“LET ME ENTER THE HEAVEN OF HER CONSCIOUSNESS”: COSMOPOLITAN GHOSTS IN ADOLFO BIOY CASARES’S 
THE INVENTION OF MOREL

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The Invention of Morel, Adolfo Bioy Casares’s tale of the adventures of a Venezuelan fugitive on a Pacific island, is a ghost story.1 Or, to be more precise, it is an “artificial ghost” story. Bioy uses science fiction tropes to create a haunted zone in which a Latin American subject encounters European ghosts, for this is how the nameless protagonist-narrator (the Narrator henceforward) describes the hologram-like reproductions that populate the island (51). This is a place in which, to cite Derrida’s epigraph (and Shakespeare’s words) in Specters of Marx, “time is out of joint” (1). One day a group of European socialites appears suddenly, and after that moment the majority of the narrative is devoted to the incongruities that result from the overlapping of the Narrator’s present reality of the 1930s and the week recorded by Morel in 1924 using a special machine of his own invention. The island works as a screen of sorts for the projection of an immersive mechanical reproduction that brings about a return of the past that goes beyond memory or conventional mimetic practices. Morel and all of his guests, including Faustine, with whom the Narrator has fallen in love, are dead, because Morel’s invention has a lethal effect on all the living beings that it records. The only thing remaining is “una buena semana” that will be repeated ad aeternitas (44). Before he finds out who (or what) they are, the Narrator lives in a constant state of fear, as he mentions numerous times in his tale. Sometimes, fear can become overwhelming terror, as is the case after a close encounter with one of the visitors, who inexplicably seems unable to spot him in a narrow corridor: “Quedé con miedo casi convulsivo” (33). At one point in that “fine week,” Morel reveals the nature of his invention to his guests. The Narrator realizes that he lives in several temporal planes simultaneously, and understands that those creatures that previously terrified him are not a threat and cannot even interact with him. This anagnorisis does not free him from his anxiety, however, and it is not the end of his story.2 Revolted by the idea of living among these artificial ghosts and desperate after he realizes that he will never be able to make Faustine return his love, the Narrator decides to shoot a new hologram movie in which Morel’s recording from 1924 is the background over which he films his own actions and words. Following a carefully rehearsed script, he appears to

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1 I would like to thank Alberto Ribas-Casasayas and Amanda Petersen for inviting me to think of The Invention of Morel in terms of specters and haunting. I am also grateful for their valuable suggestions and editorial work at different stages of the writing of this article.

2 In an important article, David Gallagher describes Bioy’s novels and short stories as ironic epistemological adventures structured around the gap between what his characters know and what is actually happening (247). However, Bioy’s work has ethical and political implications that go well beyond this epistemological dimension. The story is not over when the Narrator is able to bridge this gap.
interact with his beloved Faustine. He is aware of his impending death, but he prefers to turn himself into another artificial ghost, expecting that he will share Faustine’s reality in the eyes of future visitors. In his last sentences, the Narrator expresses the hope that one day some invention will animate Faustine’s artificial specter so that she becomes aware of the Narrator’s ghost. As a result, he will enter “el cielo de la conciencia de Faustine” (70). Readers can conclude that Bioy’s tale moves from focusing on Morel’s European “artificial ghosts” to describing the self-creation of a Latin American artificial ghost that one day, thanks to an invention that will transcend Morel’s machine, will haunt one of those European ghosts back.

My purpose in this article is to analyze Bioy’s novel in terms of two concepts from two well-known studies on specters and haunting, and to connect this spectral dimension of the novel to current discussions of the concept of cosmopolitanism. The first idea I will use is Derrida’s injunction that one needs “to learn to live with ghosts” (Specters xviii). The second is Avery Gordon’s belief that ghosts are a sign that “haunting is taking place,” where haunting is a special affective cognitive structure in which we get to know about the present or the past in a way that leads to “a transformative recognition” (8). I believe that Bioy’s tale, in which the Narrator is forced to learn how to live with ghosts that are unavailable for interaction or dialog, is a parable about the cosmopolitan desires of those Latin American intellectuals that feel drawn to and excluded from metropolitan centers and must look for innovative ways to maintain alive what Laurent Berlant and Lee Edelman call “the cosmopolitan fantasy of merging and knowing and dissolving hierarchy into a confident equality” (27). Bioy offers a Latin American misencounter with European modernity in which the Narrator’s love for Faustine leads to the appropriation of Morel’s technological invention for his own peripheral ends. This successful appropriation results in his self-immolation in order to create a new “fine week” in which the Narrator and Faustine appear to be lovers. Therefore, The Invention of Morel could be considered an example of what Alexa Weik von Mossner calls “the emplotment of cosmopolitanism,” the emotional science fiction plot being the way Bioy explores the desire to stand on par with the metropolis (Cosmopolitan Minds 6). The Narrator’s love for the French-speaking Faustine and his need to have this love acknowledged (and returned) by his beloved transfers cosmopolitan desire to the codified field of heterosexual relationships. By doing so, Bioy endows an analysis of processes of cultural exchange with the affect and ironies that pertain to stories of lovers at crossed purposes. More importantly, we find a Girardian love triangle in which the desire of the Narrator for the object of his affection, Faustine, becomes fatally mediated at one point by the desire of a model-mediator, Morel.

