own but also those of millions of Americans who desperately want to wave the flag; who are chauvinistic, patriotic Americans in the old-fashioned sense; who support our President as Commander-in-Chief and let the dissidents fall where they may!” (xxi). Such a unilateral American patriotism seems incompatible with anyone who would write sympathetically of the San Patricios, yet, we have his novel as evidence to the contrary. So, why have I chosen to put these two particular novels into dialogue in my efforts to read the San Patricios as a diasporic Irish liminal group in Mexico? To begin, these are the first two novels written on the story of the San Patricios and therefore offer narratives less influenced by later historical texts and more so by each author’s literary creativity. Dissimilar to Hogan who only finds a “passing interest” in these novels because Cox’s “makes much of the courage of the Battalion and [Krueger’s]...of their Catholicity,” I view them as important sources of fictional testimony which inform a more vivid understanding of historical events. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I argue that in reading a novel in Spanish by a Mexican writer against one written in English by an American author creates a cross-border dialogue that will reveal through confluences and contrasts the ways in which we can better comprehend these diasporic Irish as figures caught in spaces of liminality. Besides reading their stories through the lens of liminality as a process, we must bear in mind Anzaldúa’s theorizations of *borderlands* and how they function in terms of the San Patricios. From Anzaldúa’s perspective and temporal context, the *borderlands* “is a vague and undetermined

place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition” (25). This transitory and unnatural space has created an antagonistic dichotomy in which, “los Chicanos straddle the borderlands...[and] distinguish between *mexicanos del otro lado y mexicanos de este lado*” (84). A *borderlands*, then, is not a place of convergence or productive interpersonal exchange but instead, “a liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference” (Bhabha 148). What I contend is that the space Anzaldúa has appropriately designated as a *borderlands* is in fact a “liminal space,” as Bhabha puts it, shaped in great part by the futile struggles of the diasporic Irish, its vague and wavy frontiers outlined in their blood. Because I read the San Patricios as diasporic Irish liminal figures, they can also be understood in Klapcsik’s terms as occupying a zone of “liminality [that] is created by transgressions, or traversals, across *evanescent, porous, indefinite, ambiguous, evasive borderlines* (14).

As we shall also witness, an important part of Anzaldúa’s concepts of *borderlands* subjects echo the characteristics of the San Patricios as diasporic liminal figures. In one of the author’s most poignant metaphors she forms as an Aesopian analogy; “I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry “home” on my back” (43). We could effectively argue that the members of the San Patricio lived in much the same way. Although Anzaldúa’s metaphor is quite clever, it fails in one crucial aspect; the “home” of the turtle is its shell which acts like a natural and permanent armor against external forces. This being true, then *borderlands* subjects would not feel so constantly subjected to hostilities and eminent physical harm as she claims they often

do. There would be no struggle or sense of indetermination because the solidarity and security of home would be in fact innate and inextricable. Just the same, the members of the San Patricios carry rosaries and guns, their own form of armaments, but their search for a sense of “home” is fruitless because, like the Chicana/o, the liminal space they occupy cannot provide them what a “home” could. In the sections that follow I will put forth my readings of both literary texts, taking the time to explore how each stage in the liminal process is portrayed by Cox and Krueger in their works. I emphasize that my analysis, though informed by historians such as Day, Miller, Hogan and Stevens, is literary in its purpose and underpinnings. Therefore, I set aside absolute historical accuracy in favor of creative literary license to examine and analyze the story of the San Patricios.

4.2 Liminality and the Liminal Process in Cox and Krueger

Cox centers her novel on Juan O’Leary, a young Irishman from Carrickmacross⁹⁷ who was raised by his mother Dominick O’Donell (70). Like all of the diasporic Irish liminal figures, both hybrid and pure Irish, O’Leary grows up abstracted from one of his Irish parents; “Juan casi no conocía a su padre” (71). Paradigmatically, then, he was also born into a state of familial incompleteness stemming from the absence of his father. Growing up a “pobre campesino irlandés católico” (81), O’Leary received religious and practical education from “el padre Jim O’Hanlon” in which he, “conoció tantas cosas que hubo vez que llegara a preguntarse lo que hubiera sido de él y de sus compañeros si el sacerdote no los hubiera amparado

⁹⁷ A large town in County Monaghan, northeastern Ireland, near the border with Northern Ireland.

y enseñado” (73). O’Leary is also described as a lover of horses and his beloved “potrillo” (73) is the only remnant that his father left behind, “atado a la puerta del corral” (73), before suddenly abandoning his son and wife. On one of his frequent rides in the countryside, now a young man, O’Leary meets Deirdre, “una muchacha libre y encantadora, llena de esa plenitud radiante que trascienden los valles de Irlanda” (76). Unaware that Dierdre is the daughter of a noble Englishman, she and O’Leary “se amaron con el alocado impulso de la juventud y su felicidad parecía tan eterna como los viejos cantos poéticos de la isla” (76). However, one day O’Leary leaves his house to find that his horse has been claimed by an Englishman who has as well appropriated land from the poor villagers and lives in a nearby castle. When O’Leary confronts him to rightfully reclaim his horse, he becomes distraught to find that the thieving Brit is in fact Deirdre’s father. Only because of his daughter’s pleas, the English nobleman returns the horse to O’Leary who felt, “humillado y salió masticando su rabia y vergüenza” (79). Determined to have his vengeance not only for his own humiliation but also for that of all the Irish men and women in the town who had their properties stolen by the English, O’Leary formulates a plan in which, “le arrebataría al inglés su más preciado tesoro...” (79). What he eventually does is to impregnate Deirdre, an act that backfires on him in two ways. First, O’Leary is scolded by father O’Hanlon, “de haber vengado el agravio del inglés en la inocencia de su hija” (80), not to mention for also having conceived a child out of wedlock which constitutes a serious moral offense in Catholic doctrine. Secondly, when Deirdre’s father finds out about her pregnancy and the identity of the unborn child’s father, he swiftly takes her away from Carrickmacross and Ireland altogether while,

“a la orilla del camino, montado en su caballo, O’Leary la miró partir” (82). This brief biography of O’Leary gives much insight into his somewhat troubled upbringing and his motives for so intensely disliking the English and their imperialist practices. It does not, however, begin Cox’s narration of the events in his life but rather appears until the eighth chapter of the novel in a flashback. Consequently, this allows for a more liminal kind of commencement to the narrative.

In the same way as the hybrid diasporic Irish liminal figures discussed in the previous chapters, O’Leary’s narrative begins with him as a protagonist already in the intervening or liminal phase of the liminal process. This, as we shall also evidence in our analysis of Krueger’s text, is rather unusual in retellings of the San Patricios because they almost always start with the members of the San Patricios still on the side of the Americans before their desertion.⁹⁸ In that way, we would read of the San Patricios just as they are taking the first steps into the liminal process by separating themselves from a fixed position in society (i.e. first emigrating from Ireland and then abandoning their positions among the ranks of American infantry as foreign conscripts or legalized U.S. citizens). Nonetheless, Cox opts to commence her novel with O’Leary gravely wounded from engaging in battle with U.S. forces while fighting for Mexico. We initially read that he, “rondaba la muerte, su cuerpo dolorido y maltrecho” (9). Commencing with O’Leary already having traded sides, Cox employs a disjointed narrative sequence to dramatically recount the tragic losses suffered by the Mexican army and the San Patricios. During these scenes we have another example of narrative liminality as O’Leary occupies a role in the second lines

⁹⁸ For examples of this see *One Man’s Hero* and Carlos H. Cantú’s novel, *Los colorados del San Patricio* (1997).

