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# FOREWORD

> "Nothing is gained by teaching
> a parrot a new word"
> (George Orwell)

I t is with grand illusion that we publish our third volume of *GAUDEAMUS*. This journal originated from the need of young researchers to feel secure displaying their reflections in a system that urges us to publish endlessly and tirelessly and that ranks ideas and examinations as if some voices were more worthy of being listened to and read than others. In ASYRAS, the Association of Young Researchers in Anglophone Studies, we created a haven of discussion and introspection where authors could share their research leaving behind those anxieties of not keeping up with the imposed models of contemporary academia.

Slow academia is needed more than ever in these unprecedented times, where we face uncertainty due to the appraisal of willing ignorance and one-click infoxication. Parroting is loud, but communication is lacking. Scholars and our communities must stop and reflect upon the directions we are driven to as social beings; the futures imagined, the pasts forgotten—just as Orwell did in the midst of World Wars. We are in charge of placing humanities at the centre of academia, reassessing its relevance as a site of ontological discussion where to explore sociality. Philological studies hence are pierced by that humanitarian approach that becomes the cornerstone of the critical vision required to endeavour *any* scientific investigation regardless of the field. The nature of academia must be critical thinking, permeating every theory and nurturing every reader.

Thus, manuscripts like the ones collected here in this volume invite the audience to challenge Orwell's fears of a society devoid of self-awareness that parrots the hegemonic thought while negating its interdependence. For every censored book, every dishonest datum, and silenced discourse, humanities are the pivotal solution. George Orwell scrutinised the pains of his generation and grimaced at the background system underpinning such horrors. Alas, he did so with despondent pessimism. Critical visions must deconstruct and stagger the cultural constructs that shape us, but with the hope of breathing life into a more promising chapter. Those who never dare to do so are dominated by unfounded fears and hatred against the other, waiting to see whose boot stamps their face first—*for ever*. I believe this life is not worth pursuing.

We truly hope you enjoy reading these pages and, most importantly, that from their ink, new ideas arise, with the promise of actively cultivating them at your desired pace, to later fit words together so that hopeful, utopian futures sprout.

**Almudena Machado-Jiménez**
President of ASYRAS and Associate Editor of
*Gaudeamus*

# Articles

# HELL OR HIGH WATER: MIGRANT ENCOUNTERS WITH NATURE ALONG THE ROUTE IN *SANCTUARY* AND *WE ARE NOT FROM HERE*[1]

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T he aim of this paper is to analyze the representation of material and discursive engagements between the migrant population and the natural environment in the Young Adult novels *Sanctuary* (2020) and *We Are Not from Here* (2020). It initially takes into account the contributions of material ecofeminism in the understanding of human and nonhuman forms of agency, and then moves on to focus on the novels in their depiction of the character's relations with the natural landscape along the migratory journey in their flight towards the US-Mexico border. These encounters with natural elements such as water, earth or fire transform the identity of the adolescent protagonists altering their perception of themselves and their position in society. The interchange between diverse forms of nature allows for the emergence of a renewed sense of belonging and self in the characters from the novels. Thus, this paper analyzes the multiple possibilities that arise from the interaction among more-than-human

entities and the way in which it positively and negatively affects not only the material bodies of the protagonists but also the identities ascribed to those bodies.

**Keywords:** Latin American migration; ecofeminism; migratory landscape; Young Adult Literature; US-Mexico border

# 1. Introduction

Nature as a philosophical concept and a cultural repository of norms and moralism has been historically used for the oppression of women, people of color, indigenous groups, queer individuals, and the working and lower classes. The stereotypical association of social marginal collectives with the natural world has been used to justify their disassociation from rationality, subjectivity, and agency, which are commonly identified as White male characteristics. There is no wonder that there has been a long tradition of feminist theorists—most notably Simone de Beauvoir, Sherry Otner, Gayle Rubin, and Judith Butler—that aim at disentangling the idea of 'woman' from 'nature,' transporting the identity and subjectivity of women from the realm of nature to that of culture. However, in recent times feminist authors such as Karen Barad, Moira Gatens, Stacy Alaimo and Claire Colebrook, among others, have gradually shifted the focus to the material study of bodies and the relationships established between human and more-than-human entities. This change of perspective is enclosed within the field of ecofeminism, which has been described as follows: "[P]olitically engaged discourse that analyzes the conceptual connections between the manipulation of women and the nonhuman" (Buell et al. 2011, 425). Ecofeminism highlights the historic, cultural, and social exploitation and domination of women and nature by patriarchal powers. Among the various trends within this political and academic movement—cultural ecofeminism, rationalist ecofeminism, dialectal ecofeminism—the current of material ecofeminism provides the most stimulating understanding of the various ways in which the discursive and the material interact

in the constitution of bodies as contrasting and intermingling elements that create reality.

The material turn in feminist theory does not proclaim that nature exists prior to discourse. Instead, there is an interest in studying materiality as a concept composed of various forms of power and knowledge, both cultural and natural. The aim is to move towards and "onto-epistem-ology," in Barad's terms, which can be understood as the study of practices of knowing (2003, 829). This movement emphasizes the interconnection between elements that have been usually presented as dichotomous: natural/cultural and material/discursive. Practices of knowing and being cannot be separated, since they are mutually implicated: we *know* because we *are* of the world. The use of material ecofeminism allows us to emphasize the agentic contributions of nonhuman forces that operate in nature, in the human body, and in human artifacts. Stacy Alaimo situates human bodies within specific environmental contexts, as she understands human processes and events as inseparable from specific biophysical relations and interconnections. The ecofeminist author encourages us to inhabit what she has defined as "trans-corporeality," that is, "the time-space where human corporeality, in all its material fleshiness, is inseparable from 'nature' or 'environment'" (2008, 238). This idea facilitates the movement across human and nonhuman bodies and reveals the interconnections between all forms of nature. In Alaimo's words: "Imagining human corporeality as trans-corporeality, in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world, underlines the extent to which the corporeal substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from the 'environment.' […] 'nature' is always as close as one's own skin" (2008, 238). Therefore, the entanglement of all kinds of matter allows us to acknowledge the fact that we, as humans, *are* nature. We are organic, alive and agentic just like that other nonhuman nature that we tend to regard as passive and immutable. We transform and are transformed, influence and are influenced, define and are defined by all the elements that surround us.

One of the main struggles of material ecofeminism has been defining and understanding the agency of nature. Sociologists Michael Callon and John Law's theory of *hybrid collectif* (1997)

posits that agency is a property created by the interaction of heterogenous components, known as actants, which are sources of action that may be human or non-human. This idea implies that all kinds of matter, either natural or artificial, do not act in isolation, rather they have complex relations and interactions across time and space. As such, those relationships are what perform agency. According to them, there is no difference between the person and the network of entities which act through that given person. Therefore, agency cannot exist in a vacuum, it needs of the actants and, furthermore, it needs those actants to interact. Entities of all kinds are, thus, the result of the relations that made them up; they are "compound realities, the product of a process of composition" (Callon and Law 1997, 140). Similarly, philosopher Carolyn Merchant in her 1989 work *Ecological Revolutions*, reaffirms the idea that nature is a historical actor that can challenge the discursive construction through which it is understood (7). By placing humans and nonhumans in the historical stage, Merchant provides a better understanding of the agency of nonhuman nature. In her words: "The relation between humans and the nonhuman world is thus reciprocal. Humans adapt to nature's environmental conditions; but when humans alter their surroundings, nature responds through ecological changes" (1989, 8). From this ecocritical point of view, entities and their agency can be understood as network effects that cannot be separated from their specific historical context. When the US government implemented the policy of Prevention Through Deterrence (PTD) in 1994 funneling thousands of migrant people to remote areas of the desert and the mountains, they put into motion a manufactured *hybrid collectif* that has agency of its own. [2] As anthropologist Jason De León has explained, the idea was to create

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[2]Prevention Through Deterrence is a US immigration enforcement strategy implemented along the southern border in the mid 1990s. It increased security in unauthorized crossing areas near urban ports of entry in an attempt to shift undocumented border crossings into remote border regions such as the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. Whilst this strategy has failed to actually deter north-bound crossers, it has managed to take the lives of at least 3,200 people in their journey through Arizona (Undocumented Migration Project).

a wall of deterrence that is "equal parts human, animal, plant, object, geography, temperature, and unknown" (2015, 39). It can be seen that the US is strategically using nature's agentic capacities to weaponize the environment of the border and use it against migrant crossers.

Latinx literature has long been concerned with the engagement of humans and more-than humans in the specific context of the US-Mexico border space. Already in the 1980s we could see the emergence of Chicana writers and scholars, most notably Gloria Anzaldúa with her pinnacle work *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), writing from their experiences inhabiting the particular landscape of the borderlands and how this entanglement with the territory affected their identity. In the 1990s rising concerns regarding the increase usage of pesticides and other toxic substances in the Southwestern regions of the US-Mexico border—especially after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Mexico, and Canada—prompted the appearance of Latinx authors that used their works to raise awareness about the socioenvironmental justice struggle. Cherríe Moraga, Helena María Viramontes and Ana Castillo are only an example of this literary movement in the last decade of the 20th century in which characters and narratives are based on the toxic experiences of the US Southwest (Pérez Ramos 2018, 129). Similarly, novels accounting the (undocumented) migrant experiences and its interconnectedness with polluted and dangerous landscapes can also be found from the 1990s onwards. Ito Romo's *El Puente/The Bridge* (2000) and Lucha Corpi with *Cactus Blood* (1995) present "eco-cosmopolitan migrant/strangers" (Pérez Ramos 2020, 44) whose stories of illegality are closely linked to their inhabiting of polluted spaces. Therefore, "through literature by and about the Chicana/o community it is thus possible to see how toxicity and water pollution, environmental degradation, and cultural deterioration are interlinked in the US Southwest and affect the physical and mental integrity of Chicana/os" (Pérez Ramos 2018, 130). This mistreatment of the natural landscape of the borderlands reflects the disregard that official authorities have for those who inhabit and navigate such territories. Most recently, Latina Young Adult Literature authors such as Jenny Torres

Sánchez, Alexandra Díaz and Aida Salazar, among others, have been using this literary genre as a tool to give an account of the migrant experience of unaccompanied minors in their quest towards the US as they wrestle with the harsh environmental conditions that the US is using at their advantage.

The novels analyzed in this article—*Sanctuary* (2020) by Paola Mendoza and Abby Sher, and *We Are Not from Here* (2020) by Jenny Torres Sánchez—provide their readers with a detailed and, often brutal, account of the dangerous journey that thousands of unaccompanied children undergo from Latin American countries towards the United States. *Sanctuary* introduces us to a 2032 dystopian society in which a supremacist President—of whom we do not know the name—commands a massive deportation of undocumented migrants. The protagonist, Vali, her mom and her little brother, Ernie, are forced to leave the country to establish themselves with their aunt Luna in California, as the state seceded from the rest of the US, hence becoming a sanctuary state for the migrant population. After their mother is arrested at the bus station, Vali and Ernie must continue with a journey in which they are going to go through deserts and rivers, escape from gangs and Border Patrol and witness death, violence and suffering in a desperate attempt to find safety. Similarly, in *We Are Not from Here* Pequeña and her friends Pulga and Chico flee Guatemala as they find themselves involved in a local gang. In order to reach the border, they must cross countries, jump on top of freights and spend whole days trekking without food or water only to end up disoriented in the desert before entering the US. As the novels portray with their protagonists and their companions, during this hazardous flight migrant people sleep under the open sky or inside caves, they drink rainwater or from natural springs, they hide from *la migra* in nature, they traverse deserts and mountains, or they go through the river to reach their destination in the north.[3] All of this brings about marginal and illegal forms of economy and movement in which humans and nonhumans alike participate. This further permits the

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[3]*La migra* is the name given to the Border Patrol by the migrant population.

creation of extraordinary bonds that can only be described within the migratory process.

## 2.  Migrant Engagements with the Natural Space

The environment plays a fundamental role in the way we feel and in our cognitive understanding regarding how we feel about that environment we are surrounded by (Weik von Mossner 2018, 55). The migratory context is, therefore, particularly instructive and interesting to study from an ecocritical point of view, precisely because of the intense influence of nature on the body and the mind of those that navigate the migratory space. Philosopher Jane Bennett encourages us to think about the vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formations as they have the capacity to aid or destroy us (2010, 12). In *Sanctuary* and *We Are Not from Here*, the characters' engagements with natural elements such as water, earth or fire do not only affect their bodies, the materiality and physicality of them, but also serve to account for their state of mind and their emotional and psychological understanding and reconfiguration of themselves and their position in society after experiencing the migratory process.

In the novels at hand, water is the main element with which the protagonists connect. It is a powerful force present all along the stories and determining the ways in which they fuse with the space, as well as how they make sense to what is happening to them. The main character of *Sanctuary*, Vali, has always been afraid of water, even though her father tried to teach her to swim in the Pacific Ocean. In spite of her fear, she has the courage to cross the Colorado River into California but, once she has settled down with her Tía Luna, she is convinced that part of her has remained in the water. In her dreams, she is drowning and takes with her to the seabed all those she loves. At the end of her journey, she tries to reconcile with her memory by going back with Malakas—the Filipino teenage boy that accompanies her and her brother—to the shore where they entered California. The young girl understands that water, apart from being dangerous and treacherous, is also a healing element. Her mother used to tell her that life comes from water: "We were

each born in a sac of water, she told us. We were made of water"
(Mendoza and Sher 2020, 278). A new Vali was born from her
crossing of the Colorado River: resilient, stronger and braver; but
also hurt, tired and traumatized. However, it is important to
remember that this element is malleable, free of restrictions and
rules and that is why, like the water, the protagonist might be able
to adapt to this new life and, hopefully, heal. This is a paramount
idea precisely because water can be used to clean wounds. In the
Catholic religion it washes away the original sin, and in the Muslim
world it is a mandatory element in the Islamic rite of prayer, as it is
used for the removal of impurities through the ablution. Similarly,
we come across the work of the Mexican artist and painter Ana
Teresa Fernández, who uses water in most of her collections and
creations, *Aquarius* being the one in which she explicitly combines
this natural element with migration.[4] These are only some of the
examples that demonstrate the ways in which water is understood as
a purifying and assuaging element across diverse cultures, artistic
expressions, and faiths.

With regards to migration across rivers and seas, it can be
understood as a way of rebirth and healing. That is why Vali has the
imperative necessity to go back to the water from which she
emerged and reconcile with her past whilst she tries to accept the

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[4]*Aquarius* belongs to the collection entitled *Ablution* (2010). In this work
we see a migrant woman washing her hair in the waters of a US shore with
the shadow of the bars that delineate the border between one nation and the
other at the back of the image:
https://anateresafernandez.com/ablution/ab01/. The blending of water and
migration is common in the work of the Mexican hyperrealist painter, as
seen in *Untitled* (2013), in which a woman with a black dress and *stilettos*
mops the floor next to the fence that serves as the barrier between the US
and Mexico: https://anateresafernandez.com/pressing-
matters/pmatters01/. This combination can also be found in her work
*Foreign Bodies* (2013), where the sea and the beach are present:
https://anateresafernandez.com/foreign-bodies-paintings/. Similarly, in
2018 she created a whole collection in relation to migration in the
Mediterranean Sea with the title *Of Bodies and Borders*:
https://anateresafernandez.com/of-bodies-borders-2/.

upcoming future. Since the former Vali remains in that water, the girl needs to return to the Colorado River to conclude such a traumatic and painful chapter of her life. The river calls her in dreams, as it is in those waters where she experiences freedom for the first time since she left her home: "There was only the burbling sound of this amazing underwater universe now. This other existence where everything and everyone was suspended and free" (Mendoza and Sher 2020, 278), reflects the protagonist while she is crossing to California. In the water she can suspend all the weight that she has been carrying with her in the journey and during all those years she has lived with a fake identity embedded under her skin.[5] Likewise, just like Rachel Carson described in her work *The Sea around Us* (1951, 147), water has a unifying effect that can connect us to the other shore and allows us to be in contact with other beings and other creatures. It is an essential element for all kinds of nature—human and nonhuman. This is precisely the reason why Vali feels more in contact than ever with the environment and with herself:

> Whether or not I had the skills to stay afloat, I felt like there was a greater current moving me forward. Maybe connected to the sun and the moon or the magical weightlessness of everything floating, gliding, compelling us forward. […] Because we were all woven from the same thread. Braided together in an intricate pattern. It was only on land that humans could draw all these boundaries and build these gigantic walls. (Mendoza and Sher 2020, 277)

In those waters Vali inhabits Alaimo's trans-corporeality, as her body becomes a more-than-human entity able to connect with all the nature that surrounds her. This approach calls attention to the active participation of humans as part of the phenomena that takes place within the world. Therefore, Vali is not an external knower through which representations happen, rather she is another element taking part in the inter and intra-activity of the environment.

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[5] In the 2032 dystopian society in *Sanctuary*, all US citizens have a chip inserted under their wrist with personal information. Vali and her mother, as undocumented residents, have counterfeit chips with someone else's identity on them.