One could say that Bioy anticipates Rubén Gallo, who finds that love explains why certain Latin Americans experienced the French culture that they adopted in such positive terms.

3Duncan Ivison expands this idea of “confident equality,” identifying three ways one can be a cosmopolitan. A moral cosmopolitan believes in a set of moral claims that apply to everyone, everywhere; a political cosmopolitan advocates for legal and political institutions that overrule nation-states; and finally, a cultural cosmopolitan promotes the hybridity of peoples and cultural practices (82). There may be conflicts between these three ways to be a cosmopolitan. For example, a moral cosmopolitan might not be a political cosmopolitan, or a political cosmopolitan may not embrace cultural cosmopolitanism (82).

4As Wolfgang Palaver explains, “[René] Girard postulates that human desire is not based on the spontaneity of the subject’s desire, but rather the desires that surround the subject. He argues that humans do not themselves know what to desire; as a result, they imitate the desires of others. He uses several formulations to describe this phenomenon throughout his work, including triangular desire” (36). It is mimesis that gives desire its final shape (37). In this triangular structure, the “role model who designates to us the desirability of an object soon becomes our rival and obstacle, once we also desire the acquisition of this same object” (46).
According to Gallo, they “took France as an object, idealized it, introjected it, and fused it with their egos” (18). However, although Bioy’s Latin American Narrator objectifies Faustine, idealizes her, and introjects her, he never finds any productive way to fuse her with himself. Love is at the core of the Narrator’s cosmopolitan experience, but it is an unrequited love that ends in death. Trapped in a structure of mimetic desire in which he becomes obsessed with his rival, Morel, the Narrator gives up everything for the sake of defeating him by taking over his invention to make a hologram movie that replaces Morel’s. In this rivalry, he makes Morel an inextricable element of his love for Faustine, to the point that she seems to be put to the side in a way that almost confirms Girard’s assertion that “[t]he impulse toward the object is ultimately an impulse toward the mediator” (10). The Narrator’s competition with the spectral master of the island takes over the narrative after the anagnorisis, and at one moment, the Narrator becomes obsessed with removing Morel’s image from the hologram picture. He fails, however, and as a result he comes to terms with the fact that he depends on all the ghosts in the island to create (and live) a mirage of coexistence with Faustine. In this final surrender to the specters, he even conjures up a future alter ego of Morel in the form of the nameless, hypothetical inventor that one day will create a still inconceivable machine that will allow him to enter Faustine’s consciousness. Both in the present and in a conjectural future, a metropolitan figure mediates his love for Faustine, and his suicide seems at least as much determined by his bond with Morel as by his attachment to his beloved. In the end, the transformative recognition that haunting brings to the Narrator is an awareness of his lack of autonomy, his dependence on others, and the extreme separation from the spectral woman he loves and the cosmopolitan dream she embodies.

