

Place as Process:

A comparative analysis of James Joyce's "Eveline," Franz Kafka's *The Castle*, and Jorge Luis Borges' "Las ruinas circulares," and a philosophical exploration into Aristotle and Heidegger on art, being, and place

A THESIS

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It was a Monday morning in July in Dublin, and I was heading west on Upper Gardiner Street. The sun was making an unusual appearance as I stopped on Newcomen Bridge (previously Canal Bridge) to wonder if a lock keeper ever lived in that small cottage, standing by to operate the pound lock, now or even over a hundred years ago in Joyce's time. But on this Monday morning, I'm tapping into the Dublin of 2012, following Joyce's early twentieth-century real-life path through "An Encounter."

By January 2012, I had read *Dubliners* probably five times, and each time I found myself confronted again and again with an urgent need to see the city for myself. All literature buffs go through times in their literary lives when they have to wonder about the isolation of literature, the seeming distance between literature and other disciplines, between crinkled pages and pavement beneath feet, faces in front of faces. So I bought a plane ticket to Dublin, Ireland and threw myself through the pages and onto the scene.

Back on this Monday morning, I continue up North Strand Road, stopping in the cheapest grocery store I've found so far to buy an apple for the walk. I'm heading north again, and before I can even turn east on Wall Road (previously Wharf Road), it starts pouring and gusting a wind so strong that my umbrella can't hold up—or rather, hold down—so I stop to take shelter under the overhang of a temporarily abandoned apartment complex. Today, this path through Dublin is devoid of human contact, other than the loud whistling drivers operating the semi-trucks among a long litter of fast traffic. By the end of the path I couldn't find quite the same location the boys found in "An Encounter." The fishing district of Ringsend had greatly expanded since Joyce's time, and where I should have found a field, I found instead an abundance of houses packed tightly between the River Liffey and the River Dodder. I stopped along the Dodder to watch a man throw a stick for his dog. While sitting on a bench, an old man approached me to ask if I'd

like to share an umbrella. I smiled, “No, thank you,” and let him on his way, wishing later that I had said yes; it was as if Joyce’s very character, the “old josser” (Joyce 14), yellow teeth and all, practically fell in my lap. A real-life *Dubliner*.

Of course, I found many of these during my months in Dublin, spent tracing the paths Joyce laid out for his characters. It was impossible not to consider the role that these real landmarks, which constituted this real city, played in the creation of Joyce’s fictional texts and characters. His father once said that, “if Joyce were dropped in the middle of the Sahara he would sit down and make a map of it” (Anderson 14). I can personally attest to the fact that he was very aware of place—even in self-exile from this city he was able to present it with such detail that over a hundred years later, a young Joycean could find her way for months through an entire city based on his words. It’s not a wonder that it took him over a decade to get these stories published—to his potential publishers, it was immoral for him to tell the tale of his city with such harsh words. But he was not portraying the city. He was not writing, mocking, telling, revealing Dublin, but he was certainly influenced by it. Any relative, Irish-native, reader, scholar, or critic—myself included—can only imagine how much of an impact this place had on the man and his art. We can study the direct links, follow the paths he draws through the city, but we can never know Dublin as Joyce knew Dublin. And regardless of the extent of its influence on him, not only was it not his intention to capture and re-present the city of Dublin in its entirety in his *oeuvre*, but, what’s more, it would have been impossible to do so.

In this paper, I have set out to explore the concept of place and its undeniable influence and meaning in many if not all areas of life. I have chosen to ground my exploration in literature, specifically *Dubliners* by Joyce, *The Castle* by Franz Kafka, and *Ficciones* by Jorge Luis Borges, in order to then move outside of the texts—as I did in Dublin—to situate these works in

their respective authorial realities and consider the influence of external, real place on intratextual<sup>1</sup> place. My next move will take yet another step outward, where I will work through the possible origins of art, ultimately acknowledging that neither imitation nor creation constitutes origin in order to conclude with a new definition of place as a way of being-in-the-world, in a Heideggerian sense.

First, I will provide a working understanding of place in the context of literature, utilizing Wesley Kort's *Place and Space in Modern Fiction*, a textual exploration similar to my own. With grounding for the direction and purpose of my own exploration, I will then begin my own literary analysis and work to form a sense of intratextual place. I have chosen to base my exploration in three fictional texts generally unrelated in basic textual elements, like plot, setting and tone. Although in these texts there exists a selection of characters, dissimilar in their specific features and depictions, in a variety of situations, relayed in the distinct styles of these three authors, the ground for comparison exists in the way each of the three main characters maneuvers within the places—physical, spiritual, relational, mental, etc.—provided by his or her situation and the guiding hand of the author. Equipped with the understanding of place I have weaved together through these characters and these texts, I will move on to explore the lives and place experiences of each author, acknowledging the roles that each author's own sense and experience of place played in his work. To examine the extent of the relevance of each author's own presence of place, I will consider theories regarding the origin of art with the help of Aristotle's *Poetics*, literary scholars who have focused on these authors, as well as theorists who have focused on the role of reality in fiction. With the help of Heidegger's *Poetry, Language,*

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<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to call this intratextual place to emphasize when—namely in the first half, before I provide contextual information of the texts and their authors in reality/history/society—my analysis and the understanding of place is solely reliant on situations within the texts.

*Thought* and my own analysis, I will argue that there is not such a stark distinction between literature and reality, that art is neither merely imitation nor creation, author neither imitator nor creator, and I will expand upon the important relationship between place, art, and being, in the end, formulating a new definition of place in a literary and aesthetic context.

### *Part I: Defining place*

Place is something we are all familiar with, though not necessarily critically. On a basic level, when one thinks of place one probably imagines a geographic location, or a shelter or home where one cycles in and out, returning to fulfill basic needs, or to fulfill emotional and physical senses of safety. Place can also encompass less concrete space—such as an overall feeling of place as constructed by relations with an object, person, or circumstance. In this paper, I have chosen to ground my exploration into place in literature, for, regardless of the varieties of setting, plot, characters, tone, etc., there is always a sense of place present in a narrative tale. In addition, according to Wesley Kort in *Place and Space in Modern Fiction*, in modern narrative discourses, we find what we need, which is “a cultural location where the language of place and space has a rightful role, generates positive content, emphasizes the particularity of places and of people’s relations to them, and stands not in opposition but in relation to the language of actions and event, of time and history” (Kort 10), and that as such literature is the forum for exploring, unpacking, and redefining the concept of place.

By generating a theory of human spatiality and place-relations in modern culture, Kort aims to rehabilitate narrative and move toward a wider and more complex understanding of narrative discourse, elevating the importance of the language of place to the level of other languages of discourse. In order to do this, Kort proposes that there should be greater emphasis

on and analysis of place in narrative texts and narrative theory/discourse, for, although narrative theory generally gives precedence to temporal language, or “the language of actions and events” (Kort 10), the language of place is just as important as that of time. Because narrative theory neglects place, Kort suggests that, citing Edward Said, “we read particular novels with such attention to temporality that we overlook the function in them of space, geography, and location” (Kort 13). By consequence, place takes the background—when we think of place in a text we think of “setting” which, though necessary, is usually an afterthought. But Kort believes this should not be the case, because, according to Edward Casey, “places happen . . . and it is because they happen that they lend themselves so well to narration” (qtd. in Kort 188). Kort takes a step further to state that they also are inevitably always a part of narrative discourse. He stresses the importance of place: “Narratives arise from and return, either to confirm or to challenge, to the relation of physical entities, including places, to moral and spiritual beliefs” (Kort 188). A more accurate narrative discourse and theory of place will take these things into account. Through his exploration of mainly six fictional narrative texts,<sup>2</sup> he reaches a theory, which encompasses and necessitates three kinds of place-relations—comprehensive, social, and intimate space; two sides of place-relations—physical and spiritual; and one single norm of place-relations—“accommodating.”