Similarly, in *We Are Not from Here* there are numerous instances in which the element of water has importance in the story. Pequeña often uses magical realism as a form of dissociation to evade from her immediate reality. This teenage girl escapes to imaginary worlds filled with nature, fire, spiders, and water as an unconscious mechanism to process all the trauma she is being exposed to, not only along the journey, but also at home as a consequence of Rey's—a gangster from her town—rapes and the resulting pregnancy. There is a pivotal scene in the novel when she suffers a dissociative episode while she is giving birth to the baby. At that moment, the protagonist witnesses the flooding of the room in which she is in and hides in that imaginary water from the smell of blood, fluid and life that emanates from her body:

> I close my eyes, and there I find it, the imaginary door, the one that leads me somewhere else, to another world. I can hear the water— rushing, cascading all around me as I stand on rocks and fling my body into the air, leaping toward beautiful water. My body is free, and light, and mine. Just mine. I plunge into that water, clear and cold. Washing away everything—all memory, all blame. All pain. The child cries. My eyes flutter open, against my will, as if his cries demand I stay *here*, in this reality. *No*, I answer, and I picture the water again, see myself submerged in it […] I focus on the water. Only the water. When I open my eyes again, the water has followed me here. It floods the floor and trickles like sweat from the walls. […] I feel my bed becomes dislodged from the floor. I feel it lift and float as the water continues filling the room. (Torres Sánchez 2020, 19)

Lyn Di Iorio Sandín studies the ways in which magical realism can be useful to understand traumatic processes in characters such as Pequeña. Her theory pays attention to the disclosure of experiences in which certain subjectivities—Holocaust survivors, victims of abuse, rape or incest, and colonial and postcolonial subjects— experience continued psychic distress (Di Iorio Sandín 2012, 20). According to trauma theory, the traumatized person can only start to heal when they are able to tell their traumatic story to other people. It emphasizes the importance and the therapeutic nature of narrative as a means to have a better understanding of the trauma and start the recovery process. This literary style is, in this case, the

sign that certain discursive formations have been repressed and endure in the traumatic memory but cannot be completely reconstructed. Those moments of magical realism can be, therefore, catalysts of the trauma that cannot be articulated.

According to Di Iorio Sandín, the main indicator that trauma cannot be adequately adjusted to discursive schemes is through episodes of dissociation, as it happens in the case of Pequeña in *We Are Not from Here*. In the words of Di Iorio Sandín: "Dissociation […] is a productive psychic strategy for those suffering from severe trauma, as it protects them from some of the damage of the original event, until they are able to work out a narrative about the trauma" (2012, 21). This way, Torres Sánchez uses magical realism to portray the fact that Pequeña is overwhelmed by a traumatic experience that she is unable to understand or articulate. It is in these disruptions of magical realism that we can see the intermingling of the discursive and the material in the creation of reality. Rather than existing as a dichotomy, both elements interact in the constitution of bodies. Donna Haraway's formulation of the 'material discursive' proposes to consider nature as a commonplace to which we resort to "order our discourse, [and] to compose our memory" (2008, 159). Water, and nonhuman nature in general, serve the purpose of protecting Pequeña from her reality and from the fear she experiences when Rey rapes her, when she is having the baby, when she goes on board of *La Bestia*,[6] or when she has to hide from the Border Patrol in the bushes: "I stare at the road, waiting for water to come rushing down the streets. To carry me away" (Torres Sánchez 2020, 103), says Pequeña. Moreover, these disruptions of magical

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[6]*La Bestia* (The Beast) refers to a network of Mexican freight trains that carry fuel, materials and other goods throughout the Mexican railroads. However, it has also become the cheapest means of transport used by the migrant population from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to reach the United States. The physical risks of riding these trains are incalculable, dismemberment being the most common consequence. The anthropologist Jason De León describes *La Bestia* in the following terms: [T]he Mexican cargo trains that are equal parts free transportation and potential human meat grinder" (2019, 105).

realism help readers to notice that the protagonist shows signs of a trauma that will leave an emotional scar.

Another important element along the stories is earth. Both novels present scenes in which the protagonists bear witness to the death of some of their friends. In those instances in which they bury their companions, they are returning them to the bowels of the earth so that they can have a dignified rest. Regarding Vali in *Sanctuary*, there are two moments in which the protagonist releases all her energy digging up the soil with her own hands as a way to feel the humidity and the rocks scratching her skin. Firstly, she does it when Tomas, the four-year-old child that was with her and her brother, Ernie, in the meat truck in New York, dies in a mud puddle. She kneels and starts to toss soil in an attempt to create a grave for Tomas:

> I got on my knees and started trying to paw through the dirt to dig a grave for little Tomas […] I couldn't tell if Ernie knew what I was doing or not, but he joined me—his face still a dripping storm cloud as we pulled apart clumps of soggy scrub and weeds. If we hit a large rock or knot of roots, we dug in deeper and scraped even harder. I just needed to keep on tearing away at this ground. To feel something sharp or cold or dirty. Anything besides this obliterating death. (Mendoza and Sher 2020, 212)

In that moment Vali is surrounded by death, desperation and the disconsolate crying of a mother that has just lost her child. The teenage protagonist resorts to the earth and nature as she tries to channel all the emotions that rush through her body and feel, at least for a moment, the vitality of the natural environment. She directs her rage toward creating a new home so that little Tomas can be buried inside the natural floor and receive there the shelter and the refuge he did not have on the outside world. This scene of Vali's attempt to inter the body of the four-year-old has a parallel in *We Are Not from Here*, where Pequeña's cousin Pulga throws dirt in the coffin of their friend Chico when he is buried in a shelter in Mexico: "I am throwing dirt in a hole in the ground, and each particle of soil that falls is a heavy weight in my heart. How can I leave him here? But I do, we do. I throw more and more dirt on him. We pile it on and on and on. All that dirt. Until he is deep in the earth, like he never

existed" (Torres Sánchez 2020, 239). Notwithstanding, in Pulga's case this natural element has negative connotations. The boy feels guilty, as he is burying his best friend in a faraway land where he does not belong.

As stated before, Vali in *Sanctuary* resorts to the element of earth a second time at Tía Luna's. Once she is in California, the girl spends long afternoons feeling the soil and the stones between her fingers and reflecting on her past and her future. Vali wonders how to continue her life journey after the migratory experience and after her mother was detained by the Deportation Force—a body of immigration agents in the novel that resemble Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—in the bus station before leaving Vermont:

> I don't know what exactly I'm looking for as I kneel down and start pawing through the dirt. The stems pop off quickly, leaving short, stringy roots behind. The branches poke and scratch me as I try to burrow down. I pull out clumps of grass and weeds. Tear open knots of twisty, dry roots. When I hit a rock, I scrape even harder. My fingernails are soon caked in mud and my fingertips are shredding, but I keep going. I just need to feel something sharp or cold or dirty. It's just, I feel like I'm fragmented, displaced. (Mendoza and Sher 2020, 294)

Vali once again goes back to the earth, as she associates it with life and fertility. As such, the novel emphasizes the agentic contributions of nonhuman forces that operate in the human body.

Callon and Law affirm that entities of all kinds can be understood as networks whose identities are crafted through processes of transformation, compromise and negotiation (1997, 171). In this interaction with the element of earth Vali is able to recompose her understanding of herself and the new place where she has to restart her life. Once she has settled in her destination, she feels strange, which awakens in her a sentiment of rejection towards the new home. Vali disagrees with the assemblies and committees where her aunt Luna participates, as she perceives them as too simplistic and unable to come up with real solutions for the thousands of people that are still trying to find refuge in the sanctuary of California. Similarly, she does not stand having trivial conversations or eating without thinking about how much that food

and water would be needed by those who are fighting to survive the journey. Consequently, nonhuman nature and its elements become, once more, catalysts of trauma through which the protagonists reconstruct themselves after the migrant journey.

The aforementioned philosopher Jane Bennett (2010), affirms that there is vitality in more-than-human matter which permeates us to reconceptualize our position in the world. According to Callon and Law, the idea of society is better understood as "a collective association of human and non-human entities" (1997, 178). Therefore, in this new post-migratory context in which Vali has to continue with her life it is through the element of earth that she is connected to the environment in which she lives, reminding her that she is still alive, hence the need to keep fighting. The protagonist in *Sanctuary* kneels on the ground to take from that soil that she is tearing apart the necessary strength and determination to continue working for her goals: finding her mother, taking care of her brother Ernie, and healing herself. After Tomas' death, Vali recites a poem that highlights this bond that she has established with nature along her flight: "*Intentaron enterrarnos. No sabían que éramos semillas* [...] *They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds*" (Mendoza and Sher 2020, 213).[7] The girl engages with the natural world surrounding her in an attempt to understand what she has been through during the migratory process.

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[7]This line is a variation of the epitaph written by the Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal to the guerrilla Adolfo Báez Bone, who participated in the Nicaraguan Revolution in opposition to the Somoza dictatorship in 1954. Báez Bone took up exile, went to jail and was finally assassinated while fighting for his political convictions. The original poem by Cardenal reads as follows:

Te mataron y no nos dijeron dónde enterraron tu cuerpo,

Pero desde entonces todo el territorio nacional es tu sepulcro;

o más bien; en cada palmo del territorio nacional en que no está tu cuerpo, tú resucitaste.

Creyeron que te mataban con una orden de ¡fuego!

Creyeron que te enterraban

y lo que hacían era enterrar una semilla.

Somehow, along the journey both protagonists experience all the natural elements—they are washed by water, stained by soil, burnt by the sun, swayed by the wind—and it is the combination of all of them that prompts Vali and Pequeña to become new people. The migrant population suffers a process of dehumanization and animalization that transforms them into a mere body that migrates, travels and crosses borders. This erases and blurs the barriers between human nature and nonhuman nature. Because of this, human supremacy is removed and gives rise to a unique fusion between material elements that is difficult to understand outside the migrant contexts. Therefore, along the trail, migrants have to adapt to the demands of the natural space they are immersed in. As expressed by Vali, just like seeds, both adolescents go to the root of their identities, get soaked and covered by all nature that surrounds them and are born again, as new subjectivities profoundly marked by the migratory process. It is interesting to see that in *We Are Not from Here*, Pequeña was actually an affectionate nickname given to the protagonist, but her real name is Flor: "You cannot forget who you are. […] They will try to erase you. But you must always remember. Eres Flor", tells her Soledad, the owner of a refuge in Mexico, when the young girl acknowledges for the first time in the novel what her real name is (Torres Sánchez 2020, 208). This way, when Soledad's sister, Marta, rescues Pequeña from the Sonoran Desert and manages to take her to her house in the United States, the girl wants to leave Pequeña behind and become Flor, as she feels that deep inside her real name defines her better after all what she has undergone:

> I feel a small bit of relief in my chest, like a long-held breath finally being released. And I see inside my chest, dark and empty, but I see a glow come from a small space within that grows bigger and brighter. It's a flower bud and I watch as it opens up, as luminous petals unfurl. More and more petals, growing larger, taking up more space, filling my whole chest. With life. With hope. (Torres Sánchez 2020, 337)

Pequeña fuses with nature on multiple occasions and, mostly, she bathes in the water that covers her whenever she needs to escape and disappear. All this makes the Flor inside her emerge. Her real name highlights the way in which identity is not static or fixed, but rather created through ongoing relations and connections between all the

entities that conform the world. Anthropologist Vicki Kirby complicates the locatability of human identity understood as an enclosed product. According to her, identity is inherently unstable and dispersed (1997, 141). It is precisely the complex relation between the natural environment and the protagonists what brings about a change in their identities and in their understanding of themselves. Not only were they within nature, but they were part of that nature, as the name of Flor reflects. In the words of Karen Barad: "[W]e are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity" (2008, 146). As such, Pequeña and Vali leave the migratory process renewed and transformed. Even though they are completely traumatized and hurt, both girls have also become resilient and stronger. Hopefully, this experience will help them to find a purpose where to invest all the potential they carry inside them.

Nonetheless, through the character of Pulga Torres Sánchez portrays a more pessimistic—and, somehow, more realistic— side of migration. Despite experiencing a process similar to the female protagonists', the boy does not manage to overcome the situation and become stronger. Instead, Pulga remains completely downhearted because of what he had to go through and realizes that life is not full of dreams and colors as he used to think. When his aunt takes him out of the detention facility where he was staying after being found in the desert, the only thing he wants is to recover and believe that, maybe with time, he will be able to heal the wounds from the journey: "My heart thunders in my chest; it shakes and trembles and gasps for air. It reminds me I am alive. It reminds me who I am. It reminds me I want to live. And that maybe, I *will* make it" (Torres Sánchez 2020, 344). Although he manages to wake his heart up from the long lethargy and agony it was immersed in and starts to think about his future recovery, it is clear that his spirit is not the same as Vali and Pequeña's. This can result from the fact that, unlike the girls, Pulga does not relate with the element of water, but with fire instead. Along the novel, the boy describes numerous images of this: "Ahead I can see other migrants jumping, like bodies from a burning building," says Pulga once they had to jump from top of *La Bestia* (Torres Sánchez 2020, 189). Moreover, he constantly talks about the way in which the sun and the blazing steel

burn his skin and flesh: "I feel sweat trickling along my scalp, down my face, falling into and burning my eyes" (Torres Sánchez 2020, 196). It is worth mentioning that all this process begins after Chico and him witness the murder of a neighbor at the hands of Rey's gang and decide to burn their clothes in the backyard to erase all evidence of their presence in the scene: "'Get the matches,' I tell [Chico]. And when he comes back with them in hand, we go out to the backyard and build a small fire. It flickers and glows an eerie orange as it consumes the plastic bag and feeds on the clothes inside. We watch it burn" (Torres Sánchez 2020, 40). The migratory experience of these 14 and 15-year-old boys will emerge from that fire, and, that same element will be the one to determine the following journey and what happens to them. In fact, Chico dies wearing the same T-shirt as the day Don Felicio was killed, as he decides to rescue it before throwing the bag to the bonfire and keeps it in his backpack. It is already an indication that, even though both fire and water can purify, the latter is a symbol of life that will nurture Vali and Pequeña, whereas Pulga's encounter with fire will burn him to ashes. He no longer recognizes himself and does not know where to start the healing of the wounds left by the migrant trail.

## 3.  Concluding Remarks

Throughout the two novels analyzed in this article, the enormous impact that the natural elements have on the protagonists and their companions can be seen. Both stories portray forms of interconnection and interchange between human and nonhuman forms of matter and nature in the complex migratory context. The specific circumstances of migration provide ground for a renewed understanding of the ongoing relations and processes that give rise to this movement across bodies of which Alaimo and Barad, among others, talk about. Through the use of an ecofeminist perspective, we can highlight the connections established between the characters and the natural environment they navigate along the journey. Traumatic memory and narrative memory coexist in those people that have experienced trauma. It is the use of magic, emotions, dreams, superstition and nightmares what might help the protagonists and their companions to verbalize what they are unable

to tell in a realist manner. Thus, magical realism becomes a useful narrative device to express the experiences of characters such as Pequeña and the others, as it has the ability to represent "a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement" (Boehmer 1995, 235). The authors decide to use those moments of magical realism to connect Vali, Pequeña and Pulga with nature and with the landscape that surrounds them, showing the multiple possibilities that emerge from that conjunction between natural elements that coexist in the same space at the same time. Furthermore, there is a political dimension in material feminism. Stacy Alaimo argues that "[p]olitical decisions are scripted onto material bodies; these scripts have consequences that demand a political response on the part of those whose bodies are scripted" (2008, 8). The deaths, the injuries, and the physical and emotional trauma inflicted upon the bodies of Latin American border-crossers is the material result of a series of political decisions. Therefore, there is an interface between the technological, the political, the human and the natural in the escalation of border enforcement along the US-Mexico frontier.

Feminist philosopher Moira Gatens does not conceive the identity of the body as definite, for it is a ceaseless interchange with its environment: "[T]he human body is radically open to its surroundings and can be composed, recomposed and decomposed by other bodies" (1996, 110). This process can be perceived in the characters in *Sanctuary* and *We Are Not from Here*. They resort to their natural surroundings, both in material and discursive ways, to reformulate their identities. Not only are they profoundly marked by their encounters with nature, but they also use the elements as catalysts for their trauma. Through the analysis of characters such as Vali, Pequeña and Pulga it can be highlighted that the human body and the identity ascribed to that body is not static, as it is constantly altered by its interactions with other entities. These encounters with the environment are not necessarily positive, as some may result in disease, illness, trauma or even death. However, in spite of the effect that these interconnections may have on these children, they alter and transform the bodies that take part in that process.

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# AN EXPLORATION OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

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**D**espite the increasing implementation of English-medium instruction (EMI) courses in higher education (HE), insufficient heed has been paid to the perspectives of those most directly impacted by EMI (Dearden and Macaro 2016), and especially in a multilingual context like Catalonia, where a minority language must coexist with Spanish and English. Given the generally low level of English among the Spanish population (Education First 2021) this study aimed to examine the extent to which the academic body of the Universitat de Lleida (UdL), regards EMI as a propitious setting for linguistic development. To this end, a mixed-methods approach (Creswell 2015) is taken. Firstly, attitudes towards the Catalan B2 requirement and EMI were elicited through a questionnaire implemented with 287 undergraduates, which facilitated descriptive quantitative data. Secondly, experiences with and reflections upon English-taught courses were documented through three semi-structured interviews with two undergraduates and one faculty member at UdL. The 'small stories' (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) emerged were later analysed through Positioning Analysis (Bamberg 1997) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (Sacks 1972).

Overall, the findings indicate that EMI is equally accepted as an agent of linguistic development and a hurdle, which highlights, as in Cots (2013), how the UdL community–and by extension, Spanish universities–may still be unprepared to deal with EMI. It has also been observed that the introduction of English into Catalan HE is not envisaged as a threat to the local culture (Sabaté-Dalmau 2016), and that English being poorly taught at pre-university levels gives rise to an iterative discourse of victimhood among students (Diert-Boté and Martin-Rubió 2018). Despite the limitations, the findings may result in a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of EMI in multilingual environments.