Nevertheless, while Bioy’s novel may be full of melancholy, it is more than a self-defeating exercise that ends in silence. Really existing cosmopolitanism, so to speak, is questioned and discarded, in order to maintain the dream of cosmopolitan equality alive. Bioy participates in what Mariano Siskind describes as “a cosmopolitan and disruptive aesthetic identity that [...] forces its way into the realm of universality, denouncing both the hegemonic structures of Eurocentric forms of exclusion and nationalistic patterns of self-marginalization” (Cosmopolitan Desires 6). As Siskind explains, a cosmopolitan attempt is made to undo antagonistic relationships between the margins and the center by formulating a claim on “Literature with a capital L” that is free of attributes and constraints (6). In this essay, I will analyze how Bioy explores the complexities of this cosmopolitan aesthetic ethos. More specifically, I will focus on the ways in which The Invention of Morel maps out the challenges of articulating a claim to universal equality by means of the formulation of a higher principle that is inevitably shaped by the logic of mimetic desire and its disempowering structure of mirror-like rivalry with a model-mediator. First, I study how living with Morel’s metropolitan ghosts is a deeply neocolonial experience for the Narrator. Second, I will turn to practices of peripheral cultural agency and its pitfalls. For the Narrator, creating a Latin American ghost is a way to subvert the power of the metropolitan master of the island, Morel. The Narrator demands equality, instead of stepping aside and embracing national difference; however, this agonistic engagement with Morel, which aims to undo his exclusion, makes the Narrator lose all his power when he inevitably dies. Third, after analyzing these two sets of artificial ghosts, I will turn to the Narrator’s hopes to haunt Faustine one day, when Faustine’s ghost regains consciousness and becomes aware of the Narrator’s specter walking by her side. In this still unforeseeable future articulation of the relationship between metropolitan and peripheral subjects, cosmopolitanism will fulfill its own dream. Instead of being a desire-charged ideology and set of cultural practices that at best can only create mirages of equality in which the Narrator never really loses his marginal status, cosmopolitanism will take a new form based on recognition and reciprocity. Thus, the Narrator’s tale ends with the wish of a new beginning through a second radical disruption of Morel’s “fine week.”
Metropolitan Ghosts

As Seo-Young Chu provocatively explains, science fiction is “[a] mimetic discourse whose objects of representation are nonimaginary yet cognitively estranging” (3). The object of representation in The Invention of Morel is the multilayered, conflictive, alienating space and time that Eurocentric capitalist imperialism creates and imposes on what are, as a result of these hegemonic processes, fractured (neo)colonial subjectivities. Morel’s invention alters reality by giving the dead a life-like presence that renders the colonized territory more physically complex. As a result of the projection, there are two islands superimposed on the same site, with populations that must coexist while they also assert clashing authority rights over the land. Such basic temporal coordinates as past and present become meaningless, as they merge into an alternate present that includes both. In this new time-space continuum, the Narrator is a victim of forces that seem beyond his control. Haunted by artificial ghosts with whom he cannot help creating strong emotional bonds (fear, love, boredom, contempt), he is trapped in the apotheosis and decline of the project of European modernity that Morel’s lethal invention so ably embodies. I will focus first on the metropolitan domination that the Narrator encounters, and I will leave catastrophe for the end of this section.

Following María del Pilar Blanco’s advice “to vigilantly account, as a reader, for the spatiotemporal coordinates that merge to produce a site of haunting,” I want to look into the fact that the action in The Invention of Morel takes place on an island (1). I will start by comparing Bioy’s tale with one of the Victorian novels that he rewrites, H.G. Wells’ The Island of Dr. Moreau. When Moreau runs into trouble in London and his experiments are banned, he moves to the Pacific to escape prying eyes, thereby establishing this spot as a territory that is ideally beyond metropolitan control. His failure to keep the Beast People from reverting to their original animality shows, according to John Rieder, that the natural order is asserted and the devices of culture can manipulate their bodies only to a certain extent (108). In other words, in Wells’s novel Moreau is an outsider whose plan to extend the European project of biotechnological control over nature fails when he tries to go beyond certain boundaries. Morel, on the other hand, conducts his experiments with the financial support of French and Swiss industrial cartels, and he has no problems buying the island and having a number of fashionable contemporary buildings built as sets for his hologram movie. His plans represent the triumph of European capitalist universalism in which waters and remote islands occupy a particularly significant place. As Mariano Siskind explains,

[i]f the state is the absolute actualization of reason, then water, ‘this supreme medium of communication’ as Hegel calls it, is the key element for its worldwide expansion; water, one could add, is the condition of possibility for the process of globalization [...] ; it is the liquid location of the operation of translation of the universal premises of reason to its global spreading. (“Captain Cook” 11)

The very presence of European power in this remote site shows how such power has reached every single corner of the globe. As Morel’s guests move freely all over the planet without encountering (or acknowledging) barriers, these world travelers embody cosmopolitanism from the point of view of a Metropolis that claims an unproblematic relationship to universality. With the arrival of the Venezuelan fugitive, the island becomes a contact zone, the location of a displaced colonial encounter between sophisticated European ghosts and a Latin American outlaw who is convinced that apprehension by the authorities will lead to prison. Nobody is a native in this Pacific island, but the very different ways in which they arrive (luxury yacht vs. precarious boat) place them in diverging positions in the global hierarchy and on opposite sides of the cosmopolitan coin.