of the text, relegated to a minor role in the omniscient narrator's presentation. To achieve this Cox maintains the protagonist in a liminal state she equates to a waking-dream and allows the omniscient narrator to retell several of the final battles from a harrowing and heartbroken Mexican perspective. Later, O'Leary reenters the narrative and several chapters begin by establishing and reestablishing his indeterminate state: "Era una sensación nueva y extraña, como el despertar de un sueño donde se confundieron la vida con la muerte. ¿Cuándo había empezado a morir, o era sólo un fantasma arrancado a la catástrofe? (67). In the following chapter, like a betwixt ghost, "Juan O'Leary seguía confuso, flotando aún entre lo pasado y lo presente, sin sentir el peso de su cuerpo ni el dolor de sus heridas" (83). In a plot twist permitted by her non-linear narrative style, we later find that O'Leary's current near-death condition is in fact the result of his first participation in U.S.-Mexican hostilities, however, on that occasion he was still fighting in defense of the former. In this isolated confrontation resulting in a momentary defeat for the U.S., the victorious "guerrillero Cayetano Uribe...lo había encontrado [a O'Leary] gravemente herido en el Desfiladero de Piñones" (103). Against the protest of his men, Uribe decides to help the fallen soldier because he worryingly exclaims, "¡Y si fuera uno de los valientes del San Patricio!" (103). To O'Leary's great fortune, Uribe turns out to be a magnanimous man who imbues, "la reciedumbre de la hidalguía mexicana" (104), and because the San Patricios had already garnered fame among the Mexicans for fighting on their side in previous battles against the invading Americans, he brings the moribund Irishman with him to his base camp in the small town of San Lorenzo. Thus, we have discovered that his liminal journey has now begun, not at the onset of

the narrative, but deeper into its pages initiated by the diasporic Irish liminal figure reaching the threshold between life and death while traversing a conflictive indeterminate space. Now firmly entrenched in a phantasmagoric realm, O'Leary will need the assistance of a non-liminal figure to find his way through this intervening phase; "Así fué como un día, Juan O'Leary entró en la vida de Constanica, como un niño necesitado de cuidados y cariño" (103). So it is to be Constanica, a young and alluring Mexican, whose name even alludes to the stability she can offer a diasporic Irish liminal figure, which will nurse him back to health and, in a way, oversee him during this particular passage through the liminal. As my analysis continues, I will assert that, despite the aid of non-liminal subjects, O'Leary is never capable of fully exiting this hazy state nor completing the liminal process, unlike his literary counterpart in Krueger's novel.

The protagonist of Krueger's text is Michael Fitzgerald who stands, "four and on-half inches over six feet tall...He had the look of a man who stood far back in himself and watched the world from under the ledge of his tangled heavy brows and even heavier lashes which framed his eyes of smoky blue. His hard, almost atavistic jawline was that of a man born to rebellion. Like his people" (15). Described as a "typical" Irishman, Krueger brings out these telling physiognomic traits to predict his rebellious character. His story begins while still on board the steamer *New Orleans* which departed from the city of the same name and is just arriving at Vera Cruz⁹⁹, Mexico, bringing Fitzgerald and other new recruits like him to engage in the hostilities. The reception of "potato-heads" among the nativist American troops was

⁹⁹ A major port city on the Gulf Coast of Mexico, it was besieged by American forces and surrendered by Mexico on March 27, 1847 (Miller 59-60).

less than favorable and as Fitzgerald remarks under his breath, “Of all the names they call us, ‘tis that I hate the most” (21). Although Fitzgerald despises these cultural pejoratives which indicate the powerlessness of the Irish to control their access to basic necessities, the animosities towards the diasporic Irish did not stop at mere name-calling. In fact, Krueger uses the better half of the first chapter to provide scenes of unwarranted punishments and bullying of the enlisted Irishmen by American-born soldiers.¹⁰⁰ The principal antagonist and likely catalyst for Fitzgerald’s shift into the liminal is First Sergeant Jake Perkle, “a hulking brute, all guts and no heart” (28). Having formed an immediate and irrational dislike of Fitzgerald, Perkle searches for any excuse he can to create conflict with the Irishman. Eventually, Perkle viciously beats Johnny Murphy, a smaller Irish soldier in the same unit, Company K, in front of Fitzgerald without cause. Outraged by this, Fitzgerald baits Perkle into setting aside his gun and superior military rank so that they may have it out once and for all. Perkle quickly accepts and Fitzgerald brutally pummels his superior which enrages the Captain of their Company, American nativist Jared Drayton. Thus, “he meant to keep Sergeant Perkle and be rid of the Irishmen...Fitzgerald and Johnny...He transferred them to Company C” (54). Fitzgerald’s transfer represents the moment when he begins to slip further into a space of dislocation, one he must negotiate as a troublesome *atravesado* and liminal Irish figure. Although his diasporic journey began when he left Ireland, the rugged

¹⁰⁰ As discussed in the previous section, enlisted Irishmen in the U.S. Army were often the target and recipients of a variety of unusually harsh official punishments. Stevens describes one such “official” castigation in particular, “bucking and gagging,” a painful form of restraining an individual in which, “the disciplining officer would order [the offender] left that way for hours of joint-searing agony...[and] officers routinely singled out foreigners, especially Irishmen, for bucking and gagging” (52).

lands between opposing sides more clearly represent an “in-between space” which in the words of Bhabha, “provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (1). His passage from one Company to another on the frontlines of battle allow Fitzgerald to contemplate his own identity and concepts of belonging in a society that clearly belittles and abuses him. Reflecting on his first impressions of Vera Cruz, “to Michael it was different from any Irish town he’d known, yet the people reminded him of Ireland. In every Mexican face he saw an Irish face, expressing the same hate of the invader” (25). Fitzgerald, like many of his Irish comrades, had begun to develop an empathy towards the Mexican plight and affinity for the familiarity of certain elements in their society. Kendall, another Irishman in his former Company, ardently observes, “Mexico is another Ireland. Both invaded, both Catholic, both persecuted because of their religious beliefs” (37). With these sympathies swirling in his head and only a few days as part of Company C under his belt, Fitzgerald and several other men in his unit are ambushed by a squad of Mexicans while out on patrol. During the skirmish Colonel Hayes, the Company’s leader, is thought to be mortally wounded and before losing consciousness asks Fitzgerald if he planned to desert. The Irishman replied, “I’ll not sell my life that cheap!” (75), and he continued fighting until, “it came. The stunning impact of it. The searing ripping of it. In his chest. The red earth spinning madly in the scarlet sky. The acrid taste. Gunpowder in his mouth...Michael moved again, conscious of the pain only” (75-76). Fitzgerald,

severely wounded by Mexican gunfire, “toppled over backwards on the body of Colonel Hayes” (75).

Unconscious and half-dead, Fitzgerald’s ravaged body is found and searched over for valuables by the remaining Mexican troops. Juan, a Mexican soldier, finds in one of Fitzgerald’s breast pockets a rosary with a “cross [that] was beautifully made of gold and mother-of-pearl” (76). Juan then hands it over to the General who exclaims, “The Saint Patrick of the *Irlandes*...we must try to save him...we will take him with us to San Lorenzo...he is from the Saint Patrick, perhaps” (77). Parallel to O’Leary, Fitzgerald is now in a phantasmagoric liminal state, unable to act or react, and is beholden to the mercy of the Mexicans who found him. Also like O’Leary, his membership in the San Patricios has been assumed of him by compassionate and optimistic Mexicans. He is then left in the hands of Raquel María Alicia de Córdoba de Montoya (84), a beautiful young Mexican, and non-liminal figure, charged with his care. With remarkably similar imagery to that used to describe O’Leary, Raquel whispers to the semi-conscious Fitzgerald, “you are going to behave like a little baby so that you can recover quickly” (82). First portrayed as maternal figures, we will soon see that Constancia and Raquel rapidly evolve into romantic interests and influences.