**Keywords:** English-medium instruction; Catalan higher education; attitudes; foreign language learning; victimhood narrative

# 1.  Introduction

Over the last decades, the trend in education has gravitated towards the internationalisation of higher education (HE), which is defined by Knight (2003, 2) as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." One such way in which the internationalisation of HE institutions (HEI) has materialised is in the implementation of English-medium instruction (EMI) subjects, where English features as a vehicle to "teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority is not English" (Dearden 2015, 2). The Universitat de Lleida (UdL), a Catalan bilingual tertiary education public institution, also introduced EMI courses into its degree curricula.

EMI is both an exponentially growing phenomenon in HE and a fruitful one which is considered to derive language gains. This is particularly relevant for the issue at hand, as UdL students can prove knowledge of a foreign language (FL) after completing 9 credits of English-taught academic courses (see Universitat de Lleida 2021). Nevertheless, concerns continue to be raised about Spaniards' low level of proficiency in English (Education First 2021).

The case of Catalonia may be a representative example illustrating Spaniards' limited knowledge of English: although competence in a FL at a B2 level was mandatory for all Catalan undergraduates upon completion of their degree, it was observed that many of them did not yet have sufficient FL skills. Therefore, the imposition of the requirement of an accredited B2 had to be postponed for four years (see Generalitat de Catalunya 2018) and later waived.

In the broader sociolinguistic context of the institution under study, namely Catalonia, a bilingual autonomous community in Spain with two official languages–Spanish, a majority nation-state language, and Catalan, a minority national language (Sabaté-Dalmau 2016)–, EMI implementation may also be seen as creating a pressing need for Catalan to coexist with English, a language with strong presence in the academic realm. Yet, despite EMI implementation constituting a profound change in HE, insufficient heed has been paid to university teachers and students' views on EMI implementation, irrespective of their subject position in teaching and learning through EMI (Dearden and Macaro 2016), and especially in a multilingual context like Catalonia. Although EMI in Catalonia is growingly attracting research, students and practitioners' views are still receiving scant attention.

The present article fills the aforementioned gaps in the EMI research by examining the attitudes and beliefs of undergraduates and of one particular lecturer at a Catalan university towards EMI. Therefore, in the remaining sections of the paper, existing literature about EMI beliefs will be reviewed; an account of the methodology will be given; the results and the data derived from the study will be presented, and the paper will close with an exploration of the underlying meanings of the study. Indeed, since it is compelling that the effects of EMI are more researched, this article sheds light on fundamental issues that have yet to be fully addressed in the EMI research scene.

## 2.  Literature Review

An interest in introducing EMI courses in European universities has been awakened over the last decades. EMI rests on the idea that the teaching of discipline-content courses, usually at the level of tertiary education, occurs through the medium of English as the vehicular language, and, in principle, without language-oriented goals (Moncada-Comas 2020). Conversely, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which has been gaining momentum at pre-university levels, is a "dual-focused educational approach" targeting the development of discipline-specific knowledge and the students' improvement of skills in a FL (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010, 1). Recently, however, despite the non-explicit linguistic focus of EMI, university lecturers providing students with disciplinary knowledge and developing their competence in English, even if unintentionally, have been documented as teaching in CLIL-*ised* contexts (Moncada-Comas and Block 2019).

Macaro, Curle, Pun, An and Dearden's (2018) work conducting a systematic review on the growth of EMI is of help in situating EMI in HE. The evidence from the studies reviewed suggests that EMI implementation may be inevitable in HEI yet that further investigations are required to assert the connections between EMI and linguistic benefits or content learning inhibition.

Research thus far has highlighted EMI sites to be conducive to the development of an intercultural understanding and the broadening of one's mind (Earls 2016), as well as to an increased sense of achievement (Fidan Uçar and Soruç 2018). Interestingly, Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb's (2015) study yielded that students recognise the advantages of speaking English, despite them seemingly having a predisposition for L1 Medium of Instruction (L1MOI)–purportedly, due to insufficient language skills in the L2.

Further evidence of the positive role played by EMI comes from Chapple (2015), who concluded that the Japanese students under study commonly equated EMI to language gains. This was attested by Dearden and Macaro (2016), who looked at university teachers' voices from three European countries about teaching their

academic subject through English. What they found was a recurring belief that EMI was a potentially propitious setting for students' linguistic development, largely due to a perception that learners are exposed to relevant input and are forced to 'use' and 'think in' English. This finding was later replicated in Moratinos-Johnson, Juan-Garau and Salazar-Noguera (2018), where English-mediated courses also emerged as a major predictor of students' increased linguistic self-confidence.

Nevertheless, students are claimed to be prone to struggle in a setting where disciplinary content instruction occurs through the medium of English as a FL (Macaro et al. 2018). A surge of academic interest in this area points to a correlation between EMI enrolment and student difficulty in comprehending lectures and materials offered through English (Cho 2012; Cots 2013; Hengsadeekul, Koul and Kaewkuekool 2014; Phuong and Nguyen 2019). Another study by Kirkgöz (2014) follows a similar line: EMI students' voices reflected not only difficulties in understanding English-taught disciplinary knowledge but also a considerably greater demand for effort than in L1MOI-based contexts.

An expanding body of research has also yielded that students hesitate to participate in an English-mediated environment either because of a self-perceived low proficiency–as reported in Dearden and Macaro (2016)–or a fear of being subject to negative evaluation (Hengsadeekul et al. 2014). These results are consistent with those produced at the level of secondary education by Aragão (2011), who emphasises how a low self-image as a speaker of English may be a common anxiety trigger among students because of a fear of becoming their classmates' source of amusement; or by Diert-Boté (2022), whose participants reported feelings of embarrassment in English-speaking environments.

In a similar fashion, however, students' well-documented lack of competence may be extended to EMI practitioners as well, whose English proficiency comes under close scrutiny (Cots 2013). Unsatisfactory competence in English among teachers and students alike is a cause of concern, even if the issue of a lack of benchmark for instructors' required degree of proficiency to teach must also be brought to the fore (Macaro et al. 2018).

The internationalisation of HE (and ergo, EMI implementation) has also been envisaged as generating 'glocal' tensions. Though Pulcini and Campagna (2015) state that the desired promotion of one's own identity may conflict with an aspiration to compete internationally, the evidence in their study shows that the trend among lecturers at the Italian university they examined was not to fear a loss of identity. A similar finding emerged in Sabaté-Dalmau's (2016) study: the *Englishisation* process was not widely perceived as a menace to minority languages in the Catalan HEI under study.

Despite the several contributions of the above studies to our understanding of EMI contexts, their research was mostly aimed at evaluating beliefs, which may be deeply influenced by a variety of contextual variables. Since further research is needed, this study strives to analyse attitudes about EMI implementation in HE.

# 3.  Method

## 3.1.  Research Questions

The aim of the present study was to document the attitudes of the student body and of one faculty member towards having English-taught content courses at the level of tertiary education. To this end, the following research questions (RQ) were addressed:

1.  Is EMI perceived by the academic community of UdL as an opportunity to benefit undergraduates' lack of linguistic abilities in English?
2.  What are the academic body's views about EMI enrolment in HE, and, indirectly, about the English language, and FL learning?

### 3.2. Participants

A total of 287 undergraduate students, whose average age was 21, completed an online questionnaire[1]. Only UdL Bachelor students whose degree did not have a strong focus on FLs were targeted for the study. Respondents predominantly came from Spain (n= 270), with a great majority of them being Catalan/Spanish bilinguals, yet responses were also received from students from other countries, all belonging to different fields of knowledge.

Additionally, three interviews with two undergraduates and one lecturer were conducted. To ensure anonymity, they will be concealed through pseudonyms. At the time of conducting the interviews, both female undergraduates, Catalan/Spanish bilinguals, studied at UdL: Ona, a 20-year-old, is an Engineering student; Paloma, a 19-year-old, is a Preschool Education student. Martina, the faculty member, is a middle-aged female who works as a part-time adjunct professor in the Department of Private Law at UdL.

### 3.3. Instruments and procedure

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach (Creswell 2015) through a Google form questionnaire distributed in Catalan and three semi-structured interviews, conducted either face-to-face or online, and either in Catalan or Spanish, and lasting around 16-18 minutes each.

The questionnaire, administered online in November 2021 to UdL undergraduates, was designed as a collaborative task among UdL students enrolled in the English as a Global Language 2021-2022 course. It included questions related to certifying language proficiency, relaxing the regulation of the Catalan B2 requirement, and introducing EMI into degrees with a non-linguistic focus, yet items were non-mandatory and had a broader focus than the specific

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[1] The initial sample was of 290 students, but since non-undergraduate students and participants who did not specify their degree were excluded, the number of questionnaire participants lowered to 287.

aim of this research. Therefore, this paper only reports on a few of them, namely on multiple choice questions and 5-point Likert scales.

The semi-structured interviews, conducted in early December 2021 with two undergraduates and one member of the faculty staff, dealt with their perceptions of English being introduced into UdL and the position to which Catalan as a minority language may be relegated.

### 3.4. Analytical tools

Following Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008), the undergraduate interviewees' accounts were treated as 'small stories' that help gain insight into the speakers' identities and the ways in which these are dynamically constructed and maintained through the tellers' contextual positioning. The small stories were transcribed following the conventions in Appendix 1 and later analysed through Bamberg's (1997) proposal of three levels of positioning analysis within Narrative Positioning. These levels involve the positioning of the characters within the story (Positioning level (PL) 1: the tale), the positioning of the teller within the interactive situation (PL 2: the telling), and the construction of the sense of Self in relation to dominant discourses (PL 3: the teller). The undergraduates' narratives were also analysed through Sacks' (1972) development of Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA). MCA is a type of conversation analysis concerned with the study of how individuals make sense of the world through socially recognised categories which are (re)constructed in and through language.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Questionnaire

Most undergraduate participants appeared to be largely supportive of having English-taught content courses, with 60.91% of the

responses being in favour of it. Similarly, 57.14% of the responses proved that students showed themselves optimistic about having courses with English-oriented linguistic outcomes in their degree, irrespective of their field of knowledge. Indeed, despite Spaniards' well-known lack of skills in a FL, 52.01% of respondents who were aware of the B2 requirement were not concerned about proving their knowledge, which contrasts with the 56.89% of participants who favoured the relaxation of the Catalan B2 regulation.

Further items that prove immediately relevant to the aim of the present study include those in Table 1.

| Item | | Mean and SD | Unanswered |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | Any student in the Catalan educational system can acquire a B2 in a foreign language. | M = 2.34 SD = 1.36 | n = 7 |
| 38 | If your degree curriculum offered more content courses taught through English, almost all students would obtain a B2 level. | M = 3.30 SD = 1.26 | n = 5 |
| 32 | Students who graduate with a B2 level in a foreign language will have more employment and communication opportunities or access to stays abroad than those who do not. | M = 3.86 SD = 1.26 | n = 5 |

Table 1. Results obtained in Likert scales

## 4.2. Semi-structured interviews

### 4.2.1. Ona's conceptualisation of teachers and learners of English

Ona indicates that efforts must be made at all educational levels to ensure students' good command of English upon degree completion. Additionally, she does not anticipate English as a killer language, as it has limited presence in Catalan HE.

### 4.2.1.1. PL 1: the tale

A small story arises when Ona is asked to share her insights on Catalan undergraduates' inability to prove knowledge of a B2 in English. To illustrate that students' lack of motivation to learn languages may be attributed to teachers' lack of sufficient English skills, she recounts how in high school, she had a Biology teacher who had to teach her subject in English and made many mistakes. This would elicit laughter on the part of her and her peers, who would simply flip out. In her small story, Ona refers to a time when the instructor asked the students whether she could erase the classroom's board. She phrased her question in a striking way, as a) she borrowed two words from Catalan ("Can I borr the pissarr?" in the teacher's discourse versus 'Puc borrar la pissarra?' in Catalan), and b) the similarities between 'borrar' and 'pissarra' in Catalan ('erase' and 'board' in English, respectively) and "borr" and "pissarr" in the teacher's strategy for, seemingly, filling a gap in her knowledge, seemed apparent to Ona and her fellow students (see Excerpt 1).

| Ona | en la ESO (.) em tuve una profesora de biología que recuerdo que soltaba ^cada bu^rrada que nos quedábamos todos flipando y nos reíamos bastante la verdad (.) y y bueno ahora [smiles] ahora que pienso una vez en clase e iba a borrar la pizarra y y claro como tenían que dar la clase en inglés nos dijo *can I borr the pissarr*? (.) y recuerdo que todos nos quedamos fli^pando (.) |

Excerpt 1. 'Can I borr the pissarr?'

### 4.2.1.2. PL 2: the telling

Ona's emphasis on the teacher's error, as well as her non-verbal behaviour in situ and the students' reaction, may signal not only incredulity at the thought of a teacher with a poor command of English being forced to use English-mediated instruction, but also amusement at a prior high school experience. From the intonational stress being placed on the fact that the teacher "*soltaba cada burrada*", while grinning, may follow the inference that she may

find it hard to believe that secondary education teachers must teach through English despite making grammatical mistakes.

### 4.2.1.3. PL 3: the teller

Ona's confession that she laughed at the teacher's blunder may be contextually used to substantiate her positioning–perhaps in a condescending tone–as a proficient and confident user of English who takes great pride in taking FL-mediated lessons with remarkable ease, which may reveal how the teacher's unsatisfactory competence in the language of instruction generates in the narrator a diffidently emerging discourse of victimhood. This claim is nurtured by how, throughout the interview, her self-reported practices in class (she participates in class but disconnects when basic concepts are covered) may be drawn upon as a resource to see her as a member of the membership category (MC) 'high-level student' (MC proposed by author), within the Membership Categorisation Device (MCD) 'types of students of English' (see Table 2). Such a MC may be seen as resembling a teller who believes that "investment pays off" (Martin-Rubió and Diert-Boté 2021).

| MC | Category-Bound Activities/Category-Bound Predicates |
|---|---|
| high-level students | • are forced to work on a level they already have<br>• already master the verb 'to be'<br>• get bored in class because of repeated instruction<br>• may mock their teachers of English if they make errors<br>• know about the importance of languages |
| low-level students | • regard English-mediated lessons as a challenge<br>• lose track of the English lesson<br>• lack motivation and interest (in languages and in life)<br>• are ashamed of being mocked by peers |

Table 1. Ascribed categories to MCD "types of students of English", as interactionally constructed by Ona throughout the interview

### 4.2.2. Paloma and the lack of participation in her EMI course

Since Paloma repeatedly reports poor competence in English, she describes the Catalan B2 regulation being withdrawn as "a divine sign" and admits preferring EMI enrolment at university. Concerning the multilingualism encouraged in HE, she believes that the introduction of English "will not take away what you really are and what you feel."

#### 4.2.2.1. PL 1: the tale

In Excerpt 2, a small story emerges after Paloma is asked to pronounce herself on EMI implementation in HE. Paloma explains that in her Psychology lecture, her native English-speaking teacher, on seeing the limited degree of participation among students because of their inability to understand the tasks, decided to change the language of instruction (from English to Spanish) in the hope that understanding would increase.

Paloma a la meva carrera (.) que fan com he dit abans una assignatura de (.) amb anglès psicologia (.) teòricament hauria de ser tot en anglès però degut a que les meves companyes i ^jo incloent-me (.) no sabem pràcticament res d'anglès lo bàsic (.) llavors la professora s'ha cansat de parla'ns amb anglès [looks away] perquè ningú diu res al respecte sempre estem escoltant-la ^fent veure que l'escoltem em que l'ente^nem i això (.) [looks away] així que la professora s'ha cansat i no fem pràcticament res amb anglès (.) llavors no sé (.) trobo bé que s'hagi amoldat a nosaltres però [sighs] no sé

*my degree (.) which offers as I said before a course in (.) English Psychology (.) theoretically it should all be in English but because my classmates ^me included (.) know virtually no English the basics (.) then the teacher got tired of speaking in English to us* [looks away] *because no one ever says anything we're always listening to her pre^tending we're listening to her em that we under^stand her and stuff (.)* [looks away] *so the teacher got tired and we barely do anything in English*

*(.) so I don't know (.) it's OK that she adapted to us but*
[sighs] *I don't know*

Excerpt 2. 'Fent veure que l'entenem'

### 4.2.2.2. PL 2: the telling

The fact that Paloma repeated looks away from the camera and overall evokes negative learning experiences may be informative of her careless attitude as a learner, which may also affect her lack of motivation and (self-assessed) command of the language. This light-hearted non-verbal communicative cue may be conducive to affirming that she is not concerned that her low level of English impedes her understanding of the lectures.

Paloma stands in a position of liminality regarding her instructors' decision to shift from English to Spanish. Although the teller justifies it by saying that the teacher strove to avoid "talking to a wall" and acknowledges the difficulty to teach in a language that is not one's L1, she seems sceptical about it, perhaps because this may hamper students' joint content and language learning. Through this belief, she is constructing the role of teachers as that of shapers of students' perceptions of and ways of navigating their (FL) learning environment. In fact, her personal experiences point to how some of her past teachers of English have failed to motivate students, grouped them based on their proficiency level, have been apathetic and displayed insensitivity towards them, or even been late to classes. On the contrary, being a native teacher, a good person and passionate about teaching English are interactionally constructed by her as expected predicates of 'good teachers' (MC proposed by author).

### 4.2.2.3. PL 3: the teller

Paloma distances herself from the blame for not having enough language skills. The victim's narrative is therefore made apparent across the whole interview, as she recurrently documents how her teachers of English were unsuccessful in cultivating a relationship of care with her. By labelling her language learning

journey as "disastrous, disastrous, very sad", Paloma identifies as a student who was not helped to move beyond her limitations and develop a positive self-image.