Though Kort’s and my exploration seem at first to follow a similar path for an ultimately similar final goal, and though he touches on important themes/elements that will play important roles in my work, it is where I take issue with his work that our paths diverge. First, he selected texts in which he specifically found “the language of place and space [to be] prominent, if not

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<sup>2</sup> Though he does move through many other works by each author, he focuses on the following six texts: *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy, *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad, *Howards End* by E. M. Forster, *A Burnt-Out Case* by Graham Greene, *The Spire* by William Golding, and *The Only Problem* by Muriel Spark.

dominant” (Kort 19), so his texts specifically cater to the solution of the problem he identifies. Second, he heavily emphasizes stark division of place-relations into categories, and from six fictional texts he generates a theory which breaks down into *six different categories*, making it difficult to understand his conclusion about place. Third, throughout his process, he fails to clearly distinguish between fiction and reality. At times he moves, without sufficient explanation, too easily between the two, which seems to suggest that he assumes a mimetic literature.

I differ from Kort in both my method of choice of literature and my overall process. By selecting texts which cater to the solution of his problem, he places his focus on the author’s use of the language of place, rather than on the features and aspects of the text itself. He would have benefited more from using texts which, though not necessarily chosen at random, could have at least not been prime examples of texts containing prominent language of place. Even Kort himself argues that place plays a part and is important in all narratives. That being said, place will of course take different forms in different texts. Unlike Kort, I selected three texts disregarding what kind of place they represented, how they represented it, or whether it played any notable or immediately identifiable role at all. I focused instead on characters, drawing together three texts in which three main characters are driven by similar notions of obligation and duty in a search for identity. While Kort draws very distinct lines between the different kinds and sides of place-relations, emphasizing their differences and at the same time emphasizing that all kinds and sides must be acknowledged, I do not draw such lines. Though he works toward a theory that encompasses all of these categories, he never dispels the distinctions he sets up. Rather than categorize place based on how different authors portray place and use the language of place, I analyze the characters and their relationships with place as guided by their searches

for identity to form an understanding. It is clear that my process departs from Kort's, in that my goal is not to divide and categorize place-relations, gravitating toward the particular, away from the general, to the end of more particular generalizations. Rather, before tackling reality and formulating a new definition, I ground my exploration from the outset in three texts, beginning by considering place as a construction of inward relation.

In each of the three texts I have chosen—"Eveline" from *Dubliners*, *The Castle*, and "Las ruinas circulares" from *Ficciones*—there exists some presence of place, whether it be the chosen confinement of a corner in the chambermaids' secret basement bedroom in *The Castle*, or the seclusion of a dream in "Las ruinas circulares." By first identifying the main physical places and then discussing how the characters of each text maneuver within the physical places their authors provide, I will analyze and work toward an understanding of intratextual place.

In *The Castle*, Kafka writes about 10 days in the life of a man named K. who has been summoned to a small village to work as a land surveyor for the castle. When he at last arrives in the dead of night, he is not welcomed as he might have expected. He becomes a spectacle for this insular, introverted town. Soon he finds out rather publicly that the castle has no job for him, even has no knowledge of his existence, let alone his duty. In the pages of this unfinished novel, Kafka presents a character caught between places—between his past, a home and family that he left behind for a job, and his present, in which he does not even really exist, at least not in the way he thought he would. In the few long days of this novel, K. experiences time and place as a consequence of his lost sense of purpose.

Just as K. picks up and leaves life as he knows it in pursuit of a new purpose, so too does Borges' main character in "Las ruinas circulares." In this story, Borges writes of a man—the wizard—who leaves his village in the dark to travel downstream. With no one to witness his



departure or arrival, after reaching a bank, he fights against the elements uphill until he finds a circular temple. There he sleeps and passes the time in his dreams, living an alternate reality in which he tries to accomplish his ultimate duty: to create the perfect man “que mereciera participar en el universo” [who deserved to participate in the universe] (Borges 59).

While both K. and this unnamed dreamer abandon the places they had grown to know, the main character in Joyce’s “Eveline” finds herself paralyzed considering the changes in her near future. She spends this story in her all-too-familiar house where she takes care of her family in her late mother’s stead, leaning against a window, tempted by an offer to leave everything she has ever known behind in pursuit of an exotic new life with Frank, a traveling sailor. She makes it all the way to the dock to board the ship, where she must decide quickly whether or not to remove herself from her present, which has become a fragmented, bound version of her never-ending past.

On the surface, each of these characters faces a transition, a time in which he or she is making a life-altering decision, or has made one and deals with the consequences as they unfold. Themes of reality, delirium, revealing and concealing, relation, and purpose, as experienced by these characters, bring three otherwise apparently unrelated texts together. The central theme, however, which guides each character throughout the texts, is identity. Identity is always on the line for these three main characters, and is, as such, both governing and governed by their sense and the presence of place. Analyzing place as influenced and constructed by these themes, but most importantly the theme of identity, reveals overlap between these texts and ultimately leads to an understanding of intratextual place.

## *Part II: Physical place*

In each of these texts, the physical places transform and take on meaning according to the way the characters maneuver within them. But in order to delve into this meaning, I must first lay a more concrete, physical groundwork for an exploration into place. As mentioned earlier, one of Kort's two sides of place-relations is the "physical" side. With this, he references the physicality of human relations with place, rather than physicality of places themselves; I, on the other hand, use physical to refer to the concrete places that have an existence of their own, independent of the meaning created by characters and plot. Examples of these places include Kafka's castle, always looming in the distance, Borges' temple, inarguably elevated and set apart from its miasmal surroundings, and the station at the North Wall where Eveline waits but fails to board a ship to Buenos Aires, to name just a few. Physical place also includes larger scale places, such as more blanket spatial and/or geographic notions of place like city, village, and jungle. It is important to first understand the existence of the physical places, in order to then understand the sense of place as influenced by and related to the characters.

Kafka's castle is perhaps the most important place in his text. Despite the fact that all physical access roads leading to the castle join up in the village, in more ways than one it lies at a great distance from the village of which it is technically a part, as is clear by K.'s first sighting: "The village lay deep in snow. Nothing could be seen of Castle Hill, it was wrapped in mist and darkness, not a glimmer of light hinted at the presence of the great castle" (Kafka 1). From the outset, it is evident from the physical characterization of the castle alone that it is not attainable, even for Barnabas, who delivers messages to K. from Klamm—the castle official assigned to dealing with matters involving K.—and spends most of his days actually inside the castle waiting for letters to deliver. So great is his sense of distance from the castle that he and his sister Olga wonder, "Is it even castle work that Barnabas does . . . ; he goes to the offices, but are the offices

the castle proper? And even if offices do belong to the castle, is it those offices Barnabas is allowed into?" (Kafka 156). In this sense, the castle seems to embody a sense of place all its own, independent of one particular relation to define its presence. When K. finally gets close enough, though it is still dark when he does so, he sees that it is a real place, "a wretched-looking . . . collection of rustic hovels, . . . everything was built of stone, though the paint had peeled off long since and the stone looked as if it was crumbling away" (Kafka 9). This all at once familiarizes and further distances it, for its appearance seems to suggest that it has a past, an existence that predates K.'s story and his entrance into this life, this village, this text. The physical structures of the castle exist despite the fact that K. never enters, as confirmed by the rare but certain sightings of castle officials entering and exiting through the castle's gates, and the fact that it is the object of countless village desires, the final destination for so many village people, the ultimate goal of countless strategic thoughts.