The Narrator, as the only living human being, should have total authority over the island. His power, however, is challenged by the symbolic but also very material remainders of
European imperialism. As a result, the island is not a simple space. According to Saskia Sassen, “territory, authority, and rights are complex institutionalizations constituted through specific processes arising out of struggles and competing interests. They are not simple attributes. [...] Across time and space, territory, authority, and rights have been assembled into distinct formations within which they have variable levels of performance” (4-5). Once Morel’s invention is explained, readers are aware that two territories ruled by two different authorities coexist on the same physical space, like the two suns the narrator sees in the sky at one moment. One of these suns operates in the realm of mechanical reproduction and can be regarded as an example of European global expansion and technological hegemony. This hegemony is no less effective when it operates in the realm of mimesis. Morel’s invention projects its “photographs” in such a way that they trump reality, so to speak. Doors cannot be opened if they were closed when they were recorded, curtains cannot be drawn across windows, and so forth. The Narrator almost dies because he gets locked down behind hologram doors. These artificial ghosts are very different from spirits as understood by Kant, for they have precisely that materiality whose absence is central in Kant’s definition: Morel’s spectral reality certainly has “the quality of impenetrability” and does form “a solid whole” (47). But they also stay within the tradition of ghost stories, because to practice that form of writing “implies that ghosts are real, that is to say, that they produce material effects,” according to Gordon (17).

These material effects instill a feeling of isolation and exclusion, and they force the daily coexistence with the warped temporality created by the emergence of the past. The Narrator lives in an estranged reality that consists of not just the present material reality of the island, but also the week recorded in 1924 that is projected on that same reality. Haunted by these metropolitan artificial ghosts, the Narrator painfully recognizes that he lives in a fractured time in which he is simultaneously the master of the island and a perennially excluded figure with no rights to feel part of Morel’s week. The unnaturalness of this co-presence of two different islands (Morel’s and the Narrator’s, which includes Morel’s) in the same physical space shows how each territorial articulation is historical and arbitrary, full of incongruity and conflicts. One more layer is added if we consider that the 1924 of Bioy’s tale is not a historical 1924, but one that we need to place either in an alternative reality that includes Morel’s invention, or in a present that has been altered by the insertion of an impossible invention that the ideology of modern progress nevertheless makes possible in a distant future. Therefore, the past of 1924 that returns to the present of the Narrator, to merge with and radically disrupt it in the process, is a past that should have never occurred but somehow did, or a past that needs to be understood as an open portal to the future, that is, as the manifestation of the future in the past. This proliferation of temporal planes, along with the overlapping of two completely different types of time (linear and circular), partakes of the same temporal undecidability in which ghosts operate. As Derrida says, “one can never distinguish between the future-to-come and the coming-back of a specter” (Specters 38).

What is past, present, and to come overlap to create a nightmarish puzzle for the Narrator. We may see in this spectral proliferation of temporal planes a parallel to the multilevel temporal consciousness of the Latin American subject that operates in the realm of an incomplete or divergent modernity. This is “the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous” in Latin American peoples that Javier Sanjinéz talks about in his analysis of what he calls Latin America’s “historical-structural complexity” (5). Latin American subjects live simultaneously in conflicting temporal planes fashioned by different colonialist powers. For them, the past is not the past, in the sense that Henri Bergson understands it, that is, as “that which acts no longer,” because it actually becomes fused with the present, “i.e. that which is acting” (74). In Bioy’s tale, the Narrator’s present is fundamentally flawed, Bergson would say, because the most basic condition that guarantees the “presentness” of the present is a sharp distinction with the past. Metropolitan Morel invents a machine that, through the expansion of the capacities of mechanical recording already available in the 1920s, makes it possible to haunt the Narrator
from a past that is imposed upon him as the present. He becomes the victim of radical estrangement, and the only escape he finds is suicide.

He is not alone in this victimization, because Morel’s project kills his guests too. If the specters represent the apotheosis of the power of metropolitan modernity, they also very pointedly highlight the horrors of twentieth century technology. Morel’s invention grants the impossible—eternity—at the same time that it ends the lives of those that it preserves forever. Morel’s specters are avatars of closure, and in this sense they share the completeness that Giorgio Agamben idiosyncratically finds in ghosts: “Spectrality is a form of life, a posthumous or complementary life that begins only when everything is finished. Spectrality thus has, with respect to life, the incomparable grace and astuteness of that which is completed, the courtesy and precision of those who no longer have anything ahead of them” (39). It is this seemingly anti-modern desire to end change and development that lies at the core of Morel’s meticulous plan. Extinction and endless repetition come back from the past to haunt the only human alive on the island, and he is horrified when he finds out what Morel and his guests really are: “Sentí repudio, casi asco, por esa gente y su incansable actividad repetida. Aparecieron muchas veces, arriba, en los bordes. Estar en una isla habitada por fantasmas artificiales era la más insoportable de las pesadillas” (51). However, Morel’s project is paradoxical: he stops time, history, and politics in a way that reproduces their inescapable character. Nothing asserts the power of time like the death of his guests, while the history of modern European political hegemony is reenacted ad nauseam in the very success of Morel’s plan. To kill change and development, he takes science to a new level and moves European modernity one step further.