Paloma might also be positioning herself and her classmates as students enacting the role of the savers, as she later declares that since the teacher replaced the medium of instruction–English–with Spanish, they reward the teacher with their participation. This may also point to how Paloma may be seen by Ona herself as a member of a category like 'low-level students', as Paloma regards English as a hindrance and does not seem concerned about being in class only pretending that she understands the teacher. Through this, she may fit in the description of a teller who does not know English–and ergo does not like it–yet still lacks the determination to strengthen either her motivation or language skills (Martin-Rubió and Diert-Boté 2021).

### 4.2.3. Martina and the synergy benefits of English

Martina assumes that the root cause of this unresolved issue–students' poor English–must be addressed from pre-school educational levels. Even if she regards EMI as a valuable instrument for content and language integration, she also recognises that students' low level not only deters them from completing a university English-taught course, but also affects instructors, who must adapt the content. Martina also espouses the viewpoint that university students from 21st-century society are genuinely concerned with language learning, but do not receive the formal education to do so.

When Martina is asked to share her views on the impact of English on the micro-reality of a community like Catalonia and its minority language, she outlines that Catalonia is still far from approximating the nature of 21st-century societies, their modernity and Europeanism and presents English as a language which does not lower the status of Catalan and whose effective implementation in universities results in a synergy that can be very productive.

# 5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which the academic body regards the links between EMI contexts and linguistic gains as straightforward. The quantitative evidence and participants' views indicate that mixed feelings may be articulated about EMI, which was both perceived as yielding positive linguistic outcomes and highlighted as inhibiting undergraduates' learning process. What this points towards is that for the first RQ framed in this study, which asked whether EMI enrolment at university may be seen as triggering linguistic benefits, no conclusive evidence was found.

Even if the perception that EMI may derive positive linguistic outcomes may be in line with previously cited studies, further research concerning the role of EMI in undergraduates' language development would prove useful. Still, one plausible explanation for thinking it wise to claim that linguistic skills are liable to be benefitted from English-taught content courses may be the nature of EMI itself: since its focus is not linguistic, the context in which it is implemented may be seen as providing a window of opportunity to be exposed to authentic communicative situations where the goal is content-oriented. Indeed, this may explain respondents' overall positive outlook towards EMI, yet this poses many questions in need of further elucidation. What form of English-mediated instruction is desirable in HE, if any at all?

Similarly, EMI may be regarded as hindering students' content learning process because of teachers' low level of proficiency, but more notably, students' initial command of the language of instruction: students with low English proficiency upon EMI enrolment may be more prone to perceiving EMI as a hurdle, given their difficulty to understand lectures which are not taught through their L1. It may now seem that Cots' (2013) suggestion that Spanish HEIs may still be unprepared for EMI may be corroborated by the present study, which, conducted almost a decade later, has yielded similar findings.

Regarding the second RQ, which enquired what the academic body thinks of EMI in HE, the issues raised by the interviewees

(remarkably, teachers' lack of a strong competence in English and enhanced career prospects if one speaks English) broadly concur with research cited in the literature review, thus denoting that EMI may mobilise conflicting discourses. Hence, whilst the current study was unable to confirm EMI being clearly perceived as leading to language gains, it served to partially substantiate Macaro et al.'s (2018) contention that the perspectives of those most directly impacted by EMI continue to provide fertile soil for further work.

Of note, some of the issues emerging from this paper relate to how the English language becomes a commodification: the functions socially attached to it and the idea that it is a marker of career prospects is constantly being sold to students. Indeed, despite these enthusiastically received assertions, the collection of the interviewees' voices in the present study on having English-taught courses point to a lack of a concerted effort to educate competent users of English as a lingua franca in previous academic years, so that undergraduates do not perceive the need to prove knowledge in a FL as a hurdle.

Though the present study has also shown that English is not widely perceived as a threat to the minority language, it runs counter to Cots (2013), who highlighted the vulnerable status of Catalan as another potential source of tension in Catalan HE. The interviewees' perception that English does not act as a language predator can be explained by the fact that English features as the medium of instruction in limited courses in Catalan HE, and Catalan and Spanish remain Catalan inhabitants' dominant languages in the public spheres.

This paper showed how the difficulties posed by EMI in Catalan HEI flow in a double direction. Outwardly, in one respect, students must adapt to a language they do not master and to content lecturers (CL) who may be insufficiently competent in the language of instruction; in another, CLs must adapt to students' limited level of proficiency and, occasionally, their own lack of sufficient skills. Indeed, teachers of English and CLs have been put under the spotlight for either low proficiency levels or attributed poor qualities and practices, and, surprisingly, native models have emerged in

Paloma's discourse as true legitimate EMI practitioners. Although this may indicate how learners of English may still be "guided by idealised, native-speaker oriented visions" (Llurda 2016, 60), no such reference to native teachers of English was made by other participants.

Despite the heterogeneity of the stories presented (a CLIL setting in ESO within Ona's tale versus an EMI setting in HE within Paloma's), commonalities across the narratives become evident. English being poorly taught at pre-university levels or CLs struggling to deliver lessons in English have emerged in this paper as the central tenets of, perhaps, a generalised and echoed discourse of victimhood among students. Through small stories and categorisation systems, the students interviewed positioned themselves as victims of a) a teacher whose proficiency level is, allegedly, lower than that of some students, b) of teachers who fail to motivate their students, and c) perhaps, in a broader sense, like in Diert-Boté and Martin-Rubió (2018), of an education system presenting several flaws.

What the findings from the present study, along with those in Aragão (2011) and Diert-Boté (2022), may help explain, even if only tentatively, is the causal relationship (if any) between the students' accumulated past poor learning experiences with English language learning settings and their later beliefs about and practices in EMI contexts in the tertiary education domain, where Spaniards are known to have a poor command of English. This is to be taken with caution, though, and much as the participants' narratives may deliberately enhance the significant impact of previous FL learning experiences on (Catalan) undergraduates' lack of FL skills, there is abundant room for further longitudinal studies that may corroborate the potential links.

It has also been observed that the same ideas recur in the discourse of different subjects. These could be understood as emotionally loaded instances of a possible prevalent circulating discourse projected onto the individual speakers' accounts, and not as mere isolated manifestations (Diert-Boté and Martin-Rubió 2018). This repetition of a tellers' small story has been referred to as 'iterativity' by Georgakopoulou (2013) and later by Diert-Boté

and Martin-Rubió (2018) to argue that it can also encapsulate a recurrence in beliefs across the discourse of different subjects in similar environments.

Although the recurrent ideas emanated from this study do not all take the form of small stories (specially, the questionnaire), they may also be defined as iterative, which may derive better informed decisions that support teaching practices accommodating students and practitioners' attitudes. These ideas further stress that students do not come to lessons as blank canvases, but as complex social beings with multiple–and overlapping–identities echoing the roles, relationships and experiences they have had within and outside the classroom. Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of their student selves (Diert-Boté 2021) may help redeem Spanish undergraduates' lack of skills in a FL.

## 6. Conclusions

This study investigated the perceived linguistic impact of English-taught courses in a Catalan university and yielded that EMI was not conclusively regarded as an agent of linguistic development. The results, however, must be considered within the limitations of the study: with such a small sample size, they may not be transferable to a large proportion of the Catalan student body or faculty staff, which have remained a population comparatively neglected due to time and resources constraints. Consequently, it is recommended that further qualitative research be undertaken into the perceptions of EMI participants in a bid to gain a more nuanced understanding of the psycho-pedagogical implications of EMI within HE.

The present study, however, has provided valuable insights into the academic community's stances towards EMI, unveiling latent attitudes towards issues such as social hierarchies within HE or education (in)equality. Through tales and categorial work, the interviewees constructed their situated social identity as members of their socio-cultural milieu, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the effects of the EMI phenomenon on both macro and

micro levels. Yet, since beliefs are of a changing nature, conclusions should not be generalised too broadly.

From the present study, it may be inferred that EMI may be valuable for undergraduates' joint development of content and language knowledge. Yet, even if the current findings have added to an under-researched strand of the literature, the debate must be moved forward. One possible future study may document the effects of EMI on language proficiency in comparison with L1MOI ones by administering, alongside a pre- and post-test that reflect knowledge of English before and after enrolling in an EMI course, a delayed post-test, to clarify whether the language proficiency acquired (if any) endures.

Despite the limitations, the findings derived from this study have direct practical implications for future practice, and the results should thus be interpreted as an important step in setting the agenda for ongoing research on the impact(s) of EMI on its key actors: students and lecturers.

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## Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| (.) | pause |
| ^ | syllable given prominence |
| *italics* | non-Catalan/Spanish speech |
| [smiles] | relevant non-verbal behaviour |

# PALAEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF LONDON, WELLCOME LIBRARY, MS. 3771

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In the present paper, the subject of study is the manuscript housed in London, Wellcome Library, MS 3771, containing a late 17th-century English remedy book. According to the Library, MS 3771 was written by Doctor William Parnell and houses a collection of medical recipes in alphabetical distribution by disease. Nevertheless, the volume closes with the mysterious acronym, E. W. The Wellcome Library argues that E. W. is the actual author of the manuscript, instead of Parnell, due to the "probably advanced age" of the doctor. The objective of the present paper is to investigate, analyse and categorise the script employed by the hand of the manuscript, as well as the various hands of the last page and its unbound leaves, to determine the authorship of MS 3771.

Additionally, as is known, the scribes resorted to abbreviations to save time and space. The development of abbreviations in Latin acquired "elaborate and complex proportions", however, the inventory was somewhat reduced over time. Vernacular languages later adopted the Latin system of abbreviations, rules, and signs (Petti 1977, 29). In conjunction with the analysis of the scripts, the present research also pursues the study of abbreviations with miscellaneous sections such as symbols, curtailments, superscript letters, and the other resources employed

by the different scribes together with the analysis of the scribal errors and mistakes.

**Keywords:** Majuscules, Minuscules, Script, Secretary, Transcription.

# 1.  Introduction

Language is a restrictive and unique form of communication. As it is a trait that belongs in the living world, humans adopted every thinkable surface to 'record the written word' from clay to paper (Clemens and Graham 2007, 3). In the case of the English language, writing started, according to Roberts (2005, 2), during the reign of King Alfred, first using parchment or vellum, originated from animal skin. This material became the dominant writing support of 'medieval and early modern Europe' (Clemens 2007, 9). Nevertheless, before long, in the 14th century, paper began to conquer the parchment's reign (Clemens 2007, 7). During the Renaissance, the revival of "classical literature and learning" produced negligence of the "works of the near past" (Petti 1977, 1). In addition, with the dispersal of the monastic libraries and the increase of the printing press, the circulation of copied manuscripts reduced (Petti 1977, 2). By virtue of these preserved manuscripts, linguists can analyse the language through palaeography. Any palaeographic study of a handwritten artefact pursues the analysis of the following two elements to categorise the text: the script and the date of composition.

        In the present paper, the object of study is to classify the script, abbreviations, mistakes, and errors employed in the 17th-century English recipe manuscript housed in London, Wellcome Library, MS. 3771, written by Doctor William Parnell (1685). The Wellcome Library expands that MS. 3771 was presumably composed in 1685, "a date which appears to be consonant with the script, which is certainly of the last quarter of the 17th century". When analysing a manuscript, the date can be of substantial assistance. If the date is uncertain which is the case of MS. 3771, it can be an arduous task to obtain it, as the approximate date of composition of the treatise will be "entirely based on handwriting"

as the "major changes in script and the evolution of letters" can help locate its century (Petti 1977, 1).

In the information given by the Wellcome Library, it is confirmed that the author of the treatise is Dr. William Parnell. "The compiler's name appears to be given on p. 218, where there is the following heading to a list of herbs: 'A briefe Collection of those herbs and plants that purge the head and braine practiced by me this sixty yeares. D. Parnell''. Parnell acknowledges that he has practiced as a doctor for 60 years. The Wellcome Library expands:

> 'In view of Parnell's probably advanced age, it seems unlikely that he was the writer of this MS., but the scribe was possibly the 'E.W.' whose initials are found on the verso of the last leaf.' (Wellcome Library)

Further, the date of the volume is uncertain as aforesaid. However, the Wellcome Library states:

> 'In their Medical Practitioners in the Diocese of London, 1955 Bloom and James give an entry on p. 21 for a 'William Parnell of Endfield, Middlesex', who was licensed to practice medicine in 1622.' (Wellcome Library)

## 2. Methodology

The analysis is conceived with a twofold objective: a) to examine the authorship of MS. 3771, to ascertain whether Dr. William Parnell is the real author of the treatise, and b) to classify the script, abbreviations, mistakes, and errors. In order to achieve these objectives, an empirical methodology is used to complete the palaeographical analysis of MS. 3771. With the aid of observation and the evidence collected from the volume, it will be sufficient to obtain data to categorize the script by compiling the characteristics that indicate the traits of its period. A transcription of the treatise has been executed to initiate the empirical methodology. Through the instrumentality of the original digitised MS. on the Wellcome Library website, a transcription of the treatise is assembled. The tool used to perform the transcription is a word processor constructed to create critical editions, named the Classical Text Editor program.

MS. 3771 is a collection of medical receipts in English arranged in alphabetical order. The recipes are numbered, and the sequence begins with every letter of the alphabet. It maintains its original unpolished calf binding with the acronyms 'H. W.' gilt-stamped on the sides of the volume. This volume is written on paper, and it demands a title page or preliminary leaf.

The treatise is composed of 120 folios, of which 218 pages are penned. It begins with a four-page segment titled 'The manner of preparing & purging the humours of the body' (Parnell, 1) and continues with the collection of recipes in alphabetical order and ends with a three-page segment denominated 'A briefe Collection of all ye herbs plants seeds spices & gums now vsed in phisicke to purge ye body of man omitting all such herbs & plants as hath any great danger to deale withall' (Parnell, 216). Each page of the treatise shows the alphabetical letter to which it belongs in the upper left corner and the number of the page on the right side. Regarding the layout of the treatise, the lines of the pages vary in quantity as there is no structure. The treatise ends with the word 'Finis'.

After the treatise, the appendix is given as an alphabetical table being 17 pages long. The caption of the Appendix is 'An alphebeticall table shewing both ye number of ye letter & page Where you may find every particular in ye foregoeing' (Parnell, 220). It is then mentioned that the first two leaves of the treatise are 'ye manner of preparing & purging, the humours of ye body & then as followeth'. Thenceforth, the scribe delineates a chart that has 6 columns, the first line of the table indicates the letter and the page, which is written twice, and the second row shows the number, the name of the recipe, and its page. This appendix undoubtedly concludes with 'Finis'.

Just on the other side of the last page of the appendix, another scribe included another recipe to make a sirup of garlic. This piece is rendered in one page and a quarter of the last bounded page of the volume, which is ripped at the right top of the leaf. The treatise was assembled with a flyleaf at the end but through the passing of time, it was written on. The volume is closed by the mysterious acronym, E. W.

There are also three unbounded pages. The first is penned by another scribe, it encloses a recipe for the worms. At the end of the page, there is a three-line fragment written by another penman. The second leaf is authored by the original hand, and it also encompasses treatment for the worms. The third page is rendered by the same hand as the last page of the book.

Macaro, Curle, Pun, An and Dearden's (2018) work conducting a systematic review on the growth of EMI is of help in situating EMI in HE. The evidence from the studies reviewed suggests that EMI implementation may be inevitable in HEI yet that further investigations are required to assert the connections between EMI and linguistic benefits or content learning inhibition.

Research thus far has highlighted EMI sites to be conducive to the development of an intercultural understanding and the broadening of one's mind (Earls 2016), as well as to an increased sense of achievement (Fidan Uçar and Soruç 2018). Interestingly, Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb's (2015) study yielded that students recognise the advantages of speaking English, despite them seemingly having a predisposition for L1 Medium of Instruction (L1MOI)–purportedly, due to insufficient language skills in the L2.

Further evidence of the positive role played by EMI comes from Chapple (2015), who concluded that the Japanese students under study commonly equated EMI to language gains. This was attested by Dearden and Macaro (2016), who looked at university teachers' voices from three European countries about teaching their academic subject through English. What they found was a recurring belief that EMI was a potentially propitious setting for students' linguistic development, largely due to a perception that learners are exposed to relevant input and are forced to 'use' and 'think in' English. This finding was later replicated in Moratinos-Johnson, Juan-Garau and Salazar-Noguera (2018), where English-mediated courses also emerged as a major predictor of students' increased linguistic self-confidence.

Nevertheless, students are claimed to be prone to struggle in a setting where disciplinary content instruction occurs through the medium of English as a FL (Macaro et al. 2018). A surge of academic interest in this area points to a correlation between EMI

enrolment and student difficulty in comprehending lectures and materials offered through English (Cho 2012; Cots 2013; Hengsadeekul, Koul and Kaewkuekool 2014; Phuong and Nguyen 2019). Another study by Kirkgöz (2014) follows a similar line: EMI students' voices reflected not only difficulties in understanding English-taught disciplinary knowledge but also a considerably greater demand for effort than in L1MOI-based contexts.

An expanding body of research has also yielded that students hesitate to participate in an English-mediated environment either because of a self-perceived low proficiency–as reported in Dearden and Macaro (2016)–or a fear of being subject to negative evaluation (Hengsadeekul et al. 2014). These results are consistent with those produced at the level of secondary education by Aragão (2011), who emphasises how a low self-image as a speaker of English may be a common anxiety trigger among students because of a fear of becoming their classmates' source of amusement; or by Diert-Boté (2022), whose participants reported feelings of embarrassment in English-speaking environments.

In a similar fashion, however, students' well-documented lack of competence may be extended to EMI practitioners as well, whose English proficiency comes under close scrutiny (Cots 2013). Unsatisfactory competence in English among teachers and students alike is a cause of concern, even if the issue of a lack of benchmark for instructors' required degree of proficiency to teach must also be brought to the fore (Macaro et al. 2018).