These converging details at this pivotal moment in our readings are paramount in our discussion of these San Patricios as diasporic Irish liminal figures. Up to this point, both O’Leary and Fitzgerald have followed similar courses leading them to initiate the liminal process. Both began as enlisted Irish emigrant soldiers fighting on the side of the U.S. We then read that each is seriously wounded, found by Mexican

troops who naively believe they are San Patricios, brought back to a semi-fictitious village of the same name (San Lorenzo¹⁰¹) and are left in the care of a charming and adoring young Mexican woman. Neither author hesitates to embellish and wield these women's rejuvenating and seductive prowess. Though O'Leary is constantly falling in and out of sleep, floating in the liminal, Constancia still manages to overwhelm him with, "una alegría que embriagaba como el vino, una lejana frescura, un perfume presentido siempre y vibrante como carne viva" (69). Raquel, however, must only wait for Fitzgerald to open his eyes and when he finally does they were "to behold the loveliest girl he had ever seen. Her skin was dark but golden-hued. Her eyes...were dark brown and shining with compassion. Her almost too-perfect teeth could be glimpsed between half-parted lips which formed the delicate outlines of her mouth" (82). As noted by several of the historians in the previous section of this chapter, the irresistible attraction of Mexican women was thought to be a strong motivator in Irish desertion.

As a result of these types of romanticized myths, there has spawned a great deal of memorable iconography depicting different elements in the tale of the San Patricios. The traditional Irish band The Chieftains, fronted by virtuoso musician Paddy Moloney, released an album in 2010 featuring Ry Cooder titled, *San Patricio*, which brings together musicians and music from Mexico, Ireland and the U.S. in honor of the battalion.¹⁰² Replete with hip- and heart-swaying tunes which are

¹⁰¹ There are, in fact, several places in Mexico that bear this name. One is located in the Estado de México (Mexico State), just outside Mexico City and the other is a neighborhood in the northeast quadrant of the capital. It should be noted, however, that neither appears at any time in any one of the historical texts referenced in this study, which is the reason why I designate it as a "semi-fictional" location.

¹⁰² In 2012 Moloney received the highly prestigious Ohtli Award, meaning "pathway" in the Nahuatl language, which is given to civilians outside Mexico for promoting the country's culture (Moloney).

accompanied by moving folkloric lyrics, the album's cover art replicates this intense moment of liminality with iconic imagery. The artist Moisés¹⁰³ cleverly combines elements of these stories with Mexican-Catholic iconography by portraying a wounded soldier with Irish features (i.e. white skin and ruddy-blond hair) who is being carried like a child in the arms of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*.¹⁰⁴ The album's case has an opening cut in the center of it in the form of a cross, tightening the focus on the aggrieved soldier and *La Virgen*, through which the two emblematic figures can be viewed.¹⁰⁵ There is new content which is only revealed once having removed the dark-colored sleeve that is comprised of more original and added elements that enhance this visual text. Keeping in form with the original image of *La Virgen*, Moisés includes at the bottom of his piece a young Mexican boy supporting the weight of the central figures upon his shoulders. His face, like that of *La Virgen*, bespeaks benevolence and compassion. Yet, in addition to these images found in the original piece, the artist places in each of the four corners other small rectangular images alluding to symbolic features of the Mexican-Irish alliance: a guitar, a soldier, a bird, and a crossing of the Mexican flag with the flag of the San Patricios. Although these smaller framed images contribute to the work's figurative meaning, it is the representation of the virtuous Mexican woman, virginal and radiant, who has in her arms the body and soul of a fallen Irishman and fellow Catholic.¹⁰⁶ Plainly, for both the graphic artist and literary authors the genesis of the transformation of the

¹⁰³ For more on the artist and his work please visit: artedemoises.tumblr.com

¹⁰⁴ The artist has used the world famous, venerated image enshrined within the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City as the template for his work. The original image is considered canonical by the Catholic Church and is representative, for many, of Mexico's core religious beliefs and faith.

¹⁰⁵ Almost in anticipation of this type of iconography, Krueger titles his final chapter, "Resurrection."

¹⁰⁶ See image 1

diasporic Irish from enemy to ally resolutely resides in the second stage of liminality where modes of in-betweenness and the transitory are at constant play. In this case it is symbolically represented in terms similar to those found in depictions of the Resurrection of Jesus. O’Leary and Fitzgerald are not resurrected nor reborn, per say, but rather revived and rejuvenated, (re)gaining a consciousness which implores them to offer themselves as martyrs in defense of the mild and morally righteous Mexicans. Nevertheless, the transition from foe to friend, or from persecutor to savior, is much more complicated than certain convoluted versions of their tale would have us believe.

Before they are able to attempt reaching the final stage in the liminal process in which they would come to a state of reaggregation and reincorporation into a fixed place in society, each must undergo a period of physical healing and rationalization in preparation for what is to come. O’Leary’s recovery period is long and arduous; “Poco a poco, al paso de los días, Juan O’Leary sentía que recuperaba fuerzas y salud” (121). Still bedridden, it is not for another two chapters until, “Juan O’Leary empezaba a sentirse bien, pero sus debilitadas piernas se negaban a sostenerle por mucho tiempo. Recordaba con vergüenza y pena su torpeza cuando tuvo que caminar apoyado en las dos mujeres que se esforzaban en sostenerle y le animaban con palabras y sonrisas” (151). Slowly yet steadily he regains his strength with the help of Constancia and Nana¹⁰⁷ Matilde, who was, “buena como el pan y pronta como la pólvora” (102). Not only had Nana Matilde been Constancia’s primary care-giver, “desde que abrió los ojos...[era] la mujer que la había criado al morir su madre” (102, 92). Nana Matilde’s generosity spills over onto O’Leary and other wounded Mexican

¹⁰⁷ “Nana” is a term commonly used in Mexico for “nanny.”

soldiers for whom she would, “[hacer] milagros [mientras] preparaba la cena de sus heridos” (102). Thus, the aid that O’Leary receives is two-fold, part from his love interest and part from Constancia’s childhood caregiver, which brings him that much quicker and closer to the decisive moment when he may have the opportunity to pass out of liminality.

Fitzgerald recovers much more swiftly than his counterpart. At first, “he still felt dizzy and weak...pain took a cut at him and felt a sharp stab in his chest...fear was alien to him, but now he wondered just how serious his wound was” (91). Yet, with the attentive care of Raquel and her Tía Sofia, “days passed and his strength was coming back. As it flowed into his body the pain began to leave him...the wound in his chest rehealed faster than he had dared hope.” (93, 124). In fact, during this phase it is Tía Sofia who would, “brood down at him...[then] come back with a bowl of steaming broth...the woman raised Michael’s head gently and placed two pillows under him, then sat on the side of the bed and began to feed him” (91). In the same way as O’Leary, Fitzgerald is given special attention by an older woman who is also the mother-figure of his romantic interest. It is important to remark that both Cox and Krueger employ a matriarchal figure in their narratives who acts in a supporting role for these wounded, liminal Irish figures and the woman they love.¹⁰⁸ The assistance Nana Matilde and Tía Sofia give also helps to acculturate O’Leary and Fitzgerald by teaching them Spanish. Over a short time Nana Matilde, “se había familiarizado a hablarle lentamente para que el extranjero la comprendiera sin complicaciones” (155). Because of this O’Leary’s Spanish improves so much that, “le ayudaba algo a

¹⁰⁸ It should also be noted that both Constancia and Raquel are motherless, yet, as we will discuss, their fathers play important roles in their lives and the lives of O’Leary and Fitzgerald as well.

hacer amigos aunque a veces le fuera necesario repetir lentamente sus palabras para hacerlas comprender y provocara risa dado el característico abuso de los irlandeses al emplear la ‘rr’” (281). Fitzgerald, conversely, is first aided by Tía Sofia and later by Raquel. Attempting to learn little by little, word by word, Fitzgerald signals to different objects and awaits to be told their name in Spanish; “He pointed toward the door the Mexican [Tía Sofia] had just walked through...finally the realization came into her eye... “Door? *Puerta; puerta*, door”... Michael groaned, but Tía Sofia was very pleased with herself as she bustled about, setting the room in order...” (93). As he and Raquel draw closer to one another she continues this practice with Fitzgerald; “Then she pointed at the trees. “*Árbol.*” “*Árbol?*” She nodded eagerly...She pointed at the sky. “*Cielo.*” “Sky.” “Sky?” “*Cielo—sky.*”” (98). Dissimilar to his counterpart, Fitzgerald is not very accomplished in the language, “and though his Spanish was crude, Raquel was amused and delighted with it...with him...” (125). Physically and linguistically, both O’Leary and Fitzgerald are now improved and prepared but they must still confront their innermost emotions and morality before they can hope to complete the liminal process.