This island, lost in the middle of the Pacific, is suddenly pervaded with the lethal potential of modern technology and the automatism of modern progress. These tireless revenants are abject figures that, once acknowledged as such, may not cause the terror that other ghosts inspire, but substitute terror with the uncanny and a sense of accumulated catastrophe. By the end of the novel, the island consists of three different overlapping realities that are nothing more than indexes to destruction. Future visitors will find that the island has been environmentally devastated twice, and it is strewn with empty buildings that are in the process of becoming ruins. The material reality of the actual island clearly shows the traces of these two acts of metropolitan mechanical recording and reproduction, Morel’s and the Narrator’s. The artificial ghosts the narrator encounters first and joins later point to the specter of the decadence of European metropolitan modernity, that same modernity to which the liberal Latin American Narrator feels so libidinally attached that he kills himself in order to become part of it. This is a modernity that uses all the resources at its disposal to inspire self-destruction.

Morel’s plans transfer him and his friends to a sphere that has the invulnerability of the sacred. They are a new kind of undead creature endowed with a form of immortality that cancels agency and seals off an eternal sphere from history and actual living beings. As a result, the mechanical reproductions of Bioy’s tale are very different from other ghosts. They never see the Narrator, and this refusal to engage makes it difficult to identify any demands to the subject. The Narrator at first is surprised and disturbed, as he shares the unpreparedness that Julian Wolfreys considers to be a central feature of “the other’s haunting of the subject” (5). However, he gets used to them and comes to live with them in a kind of trivial domesticity that includes such rituals as spending the night lying by Faustine’s bed. Terror and perplexity end up in banality and boredom. As we saw, Derrida presses us to learn how to live with ghosts, and at a certain point of his adventure the Narrator could say that he has learned how to live with them all too well. And yet, this peaceful coexistence after the anagnorisis is not unproblematic. It is true that unveiling the nature and identities of the visitors removes any sense of threat. They cannot perceive the Narrator in any way, and as a result they leave him alone. By doing that, these specters bring to mind Fausto Majstral’s assertion in Thomas Pynchon’s V. that ghosts “represent melodrama and weakness. The only horror about them is the dreamer’s own horror of isolation”
(347). However, the Narrator suffers precisely because of this isolation, made only more painful by his unrequited love for Faustine and the unthinkable repetition that he is forced to contemplate *ad nauseam* in a radical estrangement of all conceptual frameworks. The fact that the island is no longer a mystery does not make it less horrible. If anything, the effective and affective presentness of a past that is no longer the past is uncanny, and reminds us of Antonio Negri’s “radical Umheimlich,” which “dislocates, both temporally and spatially” (9). This dislocation is not necessarily dynamic or productive here, and it seems to lead to paralysis and death. Morel’s hologrammatic movie is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the European acquisitive conservationist fever that he himself so aptly invokes when he calls one of the main buildings of the island the Museum. His machine turns his friends into museum pieces that are not, however, intended for contemplation. On the contrary, it is only their existence that matters to Morel. The secluded island is, as mentioned above, an open-air shrine in which the artificial ghosts shall live forever beyond prying eyes. He could never imagine that someone would become a filmmaker, scriptwriter, and actor, in order to embrace their fate.