The internationalisation of HE (and ergo, EMI implementation) has also been envisaged as generating 'glocal' tensions. Though Pulcini and Campagna (2015) state that the desired promotion of one's own identity may conflict with an aspiration to compete internationally, the evidence in their study shows that the trend among lecturers at the Italian university they examined was not to fear a loss of identity. A similar finding emerged in Sabaté-Dalmau's (2016) study: the *Englishisation* process was not widely perceived as a menace to minority languages in the Catalan HEI under study.

Despite the several contributions of the above studies to our understanding of EMI contexts, their research was mostly aimed at

evaluating beliefs, which may be deeply influenced by a variety of contextual variables. Since further research is needed, this study strives to analyse attitudes about EMI implementation in HE.

## 3. Method

The manuscript was entirely written by the same hand. As mentioned above, the text was supposedly composed in the late 17th century, more exactly in the year 1685 (Wellcome Library). This date gives us a preliminary idea of the particularities of the script in view of the period. At the time, the script employed by the majority of scribes was a 'mixed hand' consisting of a "gradual fusion of the Secretary and Italic hands" and, depending on the "degree of admixture of Italic", it can be a guide to obtain an approximate date of the manuscript (Denholm-Young 1954, 75).

The Secretary script is an Italian hand which was first introduced into England by French penmen "during the reign of the Francophile, Richard II". The first traces of the Secretary hand were found in "chancery warrants" in the late 14th century when the Anglicana script or "court hand" was at its height (Petti 1977, 14). Roberts (2005, 211) states that the Secretary script expeditiously became "the main business script" as a brisker and agiler script to write, especially if compared with the Anglicana, which explains why it came into more general use. Even though the Anglicana had been the king of calligraphy since its introduction into "England in the 12th century", there was a competition between both scripts which resulted in a mixture of both, thus originating what is known as "hybrid scripts" (Petti 1977, 15). Denholm-Young argues that the Anglicana drastically decreased its use in the early 16th century until its eventual disappearance one century later "abolished by law" (1954, 26). In the 16th century, Petti (1977, 16) mentions that the main concern of the English handwriters was to produce an "acceptable, all-purpose hand combining aesthetic appeal and clarity with smoothness and facility in execution" and this facilitated the spread of the new hand, that is, the combination of the "traditional gothic script", i.e. Secretary, and the "Roman simplicity", i.e. Italic.

        The Italic script was first introduced into England in the 15th century by the "form of humanistic works" written by "foreigners abroad" and later imported by those bringing "Florentine manuscripts" (Denholm-Young 1954, 73). During the mid-sixteenth century, "scholars and gentlemen" began to adopt the humanistic cursive, the Italic or Roman script (Roberts 2005, 211). Nevertheless, Denholm-Young states that this script, the "pure humanistic script", was never written in England (1954, 72). The Italic script became the alternative to the secretary script for all purposes. The Secretary script, in turn, became of widespread use from "1525 to 1660" as the current English hand for "everyday purposes", even though in the 17th century it mixed with "italic forms" (Denholm-Young 1954, 71). Notwithstanding that, "the interchange of secretary and italic graphs" is not only exclusive of the 17th century as there are occurrences even in the early 16th century (Petti 1977, 18).

        During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it became fashionable among the nobility to write in more than one hand and, for instance, Queen Elizabeth herself was capable of writing in different hands (Denholm-Young 1954, 74). According to Petti, the nobility used the italic script in "their own correspondence hand" although their secretaries employed the "traditional secretary" script (1977, 19). In addition to this, the aristocracy began to sign with their names in Italic script throughout the middle of the 16th century (Petti 1977, 19). Following the royalty, the gentry and rising middle class began learning and employing the Italic hand in their writings (Petti 1977, 19). This led penmen to write "in most literary manuscripts" with "a division of labour whereby italic would be employed for Latin, and secretary for the vernacular" (Petti 1977, 19). The quarrel "between the native secretary hand and the foreign italic" can be traced back to the 17th century and the combination of these two scripts became commonplace since the Elizabethan period (Denholm-Young 1954, 74).

        This led writing-masters to teach different styles of calligraphy but, more importantly, this could not prevent the inevitable end of the two scripts. At the beginning both hands, when taught, possessed a distinct grip of the pen, which separated one from each other, producing "that the styles so long remained

distinct" (Denholm-Young 1954, 75). This fusion of the distinct hands produced that "the secretary hand came to be written with the same hold of the pen as the italic" (Denholm-Young 1954, 75). By the third quarter of the 17th century, the English witnessed the extinction of the secretary "as a literary hand" (Petti 1977, 20), which eventually resulted in the impossibility to classify any literary or business hands other than "mixed hands" (Denholm-Young 1954, 76).

In light of all this, the hands of the witness can be classified as a mixed hand consisting of a combination of Secretary and Italic scripts. When it comes to the main hand of the manuscript, it presents a more widespread use of the Secretary than the Italic. The Secretary hand is an angular script with thick and thin strokes which can appear broken and with horns placed in the "heads or sides" of the letters (Petti 1977, 14). The main characteristics of the Secretary script are the "single-compartment <a>", "the <e> with a bow" along with the two-stroke or reversed e, the letter <g> "with its head closed by a separate line" (Roberts 2005, 211), the stroke of the letter <p> written as an x (Denholm-Young 1954, 71), the twin-stemmed <r>, like a ''v'-shaped r", the "tight kidney-shaped" <s> in final position, "the three strokes of w" and the single stroke <x> (Roberts 2005, 211).

In contrast, the Humanistic script is a round cursive script with long vertical lines and uniformed "slope and ties between the letters" (Denholm-Young 1954, 73). The characteristic letterforms of the humanistic script are the "vertical, half-uncial d", the "two-lobe g", the letter <h> not going "below the baseline", the vowel <i> without "stroke or dot", the letter <r> in the "Carolingian form", the straight <s> "in all positions" and "round <s>" in the final position, and the letter <u> only in the "round form" and not as the letter <v> (Denholm-Young 1954, 71).

## 3.1.  Hand A

It is important to note that the first "mixed hands" were essentially Secretary including some italic forms, such as the majuscules and the "minuscules f, r, long and short s prominent" together with the letters "e, h and c" (Petti 1977, 14). The scribe of the text (Hand A)

is prone to render an italic appearance, with an inclined calligraphy, each word written with the same stroke and in some instances the penman wrote two words together without separating the pen from the paper. Nevertheless, its content is approximate to the Secretary script.

The majuscules are mainly written in Italic script, and they do not present much ornamentation. Nevertheless, in headings, at the beginning of the alphabetical section or in a new paragraph, they are rendered as Secretary letterforms. In several instances, the scribe indicates that the letter is a majuscule by writing a superscript humanistic <e>. With the letter <f>, the humanistic <e> is on top of <ff> standing for the 'capital F'; it also appears without the 'e' (Tannenbaum 1930, 38).

As far as minuscules are concerned, the inventory of letters rendered with a Secretary hand are the following: the <a> whose body is composed of "a small oval (o)" with a small tail coming from the right side (Tannenbaum 1930, 27). The double lobbed <b> starts at the linear level with a long oval stroke returning to the beginning of the stroke, and closes with an oval in the initial line. The "right-angled" letter <c> is a vertical line with a "short perpendicular line" (Petti 1977, 14). The <d> is a double looped minuscule which can be confused with the letter <e> as the penman wrote it smaller, similar to a linear letter. The "reversed" <e> appears quite frequently in the treatise. The "tight" <g> is double lobbed (Robert 2005, 211). Nevertheless, the scribe may not close the infralinear loop of the letter <g>. The letter <h> has a "supralinear vertical loop" followed by a semioval ending with an infralinear curved tail. It also coexists with <h> whose supralinear loop disappeared into a "mere bow" forming an h with little or no body (Tannenbaum 1930, 47). <k> and <p> are of the Secretary script with the looped head. The <r> has two different forms, the "twin-stemmed r" being the preferred form in the treatise and the "2-form of r" (Tannenbaum 1930, 67). The letter <w> is similar to the present day <w> as the Secretary's single-stroke letter looks like an <n> linked to a <u> (Figure 1).
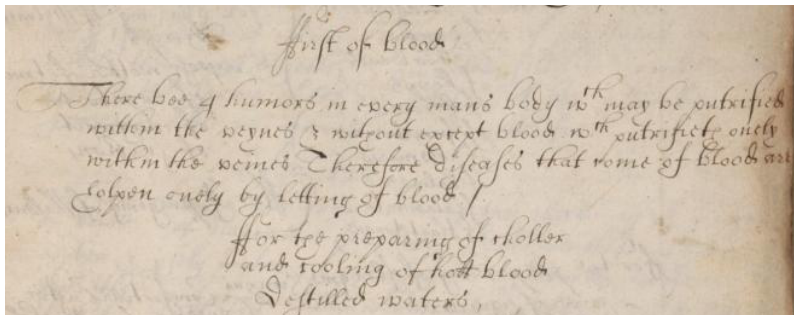
Fig. 1. Extract from MS. 3771[1] (page 1)

Regarding the Italic letterforms, the letter <s> has three types of <s>, the italic long <s> "looped and unlooped", when two <s> are together, the first letter is a long <s> that links with to a straight <s>, characteristic of the humanistic script (Petti 1977, 18). And finally, the <s> in the final position being a "round s" (Derolez 2006, 63). The letter <t> is a single stroke with a horizontal line in the middle which is also rendered as a "short introductory ascender and linking loop from base" (Petti 1977, 20). As mentioned, the italic or humanistic <e> appears as a superscript letter indicating when a letter is a majuscule. Even though the "reversed <e>" is the dominant <e>, it coexists with the "epsilon" or "Greek e", a "perpendicular stem, and the three horizontal bars" (Tannenbaum 1930, 38).

Concerning the letter <x>, the scribe differentiates the single-stroke secretary <x> and the two-stroke italic <x>, using the Secretary <x> for the expression of the cardinal number and other English words while the humanistic <x> predominates in headings and Latin words. However, as the treatise progresses, the humanistic

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[1] All of the images included in this article are part of the digitalized MS.3771 provided by the Wellcome Library. Credit: Parnell, William. Wellcome Collection. Public Domain Mark.

<x> becomes negligible and the secretary <x> progressively gains a more significant role.
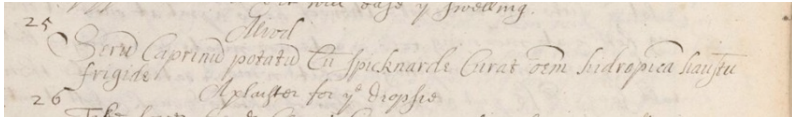


Fig. 2. <Secu*m* Caprinid potatu*m*> (page 80)

Figure 2 shows how the author of MS. 3771. differentiates the Latin from the Vernacular. The Latin section is written in Italic script including a wide range of Italic letterforms whilst the Vernacular appears with more letters that are part of the Secretary script.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Wellcome Library states that the authorship of MS. 3771 is not of Dr. William Parnell due to his seniority and that it was probably written by a fellow bearing the initials E.W., which are found in the cover and written also by Hand A. Additionally, the Wellcome Library concludes that the date of composition might be 1685 as Bloom and James confirm there was a man with the name 'William Parnell' in Endfield, Middlesex', who obtained its licence in 1622 (1935, 21). In the treatise itself there is a confirmation that William Parnell has been practicing this medicine for 60 years, 'Medicines for the Angina struma or King's evill and all glandulous and hard swellings in the neck, throate or elsewhere, being all well approved in my practice this 60 yeares' (Parnell, 135). However, when looking into the definition of 'practice', we can conclude that there is more than one possibility to understand the sentence penned in the treatise.

The word 'practice' derives from the Old French form 'pratiser, practiser', in Medieval Latin 'practicare' (Online Etymology Dictionary). The Oxford English Dictionary [hereafter OED] provides an extensive overview on the multiple definitions the word 'practice', the first definition provided by the dictionary is the following: 'The carrying out or exercise of a profession, esp. that of medicine or law. Also, as a count noun: the business or premises of a doctor or lawyer.'. Then this sentence can be understood with two different meanings, a) William Parnell has been a doctor for 60 years using this medicine or b) the establishment where he worked as a doctor had been using this recipe for 60 years.

If the meaning of practice was referring to Parnell's profession, it is improbable that the authorship would be of William Parnell as Cummins assets 'in England and Wales, the average age at death of noble adults increased from 48 for those born 800–1400, to 54 for 1400–1650, and then 56 for 1650–1800.' (2017, 407). Meaning this that if Parnell were the author of this treatise, he would be around 80 years of age and then the date of composition would be near the date given by the Wellcome Library (1685). This would be unlikely considering the advanced age of Dr Parnell. Nevertheless, when considering the second definition of practice, 'business or premises of a doctor', we can confirm that the style of script does enclose characteristics of early 17th century. Even though the date of the composition given by the Wellcome Library is around 1685, the text points towards the use of the Secretary script with sporadic tinges of the Italic hand. In addition, the author uses a more Italic script when writing in Latin, differentiating the vernacular (Secretary) from the Latin (Italic), see Figures 1 and 2. As mentioned above, Petti, along other authors, develops there were only mixed scripts for literary hands towards the end of the late 17th century, which asserts that the authorship of MS. 3771 might be of Dr. Parnell as the script was similar to the script used in the early 17th century where the scribes differentiated the vernacular from Latin. Nevertheless, even though it is a 'mixed hand', it has a higher preference for the Secretary. In light of this, there are then grounds to state that the author of the treatise might be Dr. William Parnell, as the influence of the Italic hand is negligible.

Regarding the E.W. mentioned in the Introduction, these letters are written in the last page of the volume by Hand A. The Wellcome Library considers them to be the mysterious writer of MS. 3771, as these letters can be seen as the acronyms of a name which of course are unknown. However due to the forementioned we can contemplate the possibility that the 'W' in 'E.W'. could be <William> and that the 'E' could be the first name of William Parnell. The answer to this question is unknown but it is a matter that will continue to be studied throughout my research.

### 3.2.   Hand 1, Hand 2, and Hand 3

Apart from Hand A, Hand 1 is used to render the last folio, written with a mixed hand with a preference for the italic script, having barely or no influence of the Secretary script (Figure 3). It was reproduced in haste and much attention is not paid to minims and the way the letters are displayed, with the form of the letter <n>. That explains why some letters can be confused with others, such as the letter <e> or <s> which are written as a vertical line like <i>. Further, this scribe does not use diacritics in combination with the letter <i>, making the reading of the minims intricate which is one of the characteristics of the Humanistic script (Derolez 2006, 178).

Majuscules are written in an Italic script, such as B, E, L, K, R and T. The minuscule <a> is confused with the vowel <u>. Apart from this, it shows the rounded <c>, the tall wide-looped <d> and the humanistic <e>. Uncrossed <f> can also be mistaken for a long <s>. Nevertheless, there is only one instance of the long <s>, while the italic straight <s> predominates in the text. This fragment does not have any trace of the secretary <h>, only the vertical italic <h>. The scribe writes the letter <k> as an <h>, the <r> of the Carolingian form, and the letter <t> is written in an italic style with a single stroke which curves into the cross also appearing omitted. The letter <g> as <q> has a circular head unclosed just as the letter <y>.

Additionally, three interviews with two undergraduates and one lecturer were conducted. To ensure anonymity, they will be concealed through pseudonyms. At the time of conducting the interviews, both female undergraduates, Catalan/Spanish bilinguals, studied at UdL: Ona, a 20-year-old, is an Engineering student; Paloma, a 19-year-old, is a Preschool Education student. Martina, the faculty member, is a middle-aged female who works as a part-time adjunct professor in the Department of Private Law at UdL.
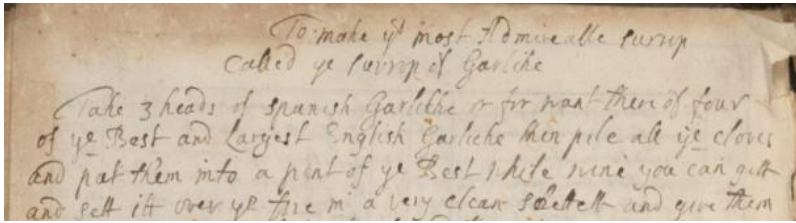
Fig. 3. Hand 1 (flyleaf)

Hand 2 is a mixed hand that has the Humanistic characteristic of writing uniformly and including the 'ties between the letters', which are not visible in some words as the scribe must have loosened the pressure of the pen (Denholm-Young 1954, 73). Regarding the letters employed by the scribe, it is clear that it adopts more letters from the secretary script than from the Italic script (Figure 4). The aesthetic of the fragment is characteristic of the Italic script, nevertheless the letters are similar to the Secretary script.
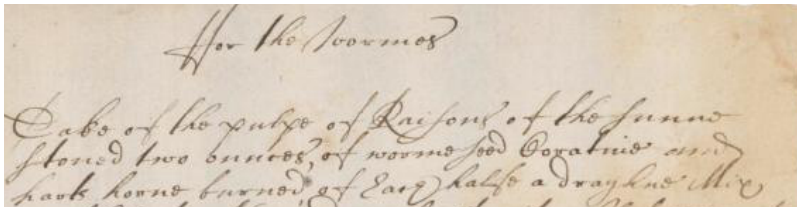

Fig. 4. Hand 2 (unbound sheet)

The majuscules, in turn, are written in both Secretary and Italic forms. The letters C and T are nearly indistinguishable from the secretary form. The T is a semicircle that goes beyond the line and has a horizontal and vertical stroke across its body. In the case of the C, the beginning of the semicircle is enclosed by the end, and it only has a horizontal line. Likewise, the letters R and S are also rendered in their Secretary forms, both decorated with circular strokes or horizontal lines. However, the letters E, M, N, and L are written in the Italic hand, lacking the ornamental loops.