In order to take the next step towards the final phase of liminal process and out of the space of liminality, O’Leary and Fitzgerald must come to terms with their allegiances and decide which will be the path they take in their attempts to leave behind liminality. To do so, each must convince not only themselves, but also the Mexican commanders who found them, of their commitment to the Mexican cause. O’Leary finally comes face-to-face with the leader of the Mexican soldiers of San Lorenzo, Cayetano Uribe, who is also Constancia’s father. Even though, “Cayetano

Uribe siempre había desconfiado de los extranjeros” (171), he knew of the heroics of the San Patricios and held hopes that O’Leary was one of them. In their first conversation of substance, he asks O’Leary directly if he is, “Del San Patricio? – Irlandés...respondió Juan O’Leary para no mentir mientras sostenía la mirada del guerrillero” (160). Though he cannot lie to Uribe, partly from shame but mostly because of the affection he has for the warrior’s daughter, O’Leary obfuscates the truth which hinders his efforts to exit the liminal state he has occupied thus far. It is not until later in the novel when Uribe and O’Leary travel to San Luis Potosí¹⁰⁹ that the latter takes decisive action. There, just before O’Leary is to meet, “General Francisco J. Romero, Jefe que fué en sus principios de la Compañía de San Patricio” (192), an individual who could easily disprove his supposed membership in the battalion, he runs into a fellow Irish soldier with whom he served in the U.S. ranks, Barry Fitzgerald.¹¹⁰ The two embrace in front of Uribe and this extinguishes any doubts the Mexican may have had about O’Leary’s affiliations because Fitzgerald wears the uniform of the San Patricios. This stroke of good fortune alleviates the tension that was consuming O’Leary because, “le turbaba el pensar en ese momento que podía destruir toda la felicidad suya y de Constancia, pero tampoco estaba dispuesto a sostener una situación indefinida” (192). His undefined situation and indeterminate state have culminated at this moment when O’Leary must choose the route he will take in order to complete the liminal process. His choice is then made clear; “O’Leary colocó una de sus manos sobre las del guerrillero, y cruzando el

¹⁰⁹ City situated about three hundred miles northwest of Mexico City, it was “the scene of frenzied military buildup” from where Mexican troops and the San Patricios departed to engage U.S. forces in Saltillo, some two hundred miles north (Miller 50-51).

¹¹⁰ Coincidentally he has the same surname as Krueger’s protagonist.

pecho con la diestra trazó la señal de la cruz...y fué entonces cuando el irlandés hizo suya la bandera donde el águila abría sus alas, elevándose muy alto, mientras abajo se arrastraba la serpiente, emponzoñándolo todo” (194). Through this imagery O’Leary begins to identify with these symbols of Mexican sovereignty; he now sees himself like the eagle devouring the sinister snake, a guardian against malevolent invaders. Even though he has made a crucial choice, we will observe that achieving the consummation of the passage through the liminal process remains frustratingly out of his reach.

For Fitzgerald, the decision of which side to take represents a serious dilemma for an individual who unequivocally stated earlier that he would not desert nor sell himself so cheaply to the enemy. However, much has changed for this diasporic liminal Irish figure since that earlier exchange with the American captain. Throughout his time in the second phase of liminality, his increasing adoration of Raquel and the generousities of individuals like Tía Sofia have prompted him to reconsider his previously immovable stance. Like O’Leary, he must also encounter his now wayward feelings of loyalty towards the U.S. military by facing the man who saved his life, Raquel’s father Don Esteban Francisco Parrera de Montoya (99).¹¹¹ During a long dialogue between Fitzgerald and Don Esteban, the latter tries to extract as much information as he can from the former without asking Fitzgerald the most pertinent question directly (“Are you a San Patricio?”), to which he may fear receiving a disappointing reply. Through their conversation, however, we learn a little more about Fitzgerald’s family in Ireland. Don Esteban has overheard the Irishman talking

¹¹¹ The fact that both O’Leary and Fitzgerald have fallen in love with the respective leader’s daughter in each author’s version of San Lorenzo is yet another overlapping detail which intensifies the similarities between the two novels.

in his sleep and in garbled phrases he mentions his parents, his mother Deirdre¹¹² and his father who remains unnamed.¹¹³ Upon further inquiry Fitzgerald reveals that, “they are dead. Killed by the British: (110). This somewhat pleases Don Esteban because he sees it as a fact which he can use to foment in Fitzgerald his animosity of imperialist invaders, a bitterness and resentment that O’Leary has already obviated in himself. As their exchange goes on Fitzgerald becomes curious as to why Don Esteban has offered him such hospitality to which he responds, “In your case, *Irlandes*, perhaps [because] you were one of the Saint Patrick” (111). Astutely, Fitzgerald never states if he in fact is or is not a member of the San Patricios which does not abate Don Esteban’s kindness and helpfulness; “You will have the freedom of the hacienda. Everyone believes you are of the Saint Patrick” (112). Don Esteban’s trust and the freedoms he has granted Fitzgerald enrage a would-be-suitor of his daughter, Felipe Varga. Varga, who is in fact conspiring with the Americans, attempts to force himself upon Raquel against her wishes. Fitzgerald intervenes, an act which solidifies Don Esteban’s favor of the Irishman. Later, however, when Don Esteban becomes aware of Varga’s traitorous activities, combined with the offenses against his family, the hidalgo of San Lorenzo sets out to hunt down and kill Varga. Fitzgerald accompanies him on this mission of vengeance but they soon come upon a troop of U.S. soldiers and now the Irishman is faced with a critical decision; continue behind Don Esteban into the war zone or retreat back to San Lorenzo. Fitzgerald hesitates but ultimately decides to go with, “the man [he] would love as a father all the days of his life” (140). In embracing the Mexican soldier as his father, Fitzgerald

¹¹² Perhaps only happenstance, yet again we find a crossing over of names between the two novels.

¹¹³ We are informed later in the novel that his father was the “Earl of Desmond” and that the great John Riley fought many times under his sainted father (182).

has also openly accepted to wholeheartedly support the Mexican cause. Now with his decision made, Fitzgerald later goes with Don Esteban to the San Patricio camp, “near the *Capilla de Aranzazu*” (180), an important and sizeable encampment of San Patricios in San Luis Potosí. Thus, both O’Leary and Fitzgerald come into first contact with the battalion in the same location. However, unlike O’Leary, Fitzgerald is not as fearful of having his half-truths exposed because he has been portrayed as less dubious in his affiliations than his counterpart throughout.¹¹⁴ After also meeting General Romero and John O’Reilly¹¹⁵, as well as reencountering his old friends from Company C, Johnny and McCaffrey¹¹⁶, Don Esteban leaves him to settle in among the ranks of San Patricios and, “that night Michael Fitzgerald slept with the soldiers of the Saint Patrick’s Battalion” (186). Hence, he, like his counterpart, has chosen to definitively switch sides with the thought that this will bring him to the final stage of the liminal process and out of liminality conclusively.

These diasporic Irish liminal figure’s decisions should come as no surprise. Having already spent a considerable amount of time as liminal personae, both believe they can complete the liminal process if they follow their hearts. But the heart can be misguided when in the throes of liminality. Cox and Krueger create a sense of dark sorcery around the love that has guided them to take these actions. Although we have seen Mexican women represented as pure and tender, they are also portrayed having

¹¹⁴ In his first conversation with Don Esteban, Fitzgerald denies knowledge of the San Patricios claiming, “I’ve never heard of it” (92). This is only half-true because, although there was no specific mention of the San Patricios in Fitzgerald’s presence until this moment, he was aware of desertion by fellow Irish soldiers.

¹¹⁵ Krueger uses the surname O’Reilly instead of the widely accepted Riley for the mythical leader of the battalion.