### The Latin American Ghost

The Latin American Narrator interferes with Morel’s project to cancel change by inserting himself in the metropolitan recording and thereby becoming an artificial Latin American ghost. The Narrator’s intense desire for contact and interaction with his beloved Faustine makes him record a simulacrum intended for future visitors. He appropriates this European documentary and turns it into a fiction movie that is fashioned by his desires and anxieties, as it exalts his cultural agency. This intrusion is devastating for Morel’s original antimodern plan. The Narrator’s presence among Morel’s guests is a serious distortion of that “fine week” they spent together. It introduces change and unseals the sacred sphere that the artificial ghosts have inhabited until then. The peripheral subject comes to “restart” an arrested modernity, saving the metropolitan project from itself. Not only that, but by reintroducing change into the island he opens up a potentially endless series of iterations in which other visitors might insert themselves into that week recorded once upon a time in 1924. This could be seen as a Latin American cosmopolitan victory, for according to Lori Cole, Latin American cosmopolitanism “represented an effort to compete with European culture on its own terms,” in which Latin American subjects posed themselves as the future of Europe (122-23). The nameless Narrator subverts Morel’s dominion of the island, as he takes “hologram art” to the next level. As Camilla Fojas would say, by engaging in a creative artistic practice the Narrator indulges in the pleasures of experimentation, exploration, and discovery that have been so far restricted to the metropolitan imagination (5). As a result of his endeavors, the island becomes a cosmopolitan space that is “interactive, porous, and translational,” to use Jacqueline Loss’s words (3). Nonetheless, in the process of recording this simulacrum that defeats Morel, the narrator dies a very real death, because Morel’s futuristic invention saves the present only on the condition of eliminating everyone in it.

The novel ends with the self-defeating agency of a peripheral subject, and it seems that Latin Americans can only find their voices to talk to Europeans as equals by means of their own self-immolation. Therefore, *The Invention of Morel* could be considered a very pessimistic representative of what Gonzalo Aguilar calls “a cosmopolitan episode” of Argentine culture.5

5Placing Bioy’s story fully in its historical context goes beyond the scope of this article. One may wonder, though, to what extent Bioy’s pessimistic intervention in the tradition of Argentine and Latin American cosmopolitan literature that Aguilar and Siskind study shows traces of the fact that the Argentine economy suffered greatly from the world slump of 1929
According to Aguilar, one of the most pressing problems for certain Latin American writers and groups was “cómo incorporarse, desde la periferia, en la Weltliteratur o literatura universal. Esta preocupación fue denominada, por Ángel Rama, como ‘orientación cosmopolita’, denominación que pone de relieve el carácter episódico, no orgánico y situado de cada articulación” (9). Bioy’s Narrator stands for this cosmopolitan orientation. He abhors “local color” of any kind, evaluates his fellow “South Americans” very critically, and believes in the liberal, modernizing Latin American projects that were inspired by the universalist values of the Enlightenment. As he dies, he dreams of a Venezuela that is free of military dictatorships, and his gradual disintegration, which is the price that he pays to enter the realm of metropolitan ghosts, pushes him towards memories of the past and dreams of another Venezuela to which he shall take Faustine (69).

Above all, he craves the feeling of inclusion that lies behind the dream of cosmopolitanism for peripheral subjects. Martha Nussbaum talks of “the very old ideal of the cosmopolitan, the person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings” (4). In this cosmopolitan dream, Venezuela and Faustine are not mutually exclusive. The intense love for Venezuela that he reveals in his death and his pride in meaningful events of the Emancipation process do not prevent him from sharing the universal values that conform this worldwide community. On the contrary, it makes him even more cosmopolitan, at least according to Kwame Anthony Appiah’s assertion that “[c]osmopolitanism is, to reach a formula, universalism plus difference” (202). His film would be then a victory of this kind of cosmopolitan art, as a peripheral subject inserts the difference of his desire into a community defined by the universal values of modernity and European hegemony. We must not forget, however, that no future viewer will accept Faustine and the Narrator as equals, given how different their outward appearances are. Therefore, the Narrator’s presence will be inexplicable and disturbing. He will be, in a way, a specter in the hologram movie that he makes to record his existence. While he shoots the film he is alive and Faustine is a ghost, but in the future she will be taken as a real person (at least until the secrets of the island are revealed again), and the Narrator’s presence will seem illegitimate.

This illegitimate presence will be a case of difference surviving the sterilizing uniformity that modernity imposes as it reaches all the corners of the world. The island will not stop being an uncanny space in which the history and the desires of the Latin American Narrator will be repressed, but not erased. It will not be enough, however. The Narrator will be with Faustine in a vision that will never die, but he will be forever excluded from “the heaven of her consciousness.” Although he finds his agency and his voice thanks to a metropolitan invention, Faustine still is unable to hear him. The cosmopolitan gesture of engagement is never returned, and his voice is consumed in the attempt to make himself heard. The artificial ghost of Faustine will go on without ever acknowledging his existence, and her indifference short-circuits the symbolic economy of mutual recognition that is fundamental to the dream of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, as Alexa Weik von Mossner explains, “to be insensate [...] is to be pitiless and potentially dangerous; and it is also to be uncosmopolitan, since cosmopolitanism involves by definition the recognition of the other, and ideally also the respect for difference and care for other” (“Confronting the Stone Face” 173). The Narrator’s sacrifice does not make Faustine care for him, and the miracle of his second (and repetitive) coming will lead nowhere. The new use of Morel’s invention simply spreads more death, because European modernity does not only fail