In the case of minuscules, this text presents some Secretary letterforms, such as the single compartment <a>, the right-angled <c>, the employment of the reversed secretary <e>, lacking the

presence of any humanistic <e>, along with the secretary <k> with the circular strokes in the middle of the letter, the secretary <x>, formed with a single stroke creating a circle in the line of the text and the letter <w> rendered as an <n+v> (Petti 1977, 14).

The Italic characters are the tall wide-looped <d>, the long looped or unlooped <s>, also including the humanistic straight <s>, and the looped <t> appearing crossed and uncrossed (Petti 1977, 20). This fragment also presents the letter <h> as a mixture of both scripts, the italic <h>, with no tail below the linear position, and the secretary <h>, with a tail and no body.

Hand 3 is similar to Hand A, however, it is a more angular script even though it is essentially cursive (Figure 5). It shows all its majuscules, A, B and M written in Italic. As for the minuscules, the scribe uses a few Secretary characteristics such as the looped long <s> and the double looped <b>. The italic influence is found in the round <c>, the humanistic <e>, the tailless <h>, the linear <p> without a loop at its head, the round <s> –although the long <s> appears–, the <r> of the Carolingian form and the single stroke looped and crossed <t>. These lines also contain the Greek <e>.
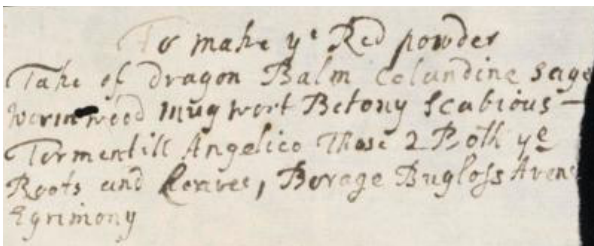


Fig. 5. Hand 3 (unbound sheet)

## 4.   Abbreviations

Scribes benefited from abbreviations in order to save time and gain space. The development of abbreviations in Latin acquired "elaborate and complex proportions, requiring of the reader considerable skill in cryptography and linguistics" (Petti 1977, 22). Because of its complexity at the time, the inventory was somewhat reduced over time. Vernacular languages adopted the Latin system

of abbreviations, rules and signs. By the Renaissance, the English language downsized the repertoire of abbreviations to a fair proportion, being less common in formal documents (Petti 1977, 22). Petti portrays the traditional classification of abbreviations into "contraction, curtailment (or suspension), brevigraphs (special signs) and superior (superscript) letters" (1977, 22).

This section shows the most frequent abbreviations employed by the scribes. The section will mainly focus on Hand A as it is the hand of the treatise. It is crucial to bear in mind that the scribe often includes ornamental strokes that might be confused with abbreviations. Nevertheless, Parnell only shows this in the word <oximell> having a vertical curved line between the two <ll> placed for aesthetic purposes (Figure 6).
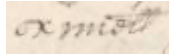


Fig. 6: <oximell> (page 116)

In addition, the scribe uses both the Tironian symbol and the ampersand (see Figures 7, 8 and 9). The only instance in which Parnell uses the ampersand is in the heading of the first leaf of the volume. From then onwards, there are just presentations of two variants of the Tironian note.
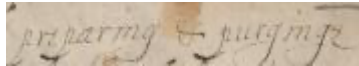


Fig. 7: <preparing & purging> (page 1)
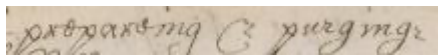


Fig. 8: <preparing & purging> (page 2)



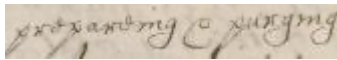Fig. 9: <preparing & purging> (page 2)

The Tironian note also appears as the Latin word <et> (Figure 10), but is linked with the right-angle <c> finishing with a horn, representing <et cetera> (Hector 1966, 35).

Fig. 10: <et cetera> (page 4)

Contraction is taken to indicate the omission of a letter or clusters from the middle of the word (Roberts 2005, 10). According to Petti, this type of abbreviation was the "commonest method" and "the number of words omitted depended on the frequency of the word and how obvious it was in context" (1977, 22). Even though, the scribe has no variety of contractions, there is one form which is persistent throughout the text. Parnell uses a curved vertical line above the middle of the word to indicate the omission of the letter <i> in words containing the -ion suffix (see Figure 12 and 13). This graph can also appear with smaller horizontal lines crossing the middle of the vertical line. In some instances, the scribe also omits the letter <t>, as in <decoction> in Figure 11.
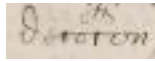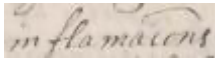


Fig. 11: <decoction> (page 15)
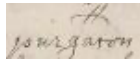


Fig. 12: <inflamacions> (page 147)



Fig. 13: <purgacion> (page 63)

Curtailment or suspension refers to the omission of a letter or cluster at the end of a word (Roberts 2005, 10). Parnell mostly uses the enlargement of the last minim of the word to indicate the omission of the letter <m>, it can also appear as a vertical stroke on the top of the last syllable of the word. This type of curtailment usually appears in Latin words (see Figures 14-17):
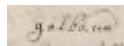


Fig. 14: <galbanum> (page 111)
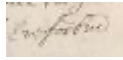
Fig. 15: <Eveforbium> (page 106)
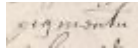


Fig. 16: <pigmentum> (page 111)
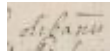


Fig. 17: <olibanum> (page 72)

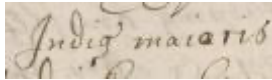Figure 18 shows the letter <g> with a horn from its head, indicating the omission of the letter <o>.



Fig. 18: <Indigo maioris> (page 4)

However, with the word Iterum (Figure 19), standing for 'again' or 'a second time', the long tail of the letter <m> indicates the omission of the cluster <eru> (Martin 1910, 71).
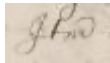


Fig. 19: <Iterum> (page 11)

When indicating measurement, the obolus, standing for 'one sixth' (Figures 20 and 21), is shown as <ob> or <obo> with a vertical line across <b> indicating the omission of the final cluster <lus> (Cappelli 1990, 246).



Fig. 20: <obolus> (page 5)
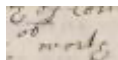


Fig. 21: <obolus> (page 137)

A brevigraph is a unique sign indicating the omission of a syllable or two letters (Petti 1977, 23). In the treatise, brevighraps are mostly used with Latin words. In Figure 22, the symbol coming from the vertical line of the letter <q> appears like an anagolous number 3. It indicates the omission of the cluster <us>, just as the small <g> at the end of the following word <generibus>.
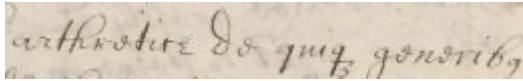
Fig. 22: <arthretice de quiqus generibus> (page 4)

The following brevigraph is laid-out with a semicircle above the letter <i>; nevertheless, the Latin word which this brevigraph stands for is <Christus> (Figure 23).
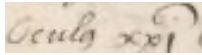


Fig. 23: <oculus christus> (page 89)

In addition, the semicircle is place in one English word, but in this case, it represents the word <grains> (Figure 24).
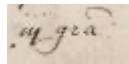


Fig. 24: <grains> (page 138)

The crossed <p> indicates the contraction of the clusters <re>, <er>, <ar> or <or> depending on the word. It is usually rendered with the secretary <p>, forming a single stroke with a circular head and the tail crossing itself, creating another circle in the infralinear section (Figure 25, 26 and 28). Notwithstanding, it can also appear with the straight italic <p>, having a vertical line crossing its tail (see Figure 27).
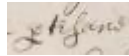


Fig. 25: <pertisane> (page 38)
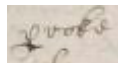


Fig. 26: <provoke> (page 15)
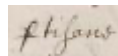


Fig. 27: <pertisane> (page 38)



Fig. 28: <part> (page 117)

As this treatise is a compilation of medical recipes, the scribe was bound to display measurements which essentially appear in their abbreviated form. The abbreviation for a pound or libra is lb, which is still in current use in present-day English (Capelli 1990, 410). The scribe represents it with the letters l and b written with the same stroke and ending with a circular line crossing both letters which can be seen in Figure 29.

Fig. 29: <lb> (page 7)

In Figure 30, the scribe uses the long <s> and an eight as the abbreviation for 'in summa/somma' signifying 'in addition' (Cappelli 1990, 189).

Fig. 30: <in summa> (page 10)

To represent uncia 'a twelfth part', the scribe renders in Figure 31 a lengthy 3 maintaining its size through the infralinear section with angular lines and ending with a curved tail (Cappelli 1990, 410).
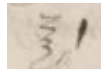
Fig. 31: <uncia i> (page 44)

Parnell draws an abbreviated measurement (see Figure 32) which is identical to number 3 (Cappelli 1990, 407), 'drachma' which stands for "one sixteenth of an ounce" (Sinclair 2023).
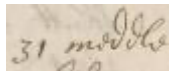
Fig. 32: <drachma i meddle> (page 72)

For a 'handful', the penman uses the letter <m> (Figure 33), the abbreviation for 'manipulus' or 'manipuli' (Cappelli 1990, 218).

Fig. 33: <manipuli i > (page 12)

In the case of 'half' the penman employed the abbreviation <d> for 'dimidium' (Cappelli 1990, 86), see Figure 34:

Fig. 34: <dimidium i> (page 13)

Superior (or superscript) letters are a form of contraction where the word has a raised letter indicating the omission of the preceding letter or cluster (Petti 1977, 24). There are also measurements such as <quarter> (Figure 36), Latin words <que> and English nouns <fundament> and <ointment> (Figure 37).



Fig. 35: <your> (page 9)



Fig. 36: <quarts> (page 116)
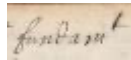


Fig. 37: <fundament> (page 121)

In the case of Hand 1, the scribe uses the superscript letters, yt <that>, yn <then>, and Bettr <better>. Hand 2 does not present any abbreviation except for the contraction <pinte> 'pint'. The scribe previously writes the word unabbreviated and indicates with a crossed t, omitting the letters <in>. Hand 3, in turn, only presents the superscript letter ys <this>.

## 5.  Errors and mistakes

The errors made by the scribes essentially derived from lousy usage of sight, lethargy, memory loss, and unconsciousness. Petti groups the errors of the penmen into four sections: omission, additions, transposition, and alteration (1977, 30). This section is divided into mistakes and errors. An error is generally defined as 'deviation from truth, accuracy, correctness' (Sinclair 2023). Mistake is taken as an error derived from 'carelessness, inattention, misunderstanding' (Sinclair 2023).

The commonest mistakes are omissions, both of a letter and cluster, as in the following cases (Petti 1977, 29), see the following Figures:
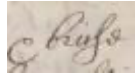


Fig. 38: <bruise> (page 25)
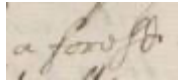


Fig. 39: <a foresaid> (page 133)
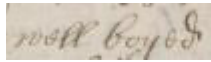


Fig. 40: <boyled> (page 7)

The scribe renders words with wrong spelling as a result of carelessness:
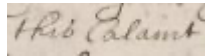


Fig. 41: <Calaint> Calamint (page 90)
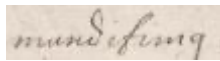


Fig. 42: <mundifimg> mundifing (page 9)

Other mistakes are the result of transposition, in which letters, words, or even phrases are displayed in a reversed order. "In the case of reserved pairs of letters, the process is known as metathesis" (Petti 1977, 30). However, this treatise does not present any instance of metathesis (Figures 43 and 44).
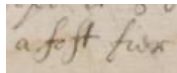


Fig. 43: <fost> soft (page 7)
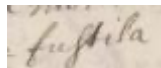


Fig. 44: <fustila> fistula (page 105)

The treatise also entails some instances of 'additions', which are the automatic reiteration of syllables or words (Figure 45). The motivation for this error is, as stated, the tricks of sight, memory, or an 'error of dittography' (Petti 1977, 30). In this volume, there is only one instance that appears at the end of a line and at the beginning of the following line.
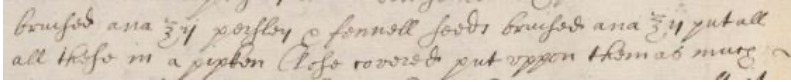


Fig. 45: <all> (page 82)

It was frequent at the time that scribes committed themselves to the corrections made during the act of writing (Petti 1977, 29). MS. 3771 is not an exception. The amendments of these shortcomings involve "deletion, alteration, and insertion". There were several methods of deletion, but cancelation and dissolution are the recurrent devices in the witness.

Cancelation consists in the omission of the unnecessary material with the use of "one or more straight lines"; it also appears as spirals or with a "criss-cross pattern" (Petti 1977, 29). Petti explains this is the 'commonest method of deletion in renaissance manuscripts' and it is also the case of MS. 3771 (1977, 29), which can be observed in the following figures:
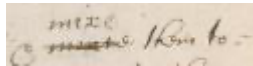


Fig. 46: <& mixe> (page 10)
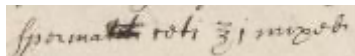


Fig. 47: <sperma ceti> (page 165)
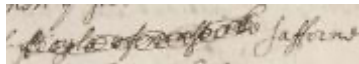


Fig. 48: <safforne> (page 185)

There is only one instance of dissolution, which consists in 'sponging the ink of the deleted passage until it completely dissolved' (Petti 1977, 29). Nevertheless, the letter the scribe tries

to erase is still clearly visible, due to the type of ink used (Figure 49).
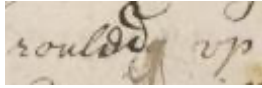


Fig. 49: <g> (page 71)

Alteration: the erroneous letters of a word are corrected by superscribing the rectified letters over them (Petti 1977, 29), see Figures 50 and 51.



Fig. 50: <or> (page 53)
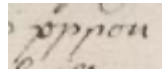


Fig. 51: <vppon> (page 58)

Insertion, in turn, consist in the insertion of the corrected segment or word in the supralinear section indicating its placement with a caret which can be seen in Figures 52 and 53 (Petti 1977, 29).
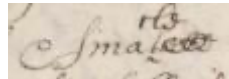


Fig. 52: <& smacle> (page 92)
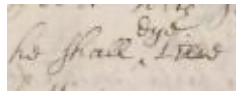


Fig. 53: <he shall dye> (page 92)

# 6. Concluding notes

Through the aid of the palaeographical analysis of MS. 3771, it can be determined that the date of composition might not be of the last quarter of the 17th century (1685) but of the first half of the 17th

century. This brief examination of MS. 3771 considers that Dr William Parnell's might be the author of this volume since the script presents characteristics belonging to the early 17th century and additionally the acronym E.W. could be referring to 'William'. As examined in the analysis, Hand A is a mixed hand (a combination of the Secretary script and the Italic script); nevertheless, depending on the degree of Italic, it can lead us to locate MS. 3771 in its approximate date of composition which in this case is early 17th century. Hand A displays visually a humanistic handwriting, but the content includes mostly Secretary letterforms with sporadic tinges of the Italic. Additionally, the scribe differentiates between the passages in Latin and English using an Italic script in Latin excerpts and Secretary script with the vernacular. This is a characteristic belonging to the 16th century where scribes altered their script depending on the language. This asserts that MS. 3771 might be written by Dr. Parnell as the script has characteristics of the early 17th century where mixed hands mainly contained Secretary letterforms.

This paper also shows that the remaining hands are all 'mixed hands'. Nevertheless, some hands present a lesser influence of the Italic script than others, these being Hand A and Hand 2. In contrast, Hand 1 and Hand 3 have a combination of both scripts. Concerning abbreviations, Hand A presents contractions, curtailments, brevigraphs, and superscript letters. Although, Hand 1, Hand 2 and Hand 3 do not present an extensive use of abbreviations due to their brevity; Hand 1 presents superscript letters, Hand 2 entails the contraction of <pinte>, and Hand 3 presents the superscript letter <ys>. Lastly, the errors and mistakes shown in the study establish how Parnell emends its errors by using the standard methods, such as deletion, alteration, and insertion.

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# OTHER POSSIBLE WARS: GENRE, METAFICTION AND THE ETHICS OF ART IN MICHAEL CHABON'S *THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF KAVALIER AND CLAY*

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In the last few decades, American fiction has aimed to explore the ethical possibilities of language and art. In this new tradition, Michael Chabon combines plots and motifs from American popular culture with postmodern narrative techniques with a double purpose: exploring the meanings of contemporary Jewish identity, and interrogating the legitimacy of American myths and narratives. Chabon's acclaimed novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000) is an example of Jewish-American fiction that explores the question of Jewish identity in post-war America through the motifs of exile, popular culture, and superhero narratives. In doing so, however, it also considers the ethical problems of surviving the Shoah and thriving surrounded by multiple fictions.

This paper examines Chabon's use of metafictional strategies as well as the meanings of creativity within the ontological frame of the main characters, arguing that Chabon stands at an intersection between the self-reflexive practice of postmodernist fiction and the ethical possibilities of narrative and art. Despite the critiques against Chabon's ethically deviant approach to Holocaust history, *Kavalier and Clay* advocates fiction as a powerful tool that

reveals the possibilities and responsibilities of writing the self in a collective (hi)story.