Borges' temple in "Las ruinas circulares" bears pivotal importance as a concrete place for this story for reasons not far off from those which bring the castle to the spotlight in Kafka's novel. Like the castle's structural exterior, the temple's appearance also suggests a history regardless of the wizard who uses it for shelter throughout the whole story, as it is visibly a temple "que devoraron los incendios antiguos" [that had been devoured by ancient fires] (Borges 57). But, the wizard spends an even greater portion of his time in dreams, where at first he teaches to a class from "el centro de un anfiteatro circular que era de algún modo el templo incendiado" [the center of an amphitheater that was like the burned temple] (Borges 58). This amphitheater differs from the temple in its unreal, dream-like qualities, its "nubes de alumnos taciturnos fatigaban las gradas" [clouds of taciturn students in the bleachers] and "caras de los últimos pendían a muchos siglos de distancia y a una altura estelar" [the faces of the farthest

ones were hanging many centuries away at the height of the stars] (Borges 58-59). Another place which bears significance also related to these circular ruins is the other burned temple located far downstream, where the wizard is instructed in his dreams to send his perfect man. These two places—the amphitheatre of his dreams and the burned temple of his dreamed creation’s reality—clearly relate back to the ultimate place of this story, suggesting the importance of the one important place which exists independently of both the wizard who finds and utilizes it and of the two other places that come into physical existence by contrast to this place.

Just like Kafka’s castle and Borges’ temple, Eveline’s childhood house—the primary physical place where we find Eveline still living at the start of the story—has an existence which predates Eveline and the beginning of the story. However, unlike K. and the wizard, Eveline actively works to influence, even tries to control the existence of this place, physically adjusting it in an endless cycle, dusting only to find herself needing to dust more, once every week, “wondering where on earth all the dust came from” (Joyce 23). The fact that this physical place never changes, despite Eveline’s consistent active efforts, reinforces the interpretation of physical place as that which exists independently of the characters.

All three physical, geographical/societal settings influence the characters and the sense of place in the text. Eveline’s house, situated in the middle of a bustling city, exists as a physical place within the context of overall physical alteration and progress. It, and Eveline, remain unfazed as the surroundings change. Eveline watches as, over the years, the field where she and her siblings and friends once played became a new string of houses after “a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses but bright houses with shining roofs” (Joyce 23). While Eveline lives untouched amid the structural changes that result from the growing demands of a busy, moving city population, the wizard too lives untouched, in

respite elevated in the middle of the dark wild in the remnants of a civilization. The physical place of the temple gathers context in its once civilized state, now standing out in the jungle as if an abandoned battleground between nature and the divine, the middle ground where civilization stood to bridge the two together. The village K. occupies exists between Eveline's bustling city and the wizard's natural surroundings; it is neither a bustling city, nor a dark, once civilized place overtaken by nature. This village is a civilized, socially mobilized town, whose labyrinthine roads hearken to the worlds of Joyce and Borges, both known as labyrinth makers in the muddled portrayal of the characters with regard to the physical places of their texts. The village is also defined by its contrast to the castle looming over and above it, situated so that its existence is inevitably comparative.

These physical places cannot solely be considered independently of the characters that maneuver within and contribute to them, for even the physical elements of a given space have specific meaning in relation to the characters. However, exposing the physical places that exist beyond the character's control or influence in these texts does set the scene for analysis. Kort defines space which exists independently of, beyond, or apart from human control as "comprehensive space," one of his three kinds of place-relations. Being human means having limitations—physical, mental, and otherwise—and this notion of comprehensive space speaks to a place which cannot be captured, controlled, created, or fully understood; place as unreachable, unchangeable. Kort interprets D. W. Meinig's idea that "nature provides a stage" to mean that "human spatiality requires a component that locates human constructions in relation to a space that they do not themselves provide" (Kort 154). By acknowledging the physical places or comprehensive space in these texts, we lay the groundwork for analyzing the characters and how and why they interact with, foster and create their sense of place. Physicality is a key component

in this process, because places or place-relations “ground and steady human life and support modes of relationship between people, bodily identities, and the physical contexts of people’s lives” (Kort 174). While the notion of comprehensive space that Kort uses in his general theory of human place-relations is useful for understanding the role and presence of place in literature, it cannot stand alone. Kort agrees, but while his solution is to keep this “kind” of place in its own category as a part of his final theory, I will not attempt to suggest that this can represent a category on its own. While the large span of theories and literature he compiles is commendable, Kort, with too much material, concludes his exploration by generating a final theory in the form of ultimately six different categories on three different levels. For my exploration, revealing and explaining the physical places in each text is crucial for laying a groundwork on the way to reaching a full understanding of intratextual place; but, that being said, physical place is not separable from the other components which constitute the overall presence of place within the texts.

### *Part III: Reaching a definition of intratextual place*

The characters of a text provide, maneuver, and foster contexts for the physical places of a text. The overlaps and interactions between more concrete and more abstract instances of particular places within the texts make dividing and separating physical place off at one end of a binary opposition a step in the wrong direction. I will not split place or place-relations, as Kort does, into two opposing sides, physical and spiritual. It is the relationship between these “sides” that is important. Kort refers to Edward Casey to explain the significance of interaction between bodies and place: “Just as there are no places without bodies that sustain and vivify them, so there are no lived bodies without the places they inhabit and traverse” (Kort 176), and,

furthermore, “Bodies and places are connatural terms. They interanimate each other” (Kort 187). Though Kort suggests and does “affirm a fully relational theory” (Kort 187), he loses touch with the true significance and weight of relation by keeping his categories distinctly divided. For this exploration, identity will guide the way through the various presentations and relationships of place in these texts, and bridge the divide between the strict physicality of the places and the relationship between the places and the behavior, thoughts, and actions of the characters.

As soon as K. steps foot in the village, this new physical place, his identity as a “land surveyor”—the new purpose for which he abandoned his past and traveled so far—is denied. In the delirium of exhaustion from his travels, he is unable to sensibly or convincingly identify himself upon arrival. By consequence of this start, as well as of the fact that his job does not exist, K. often paces within what seems a state of non-existence, where his purpose is called into question, and neither he nor any official or village person can defend or identify him. This leaves K. dependent on the relations he establishes with the people and the places his circumstances present to him. From the outset, he depends on the castle as a goal, both to attain his job and purpose, and to reclaim and locate an identity for himself. Another important relationship is the one between K. and his fiancée Frieda, the barmaid who was once Klamm’s—the aforementioned castle official who deals with matters involving K.—mistress. He depends on this connection for access and exposure to more people and places on his way to attaining and understanding his role in this village; and, as Frieda later accuses him, he uses her because, as she tells him, “before you met me you had lost your way here” and “it was only since knowing me that you’d had any sense of purpose” (Kafka 139). Though he denies the negativity of this assertion, he most certainly utilizes people and places on his way to claiming a concrete role in this place.

Though all of the people and places he meets along the way are important in his search for the job he came to claim, the most important and overarching goal is ultimately to reach the castle. His preoccupation with this distant entity becomes clear at the very beginning when, in the third sentence of the novel, the looming importance of the castle stops K. in his tracks: “K. stood for a long while on the wooden bridge that led from the main road to the village, gazing up into the seeming emptiness” (Kafka 1). A character who is otherwise ever on the move in his pursuits, pushed and pulled in and out of his relational place, spends a “long while” “gazing” at the physical entity of the castle, of which, in this moment, he cannot even yet see let alone make sense. This rare moment of stillness and silence signifies the distinctly notable importance of this particular object of his desire—the castle, which stands in as a sort of keeper of his lost identity and lost sense of place.

Just as K. enters the text with a still gaze, so too does Joyce’s Eveline: “She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired” (Joyce 23). Unlike K.’s gaze, which ends quickly enough, never again to interrupt his forward though ultimately unproductive motion throughout the story, Eveline’s is much longer. While K. stares at his goal in order to tuck it away and constantly pursue it, Eveline remains gazing at something intangible—her home and her past which constitute her only sense of place—throughout the story, and when she finally breaks from this gaze, she finds herself physically unable to move at the end of the story, submitting once again to a harrowing gaze, in which she turns her blank, dead eyes and “her white face . . . , passive, like a helpless animal” (Joyce 26) toward a planned, secure future that she is too paralyzed and scared to accept even as it is handed to her.



