



**Identity Politics and *Finnegans Wake*:  
Presenting at the 2019 North American James Joyce Symposium**

This summer, I used my Royal Holloway Travel Award to attend my first academic conference: the 2019 North American James Joyce Symposium in Mexico City, Mexico. As an undergraduate, I wrote a thesis on the ways in which Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* provides a model for feminist theories of anti-patriarchal language. With my travel award, I had the opportunity to present one chapter of that thesis at the "Joyce Without Borders" conference in Mexico. The conference took place from Wednesday, June 12 to Sunday, June 16, and was hosted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM). I presented my paper—"Enough of Old Muttergoosip: Reclaiming Discursive Agency with Anna Livia's *Écriture Féminine*"—on Saturday afternoon.

Prior to my presentation on Saturday, my participation in this conference offered new perspectives on many of the ideas and concepts I'd been pursuing in Royal Holloway's MSc Media, Power and Public Affairs. The conference, for example, offered various "posthuman" or post-structural readings of Joyce's works which discussed some of the thinkers I'd studied in my MSc modules. Presentations like "Posthuman Joyce? The Becomings of *Finnegans Wake*" or "Posthumanism, Systems Theory, and Joyce's Man in the Brown Macintosh" discussed theorists like Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Following the conference, my MSc dissertation focused on William Connolly: a post-structuralist theorist who draws on Deleuze and Guattari and whose

ideas I better understood as a result of the conference. The conference's focus on identity and fluidity in Joyce's works also contributed to my studies of identity politics in the MSc. Keynote speaker Terence Killeen, for example, used genetic criticism of *Finnegans Wake* to discuss the role of personal and national borders in the text. Presentations like these helped me develop more nuanced perspectives on identity which made my MSc dissertation—applying William Connolly to American identity politics—more interesting.

The conference was also a fantastic opportunity to broaden my academic experiences. Attending presentations, performances, and other events with fellow members of the conference gave me the chance to discuss and debate my ideas in a more rigorous way. I had used material by keynote speaker Michael Wood, for example, in my undergraduate dissertation on the *Wake*. Following his keynote on questions of satire and development in Joyce's oeuvre, I had the chance to talk with Professor Wood one-on-one. This conference was the most significant opportunity I'd had to speak personally with such internationally-acclaimed academics in my field.

Finally, my presentation itself was a valuable and exciting chance to practice articulating my research before a group of experts. The chapter I presented focused on the ways in which the final ten pages of *Finnegans Wake* allows the book's central female character to articulate a new language from which she derives a sense of empowerment. A number of the academics who I respect attended the talk, and a few of them approached me after the presentation to discuss the paper and its possible publication in future. This experience has made me more confident in sharing my academic work and has prompted me to already consider further conferences for the coming year.

I'm incredibly grateful for the Royal Holloway Travel Award which made this trip to Mexico possible for me. I would not have been able to afford the conference without Royal Holloway's support—the Travel Award paid for my flights, my accommodation, and some of my meals. I'm confident that my attendance at "Joyce Without Borders" led to a more sophisticated MSc dissertation and helped me develop into a more confident and experienced researcher.



*Conference venue in Mexico City*



*Following my presentation on Saturday*



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## EL LEGADO DE JOYCE

La importancia de Joyce como escritor puede medirse mejor a través de los autores y artistas que se han inspirado en él que a través de la cantidad de libros que vendió. Tal como Pablo Picasso, Joyce hace que sus lectores cuestionen las suposiciones que tienen sobre las obras de arte. En autores tan diversos como Salman Rushdie, Thomas Pynchon, Ralph Ellison, Margaret Atwood y Mario Vargas Llosa se trasluce la influencia de Joyce. Se puede decir que muchas de las mejores novelas del mundo se han escrito en la tradición de *Ulises* o como reacción a esta obra y que mucha de la poesía experimental contemporánea tiene su origen en *Finnegan's Wake*.

Quizás, el legado más importante de la obra de Joyce sea el modo en que su innovación estilística estaba enlazada a una veneración por la experiencia humana normal y la necesidad de representarla de manera honesta.

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FIN

Poco des  
novela a  
progreso  
muchos a  
esta pieza  
radicales y  
numerosa  
nocturno y  
familia de  
recurriendo  
por la confu  
1939. El pen  
mundo pod

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JA

*An example of the Spanish-language Joyce scholarship on display at the conference.*