**Keywords:** Michael Chabon; Jewish American fiction; Metafiction; Trauma; Ethics

# 1.  Introduction: Chabon's Approach to Contemporary Jewish American Writing

## 1.1. New Sincerity and Literary Ethics

Michael Chabon's novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000, hereafter *Kavalier and Clay*) explores the ethical costs of escaping the Holocaust and surviving the violence of postwar America through a multi-perspective story of exile and displacement. The novel begins when Josef "Joe" Kavalier, a young Jewish man and amateur escape artist, flees his native Prague during the Nazi occupation to live in Brooklyn with his American-born cousin Samuel "Sammy" Clay. Hoping to earn enough money to help his family out of the Nazi occupation, Joe accepts his cousin's proposal to join the comic book business as a draftsman. Centered on the two cousins' creation of The Escapist, a Superman-like superhero inspired by Harry Houdini, the novel reflects on how their lives are simultaneously affected by the political violence that they experience and by the stories that they imagine.

Chabon's imaginative, openly experimental approach to the Jewish past has often been criticized as too sentimental or nostalgic (see e.g. Rovner 2011; Aarons and Berger 2017, 126-30). Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2001 and a New York Times Bestseller for over a year (see e.g. Maslin 2000), *Kavalier and Clay* has also been accused of trivializing the experience of the European Jews through the motif of escapism through superhero fantasies and ancient Hebrew mysticism. As John Podhoretz (2001) argues, many of the Jews living in Europe under the Nazi regime were not invested in the magical powers attributed to the Golem of Prague. Neither would they feel any relief from the promise of escapism that hardly

applies to the protagonists. Similarly, Alan Berger suggests that "there are two unhappy results of escapism. The first is that one cannot escape the Holocaust any more than one can escape the impact of Rome's destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Second, escapism leads to forgetting. And forgetting is the ultimate form of Holocaust denial" (2010, 88).

Against the critiques of Chabon's disregard for the memory and dignity of the European Jews –both victims and survivors–, others have looked at the question of escapism as a creative act towards the future. Among this group, Lee Behlman has vindicated the novel's self-conscious defense of the escapist power of fiction, which can activate human creativity and turn it into a regenerative capacity against individual and collective trauma (2004, 68). This paper supports this position, vindicating the novel's creative mobilization of the narrative of exile, seeing in this experience a juncture between the Jewish and the American histories and futures.

That said, a caveat is necessary, since I agree on Chabon's recurrent indulgence in a nostalgic, idealized sketch of European Jews, and on his resignation to engage with a collective sense of loss. At the same time, I suggest that this ethical slippage is not Chabon's failure to write an epic that synthesizes the Jewish past, present, and future, as much as a statement on the impossibility to do so from his evidently privileged place as an American, a non-witness, and a highly marketable author. The idea of Chabon's reckoning with his one's own ethical limitations, while trying to offer a creative alternative for collective healing informs a late postmodern approach to art and literature as always already compromised by a dominant ethos and by the socioeconomic politics of the book market (see e.g. Haselstein et al. 2010, 23).

In this respect, Adam Kelly (2016) identifies Chabon's work within a tradition commonly known as "New Sincerity writing," along with that of others like David Foster Wallace, Dave Eggers, Jennifer Egan, or George Saunders. The notion of New Sincerity suggests a more complex, post-postmodern conception of the long-disputed notion of truth. As Kelly explains, the writers included in this group refuse the preoccupation with aesthetic perfection and artistic autonomy of their modernism and postmodernism

predecessors (Kelly 2016, 200). Yet this reaction implied a form of continuation of the movements above mentioned, especially the latter: "[Postmodern] theory has taught contemporary writers […] that sincerity, expressed through language, can never be pure, and must instead be conceived in inextricable conjunction with ostensibly opposing terms, including irony and manipulation" (Kelly 2016, 201).

In this sense, New Sincerity authors have represented everyday reality as inevitably intertwined with fictional discourses, such as political propaganda and advertising. This post-postmodern attitude, based on the assumption that the writer's intentions can always be manipulated (Kelly 2016, 204), informs many contemporary writers' approach to traumatic (hi)stories. Among these, Chabon has explicitly outlined and navigated the ethical problems implied in the representation of the Holocaust, particularly concerning its aftermath and ongoing legacy in the cultural memory of American Jewry. Published for the most part at the turn of the century, Chabon's work is engaged in a cultural revision that aims to move beyond the postmodernist work of deconstruction, towards a process of reconciliation and dialectical revision of the past. Through a series of metafictional strategies that Kelly calls "ethical experiments," the author explores multiple artistic responses to the ethical demand of filling the void left by the European ancestors murdered by the Nazis, while attempting to conciliate the memory of the victims with a present-day sense of Jewish American identity (2016, 203).

## 1.2. Locating a New Jewish American Literature

Chabon's post-postmodern project of restoring Jewish memory and tradition within the frame of American identity is common to the third generation of Jewish-American writers, which David Sax (2009) has dubbed "the New Yiddishists." Like Chabon, other writers such as Nicole Krauss, Jonathan Safran Foer, Nathan Englander, or Dara Horn, U.S.-born and educated in the last decades of the past century, are connected by their interest in articulating their hyphenated identities, in a move of "reverse assimilation" from

the mainstream North American culture. Aware of the difficulties of bridging the gap with the tradition of their European-born ancestors, they have attempted to reconstruct the past by relying on postmodern and experimental techniques (see e.g. Sax 2009; O'Brien and Witcombe 2018).

In order to excavate and reconstruct the Jewish past from an American perspective, Chabon first locates the site where both cultural traditions intersect in the practice of creativity and fantasy, particularly in writing. On the one hand, writing, particularly narrative, represents the basis of the Jewish cultural tradition. As historian Simon Schama has argued, the devotion of the Jewish people to writing responds to the creation of a collective narrative that helps them survive throughout a long history of genocide and exile (Guimón 2015). Further, Ruth R. Wisse points out that the Jewish intellectual and storytelling tradition is intimately connected with the community's political engagement: "A people that intends to participate meaningfully in the world would first have to know itself and be able to represent itself through a creative cultural continuum" (2000, 4). Such a vast written legacy has provided Jews with a source of inspiration for the questioning and renegotiation of their communal identity.

On the other hand, Chabon has reflected on his own identity as a third-generation Jewish American through a particular approach to fiction writing. For him, there exists a close relationship between his feeling of cultural dislocation and his decision to adopt the conventions of genre fiction. As he has explained explains, his use of generic forms, ranging from fantasy, adventure, or detective narratives, responds to a great extent to his own experience as a modern Jew, constantly "longing for a home that feels irretrievable," a remote birthplace that he sets in "lands that can be found only in imagination" (2008, 175).

Despite the widespread disagreement regarding this market-based differentiation (see e.g. Edmonson 2014), the label "genre fiction," as opposed to scholarly or high-brow fiction, is based on a recurrence of specific plotlines and elements meant to satisfy the low-brow reader's demands for mystery and emotion. Importantly for my thesis on Chabon's engagement in the politics and aesthetics

of Jewish American literature, I argue that genre fiction, with its formulae based on recalling old myths while addressing new masses, provides a meeting point for the Jewish and American traditions.

As Alfred Kazin observed already in the 1960s, the Jewish community has had a rather noticeable presence in American popular culture since the beginning of the 20th century (1966, 405). According to Kazin, their alliance to the national entertainment scene, from the vaudeville and the music hall theatre to the stand-up comedy, including the comic book industry, accounts for their willingness to voice their own story in a country in which they were still another minority in America (1966, 405). Likewise, Chabon finds in this minority consciousness of popular art a meeting point between Jewish and American cultures through the ideal of democracy: "Maybe that strangeness is a universal condition among Americans, if not in fact a prerequisite for citizenship" (2008, 159).

Throughout the analysis that follows, I examine how *Kavalier and Clay* reflects on art, fiction, and fantasy as practices allowing for different forms of escaping and transforming reality. In the first section, I look at Chabon's particular use of metafictional devices throughout the novel, to represent Joe and Sammy's immersive acts of reading, drawing, writing and experiencing reality throughout their own stories. I argue that the novel's representation of the bi-directional passage from reality to fiction and vice-versa maintains the ambivalence regarding the protagonists' agency as both avid consumers and prolific creators of a new American myth. In the second section, I interrogate the ethics implied in the protagonists' acts of "escapism" through fiction, particularly those informed by discourses of American supremacy and war-like heroism. Finally, I look at how the novel advocates for fiction as a space for personal and collective transformation, allowing the protagonists to question essentialist notions of identity and home.

## 2. Chabon's Metafictional Apparatus

### 2.1. Uses of Metafiction in *Kavalier and Clay*

The quintessential device of postmodern literature, Metafiction often works to evidence the fictionality of a story by means of what Patricia Waugh has called "obvious framing devices" (1984, 30), strategies that highlight the presence of those frames that explicitly delimit the ontological realms of the real and the fictional. Waugh has coined the notion "frame-breaks," to refer to explicit references to the novel's fictional constructions that reveal an unbridgeable gap between reality and fiction and "forc[e] to recall that our 'real' world can never be the 'real' world of the novel" (1984, 33). As Waugh argues, in suggesting the dissolution of the classic boundaries between reality and fiction, the author warns readers that humans' experience of reality also responds to preexisting narrative constructions based on dominant sociocultural notions (1984, 31). Under this premise, postmodern writers have traditionally used metafiction to interrogate the prevalence of dominant narratives and discourse in the practices and conventions that inform our everyday lives.

As Kelly argues, New Sincerity writers adopt postmodern techniques in order to emphasize the impossibility to separate reality from fiction in contemporary post-capitalist culture, often adopting ambivalent attitudes regarding the ethical agency of readers and authors. In this sense, Chabon's reworking of genre fiction interrogates the divisive, supremacist discourses so often mobilized by American popular culture, but it also explores the possibilities for alternative, more ethical uses of narratives. Thus, in *Kavalier and Clay*, he employs metafictional strategies in order to explore the presence of myths and fiction in 20th-century American life, but also the possibilities for agency and ethical action, that fiction and art enable. Since the protagonists of *Kavalier and Clay* are readers and authors, frame-breaks in the novel operate on two levels: the diegetic and the intradiegetic.

On the one hand, at a diegetic level, the novel engages the reader in the playful logic of what Linda Hutcheon has called

"historiographic metafiction," based on the intertwining of two discourses, a realistic historical one that asserts the novel's historical referentiality by mentioning real characters and events; and a (meta)fictional one that exposes such history as yet another story. Hutcheon introduced and theorized this notion to illustrate a new postmodernist tradition of historical novels published between the 1960s and the 1980s and displaying "a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs [that]" thus "[making] the grounds for [a] rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (1988, 5). In this vein, *Kavalier and Clay* interrogates the alleged factuality of the historical novel by introducing the figure of an editor whose interventions are occasionally registered in the form of footnotes accounting for fictional events and characters or citing invented sources.

In addition, other textual documents are included, directly transcribed, and presented to the reader as unmediated accounts of the reality of the protagonists' lives: this is the case of the last letter, full of black blotches, that Joe receives from his mother and he never opens (Chabon 2000, 322-23), or the record of Sammy's declaration at court, accused of promoting homosexuality in his comics (614-15). The fact that these elements stand in between the openly fictional world of the characters and the assumed reality outside the narrative is part of the novel's metafictional game. The contrast between the mock editor's authoritative tone and the fictionality of his narration leads readers to call into question the historical validity of those accounts that they have so far identified as real, and in turn, open up to a more empathetic approach to the past that recognizes the intimate lives of fictional characters.

On the other hand, at an intradiegetic level, the limits between the world where the protagonists live and the one that they imagine are also blurred. This is what happens when the two protagonists first envision and, presumably, create their comic book hero, the Escapist. Opening without any initial indication of its subordination to the main action, the embedded story closes with a reference to its authors, vaguely but recognizably outlined, walking on the streets of the fiction town where their characters live:

> The sound of their raised voices carries up through the complicated antique ductwork of the grand old theater, rising and echoing through the pipes until it emerges through a grate in the sidewalk, where it can be heard clearly by a couple of young men who are walking past, their collars raised against the cold October night, dreaming their elaborate dream, wishing their wish, teasing their golem into life. (Chabon 2000, 134)

Chabon's intradiegetic frame-breaks also introduce actions taking place in the characters' world as if they belonged to a fictional comic-book realm, such as the frustrated attack of pro-Nazi journalist Carl Ebling (Chabon, 328-32). Following the conventions of the popular genre, Ebling is presented as a murderous villain called "the Saboteur," whom the reader soon identifies with the fictional alter ego of the character. At a certain point, the narration reveals itself as Ebling's own counter-fantasy of heroism, which he plans to put into practice in real life: "When he arrived at work, it was with the intention of showing Joe Kavalier that while Carl Henry Ebling may be a shiftless bumbler and pamphleteer, the Saboteur is not one to be trifled with" (Chabon, 331).

Both these episodes give proof of the instability of the notion of historical truth when it comes filtered through the author's active imagination. Through the introduction of major frame-breaks at both levels of the diegesis, the novel subscribes to a basic postmodernist concern, which Susana Onega has identified as "the advisability of seeing the everyday reality as a construct similar to that of fiction, and as such, similarly 'written' and 'writable'" (1989, 75). On this basis, the novel explores the possibilities of fiction to question and potentially transform one's relation with the narratives that inform our everyday reality. Not only does Chabon destabilize the readers' expectation of historical veracity and objectivity in his portrait of 1930s America, but he also presents us with two protagonists who, switching the roles of readers and authors, mobilize different forms of narrative in order to make sense of and cope with trauma and ordinary violence.

## 2.2. Fiction as a Response to Reality

The importance of fiction as a mediator in the two protagonists' approach to reality is emphasized in their characterization. In both cases, the reality conveyed through their focalization is filtered by a distinct cultural background, captured in a number of myths, and (hi)stories. Joe's romantic, mythical imagination is shaped by the legend of the Golem of Prague and the famous feats of Harry Houdini. In the same way, Sammy's vast recollection of American pulp mythologies, like the extraordinary circus stories provided by his erratic father, shape his magnifying and self-parodic genius from an early age. Importantly, fiction and fantasy have a therapeutic function for both heroes, helping Joe cope with the fear and uncertainty of a life in exile, and showing Sammy a safe space where he can thrive despite the isolation that he experiences as a working-class, physically non-normative male.

Most notably, the influence of fantasy is reflected in the protagonists' respective responses to reality as creators. On the one hand, Joe embraces the illusion that his authorial battles against the Nazis can have a real effect in reality:

> His ears still ringing with artillery shells, screaming rockets […] He had been drawing, painting, smoking cigarettes, and nothing else for much of the past seven days […] It was six o'clock on a Monday morning in October 1940. He had just won the Second World War, and he was feeling pretty good about it. (Chabon 2000, 165)

Joe's unconscious, life-or-death involvement in his own fantasy mirrors Sammy's intense interaction with his own late work, which translates into a personal reaction against the disillusionment and frustration of adult life:

> He was a furious, even romantic, typist, prone to crescendos, diminuendos, dense and barbed arpeggios […] He had reduced two typewriters to molten piles of slag iron and springs since his return to comics, and when he went to bed at night his mind remained robotically engaged in its labor while he slept, so that his dreams were often laid out in panels. (Chabon 2000, 486)

Both these episodes show the act of creativity, in particular the "writing" of fantasy, as a necessary response to a particular anxiety

related to the condition of dislocation. This idea is symbolized by the figure of Houdini who, as a Jewish artist living in the United States, embodies the romantic sensibility that the cousins share. Houdini is Joe's main referent during his personal and artistic development, particularly when he must cope with the reality of exile and estrangement. Likewise, Sammy relates to Houdini in his ambitious nature as a young man and the consciousness of his own difference: "his dreams had always been Houdiniesque: they were the dreams of a pupa struggling in its blind cocoon, mad for a taste of light and air. Houdini was a hero to little men, city boys, and Jews; Samuel Louis Klayman was all three" (Chabon 2000, 3). Significantly, Houdini stands behind the protagonists' personal and creative partnership, as explained at the novel's opening:

> IN LATER YEARS, holding forth to an interviewer or to an audience of aging fans at a comic book convention, Sam Clay liked to declare, apropos of his and Joe Kavalier's greatest creation [the Escapist], that back when he was a boy, sealed and hog-tied inside the airtight vessel known as Brooklyn, New York, he had been haunted by dreams of Harry Houdini. (Chabon 2000, 3)

In pointing to the connection between displacement and creative urgency, the novel places emphasis on the individual's capacity to reimagine reality through narrative (Robbins 2009, 95).

# 3. The Ethics of Living through Fiction

## 3.1. Escapism and the Traps of Superhero Narratives

Well through the first half of the novel, the ethical problems of escapist fiction are outlined through Joe's alternating feelings of confidence and satisfaction towards his work and immediate success, in contrast to his impotence towards the escalating violence of the Nazi regime, and his guilt for having left his family behind: "The surge of triumph he felt when he finished a story was always fleeting, and seemed to grow briefer with every job. […] The Escapist was an impossible champion, ludicrous and above all *imaginary*, fighting a war that could never be won" (Chabon 2000, 168, emphasis in the original). Through this sentence, the novel

points out the futility of any attempt to apply the parameters of fiction to effect any change in real life. As a result, Joe's sense of creative agency as he fights "the funny book war" turns out to be a form of self-conscious deception.

Yet the moment that most clearly stages the ethical dangers of embracing the ethos of popular fiction is when, having joined the army after learning about his younger brother's death, he is sent to an Antarctic base where, still in search of revenge, Joe kills a German civilian in cold blood. Right after realizing that the man is dead, he immediately experiences a sense of loss that surpasses that of the deaths of his loved ones:

> Nothing that had ever happened to him, not […] the death of his father, or internment of his mother and grandfather, not even the drowning of his beloved brother, had ever broken his heart quite as terribly as the realization […] that he was hauling a corpse behind him. (Chabon 2000, 465)

Aiming to escape reality and his responsibility in it, Joe chooses to embody the narrative of the American hero, along with the sociopolitical apparatus that partly informs it. In so doing, he envisions his life as a war hero in search for revenge against a dehumanized German enemy.