precisely because it was highly integrated into international financial markets. As Roy Hora explains, the subsequent economic recovery shifted the balance of economic power from the landowning elite to which Bioy belonged to a new urban capitalist class that showed no interest in allying itself with the landed establishment (26-27). The history of Bioy’s class in the 1930s and early 1940s is a tale of loss and gradual displacement caused by its embrace of global economic exchanges and financial flows.
Europeans, but everybody else that encounters or misencounters it. No productive dialogue with these European hegemonic ghosts is possible, and the Latin American subject’s isolation among them is never cancelled. In the end, his dying for her only records his exclusion, an exclusion that will last forever.

So we can conclude that the Narrator’s story is, allegorically, a warning for all those Latin American artists attempting to communicate from the margins with cultural centers that still hold a significant share of the symbolic and material capital of the old European metropolitan powers. But is it truly only that? Is it merely an example of that condition that Paul Gilroy addresses in his book *Postcolonial Melancholia*? Is there no other way to understand cosmopolitan desires in Bioy’s novel? According to Gilroy, recent theoretical interventions have made us “acutely aware of the limitations placed upon the twentieth century’s cosmopolitan hopes by the inability to conceptualize multicultural and postcolonial relations as anything other than risk and jeopardy” (4). The self-vanishing act with which the peripheral subject ends his postcolonial utterance in *The Invention of Morel* could have been a perfect example of these risks. It is not the end of the story, however. Haunting Morel’s invention and plan are a future invention and future plan that will bring Faustine’s artificial ghost back to consciousness in order to engage with the specter of the postcolonial subject that shot himself into the picture to stand by her side. Likewise, haunting the real existing modern cosmopolitanism that disempowers the Narrator there is a future formation, unseen, spectral, one that Derrida conjures up in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, as he hopes for “a certain idea of cosmopolitanism, an other, [that] has not arrived yet” (23). In the failure and promise that end his novel, Bioy outlines a program that is not that different from Walter Mignolo’s observation that while Kant’s cosmopolitanism was conceived centrifugally (e.g., a cosmopolitan world designed and led by and from Europe), the future demands decolonial cosmopolitanism, rather than imperial cosmopolitanism […]. Decolonial cosmopolitanism should be thought of as cosmopolitan localism, an oxymoron for sure, but an oxymoron that breaks away, delinks, from the imperial bend of Kantian cosmopolitan legacies. (23)