¹¹⁶ Krueger, like Cox, plays on the emotional reuniting of Irish comrades previous separated from O’Leary and Fitzgerald while they were in the midst of the second phase of liminality. This does not mean, however, that they have completed the second stage of the liminal process, but rather signifies the initial formations of a *communitas*.

the ability to woo and seduce Irishmen into abandoning their stations and taking up actions guided by unfettered emotions. For example, O'Leary, "se sentía también embrujado en el encanto de unos ojos negros cuya ansiedad tal vez fuera el hilo misterioso que le hubiera detenido al borde de la muerte para colmar la vida de amor y de ternura" (149). The case of Fitzgerald is much the same; "Just to look at you [Raquel] and it's bewitched I am. Your eyes...your voice...the way of your walk..." (96). The enchanting quality of these Mexican women has been over exaggerated by both authors who have also chosen to do so through the eyes which seem to cast a spell over O'Leary and Fitzgerald. However, the intoxicating effects of the exotic 'Other' and the dangers of giving into romantic impulses are also evident if we read the situation from the opposite perspective. Because Constancia and Raquel are portrayed as young and innocent, they depend upon the wisdom of the mother-figures in their lives. Nana Matilde has raised Constancia with the idea that, "los hombres eran malos" ...así se lo aseguraba" (92). However, because she, like Constancia, has become fond of O'Leary her tone changes in regards to their budding relationship; "Nana Matilde sabía también que hay hechizos que ni el tiempo rompe ni los años cambian...su viejo corazón le avisaba que la hora había llegado, que su niña desprendería de sus ojos la venda inocente de su juventud y que sin que ella pudiera detenerla, traspondría el umbral prodigioso de un amor que llenaría su vida entera de felicidad o de tortura..." (148). In accepting the inevitable blossoming of her adopted daughter, Nana Matilde foreshadows the only two possible outcomes of Constancia and O'Leary's love. On the one hand, if O'Leary is able to complete the liminal process and step out of liminality then they will be rewarded with uninhibited and

unending happiness. However, if he proves to be incapable of terminating the liminal process and remains trapped in liminality then the only outcome will be eternal suffering.

Raquel receives similar advice from Tía Sofia in regards to her involvement with Fitzgerald. Once she begins to perceive a fascination in Raquel towards the Irishman she sternly cautions her niece, “He must have the evil eye. Truly, child, I am afraid for you. You must not love him... Tía Sofia made the Sign of the Cross, clasped her hand, and closer her eyes. ‘Mother of God, protect this innocent child from these evil desires!’” (103). Similar to Nana Matilde, yet with much more religious connotation, Tía Sofia implores Raquel not to fall under Fitzgerald’s spell, his eyes now the ones that would bewitch and seduce the young Mexican. As we have already noted in previous sections, however, Tía Sofia takes a liking to Fitzgerald and slowly begins to accept him as part of Raquel’s present and future. In a scene where Fitzgerald and Raquel are openly expressing their mutual love for the first time, Tía Sofia overhears this and she, “tiptoed down the long hallway and paused outside her [Raquel’s] door, listening...she opened the door and peered in” (119). Here Tía Sofia witnesses a moment of genuine adoration between the two, one she must accept as illustrative of their intentions to be together and so she, “laid a finger upon her lips and closed the door so softly that Raquel never knew” (119). Though Tía Sofia never tells Raquel of her eavesdropping, her change in attitude and acceptance of Fitzgerald later becomes evident when he is soon to depart with Don Esteban to fight against U.S. troops. So that they may have a moment to be together once more, uncertain if Fitzgerald will return, Tía Sofia tells Raquel to go to the forest and, “hurry, child,

before your father returns!... Tía Sofia whispered harshly. “Go! He may be gone a long time!”” (150). Thus, she like Nana Matilde, eventually embraces the Irishman and condones their relationship. What is noteworthy is that, despite previous evidences which suggested that only Mexican women were responsible for captivating Irish hearts and minds, we have found that Cox and Krueger also attribute certain powers of seduction to O’Leary and Fitzgerald. In this way, then, emotional and amorous stimuli can be viewed as flowing from both participants on both sides and not solely from the Mexican female as many of the aforementioned historians believe in their scholarship. It would seem that diasporic Irish liminal figures do indeed have, despite their liminal status, the capability of affecting and influencing non-liminal subjects.

As we have evidenced in the previous sections of this chapter, O’Leary and Fitzgerald have slowly gone through the second stage of the liminal process and come to a cusp in their development as diasporic Irish liminal figures. Each has undergone a significant change that has brought both of them to represent the possibilities of intercultural exchange among members of separate, formerly unfamiliar communities who share common experiences as victims of imperialism. We have also commented on the significance of the iconography associated with the San Patricios and how it informs our understanding of their tale. Another such image that now warrants our attention, like that of the *La Virgen* gently holding an injured San Patricio in her delicate arms, is the flag of the San Patricios. Unvaryingly associated with a nation’s identity as sovereign and distinctive, a flag can often represent simultaneously the beginning and end of a border, in a way indicating that, “*here* is where *this* stops and

where *this* begins” (Smyth 144). Nevertheless, it can also signify the absolute contrary and offer instances of cross-border and cross-culturally solidarity. I agree with Abby Bender, who observes that this type of cultural melding is readily perceptible in the flag of the San Patricios, as she describes it:

the Irish harp supporting not the British crown but the Mexican coat of arms; two parallel mottos of independence written in their national languages, Irish and Spanish [*Erin go Bragh* (Irish for “Ireland forever”) and “Libertad por la República Mexicana,” respectively]; the Catholic patron saint of Ireland, resting his foot on the traditional snake—as the Eagle of the Mexican flag holds the snake in his mouth.
(272)

For Karen Racine, the flag of the San Patricios with its inclusion of the eagle and the snake from the Mexican flag, is a “nice blending [of] Irish and Aztec symbolism” (1).¹¹⁷ It can therefore be read as illustrative of what Mary Louise Pratt calls “autoethnography” or “autoethnographic expression.” For Pratt these terms, “refer to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer’s own terms...autoethnographic texts are those the other constructs in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations” (7). What is inferred here is not that Mexicans were the colonizers of the Irish but rather the San Patricios, who were previously colonized subjects in Ireland and now diasporic liminal figures that exist like ghosts in the fluctuating interstice between the U.S. and Mexico, sought to escape their North American oppressors by positioning themselves with and symbolically identifying themselves as part of the Mexican

¹¹⁷ See image 2

nation. Hence the flag of the San Patricios may better represent in many ways what they hope to become and not who and what they in reality are. Tragically, the original flag of the San Patricios was lost at the end of the war and all that is left are the fairly historically accurate reproductions of it that we have today.¹¹⁸

Strikingly absent from Cox and Krueger's novels is any reference to this iconic piece of Irish-Mexican solidarity. In its place both authors recur to the traditional Mexican flag to evoke patriotic sentiment in their diasporic Irish liminal protagonists. The appearance of the Mexican flag in Cox's novel has already been discussed in this chapter as representing O'Leary's decisive choice to align himself with Uribe and the Mexican cause. Cox, with profuse patriotism, portrays the flag as the ultimate symbol of union and fidelity towards Mexico. Krueger, in a comparable way, utilizes the Mexican flag as a medium to express the unwavering loyalty of Mexican patriots and the San Patricios who fought and died alongside them. Echoing the story of "*Los niños héroes*"¹¹⁹, the author brings the flag into the narrative during the final battle with U.S. forces. A young Mexican soldier, Carlos Rodriguez, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the San Patricios, "planted the Mexican flag on the edge of a trench and he held it there in triumph for an instant before he was smashed to the ground by a dozen Yankee bullets. He rolled on the ground, bloody, tangled with the flag" (224). Krueger then mixes in Fitzgerald's friend, Johnny, to this dramatic scene

¹¹⁸ The flag we see in image 2 was created by using several historical records of the original, mostly found in personal logs and journals. The original is rumored to still exist, buried deep and locked away in some secretive U.S. military installation. There is, however, no tangible evidence to support this fantastic claim.