In a way, Eveline's home represents a place of safety for her, in that it is familiar, she has a tried-and-true routine, and a secure, consistent sense of duty. The wizard in "Las ruinas circulares" also finds a sense of safety and comfort from which he is hesitant to extract himself. The conflict between nature and divinity—between the real and the unreal—is clear from the very beginning, when the "selva palúdica" [odious jungle] (Borges 57) wounds the wizard's flesh as he fights his way up to a temple once used for worshipping, symbolically elevated atop a hill high above the dark jungle which tried to defeat him below. The seclusion of the temple allows the wizard to enter the safe oblivion of his dreams where he never faces danger, in the meantime also divinely healing his wounds and restoring his physical existence, mind and body. One night when he awakens to "el grito inconsolable de un pájaro" [the inconsolable scream of a bird] (Borges 58), he fears that other men of the region had been watching him, so he finds deeper safety in "un nicho sepulcral y se tapo con hojas desconocidas" [a sepulchral niche and wrapped himself with unknown leaves] (Borges 58). Both in hiding from the expansiveness of nature and in separating and secluding himself far away in his dreams, he buries himself, burrowing away from and out of reality.

All three characters are torn between past and present, but while for both K. and the wizard this means existing between being and not being—more specifically reality and dreams for the wizard—for Eveline it means dwelling in a place in which her past is still living and breathing around her. Dwelling in her home makes her past always accessible, presently in the form of "familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided" (Joyce 23), objects that hold memories, like the portrait of the priest hanging on the wall. This portrait stands out among the familiar objects, for both Eveline and the reader: "During all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall about the

broken” (Joyce 23). This portrait acts as a reminder of her past, and a reminder, for the reader, of Eveline’s plague of inactivity. She calls it a familiar object, but in the time that had to pass to make it familiar, she did not actually achieve an understanding of it. Even the activity in which she does engage accomplishes nothing, mainly her incessant dusting of these objects, as mentioned above. Her cyclical behavior, despite the fact that the physical state of the house never changes, seems to reveal all at once a desperation for action and a paralyzing desire for stagnation. The safe places Eveline and the wizard confine themselves to constitute the perfect environment for their obsessive, task-oriented, but in reality unproductive behavior, as the insularity of their safe places separates both characters from the real world where they would be unable to carry out this ultimately fruitless behavior.

Eveline’s extension of her past is her exit from reality, and her incessant dusting and tending to the house is her way of keeping current the moments of the past. Not only is this evident in her behavior, but also in the narration of her memories. She passes time in the quiet of her thoughts, where she lovingly dictates to herself the details of her never forgotten past. Throughout this story, Eveline uses the phrase “used to” over and over again; for example, when remembering the field across from her house where “the children of the avenue used to play” (Joyce 23), and the house on the main road where she “used to visit” (Joyce 24) Frank, and when remembering that “he used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home” (Joyce 24), and that he “used to call her Poppens” (Joyce 25). Rather than utilizing the preterite—a tense which refers to single completed events in the past—she repetitively tells her story in the imperfect, thus elongating the past and allowing it into her present. This elongation of the past also takes form in the melancholic, emotional, wordy nostalgia of her depiction of the past; here she tells a story about her father: “Not long before, when she had been laid up for a

day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh" (Joyce 25). This account contrasts sharply with her sudden, perceptibly painful breaks into the present, like this one: "That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes" (Joyce 23). The smooth, flowing descriptions of her past in contrast to the choppy acknowledgement of reality, of the present, reflects the nature of the impending transition for this character. It is a contrast between something wanted—the past, which she recounts lovingly—and something dreaded—the present, which she does not want to face.

This choppy revelation of Eveline's present against the endearing, flowing descriptions of the past mirrors a similar contrast between the depiction of the present and that of dreams in "Las ruinas circulares," in which Borges differentiates between the main character's pleasant, fluid dream place and his active presence in a more dangerous, dirty reality. The ambiguity of time acts as evidence of the wizard's separation from the course of time, and as such, from the natural, physical world; for example, it is unclear exactly how much time passes as the man sleeps before "lo despertó el sol alto" [the high sun woke him up] (Borges 57) and he finds his wounds magically healed. More concrete installments of time starkly oppose the ambiguous fluidity of dreams. The passage of time becomes most clear at points in the story when the wizard exists actively and presently in reality. One afternoon, he wakes up and finds himself unable to return to his dream world: "El hombre, un día, emergió del sueño como de un desierto viscoso, miró la vana luz de la tarde que al pronto confundió con la aurora y comprendió que no había soñado. Todo esa noche y todo el día, la intolerable lucidez del insomnio se abatió contra él" [The man,

one day, emerged from his sleep as if from a viscous desert, looked at the useless light of the evening which he immediately confused with the dawn, and understood that he had not dreamed. All that night and all day, the intolerable lucidity of insomnia fell upon him.] (Borges 59-60). His disorientation and misreading of the meaning of the light and the passage of time make it clear that measured time is a marker of reality and of a sense of place that is governed by a certain cyclical, natural, physical order. It quickly becomes clear that the wizard must utilize the clarity of reality; he brings this extended break from his dreams to an end by engaging in a formulaic process of purification at the full moon, another drop into an actual passage of time, to prepare himself for his modified task. He abandons the idea of finding the perfect man in the pupils of the “condición de vana apariencia” [condition of empty illusion] (Borges 58-59) of his dream classroom, and determines instead to tap into his understanding of the physical reality of a body, which he then utilizes to construct the perfect man piece by piece, forming each principal organ in his mind. He makes a conscious move away from thin air to the framework for physical existence, for he realizes that “el empeño de modelar la materia incoherente y vertiginosa de que se componen los sueños es el mas arduo que puede acometer un varón” [determining to model the incoherent and vertiginous matter of which dreams are composed is the most difficult task that a man can undertake] (Borges 60). And so, it is when the wizard’s dreams become more based in physical reality that the passage of time becomes clearer. The installments of time at this point begin to act as instances of interaction between the natural, real world and the more spiritual dream world. For example, the wizard provides us with a 14-day marker when his dreaming becomes more “lucid,”—a characteristic, as previously quoted, only before assigned to torturous waking hours—the dream construction of this perfect man becomes more based in reality, and he is able to physically touch the heart. Yet still, his ultimate, “invencible propósito”

[invincible intent] (Borges 58) is to conquer reality; he utilizes the physical world so as to create a convincingly real, perfect human being and “imponerlo a la realidad” [impose him on reality] (Borges 58), keeping it a secret that the man is made of dream matter. His creation becomes an expression of power, in the fight that he still engages in with reality.

Both the wizard and K. seem to use places to create a sense of place for themselves, which brings the theme of power to play an important role in both texts. As in “Las ruinas circulares,” power in *The Castle* is inextricable from the distinction between the real and the unreal, taking form at times as truth and lies in this text. Just as the wizard hoped to impose his creation on reality, K., too, exercises his power by imposing, the difference being that he imposes himself in a variety of situations and places, creating and feigning a reality rather than fighting against or sneaking around it. He imposes himself at the very beginning of the novel when he walks into the inn and lays down to sleep on a pallasse. When people at the inn start bothering him to leave, seeing as he did not have a permit to be in town, he tricks them into believing he is a powerful person, first by claiming he is the land surveyor, which of course at this point is true, second, and more importantly, by setting forth an unfaltering, undefeatable confidence—he addresses them directly, explaining that he has a right to sleep there that night, a “night you have had the – to put it mildly – discourtesy to disturb. That is all I have to say. Good night, gentlemen” (Kafka 4). He uses this same attitude to find residence throughout the town in many places where he certainly does not belong, namely the school where he manages to wrangle a job as caretaker out of the schoolmaster, and he, Frieda, and his assistants move in to the room used for PE class. He wakes up the first morning “to find that the first schoolchildren had already arrived and were crowding curiously around the beds. This was awkward, because . . . they had all stripped to their underwear” (Kafka 115). Sleeping on a bed of straw in the middle

of a bar, living in a bedroom decorated with “the pieces of [PE] apparatus [standing] around and [hanging] from the ceiling” (Kafka 111), lurking in a forbidden hallway in the inn because, out of exhausted disorientation and an unfolding of a whole novel’s worth of confusing events, he actually has no other place to be. When the landlady and landlord of the inn catch K. lingering in this hallway, he is berated:

Did not even the moth, poor creature, seek out a quiet corner when day came, flatten itself, ask for nothing more than to disappear, and experience sadness that it could not? K., by contrast, stuck himself where he was most visible, and had he been able to stop the dawn coming up by doing so, they added, he’d have done so. (Kafka 251)

In this novel, he visibly stands out in places with which he should not be familiar, and yet he remains, with his powerful presence as a stranger, seemingly undefeatable, unmovable. To top off all of the places where he has made his presence known and accepted—at least temporarily—this particular instance reveals that he does not belong in this village. By referencing the dawn, a phenomenon of nature, marked like time with unfaltering regularity, the landlady at once equates K. with the power of time and nature, and yet elevates him and his threat to the natural, practiced, usual way of the village by suggesting that he opposes nature, or at least would if he could. The source of K.’s alienation is the setting of place itself; he does not belong, he cannot reach the place he came to reach, neither physically nor mentally, and yet, he remains, searching. And, in fact, on the last page of the novel K. is on his way to a new place in the village that he thinks will provide him with a sense of duty and push him forward in his search for an identity here.

K. only finds himself in place—at home, if you will—one time in this novel. One night while paying a visit to Barnabas’ sister Olga to gather information about Klamm, he is instead bombarded with the family’s entire life story, and by the end of that long night, “It seemed to him he was now . . . so involved with this family that spending the night here, though perhaps

awkward for other reasons, was in fact, considering that involvement, the most natural place for him in the entire village” (Kafka 207). But, he does not stay, he avoids this place where he feels like he belongs, and goes on his way. Throughout the novel, he jumps at any opportunity to try out a new place, imposing himself everywhere, faking power so as to maybe fake belonging, all the while digging himself further away from a destination. Ultimately he is never able to find a place to *be* in this village.

While K. exercises power to get around and search for a place, Eveline lacks the power to even stay out at the market for longer than necessary. She cannot extract herself from the place where she has belonged so naturally for her entire life, not even within the span of an evening can she even bring herself to move: “Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne” (Joyce 25). In this scene, her motionless body remains as she finds her place among the familiar objects, like one of them herself, a repository for memories simply collecting dust. In her time living in this home, she has born witness to the living breathing entity of an urban center, as mentioned above. The field outside of her window that she remembers so well becomes a neighborhood of “bright houses with shining roofs” across the street from the “little brown houses” (Joyce 23) of which her own, unchanged, never updated, is a part—an external point of comparison revealing both her house’s and her own lack of change. Though we do not see it in this particular scene until the end—and even then it does not work out—she does leave the house on occasion, to work in the Stores and buy the groceries. When she does venture out, “she [has] to rush out as quickly as she [can] and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbow[s] her way through the crowds” (Joyce 24). While this could be seen as an act of confidence, not letting the sway of the crowds keep her from accomplishing the task at

hand, it is more likely, considering her character and situation, a consequence of the fear of being away from home, and thus determination to make it back as quickly as possible.

Each of these characters struggles to find his or her place, or to grapple with the places he or she creates, fosters, or deals with in the text, and it is clear that identity is always on the line. It is the culmination of each of these characters' ultimately unproductive searches, the turning point, the moment of identity crisis which sets up the reader for confusion and pushes the reader outside of the text in search of a sense of place.

For Eveline, the ultimate moment when her entire life could change, when she could at last find her purpose, her place, her own existence, occurs when at last she removes herself from the dust and prepares to board the ship to Buenos Aires with Frank. Throughout the story, Eveline never speaks out loud, which makes it all the more significant when, as the whistle blows and Frank is swept onto the boat with the crowd, she grabs the iron railing on the dock and "Amid the seas she [sends] a cry of anguish" (Joyce 26). In this moment, her body returns again to its passive "leaning" position, this time outside of the familiar comfort of her home. In many ways this moment, in the crippling separation from her home, the paralyzed distance from her future, the impossibility of her living presence, is the culmination of her own distance from her sense of self. She spends the story reminding herself of who Frank is and of their history together. Her distance both from this past and from her self is clear when she reveals that, when Frank used to sing to her "about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused" (Joyce 25), somehow unable to understand that she was the lass, that she loved him, or even that she was the one he loved. When she reminds herself of their impending marriage, she says, "Then she would be married – she, Eveline" (Joyce 24). Her disbelief in her own impending progress, her distance from her self and her growth as a living being, is evident in the fact that



she must take a moment to remind herself that it is she, *Eveline*, who is connected to this series of forward movements. So disconnected is she from her own independent identity that the only thing which spurs her to stand up in this story is when, she realizes “in a sudden impulse of terror” (Joyce 26) that she is at risk of becoming her mother, dying like her mother. As she leans motionless collecting dust like a dead body, remembering her mother’s death, she hears the same song that an organ-player had played the very night of her mother’s death, a life ended when “commonplace sacrifices clos[ed] in final craziness” (Joyce 25), and realizes she must escape. But yet, she makes it out and cannot make it away, paralyzed in the final moments, pale and passive, eyes glazed over, once again as if dead.

The wizard, too, throughout his story, noticeably lacks a sense of independent identity. His preoccupation in his dreams already hints at a troubled relationship with self and reality. This is further emphasized when he not only exits reality, but loses reality in the process of pursuing his goal: “Ese proyecto mágico había agotado el espacio entero de su alma; si alguien le hubiera preguntado su propio nombre o cualquier rasgo de su vida anterior, no habría acertado a responder” [This magic project had exhausted the entire space of his soul; if someone had asked him his name or any feature of his previous life, he would not have been able to answer] (Borges 58). In his preoccupation with his present task, he loses sight of his own existence apart from this divine purpose. After two years, his creation reaches completion, and the wizard is overcome by a sense of paternal ownership as he begins to refer to him as “hijo” [son] (Borges 62). This signifies a further distancing from reality, for he begins to feel a sense of a real-world relationship with a figment of his dream, which is by no means his son in a conventional, natural sense. That being said, he does realize, in the only instance in the text of him closing his eyes while awake and directly thinking to himself, that “*El hijo que he engendrado me espera y no*

*existirá si no voy*” [The son that I have engendered is waiting for me and will not exist if I do not go to him] (Borges 62). Though he realizes that this figment of his dreaming thoughts will not exist if he is not dreaming, the wizard still gives him existence in a place by suggesting that when he dreams he will “go” to him. Once the dreamed man is ready to enter reality, the wizard must erase the memory of the process of creation in his mind so that his son will never know he is not real. Though he knows this is what he must do, “Íntimamente, le dolía apartarse de él” [Secretly, it was hurting him to be separate from him] (Borges 62). What he does to bring his son to live as a being in the world, simultaneously removes him from his own sense of being in the world, for it removes the only sense of identity and place he had, in his dreams, in relation to this divine task. Losing his dream, losing his dreamed son, he loses his sense of self and purpose, which readies him for the final moment of crisis and shock to any sense of existence he had, when at the very end of the story the dreaming wizard finds that he himself is only “una apariencia, que otro estaba soñándolo” [an illusion, that another was dreaming him] (Borges 64). And just like that, he never existed, or if he did, only as an illusion.