What would this decolonial cosmopolitanism be like? Gilroy expresses his frustration at what he considers the “failure of political imagination” when it comes to imagining a cosmopolitanism that leaves behind the imperialism of past and current formations. Those contemporary formulations (such as Nussbaum’s and Ulrich Beck’s) that do not go beyond the humanitarian preaching of ethics, and the canonization of human rights as the only horizon for politics, seem to David Harvey just an alibi for the unimpeded hegemony of neoliberal practices and financial and militaristic imperialism (84). Harvey, however, finds himself asking about the guidelines to initiate a cosmopolitan project of opposition to cosmopolitan neoliberalism (94). Mignolo is not too confident either about breaking this impasse between rejection of what is and an inability to envision what it should be, as he wonders whether it is possible to imagine futures that do not follow “the blueprint of globalism or of Western critical cosmopolitanism” (285). We need a newer cosmopolitanism that acknowledges history to override the new cosmopolitanism of Beck and Appiah, according to Bruce Robbins; and these newer cosmopolitan formulations of “a democratic, egalitarian universalism can only be conceived as counterhegemonic,” in James D. Ingram’s words (19, 4). Yet in the end, all these critiques only manage to register a deep contemporary dissatisfaction with the idea of cosmopolitanism, which can only be conceived in the negative. As they seem unable to let go of the “fantasy of equality,” these contemporary thinkers articulate cosmopolitanism as a desire that nowadays is even stronger than in the past precisely because it remains frustratingly unfulfilled. It appears to be more an object of neverending critique rather than a program that may eventually be formulated and acted upon in effective terms. Cosmopolitanism stays in the contemporary political consciousness as a request that fails to be fulfilled over and over again, as a question without answers.
Back in 1940, Bioy has no answers, either, which is precisely the point of the spectralization of Faustine’s future. The Narrator’s ghost will enter her consciousness full of “unfinished business,” and this business will be the establishment of a more equal relationship in which that emancipatory project of cosmopolitanism that Gilroy refuses to abandon is not fulfilled (for how it could be fulfilled?), but acknowledged and set in motion. The Narrator’s ghost will visit Faustine as a figure that bears all the power of indebtedness and moral obligation to the ancestors that Nietzsche finds in Western relationships to the past (60-61). The fractured temporality of haunting gives the unrequited, unacknowledged lover a kind of power that he would lack in an exchange defined by synchronicity. Therefore, the Latin American specter will come back as an ethical injunction, an injunction that, in Colin Davis’s words, will be a “wholly irrepeperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving” (373). The ghost stands outside of knowledge and pushes its limits, thereby inaugurating new intellectual formations that never exhaust these spectral demands for conceptualization. It is with the projection of a potential cosmopolitanism onto the future that this apparently pessimistic cosmopolitan episode postpones its end. “[E]verybody lives in someone else’s past,” William Gibson said (Gorney). This pastness of our present endows all of our actions with the potential for haunting and creating ethical demands for others. Located in a present that is simultaneously the future of a living Faustine and the past of a Faustine that will come back to life, the Narrator imagines himself as a ghost that finally makes Faustine look at him, to effect a recognition that is the beginning for a new relationship between peripheral and metropolitan subjects. As it is the case with any other ghost, his apparition will produce, as Gordon tells us, “something to be done” (xviii). In this labyrinth of misencounters that are, nonetheless, encounters of a certain kind, he (and we) cannot know in any way what this “something to be done” will eventually become, but he (and we) can believe that a rattled Faustine will be encouraged to respond to his call. To ask for recognition from Faustine will start a process of transformation of the Narrator, who will go from being unknown to becoming a stranger, someone who came and decided to stay, as Georg Simmel would have it.\textsuperscript{6} As a stranger, the Narrator would enter in a dialog with Faustine in which his history would not be erased. In this dialog, the indebtedness that the ghost carries with him would level the power imbalances between center and periphery in a decidedly counterhegemonic spirit that might substitute real existing, imperialistic cosmopolitanism with an emancipatory project that keeps articulating democratic ideals without exhausting itself.

In conclusion, the Narrator’s fate proves the failure of an idea of cosmopolitanism based on \textit{emulation}, understood as a mix of imitation and competition. Imitation means submission to European universalist models until inclusion is achieved, as doors previously closed now open to non-European subjects. Competition entails proving that peripheral individuals adhere “better” and more faithfully to a transcendent ideal of cosmopolitanism than metropolitan subjects themselves. As peripheral subjects fashion themselves into rivals of metropolitan agents (as the Narrator does against Morel), they enter a one-way specular relationship with those metropolitan subjects they hope to defeat. Metropolitan desires are now peripheral desires too, and the cultural dynamics that result from this one-upmanship only turns any victory into a bigger defeat. In Bioy’s tale, the Narrator crashes through the technological gates and gets himself invited to the “fine week” that Faustine, Morel, and his guests inhabit. He critically disrupts Morel’s plans, and

\textsuperscript{6} As Judith Butler explains, “to ask for recognition, or to offer it, is precisely not to ask for recognition of what one already is. It is to solicit a becoming, to instigate a transformation, to petition the future always in relation to the other” (44). Georg Simmel describes the stranger as an organic member of the group that, nonetheless, has not belonged from the beginning and thereby imports qualities that do not stem from the group; participation and acceptance does not mean erasure of his or her history outside the group (407, 402).
we can say that his week is a more advanced and complex example of hologram art than Morel’s mere recording of reality. Nevertheless, the Narrator dies as an unavoidable result of engaging in cosmopolitan emulation, and Morel never stops being the prime cause of all events taking place in the colonized space of the island. Moreover, the Narrator’s consciousness vanishes without ever entering into any dialogue with the artificial ghosts that control the territory. This is why the appeal in the last paragraph is so poignant. He hopes for a completely different model of cosmopolitanism, one that turns the island into an actual meeting place of minds and identities. With his wish to enter Faustine’s consciousness, he moves from a cosmopolitanism based on power and elimination of distance to a model based on a difficult and disturbing acknowledgment of others. He shall become an inexplicable haunting presence for Faustine, a revenant from her future that she might be able to acknowledge through a complicated process that neither absorbs peripheral subjects nor turns them into mere replica of metropolitan subjects as a result of a head-to-head confrontation. Their relationship will be askew, and as such will create a space for estrangement, difficulty, and potentiality. It will open a crack for precisely that shapeless cosmopolitanism for which Jacques Derrida so forcefully advocates.

**Works Cited**