¹¹⁹ The story of "*Los niños héroes*" is well-known in Mexican culture. Instead of surrendering to American forces at the final battle of the Mexican American war, near the center of Mexico City, several young Mexican soldiers wrapped themselves in the Mexican flag and hurled themselves to their deaths from the top of the besieged Chapultepec Castle. Recent scholarship in Mexico has proven this to be a fictional tale designed to inspire patriotism in current and future generations of Mexicans.

thus joining the dismal fate of young Mexican patriots like Rodriguez with that of the San Patricios; “Moments later Johnny Murphy went down not far from the body of Carlos Rodriguez, still wrapped in the bloody Mexican flag” (224). Despite making no mention of the San Patricio flag, a tactic which would have perhaps intensified the importance of Irish interventions in the war and represented the presence of a new hybrid Irish-Mexican identity, the symbolism of the Mexican flag suffices in stirring up sympathies in the reader for the heroic actions of not only the San Patricios but also the Mexican characters in these novels. With that said, we now move on to the final phase of liminality for O’Leary and Fitzgerald in an attempt to highlight key aspects of divergence in each figure’s journey.

4.3 Divergence in the final phase of liminality

The outcome of the U.S.-Mexican War is a matter of recorded history and, therefore, there should be no surprise as to how these novels end. John Riley and the other members of the San Patricios faded into the mist of history, many of them lost in the rubble of a defeated nation never to be seen nor heard from again. Our study thus far has revealed that the two novels under analysis here share more in terms of the way they narrate the course of these two San Patricios, O’Leary and Fitzgerald, than the points on which they diverge. As I stated at the outset of this chapter, engaging in cross-border, cross-cultural readings of these texts would reveal the contrasting ways in which the story of the San Patricios is understood and retold from different national perspectives. It will as well, as I argue, provide us with distinct outcomes for different yet parallel individuals in the final stage of the liminal process.

Thus, it is at this juncture that I believe each author's nationality plays an important role in how both choose to conclude their narratives.

Cox, as we have already read, employs a non-chronological narrative style which has allowed O'Leary to remain as liminal until deep into the novel. Though this technique is rather disorienting in the initial chapters of her novel, the narration falls into a more traditional mode in its final pages. Nonetheless, there are still some disjointed elements from earlier in the narrative that must be dealt with in order to give close to O'Leary's story. Because the novel begins with the protagonist already wounded and Mexico defeated, once the narrative comes full circle back to this moment we have other previous events that have helped to shape the novel's conclusion. One crucial detail we have not yet discussed in Cox's work, but that has been examined in Krueger's, is the romantic rival each diasporic Irish liminal figure must confront. In Krueger's novel it is Varga who is the nemesis of Fitzgerald but in Cox's novel we have Macario Pacheco who "tenía maldita el alma y negra la conciencia" (117). It is in part due to his unwanted advances towards Constancia that Nana Matilde more warmly accepts O'Leary because she "resolvió que Constancia no podía ser feliz con un hombre así, hijo de la desvergüenza y del deshonor" (148). Just the same as his counterpart, O'Leary goes after Pacheco because he has dishonored the Uribe family and Mexico with his traitorous ways and, "desde ese día la cabeza de Macario Pacheco tuvo precio" (261). However, this pursuit of the traitor comes at a distinct moment, much later in the novel than in Krueger's, which forces O'Leary to abandon the battle at Churubusco, an act which ironically saves his life. With the hostilities ended and Mexico in the bitterness of defeat, "toda la Capital era un

cementerio” (322). Therefore, it would seem that the time has come for O’Leary to consummate his passage through the liminal yet, “para O’Leary su vida había acabado hacía ya mucho...halló su presente oscuro y sin porvenir” (327). Later captured in Mexico City along with the other remaining San Patricios and severely punished for his betrayal of the U.S. Army, “le dolía a veces la espalda, cómo la sentía desgarrada aún por el golpe brutal del látigo” (333). Though his corporal punishment has already been carried out upon him, “O’Leary no volvería nunca a ser el que había sido. Estaba enfermo irremediabilmente del alma y del cuerpo, abatido por la infinita pesadumbre de su derrota. El y sus compañeros eran despojos del odio, sombras de una injusticia y de una crueldad sin nombre” (332). Through the portrayal of these quisling’s harsh punishment, Cox insightfully comments from a Mexican perspective on the U.S. invasion by reiterating the unjust and cruel way in which it was carried out. As part of the San Patricio battalion, one of the briefest *communitas* forged by a common desire to create a new diaspora space for themselves, O’Leary and the other San Patricios have either been executed or maimed to a point beyond which they cannot recognize nor reclaim themselves. Now irrevocably battered and alone, ripped away from Raquel and his fellow San Patricios, O’Leary, “caminaba encorvado, arrastrando un poco la pierna que le quedó herida en el Molino del Rey” (335). His body permanently bruised, he has lost all sense of himself and his liminal status is what now defines him. Tired, hungry and wandering the streets of Mexico City, O’Leary stops to drink from a public fountain and, “al ver el agua de la fuente quiso calmar su sed, pero al inclinarse para beberla, se quedó asustado de sí mismo. El limpio espejo de la fuente reflejaba un rostro de barba crecida que no cubría del

todo la marca infamante del hierro, y la letra “D” se perfilaba claramente en la mejilla derecha” (335). O’Leary’s face now carries the brand of the traitor, a defining indicator imprinted upon him by the nation he betrayed for Mexico. This was a common practice at the time for deserters, one in which, “the US Army had been instructed to make an example of the Irish Catholic defectors. They meted out face branding with hot irons (the letter ‘D’ for Deserter) and most survivors were summarily hanged” (Phillips 18). The unusual cruelty of this punishment was often more horrific than it may seem. Mexican author D. Carlos Bustamante of this writes in disbelief of such malice; “Yo no lo creería si los prisioneros llamados de San Patricio no hubiesen recibido igual marca en la cara, y por haberse errado en el acto de ponerla, habérsela *repetido dos veces*...nada más digo porque me horrorizo” (182). The horrors of defeat are only equaled by the terrors of perpetual liminality for O’Leary. In the final scene of the novel O’Leary comes across Constanca in a large crowd in the capital city. However, he is now a broken man, a “fantasma entre las sombras” (347) and hides himself in a doorway to avoid contact with his former love. Incapable of reaching the final stage of liminality which would allow him to reincorporate himself into society, he remains a liminal figure lost in the indeterminate space of the half-dead. And so O’Leary, “había perdido todo: lo único que podía tener; lo que no había poseído nunca!” (348). Thus O’Leary’s outcome is representative of the Mexican perspective of the war’s outcome. He, like the Mexican nation, can find no solace in such a dark and unfavorable result to the war. In his own journey O’Leary fought to find his way through liminality, but in the end he became lost forever within it.

Krueger's novel portrays a different vision of the final moments of the U.S.-Mexico War and last steps of Fitzgerald in the liminal process. Though we do have the same formation of a momentary *communitas* in the rejoining of Fitzgerald with his fellow diasporic Irish liminal figures, the author chooses to elaborate on the sequence of their trials in military court which allows the reentry of Perkle, Drayton and the now miraculously recovered Colonel Hayes. Perkle and Drayton, who were cast as antagonists from the beginning of the novel, have returned to take their revenge upon Fitzgerald for having deserted. Yet Colonel Hayes is sympathetic to the Irish defectors and openly states in court that, "I say we failed to understand these men when they enlisted...don't forget it wasn't too long ago *we* fought another war for *our* beliefs" (248). Though his words are eloquent and wise, they go unheeded and so Perkle and Drayton are to "hang thirty of the potato-heads. Fifty lashes for the other seven" (254). As fate would have it, Fitzgerald is one of the seven to receive fifty lashes instead of being hung to death, although once his punishment is enforced, "the pain was unearthly" (273). Unlike his counterpart, Fitzgerald does not receive the permanent brand on the face thus his shame is one that can be more easily covered up. This is quite telling of the author's final narrative choices. In Cox's novel, we read how she ends O'Leary's narrative with a pessimistic and gloomy twist, casting her protagonist into a state of perpetual liminality. Krueger, however, employs a Hollywood film quality not only throughout his work but most strikingly in its final pages. In true Hollywood fashion Krueger neatly ties up all loose ends in the story. Unlike Pacheco who never paid for his crimes against Mexico and the Uribe family, Varga is captured and killed by Don Esteban in a final act of street