K., too, left a past behind of which the reader never learns and which K. never really mentions, and with the immediate denial of the identity he came to the castle to claim, he goes on to never really have an identity in this text. However, there is a notable moment when his search for a purpose resounds deeply within, revealing itself as a search for inner self. Though writing of Kafka’s *The Trial*, Robert Alter’s description of setting and motives for the main character in *The Trial* in “Kafka: Suspicion and the City” sheds light on K. of *The Castle*: “The city is the perfect setting for this floundering everyman who has no enabling sense of purpose, whose inner world is an unacknowledged mess, and who substitutes self-interested calculation for community and human connection” (Alter 153). *The Castle*’s K. spends his time engaging in activity painted

by an absence of his own independent sense of an identity. As the townspeople immediately greet him with a collective, “What assistant? What land surveyor?” (Kafka 20), he seems to lose his identity himself. Throughout the text, an outward lack of identity becomes an inward loss of recognizable self, as K. begins to question who he is. Olga tells him her family’s secret game-changing story, to which his immediate response is, “Who is it you welcome? Olga, who is it you’re confiding the history of your family to? . . . Surely not to me, the land surveyor” (Kafka 178). Here he acknowledges that she is confiding in *him*, but not the “land surveyor,” which seems to reveal a lack of self-identification, seeing as the *him* he has come to this village to be is the him who is a land surveyor. If, more than halfway through the text he is still identifying himself by contrast to this empty term of a job he never had, that doesn’t even exist, there is undoubtedly existential uncertainty. A sense of existential crisis becomes clearer as he reflects at the end of Olga’s long story: “In Olga’s account, there opened up before him a world so vast and scarcely plausible that he could not resist reaching out and touching it with his little experience, in order to convince himself more clearly not only of its existence but also of his own” (Kafka 194). This rare occurrence when K. actually narrates directly about his own existence holds great significance for the text as a whole. In a moment of exercising the possibility of inexistence, he consequently allows momentarily for the entire plot to take on a new meaning. In a text in which a character spends the entirety rejecting rumor, gossip, secrets and conspiracies, and ultimately clinging to an underlying normalcy of this strange place, the moment when he uses the possibility of a rumor to affirm his own existence is a moment that threatens the authority and trustworthiness of the text itself. All three texts are called into question when all sense of building and constructing place and identity along the way proves in the end to come to nothing. In the end, the only sense of identity which still remains is that which is heavily connected,

productive or not, to the physical places which existed in a way before the stories began, and which went on after the stories ended.

*Part IV: The authorial realities*

In Kort's exploration through the six fictional texts, he does not really acknowledge each author's reality/own relationship with place. Beyond this, he ultimately fails to distinguish between fiction and reality, or at least he fails to explain why he did not distinguish between them, or to provide an explanation of the relationship between them. And yet, one of his main goals is to situate his theory in reality. He uses the six fictional texts to identify a problem of human place-relations in modern culture, and then he uses those six texts to solve that problem, somehow asserting that a problem identified textually can be solved textually and then applied to reality. In this way, he seems to approach the texts as representative of reality, or at least as means for reaching reality. He asserts that "Places in narrative have force and meaning; they are related to human values and beliefs; and they are part of a larger human world, including actions and events" (Kort 11). His lack of a clear distinction raises a few crucial questions: Why does narrative discourse serve this important function as a "cultural location" through which we can interpret and understand place? Is it enough to use fictional texts to define place for reality? Just as "the grandmother in Proust's novel ceaselessly driv[es] the young Marcel out into the garden, away from the unhealthy inwardness of his closeted reading" (de Man 4), I push this intratextual exploration outside of, but not away from, the texts, delving into the authors' lives in order to reveal the connectedness of fiction and reality, and to access the referential relationship which exists between the fiction and reality. Uncovering and understanding each author's relationship

with place as he experienced and understood it in his reality outside of the text provides possible insight into the presence and manifestation of intratextual place.

There is no doubt that Joyce was heavily influenced by Dublin, Ireland. Born in 1882 at 41 Brighton Square in a south-side suburb of the city, he spent nearly all of his first 20 years living in Dublin. His family moved around quite a bit during his lifetime—his father did everything he could to avoid paying rent—but they always stayed close, moving from suburb to suburb. Much like his characters, Joyce paced the small city. In June of 1895, he and his brother Stanislaus skipped school and set out for the Pigeon House, which was, at the time, a storehouse that also served refreshments to passengers traveling between England and Ireland, an interesting destination considering its location on the edge of the city, at a point which holds the potential of departure.

The parallels between Joyce's own experience and that of the two boys in "An Encounter" are undeniable. In this *Dubliners* story, two young boys skip school and draw a plan to travel through the streets and along the River Dodder in order to reach the Pigeon House. They make a plan, and they play with their newfound senses of purpose and power along the way. All four of these characters, Joyce and Stanislaus here included, take the exact same path through the city, over the Canal Bridge, down North Strand Road to the Vitriol Works, right on Wharf Road past the Smoothing Iron, reaching the quays at noon for a short break. Then they take a ferryboat over the River Liffey to Ringsend, a south-side suburb of Dublin where they ultimately, still relatively far away from the Pigeon House by the end of the day, find rest on a bank in a field from which they could see the Dodder. Joyce portrays this path with such precise detail that the path can even be followed start to finish in today's Dublin, as I can personally attest to. According to Chester G. Anderson in *James Joyce and His World*, they met a creepy old man at

the end of the day; just as Stanislaus called the old man he and Joyce met, Mahony in “An Encounter,” exclaims that the man they meet is a “queer old josser” (Joyce 14).

Joyce transformed this experience when he began writing the short stories of *Dubliners* in 1904. After graduating from University College, Dublin (UCD) in 1902, Joyce moved to Paris where he intended to study medicine. Along the way, the little writing he had already done helped create connections for him, with W.B. Yeats among others. He always maintained his strong ties with Dublin, but certainly left with speed and inclination—he was ready for other things: “He saw himself soaring, like a successful Icarus out of the labyrinth of Dublin into exciting, unknown worlds” (Anderson 37), something many of his characters, like Eveline, are never able to do. Through his late twenties and early thirties, he moved back and forth, Paris to Dublin to Zurich to Trieste. He went on to base all of his major works—*Ulysses* most notably—in the Dublin he grew up knowing, most of which he actually wrote in self-exile abroad, “For he had realized that his ordinary Dublin life showed forth or ‘epiphanized’ reality itself, from which he would forge, in the words of Stephen’s vow at the end of the *Portrait*, in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race” (Anderson 6). It is not so far off to acknowledge the significant ties between Joyce’s own experience of Dublin and the fiction of Dublin he creates, as the transfer of his reality into fiction was, at times in his life, unabashed: in 1904, “he had begun to convert his life directly into fiction, turning from their company to jot down notes and epiphanies on the library slips he now carried with him” (Anderson 48). But beyond simply his own personal reality, he was also heavily influenced by the city as a whole. In “Joyce on Location: Place Names in Joyce’s Fiction,” Martha Fodaski Black argues that “Joyce not only grounds his work in the reality of the city but also chooses locations whose implications and ironies deepen his depiction of Irish life and his Irish characters” (Begnal 18). Joseph Frank, in

“Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” even goes so far as to say that Joyce’s “most obvious intention” was to “re-create the sights and sounds, the people and places, of a typical Dublin day” (Frank 233) for his readers. His countless specific references to parts and pieces of Dublin certainly make it difficult to argue that Joyce was not basing his literary world on, or rather *in* Dublin.

The deep and troubled relationship Joyce had with Dublin is clear in his work, by comparison to more ambiguous and subtle relationships authors, like Franz Kafka, have with their own residential realities. Kafka was born in 1883 in Prague in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Unlike Joyce’s, Kafka’s life has not since been, and, in reality, was not so markedly attached to specific place and the specific locations that constitute that place. Though neither author is a classic realist, where Joyce could more easily be called a realist considering his specific place references, Kafka most certainly could not, as his generic place portraits show. That being said, Kafka’s work, when considered on a larger scale, seems to center around a certain relationship with city/village life. Alter argues the relevance, for Kafka’s work, of the nineteenth-century depictions of (and bearings on) “the modern European city,” and of other authors who were working within these parameters, asserting that “every urban novel, even a solidly realist one, is an imaginative mediation of the experience of the city” (Alter 141). He clarifies that, for Kafka, “the city” “is above all a place where one is alone, as his parable-like short narrative pieces remind us” (Alter 144). Here, Alter suggests that the style which emanates throughout Kafka’s oeuvre echoes and evokes the city. Just as Joyce’s Dublin reality seems irremovable from his work, so Kafka’s generic “city” reality seems irremovable from his work.