justice, “hanging unhung and his death throes were awful twistings and inarticulate grunts...” (299). Even Perkle and Drayton are found out for having raped and shot “unarmed prisoners, members of the civilian population” (283). Rightfully, they are handed over to the “newly formed Mexican Provisional Government...to be tried for their crimes against the people of Mexico” (283). Following the same idealistic optimism, Fitzgerald meets up with Raquel in the final scene in a church and, “there was love there. And purity. And they were Raquel” (308). Totally opposite from O’Leary, Fitzgerald reaches the final stage of liminality and consummates his passage at the altar under the watchful eyes of God. Thus, Fitzgerald completes the liminal process, not unscathed but seemingly no worse for the wear, and with Raquel at his side, “all of the pain, all of the bitterness, all of the hurt that they had ever known was gone from them, always and forever” (310). This, then, is the critical point of divergence between the two novels. While Krueger gives his diasporic Irish liminal figure the fairytale ending that is the goal of all liminal personae, a clean exit from liminality, he departs grossly from the realities of the U.S.-Mexican War and the grim eventualities of the San Patricios. It is clear that his American perspective suffers from an overly romanticized cinematographic narration which nullifies subsequent questions of Fitzgerald’s traitorous acts and suspect loyalties. Cox’s work, on the other hand, stays true to the historicity of the conflict and, though it is as well imbued with Mexican patriotism, the author better represents the acrimony of the defeated Mexican nation through the liminal journey of a diasporic Irish figure trapped in liminality. In a way Cox’s novel replicates what Klapcsik argues is a fundamental

element of liminality, a “*space of continuous transference, of a never-ending narrative, forming an infinite process towards an unreachable end*” (14).

When read against each other, these two novels form a dialogue which has revealed many similarities in the initial approach to and framing of the San Patricio narrative. Nevertheless, as we have observed, each author chooses a starkly contrasting manner in which to finalize their respective protagonist’s conclusive moments in the liminal process. For O’Leary, liminality is to be perpetual, unending and the goal of reaggregation and reincorporation unattainable. Thus, his narrative, like the fate of so many San Patricios, continues to loom in the post-war mists of the *borderlands*. He is a liminal figure *par excellence* whose story represents not only the indefinite liminal state of *borderlands* subjects but also that of diasporic Irish liminal figures. Fitzgerald, to the contrary, begins the liminal process in the same way, traverses parallel spaces and experiences, but is ultimately able to find his way through liminality and into a state of stability and regains his status in the social system. The cross-border dialogue we have established in reading these two works in tandem has exposed a discontinuity between the two opposing national perspectives of this single event and has also illuminated the consequentially wavering possibilities of liminal figures and the effects of liminality.

4.4 From Clifden to Coyoacán and back again; Irish-Mexican solidarities

The story of the San Patricios, as mentioned before, is one that has only garnered wide-spread interest in recent years. Beginning in 1993, the Clifden Historical Society took a keen interest in the tale of the battalion because of the

town's connection to John Riley. This small village on the west coast of Ireland in County Galway had already been a popular tourist attraction for its scenic views, marvelous bike routes and important historical significance for being both the former location of the Marconi Station¹²⁰ and site of the first transatlantic flight landing by Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown in 1919.¹²¹ During the 1990s and up to present day, both the Irish and Mexican governments have done much to foment Irish-Mexican relations based on the connection established through the San Patricios. Unveiled in 2004, a statue named "The Rifle" was erected in the center of Clifden to commemorate John Riley and the San Patricios as fallen heroes in the U.S.-Mexican War.¹²² The statue has two plaques on opposing sides, the more recent of the two reads, "The Rifle – Sebastian. This sculpture, presented by Sebastian and the people of Mexico to the people of Clifden, honors John Reilly and the San Patricio Battalion. It also honors the continuing friendship between Ireland and Mexico as we celebrate forty years of diplomatic links between the two countries. This sculpture was first donated in 2004 and was unveiled by Sebastian on the 12th September 2015".¹²³ Thanks in great part to the efforts of historian Breandan O'Scanail¹²⁴, in 2012, "Clifden became the first town in Ireland to be officially

¹²⁰ The Marconi Station was the first regular trans-Atlantic wireless service established in Ireland on October 17, 1907. Due to severe damage it received during the Irish Civil War in 1922 the station was dismantled.

¹²¹ The Alcock-Brown transatlantic flight was the first of its kind, predating Lindbergh's famous flight from New York to Paris by some eight years. Departing from St. John's, Newfoundland and planning to land near London, the two pilots became somewhat disoriented and harmlessly crash landed on the grounds of the Marconi Station. Both the defunct station and landing site are now popular tourist attractions.

¹²² See image 3

¹²³ See image 4

¹²⁴ Like Paddy Moloney, O'Scanail is also a recipient of the Ohtli Award, his bestowed in 2016.

twinned with a Mexican counterpart [the Coyoacán neighborhood in Mexico City where the Churubusco Convent is located]” (Historic handshake).¹²⁵

In Mexico, besides the large plaque in the Plaza San Jacinto which we have already cited, the local municipal government in Coyoacán has also placed a bust of John Riley facing that original monument as a symbol of the ongoing efforts to further solidify relations among the two nations.¹²⁶ However, this transatlantic bond is not one appreciated nor condoned by everyone. In several interviews I conducted with O’Scaill, he spoke of a few scattered instances when the Irish-Mexico relation based on the San Patricios came up against adamant resistance. O’Scaill told me the story of an unnamed local¹²⁷ who saw the erection of the “Rifle” monument as offensive and detrimental to Irish-U.S. relations. The individual thus ripped off the original plaque affixed to the monument and left non-permanent graffiti on and about the sculpture. When I asked O’Scaill if the original plaque was ever recovered he laughingly replied, “No...He probably tossed it in the bay!” The sculpture has, of course, since been cleaned and no similar incidents have been recorded.

Although the “Rifle” monument was enough to rile up one man to the point of committing vandalism, there is more powerful iconography associated with the San Patricios that has been kept out of the public’s eye because of its controversial potential. One such example is a pair of twin banners created by an “indigenous artist from Oaxaca” (O’Scaill). These banners are extremely rare and have never been

¹²⁵ See image 5

¹²⁶ See image 6

¹²⁷ O’Scaill did not wish to reveal the individual’s name. However, he did note that the vandal in question was male and had since moved on to another town.

reproduced, most likely because very few even know of their existence.¹²⁸ It portrays the Celtic cross with a large eagle jutting out from its center; hence it is another example of the seamless blending of Irish and Mexican iconographies.¹²⁹ However, it is not the mixing of Irish and Mexican imagery that could be viewed as inciting, but the fact that the cross and eagle are set in large orange and red flames. This, in O'Scanaill's words and forgiving the pun, "was just too inflammatory." The insinuation of the Irish-Mexican affiliation via the San Patricios as "burning down anything and everything in its path" would only serve to upset decades of stable Irish-U.S. relations and further increase steadily building Mexican-U.S. tensions. Therefore, it, perhaps like the original San Patricio flag, has been stored away and will not likely be on display in the foreseeable future.

Despite these small controversies the celebration of the San Patricios has become an enduring tradition in both Mexico and the town of Clifden. In 2015 the president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, visited Mexico for the ceremony in the battalion's honor and remarked:

The late Patricia Bustamante Cox, a first generation Irish-Mexican who wrote two books about the San Patricios, describing their bravery on the battlefields of Matamoros, Monterrey and Churubusco, noted that: "México e Irlanda son tierras de santos, héroes y poetas que no necesitan acudir a la leyenda para hallar en su realidad cotidiana elementos suficientes para hacer de la vida una obra de arte, donde hay que entregarlo todo, incluso la vida". Now, more than 150 years after

¹²⁸ There are only two banners of this type known to exist; one is in O'Scanaill's personal collection and the other is kept at the National Palace (*Palacio Nacional*) in Mexico City.