Alter compares Kafka’s depiction of the city to Joyce’s depiction, claiming that while Kafka evoked the dark and scary side of the modern city in his work, Joyce focused on the

“bustling city” (Alter 159). In *The Castle*, Kafka never identifies a specific location or name of the village, or any of the places within the village for that matter, merely providing generic names for landmarks, like Castle Hill, the Bridge Inn, Count *Westwest’s* castle—as the castle is, seemingly arbitrarily, named in the very beginning—and the main inn, which is never even given a name. In *Dubliners* on the other hand, Joyce provides very specific names for all places he references in his texts, most of the time staying true to the real Dublin—places like the Hill of Howth (Joyce 25) and the station at the North Wall (Joyce 26) in “Eveline,” both of which still exist today.

Fifteen years after Joyce, and 16 years after Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges was born in 1899 in Buenos Aires. He and his family moved from Buenos Aires to Geneva, Switzerland when he was 15, then to Spain five years later, then back to Buenos Aires in 1921. In 1937, this once thriving city was hit, like the rest of the world, by the Great Depression, forcing a 38-year-old Borges out of his comfortable life earning enough with his talent as a writer, and straight into the Buenos Aires Municipal Library, where he spent years cataloging. He worked there until 1946, and though, according to Paul S. Piper, Borges later called the experience “nine years of unhappiness” (Piper 56), in the end, it wasn’t that much of a change—he was efficient with his work, which left him a great amount of time to read and write at work. Then in 1955, he was appointed director of the Argentine National Library. This time around, in a position of greater power, direction and importance, he was inspired; according to Piper, he wanted to make the library a cultural center—some place of pivotal importance to everyone. He worked there until 1973, when a change in governmental power led him to leave his position in protest. In his “Autobiographical Essay,” written in 1970, Borges states that, “If I were to name the chief event in my life, I should say my father’s library. In fact, I sometimes think I have never strayed from



that library” (Reid 143). So, in the end, Borges was as much a librarian as he was a writer, or perhaps the two were simply inextricable.

Borges’ relationship with Buenos Aires—the place where he spent most of his life—was greatly shaped by his relationship with his ancestral past. In the first chapter of *Borges the Labyrinth Maker*, Ana María Barrenechea writes that Borges and other writers of his generation, as Borges himself has explained, were eager to live lives of adventure their ancestors had lived—during times of struggles against tyrannical power and wars for independence. But living in “the tranquil Argentina of 1920” (Barrenechea 2), there was no such adventure to be experienced. So, Borges used memory and the stories of his ancestors, plugging them into the places he knew; in this way, it seemed his relationship with place morphed into one in which he applied feelings and memories of experience to the place(s) he knew, and by doing so, he developed an attitude that resembled the attitude of his ancestors despite their separation of circumstance and time. Resorting to memory seems to mirror the wizard in “Las ruinas circulares” resorting to dreams to attribute meaning to a place.

These two places—the library and Buenos Aires—are arguably the most influential for his writing. His first published book, published in 1923, was a collection of poetry called *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, which was, as indicated by the title, influenced by his hometown. Its localism marked his departure from the Spanish Ultraists—he and the Argentinean Ultraists “were enthusiastic over disclosing those national aspects which had not been touched by literature” (Barrenechea 7). This text marked the start of his development as a writer, a development which would take form in transformation of his place-related influences. Of this first text, Borges himself “recognized the insufficient connection of his two themes: idealistic philosophy and the interpretation of the city” (Barrenechea 9). He would go on to meld themes of human destiny and

place—which mostly took less and less specific form as time went on, as a story like “Las ruinas circulares” exemplifies. Another place—a more specific place within the greater Buenos Aires area—at times directly influences or translates into his literature: his family’s summer home in Adrogué, Argentina, “which appears from time to time in his poems, essays, or stories”—“Tlön Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” and his poem “Adrogué,” for example—“with a magic which restores the lost days of scenting honeysuckle or eucalyptus, or is useful in contaminating with unreality some of the stories” (Barrenechea 3-4). The library, a less specific place, by contrast represents a more broad and abstract influence on his texts, playing a key role in many of his stories, like “La biblioteca de Babel” and “El Sur,” to name a few. According to Piper, in “El Sur,” “The protagonist is not unlike Borges himself: a man of books, a writer, a librarian, who dreams of being a man of action” (Piper 58). This claim isn’t so far-fetched—in his “Profesión de fe literaria” in his second collection of essays, *El tamaño de mi esperanza*, Borges stated that “Toda literatura es autobiográfica” [All literature is autobiographical] (Núñez-Faraco 771).

The relationship between reality and fiction, artist and art, has always been an important one. In “Semiology and Rhetoric,” Paul de Man pushes for reconciliation between the internal and external of literature, and though he focuses on form and meaning as the internal and external, he speaks also to the relationship between artist and art. De Man uses the last line of Yeats’s poem “Among School Children”—“How can we know the dancer from the dance?”—as a metaphor for form and experience, creator and creation, in order to entertain both the possibility of unity between the two and the possibility of telling them apart. He ultimately concludes that, whether we want to tell them apart or unite them, “There can be no dance without a dancer, no sign without a referent” (de Man 12), there can be no creation without a creator, no art without an artist, and, I would add, no complete sense of place without the artist’s own

experiences of place. According to Cixous, “writers inhabit both the living and the writing worlds” (Cixous 10), and it is in understanding how and why those worlds are not so separate that I believe that we will find a new way to conceive of place by understanding how inhabiting these two worlds contributes to an overall, undivided sense of being in the world, for both author, character, and reader.

*Part V: Art as representation*

An exploration into the lives and places of the authors at hand has shown the undeniable bearings of reality on their literature; however, the question of the extent or weight of that relevance remains. Do the authors’ own place experiences govern the characters and the sense of place they foster and create in their texts? Was Joyce merely portraying the reality of his city in order to recreate days in the life of a Dubliner? Was Kafka writing autobiographically—writing K., short for Kafka, perhaps—capturing facets of his own life and plugging them into a generic overarching scene in which a conspicuously mysteriously named character situates himself? Was Borges channeling and mirroring his own true soul? These questions necessitate situating art in the context of reality, expanding on the role of identity and being for the authors, and finally, constructing a new definition of place to then situate in a broader aesthetic context.

First, I will turn to Aristotle to explore the relationship between fiction and reality and the question of intention in art. At the start of *Poetics*, Aristotle states that all art is mimetic,<sup>3</sup> and additionally that some imitation is unintentional: “there are persons who, by conscious art or

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<sup>3</sup> As the translator notes, the particular meaning of *mimēsis* is unclear in English as it is in Greek: “*Mimēsis* can refer to something that the poet does or to an object that the poet produces and that the audience can see or experience. However, *mimesis* does not have the connotation of copying. Reasonable alternative translations are ‘depiction,’ ‘representation,’ and ‘portrayal’” (Aristotle 2). This is an important distinction; while I am exploring the extent of reality’s bearings on fiction, I am not suggesting that mere copy is a possibility.

mere habit, imitate and represent various objects through the medium of colour and form, or again by the voice” (Aristotle 3). An artist is inevitably influenced by that which he or she knows and has experienced; so, it is possible that imitation in art is at times unconscious. Being out of our control, imitation then becomes a natural activity: “Having passed through many changes, [Tragedy] found its natural form, and there it stopped” (Aristotle 13). By giving tragedy/art the action, Aristotle seems to eliminate the artist entirely. In *The Word according to James Joyce*, Cordell D. K. Yee, referencing *Poetics*, further emphasizes absence of the artist: “According to Aristotle, imitative or mimetic arts contain representations of things in the world . . . . Thus, a work of art stands to a perceiver as the physical world does” (Yee 23). If imitation is natural, is an artist then an artist at all or rather a mirror, reflecting the real world, with only agency enough to adjust the angle of reflection? Art, inevitably influenced by the physical, real world, stands to serve a function with regard to the physical, real world for the viewer/reader.

The implications of Aristotle’s notion of mimetic art are broad, but just as it was important to consider the distinction and relationship between the real and the unreal in reaching an understanding of intratextual place in these texts, so too is it important to consider the relationship between fiction and reality in the context of creation of a text itself in order to reach an overall understanding of place that can be applied to/a part of reality. In the three texts at hand, each author’s place reality played a crucial role in the construction of his text. In *Dubliners*, as in *Ulysses*, Joyce, for the most part, referenced real places, but even when he made up or omitted place names, he still provided enough specificity for the general vicinity to be located or identified. That being said, it was not his intention to make a map for his readers to traverse and know this city as he did. A classic realist text is “one that . . . claims to function as a window on reality . . . . claims to reflect the world beyond itself” (Yee 20). Yee argues that,

though *Dubliners* is not a classic realist text, it is representative. Yee quotes Joyce himself to support his argument regarding Joyce's representative intention:

His language presumes that there is a Dublin to be represented in his verbal art. He also assumes that this Dublin is knowable to others. He wants his Irish readers to recognize it in his art, so they will have "one good look at themselves." In addition, Joyce has some notion of what he wants to reveal about Dublin through his art. He entitled his collection *Dubliners* to "betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city." (Yee 21)

Fellow Dubliners were not his sole audience. As such, the assumption that his Dublin is knowable to others is misguided. He could not have made a map to guide any reader to or through his reality. The feelings, stories, and senses of identity he fostered through and around the places he uses, cannot be found in geographical location. His own relationship with place cannot be articulated and passed on; and his sole intent was certainly not to convey this personal relationship he had with the place: "The task of reading Joyce's work is not merely to reconstruct what Leo Bersani has dismissed as 'the structurally coherent fragments of Joyce's own cultural consciousness.' Joyce's intent was less egocentric than that" (Yee 132).

Kafka also did not use his texts to write about himself, but perhaps he did use his writing to supplement or guide his life. In "Writing and the Law," Hélène Cixous points to Joyce and Kafka as prime examples of the kind of writing that is inscription "of the origin of the gesture of writing and not of writing itself" (Cixous 1), and that "raise[s] the question of art" (Cixous 1). According to Cixous, "Kafka's strongest writings are those that are unfinished, that he was only beginning, over and over again" (Cixous 2). This mimics his own character K.'s search for a purpose, a task to complete, a place to be. In reality, Kafka was searching for a where, both within his texts and outside of them. It is his greatly unfinished oeuvre that seems to reveal to us that he never found it. Cixous believed that his texts "[were] Kafka's very drama . . . Kafka

spent his time getting engaged and disengaged, indefinitely. He was playing with his own life and death” (Cixous 12-13).

Borges also used his texts retrospectively as a sort of guide for understanding his role and meaning in life. Borges believed that no one person can truly know themselves sufficiently to completely capture their lives and realities. So, egocentric or not, writing holds something unintended, and yet unknown. The foreword of *Borges the Labyrinth Maker* is a letter that Borges wrote to the author in January 1964. In the letter he praises Barrenechea for helping him understand more about himself, his life, and his work, which, he identifies, is the critic’s job:

There are many things in an author’s work not intended . . . . Not only with understanding does a man write a book, but with his flesh and his soul, and with all his personal past and that of his forefathers. The tenets and opinions he holds are wrought by the superficial accidents of circumstance; what really matters is the driving trend behind the symbols. The author may not wholly understand them. (Barrenechea vii)

If Joyce was making a map, if Kafka was using his texts to extend his perpetual searching, if Borges was just letting his texts happen, hoping to discover more about himself retrospectively, they all were providing some amount of mirroring into their real places, of self or city, and their works are neither merely representations of reality, nor entirely devoid of reality. Regardless of the extent of the relevance of each author’s life in his intent and his final product, regardless of whether he was carefully, exactly using reality, each clearly had a personal investment in the sense of place he was capturing or channeling.

Rather than searching for and trying to understand the specific role of reality in a fictional text, it would be better to approach art not as a forum where reality acts as object for imitation and creation is impossible, but instead to see art as a forum for reference and interplay between fiction and reality. It is not important to understand exactly where Borges specifically used the Buenos Aires Municipal Library, or how exactly Kafka’s own wandering relationship with cities

made it into his texts, or how much of Joyce's own sentiments he felt while waiting on the dock at the North Wall preparing to leave Dublin influenced the feelings he wrote into Eveline's character. This personal investment in constructing, channeling, creating intratextual place necessitates an extension of the role of identity, so heavily present in the three texts and the presence of place within them, outside of the texts, into the authors' lives, and further, into a broader aesthetic, place-related context.

*Part VI: Identity and Conclusion*

Place, though something we all experience and a concept with which we all are acquainted, has been seriously overlooked. According to Kort, "Place . . . [has] not had the kind of systematic and widespread attention in modernity that has been given to time and temporality" (Kort 1). And yet, it is a concept whose presence permeates existence for both characters and people in the world. According to Jeff Malpas in *Heidegger's Topology*, "A central, if neglected concept at the heart of philosophical inquiry is that of place" (Malpas 1), and further it is central specifically to Martin Heidegger's thinking of being. In "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger sets out to reveal and unpack the inextricable relationship between being, building, and dwelling. Though he only mentions place as positions between which there is distance, or as mere consequence of physical connection, place is more pivotal and present than he may explicitly say. I see the move he makes between being, building, and dwelling as a move between identity, artist and art, and place. Place and art are related just as dwelling and building: "as end and means" (Heidegger 144); in other words, art, the process of art, the work of the artist—to be understood as neither merely imitation nor creation—act as a means towards the end of place.

Starting in literature before considering the context of its author's existence as a living, dwelling being, provided me with a way of focusing on gathering together the elements of a sense of place. I found that the characters were guided through the places and relations they established and met by an unavoidable desire, of which sometimes they were not even aware, to complete a task, to fulfill a sense of purpose—to locate, as it were, an identity. But, in the end, these characters were not able to find a sense of identity, a sense of place, and by the end of their texts, they are once again aimless, either after achieving goals and not advancing, or achieving goals that they then had to forget or erase.

By gaining insight into the author's lives after breaking down the sense of place that each captured in his text, I found that intentionality and agency—or lack thereof—played a crucial role. On the topic of existing and inhabiting, Heidegger emphasizes the role of habit, the inevitable lack of control, and the idea that “no thing arises from nothing” (Heidegger 145). Each of these ideas to a certain extent denies the agency of a being in that being's dwelling, building, and existing. In my work, I explored the possibility—and inevitability—that the artist himself lacked some intention in the creation of his work. After looking into the origin of art, I came to realize that regardless of intention, the author's own searches, his own identity, and his own sense of place permeate his existence and the purposes which define and guide his existence. In a way, I was able to look at these works as the tasks which then guided them on their way to an identity and a place, as tasks and purpose guided their characters. For Kafka, his work supplemented his life, gave him a place where he was missing one. For Joyce, his work helped him use his Dublin, the place which he so tired of, for art. For Borges, his work helped him discover in retrospect, his intentions. This supplemental role which each author's art played acted as a sort of place-oriented grounding for each author.



With this exploration, I have come to find that existence and place are inextricable, but further, that identity guides all manifestation of, and interaction and relationship with place. Place becomes a way of pursuing an identity in the world. Though perhaps physical place may represent the most concrete instance of place, overall, the concept of place cannot exist independently of the relations with beings, reality, task, and identity. The undeniable relationship between fiction and reality that I have touched on in this exploration, hinges on the construction of text itself. We can recognize the parallels between fictional and real place for these authors. But because there is no way of knowing the extent of intention, imitation or creation in each of the author's texts, place comes to exist as a way of maneuvering within the context of the world. Because no thing comes from nothing, and art is not mere imitation, place seems to fill in, taking a pivotal role in the construction of text. In permeating the boundaries between art and reality, inextricable from each, place becomes process.

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