¹²⁹ See image 7

that cruel war, we have moved miles away from the animosity and prejudices that underpinned it. But the identification with the Mexican cause by ‘los San Patricios’ has created an unbreakable link between our two countries. (“Speech”)

It should come as no surprise that the Irish president is familiar with the works of Cox, sharing in her sentiments of reverence for the San Patricios and equally recognizing the consequent solidarity between the two nations. It is curious, however, that in Cox’s words quoted by Higgins the author remarks that there is no need to recur to legend to find sufficient elements with which to make life into a work of art. After our analysis of her text against that of Krueger, we can argue that the components of legend have greatly contributed to the story of the San Patricios in the way both authors relate it, more so than have quotidian historical facts and empirical evidences. Each has tapped into the desire to represent the San Patricios as forgotten heroes and has written their story as one of a liminal journey, the results of which we examine for the first time against the framework of the liminal process. Looking towards the future new questions then arise: How will the story of the San Patricios continue to be told and what weight will their narrative carry in this burgeoning transatlantic solidarity? More importantly for this project, will liminality remain as a tangible element in their tale? Only further study can bring us closer to possible responses to these inquiries.

Conclusion

This project has analyzed the diasporic Irish in the literatures of the Caribbean and Latin America, examining the ways in which their representations stem from stereotypical discourses rooted in English imperialism and extend into and through centuries of emigration. I began by reviewing this racialized history of the Irish and elucidated its inextricability from the diaspora experience in Irish culture. I then continued by posing questions about the different literary representations of the diasporic Irish in Caribbean and Latin American works, which turned the focus from Ireland outward towards the Irish diaspora and the nostalgic impulse to return to Erin and inverted this perspective to privilege diasporic Irish and non-Irish perceptions from diaspora spaces. Such a gesture has revealed somewhat covert examples of the diasporic Irish in certain literary imaginaries that had not yet been examined for their connections to the Irish in diaspora. In building upon Turner and Klapcsik's theorizations of the liminal process and liminality, this study has contributed to the field of not only Hispanic literary studies but also that of Irish diaspora and cultural analysis by interjecting innovative readings of under-read texts within these categories. These readings now suggest the existence of a literary paradigm based on diasporic 'Irishness' as a liminal state and the pervasive presence in varying forms of references to Irish immigrants and their hybrid offspring. The works studied here have demonstrated that, while diasporic Irish parent figures do pass through the first stage of the liminal process, each inevitably vanishes in the transition to the second stage, and thus their journey toward assimilation and reaggregation is always left to

be completed by their half-Irish offspring. By delving deeper into the narratives of the diasporic hybrid Irish figures and by reading their stories against the liminal process, I have been able to demonstrate that each author has replicated the same unending journey of subjects caught in a state of perpetual liminality. Hence, works that were previously in complete isolation from one another have now been put into a critical dialogue which has served to address the problems of the role of language and cultural fluency in transnational environments. As well this study intervenes in the conversation on how immigration impacts our understanding of language, culture and national identity from a distinct viewpoint. This new approach to reading the Irish in diaspora in multiple languages and multiple cultural contexts through a lens of liminality decenters the previously predominant Irish-centric standpoint which has driven much related scholarship in the field to date. It has also challenged the monolithic national discourses in several Caribbean and Latin American countries, which have yet to fully recognize the diversity that the Irish diaspora has added to their cultural and social makeups. We have shown that in some countries the Irish communities, whether of their own volition or because of discrimination in the host countries, have remained separate and even parallel to those host nations, nevertheless we have underscored the evidence of an Irish-Hispanic connection and how it fosters pluralism among seemingly unrelated nations and their peoples. However, there is still much to be done.

Even though each chapter offers its own literary analysis, all are limited by the parameters of a dissertation. This is to say that I see the opportunity to expand my readings to include both texts that have and have not been mentioned but not

thoroughly analyzed yet, using this theoretical approach and framework based on the liminal process and liminality. Therefore, every chapter opens the door to further inquiry. For instance, what other texts may add to and bolster the paradigm of diasporic Irish parentage and hybrid Irish liminal offspring? What other literary imaginaries in the Caribbean and Latin America remain untapped for these types of texts with Irish figures? After the examination and discussion of the diasporic Irish community in Argentina it becomes pertinent to ask, what other nations in these geographic regions host similar Irish communities? What have been their roles in the formation of these nations and to what levels have the diasporic Irish been assimilated or resisted assimilation? How are other diasporic Irish communities portrayed in even more literary imaginaries? Through the tale of the San Patricios we have observed a propensity in the Irish to take up arms in the name of righteousness. What other diasporic Irish heroes and martyrs are we to find in struggles against colonialism and imperialism of similar nations in these geographic regions? Have their narratives been written like that of the San Patricios, as freedom-fighters or as a failed group of liminal personae? Looking towards the future of my research, these questions represent exciting new dialogues yet to be established and fomented.

As the world becomes more and more globalized at a blistering rate, Ireland has been working towards making itself a stand-out nation. In 2009 the government sector dedicated to “Tourism Ireland” first launched its “Global Greening Initiative,” which encourages countries around the world to illuminate with green lights their most iconic monuments on St. Patrick’s Day (Tourism Ireland). In the years since the initiative began, participation in the Global Greening has increased dramatically to

include the Pyramids in Egypt, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and even the Prince's Palace in Monaco (Tourism Ireland). These beacons of "greenness" are meant to underscore that the Irish diaspora has been a global event and that 'Irishness' can be found in spaces well beyond the Caribbean and Latin America. Yet, if Ireland looks to bring out the 'Irishness' in its diasporic descendants, then it will become necessary to give voice to these diasporic Irish subjects who will speak out and from the regions they now occupy. This project is a first attempt at listening attently to those diasporic Irish voices calling out from liminality.

Images

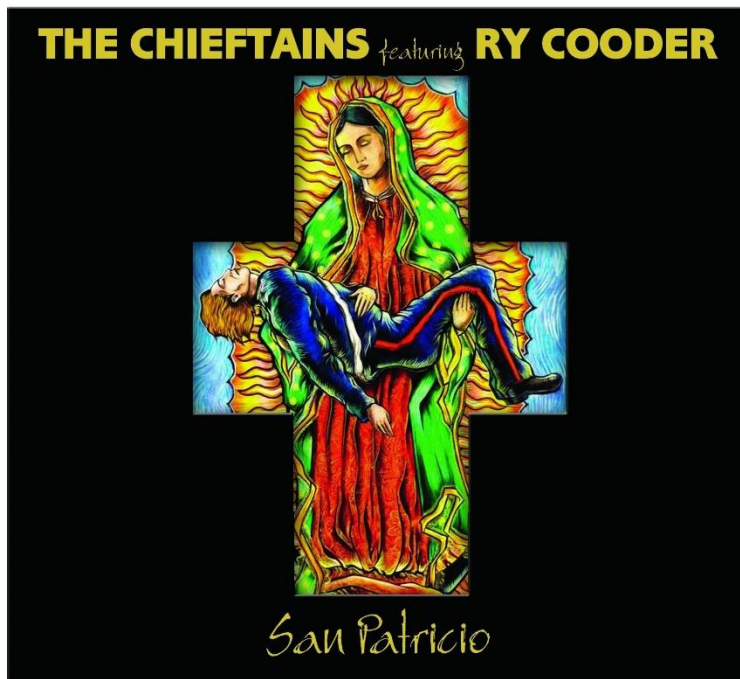


Image 1—Cover art with sleeve



Image 2—Historian Breadan O'Scanail holding the San Patricio flag



Image 3— “The Rifle” sculpture (photo taken before new plaque mounted)



Image 4—New plaque on front of “The Rifle” sculpture



Image 5—Welcome sign located at the entrance to Clifden



Image 6—Bust of John Riley located in the Plaza San Jacinto



Image 7—Extremely rare San Patricio banner

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