The aftermath of the killing, in which Joe experiences the loss of the "enemy" as his own, expresses the former's realization of the traps of popular "escapist" fiction, insofar as it is mobilized towards a supremacist and war-oriented political agenda. The novel's cruel irony towards the American hero narrative is emphasized when, after Joe is rescued by the Allies, he is hailed as a hero for "his claim to have killed the *lone enemy* occupant of a German Antarctic base" (Chabon 2000, 467, emphasis added). In this sense, despite his fantasies of fighting the Nazi evil as an author, Joe ultimately fails to rescue his family, and his testosterone-infused project to embody the American (war) hero ideal only leads him to self-isolation and arbitrary violence. Similarly, no matter how long Sammy tries to escape society's stigma and repression as Jewish and homosexual, as both a reader and a successful author of popular fiction, he is trapped in a cycle of shame, and self-denial.

In sum, the novel interrogates the totalizing narratives often conveyed by popular fiction by showing the self-deception and the tragic consequences implied in performing and ultimately living up to the standards of a superhero in the real world. Chabon underlines how the violence and injustice experienced by the protagonists are also perpetuated by political propaganda, such as the Nazi propaganda that Ebling collects and circulates (Chabon 2000, 202-4), or the pastoral documentary about the life of the Jews in the Terezin ghetto that distorts and denies the Nazi genocide (Chabon 2000, 442-43). Likewise, comic books and other popular culture products may also be mobilized as vehicles for dominant narratives of heroism and national pride. However, the novel insists that fiction can –and must– exceed the aims of political propaganda, and undo the hierarchies that threaten human relationships across cultural and political borders.

## 3.2. The Ethics of Transformation through Fiction(s)

Joe's and Sammy's experiences of displacement, violence and ostracism are not isolated from the cultural and political landscape of the interwar period in which the Golden Era of comic books took place (see e.g. DiPaolo 2011). The fact that both characters are capable of finding refuge and a source of reassurance in popular fiction speaks to a more complex understanding of the latter, beyond its associations with escapism and nationalist propaganda. Fiction in Chabon's work always stands as a complex, polyphonic space that both encompasses and potentially destabilizes dominant discourses, as an example of Mikhail Bakhtin's "heteroglossia," this is, the intrinsic capacity of texts to contain multiple stories and voices in their very structure.

Bakhtin suggests that texts are most often conditioned by dominant socio-historical conditions and "by the task that an ideological discourse assumes" (1981, 270). While this monologic or univocal approach to discourse is "opposed to the realities of heteroglossia," it also acts as a force that inevitably limits the multiple possibilities of voices contained in a text to a few, if not a single, dominant one(s) (1981, 270). According to the critic, all texts, literary or otherwise, are heteroglossic only by virtue of their

existence in a complex network of "dialogic" elements from diverse living languages and socio-semantic strata. However, for its structural complexity, it is the discourse and the form of the novel the one that most clearly illustrates this trait (1981, 263), providing a vast space to appropriate dominant narratives to convey more specific, often marginal experiences.

In this sense, Chabon counters the monologic view of fantasy fiction as an escape route or a lifesaver for the protagonists, instead vindicating art and fiction as forms that, unlike propaganda, allow authors a space to renegotiate their identity and ethically engage with the world. This capacity of fiction to foster openness and (self-)transformation among readers and authors is anticipated by Sammy's reflections on the supernatural powers shared by the cousins' two heroes, Houdini and Superman: "[T]o me, Clark Kent in a phone booth and Houdini in a packing crate […] You weren't the same person when you came out as when you went in. […] It was never just a question of escape. It was also a question of transformation" (Chabon 2000, 3).

This idea of transformation, as opposed to mere escapism, is based on an ethical and political engagement with fiction, which informs the final development of the protagonists' lives. While Joe realizes that he is both capable and ethically compelled to find a new home and community after the war, Sammy decides to follow his own desires and search for a freer place to pursue his career as a screenwriter and his personal happiness as a gay man.

These two storylines intersect in the cousins' first encounter after the war, over the first draft of Joe's latest work, pointing to fiction's role in enabling an ethical and transformative encounter between authors and readers. Back in New York, and still estranged from his cousin and old girlfriend Rosa Sacks, Joe starts to work obsessively on a new comic book titled *The Golem*, a mythical-historical fiction that recreates ordinary episodes in the lives of the European Jews murdered by the Nazis. Closer to a modern graphic novel, *The Golem* departs from the popular comic book imagery that he had displayed in The Escapist, and through it Joe aims to locate himself in the Jewish tradition and pay homage to the memory of

his people, stigmatized, massacred, and forced into exile for over the centuries (Gasiorek 2012, 887).

Joe's project to imagine and memorialize his fellow European Jews has both a personal and a political dimension. Since the early 1990s, early criticism on trauma literature has advocated art and writing's possibilities for individual healing and collective vindication. Judith Herman has pointed out that speaking out against cultural and collective trauma not only produces immediate relief in front of an audience but also responds against the silencing of a certain community's past and present in the public sphere (1997, 2). Further, Susan Brison advocates for writing's role in providing a sense of continuity and cohesion to the gaps and disruptions that often characterize post-traumatic memory (1999, 48-49). As she argues, writing can help restore the void created by the numbing effects of trauma and allow survivors to continue to project their lives towards the future (1997, 2).

This framework illuminates how in writing *The Golem*, Joe simultaneously addresses both dimensions of his trauma: the loss of his family and home, and his political experience as a European Jewish refugee, exiled from a cultural and ethnic territory that no longer exists. It is after having rescued the memory of his people that he can accomplish his transformation by recognizing that he can construct a new homeland in America. After he finishes his new work, Joe visits Houdini's grave in the Machpelah Jewish cemetery. There he has a vision of his magic teacher Bernard Kornblum, dead in the Shoah, in which the latter advises Joe to "[f]or God's sake […] Go home" (Chabon 2000, 608). In this significant episode, fantasy, tradition, and the supernatural reveal themselves as transformative forces enabling Joe to remember his past, in other to rethink his home for the future. This future home, as he already knows, is in New York, along with his cousin, his still beloved Rosa, and the son born soon after he left.

The transformative effect of fiction is also manifested in its capacity to provide ethical paths for mutual understanding. After reading Joe's *The Golem* after his reunion with his cousin, Sammy eventually reckons with his own escapist approach to life as expressed in his writing as well as his long-time exhausted literary

ambitions, which he had expressed for years in his unfinished autobiographic novel titled *American Disillusionment*:

> 'A comic book novel,' Sammy said. He thought of his own by-now legendary novel, *American Disillusionment*. […] It had been two years now since his last crack at the thing, and until this very instant he would have sworn that his ancient ambitions to be something more than the hack scribbler of comic books for a fifth-rate house were as dead, as the saying went, as vaudeville. (Chabon 2000, 543)

Sammy's realization of the loss of his literary and personal ambitions after reading Joe's great *oeuvre* reasserts literature as an ethical vehicle for self-identification and mutual understanding. It is in this episode that Sammy opens up about his homosexuality to Joe and admits the fact that, after many years of escaping his own personal desires, he also needs to transform at that point in his life.

A direct victim of postwar America's homophobia, Sammy spends most of his adult life hiding while expressing his homoerotic desires through his superhero-sidekick plots. This form of autobiographic escapism fails to go unnoticed by the government committee that calls him to declare, under a homophobic panic against comic books. Having repeatedly lied about his condition, his encounter with himself Joe's late work encourages him to move to Los Angeles and start working as a TV scriptwriter. Although the cinematic character of this city may suggest Sammy's need to keep playing a role, his decision to move follows his search for a new "homeland" in accord with his true identity. Further, his choice of Los Angeles also implies a redefinition of his roots in adapting his art to new channels of popular culture. In its constant exploration of the possibilities of realism and fantasy to represent the protagonists' plights, the novel shows that the truth depends on the individuals' capacity to understand their position in the world and in history. Over and above, transformation means embracing the idea of alterity by adopting narrative and art as sites of self-discovery and interpersonal connection.

## 4. Conclusion

In this essay, I have approached *Kavalier and Clay* as a case of contemporary fiction that attempts to bridge the gap between the Jewish past and present, but also between the European and American cultures and literary traditions. As I have suggested at the beginning, following Kelly's study of the New Sincerity writing, Chabon approaches these tasks as a sort of ethical experiment, knowing that, in choosing to focus on a particular side of history, he will probably escape certain responsibilities in leaving another at the side. In this sense, the author consciously departs from a realistic Holocaust narrative to explore the experiences of exile and displacement through the stories of Joe and Sammy, a European survivor in exile, and a first-generation American Jew respectively. In so doing, he explores the development of Jewish American identity, whose nucleus he has formerly located in the practice of creativity and fiction, and in particular in popular culture and fantasy.

In narrating how the protagonists work together to create the successful comic book, *The Escapist*, Chabon reaffirms the importance of creativity in the construction of Jewish American identity, embodied by the figure of Harry Houdini, a Jewish exile in America and a hero for both protagonists. However, working on *The Escapist* and living up to its immediate success and cultural relevance comes at a high price for both protagonists. As I have argued, this is particularly the case of Joe, who often finds himself guilty in his frustrated attempts to rescue his family back in Europe, and channels these anxieties by embodying a black-and-white narrative of American heroism that eventually leads him to pursue "justice" through extreme violence.

Ultimately, the novel acknowledges the clear-cut limits between fiction and reality, and the problems of "escapism" insofar as it is understood as a drift from ethical responsibility. In so doing, it advocates fiction's heteroglossic character and concedes that it can also have a "transformative," allowing both readers and writers to mediate with their own notions of culture and identity, and ultimately find creative and ethical ways to survive and thrive through structural conditions of oppression. As Chabon implies, this

final development is possible through an ethical encounter between both heroes, simultaneously characters, readers, and authors of a story in a constant move of exile and regeneration, a cycle that illustrates the Jewish American experience.

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# BAD MOTHERS AND FETUSES FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS: PHALLIC MOTHERS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH IN VIDEO GAMES

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Video games are a recent medium compared to film or literature, but boast an immense cultural output. Their production values have escalated alongside their popularity. During this prolific history, most developers have ignored or misrepresented female characters and issues. However, the patriarchal perspectives that have given birth to certain ubiquitous tropes are not new, as they are rooted in earlier reactions to the presence of female literary production in Western culture (Francus, 2013).

Still, video games possess a unique device: player agency. It is defined as the ability of players to have effects and cause change in a virtual game world (Eng, 2020). It holds potential to create a powerful impression of the cultural perspectives it bears, in addition to engaging audiences in a more direct experience with them. When pregnancy, childbirth and parentcraft are at the core of a video game's narrative or gameplay, they are still distorted by patriarchal misrepresentation.

This paper puts forward a typology of representation of pregnancy in video games based on Barbara Creed's (1993) aspects

of the "monstrous feminine". Using the contrast between what she calls the pre-phallic "archaic mother" and what the Freudian imaginary considers the pre-Oedipal phallic mother, this article draws up a category of misrepresented pregnancy referred to as "the supernatural birth". To illustrate, three case studies will be analyzed, interpreting their symbolic systems according to their use of horror themes and and their grotesque portrayals of female fertility, sexuality, and reproduction. These are: *Bloodborne* (FromSoftware, 2015), *Dante's Inferno* (Electronic Arts, 2010), and *F.E.A.R. 3* (Warner Bros. Games, 2011).

Thus, I expect to contribute to ludology studies focusing on gender, and to invite academic discussion into the matter of female-specific issues being shunned by cultural representations in video games.

**Keywords:** Cultural studies; gender studies; pregnancy; motherhood; video games.

## 1.  Introduction

In the age of media convergence, the growth of video games as marketable entertainment products has become nothing short of extraordinary. This stellar increase in popularity runs awkwardly parallel to the scarce research focused on the textuality of the ludic medium. Studies in representational strategies in video games are timidly making a dent in the vast landscape of academic research. Within that vast dimension, gender representation is one of the most vehemently discussed fields. When we look at video games at large, there still appears to be a general assumption that the target audience is made up of mostly cis-heterosexual males despite the fact that player demographics come in at nearly a 50 - 50 split in both the E.U. (ISFE 2022) and the U.S.A. (Statista 2023).

The copious repetition with which male characters are placed in the position of the playable main protagonist seems to be a clear symptom of gender-biased perceptions of the ludic medium and its consumers. A vast majority of players are extremely likely

to be looking mostly at a male body occupying a central position in the game world, in the midst of both gameplay and narrative. To be sure, female bodies frequently appear, albeit showing characteristics previously filtered through the lens of heteropatriarchal notions of female ideals and stereotypes. The abundance of male bodies and their modes of representation are worth researching on their own. However, this article will look at specific issues in female representation, as the gaming landscape has intensely focused on the presence of male protagonists within their fictions while assuming a heterosexual male player in front of the screen. Such bias has turned video game culture into 'not' a place for women where social constructs perpetuating binary oppositional gender roles have intruded to the point of chiseling into popular culture the idea that video games are the dominion of males (Antía Seoane & Maite Sanmartín 2019, 13). Yet, such assumptions are rooted in misogynistic stereotypes originating in historical moments long before video games could even be theorized. For that reason, this article will also rely on Marylin Francus' theories on the representation of motherhood and female reproduction in eighteenth-century English literature. The stereotypes she describes have been reiterated throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the new media that these eras have produced. Therefore, establishing a link between those stereotypes and their reiteration in contemporary fiction formats is essential. For that matter, Barbara Creed's theories on the Monstrous-feminine will provide a basis for the analysis of audiovisual tropes portraying pregnancy and motherhood as devilish in video game design. A typology for one of the most common of such tropes will be proposed.

## 2.   Context

The lack of attention to female sex-specific issues in gaming has created a void in different representational strategies for female characters, and certainly also in female perspectives on a wide variety of genres, narratives, and parts of the human experience. When it comes to female bodies, most representations tend to fall within a limited range of tropes. Each of these usually focuses around one stereotypical image of the female body, based on

heteropatriarchal interpretations of gender roles. All such images originate in heterosexual presumptions focused on gender performances, acting by means of excluding from the symbolic order any realities that do not conform to this model (María Lozano Estivalis, 2006). In the vast field of how video games produce and reiterate clichéd images of male and female stereotypes, pregnancy and childbirth are still among the most overlooked. These should not remain confined to their most literal representations but should include those that dwell in the symbolic realm and operate through metaphor.

Their presence in the ludic medium may take multiple forms. For instance, the conception, gestation, and birth of a child may take a central position in a game's narrative. In such games where players are able to affect the storyline, pregnancy may appear as an optional choice for narrative and character development. As for the latter —and due to the interactive nature of video games—, story is not always necessary for it to happen, as this medium allows for gameplay and character-building mechanics whose effect is noticed mainly through statistical changes and interactions between the player's avatar and the virtual game world. Furthermore, the existence of hostile denizens or 'enemies' in that world frequently provides fertile ground for grotesque, monstrous, and horror-inspired designs that embody female fertility, female sexuality, pregnancy, and childbirth by means of symbolism. Before such strategies are specifically analyzed, it is of the essence to clarify one of the definitory characteristics that set video games apart from other media, which also provides the necessary interaction for players to engage with gameplay mechanics: player agency.

> Player agency is about giving players the interactivity to affect and change the game world. Through agency, players have power to influence and change what is happening in the game. It provides them control (or at least of sense of it) of what will happen next. This means that players should be given the ability to make decisions in the game. But these decisions shouldn't be trivial – at least from the player's perspective. (Dave Eng 2019)

Complementarily, there also exists the notion of 'choice' within any given video game's mechanics. Choices may be meaningful to different degrees, but the ludic medium evidently sets itself apart by the presence of this characteristic, as Katherine Isbister clearly states:

> At their heart, games differ from other media in one fundamental way: they offer players the chance to influence outcomes through their own efforts. With rare exception, this is not true of film, novels, or television. Readers and viewers of these other media follow along, reacting to the story and its twists and turns, without having a direct personal impact on the events they witness. In games, players have the ability to control what unfolds. (2017, 2)

What exactly constitutes player agency is generally challenging to pin down, but it certainly both enables and depends on players' abilities to make choices that influence the game world. Through a series of decisions, game progression proceeds forward, be it in the most simple and purely mechanical game —examples such as *Tetris* (Nintendo 1989) and *Super Hexagon* (Terry Cavanagh 2012) come to mind— or in a heavily-narrative story-driven game with ample options for character customization and a vast, crowded virtual world ripe for exploration —such as *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (CD Projekt RED 2015) —. In any case, the immediate consequence of this basis for design is that players quickly develop an emotional investment in the game: "People go through a rapid and automatic set of evaluations as things happen to them, about what each event might mean for their goals and plans. Emotions arise in the context of these appraisals, and help guide quick and appropriate actions" (Isbister 2017, 2).

It is easy to imagine the power that rhetorical texts such as video games can have in propagating cultural assumptions, stereotypes, clichés, prejudice, and misinterpretations. With the emotional stakes that games involve players in, their symbolic systems act as powerfully vivid fictions in which the cultural baggage of the people interacting with them may be either challenged or reinforced. Imagine someone accustomed to the gender binary power dynamics established by the patriarchal order being deeply engaged with a virtual world where women are

reduced to 'eye candy', damsels in distress, or chainmail-bikini-wearing warriors with the physical shape of a supermodel and scant character development. Jason Hawreliak provides a clear example of what analyzing such representations may yield: "Anita Sarkeesian's popular Feminist Frequency series has examined how many videogames depict women as weak, hyper-sexualized objects of straight male desire. Through this series, Sarkeesian convincingly demonstrates that videogames often reinforce patriarchal conventions of femininity by way of visual rhetoric" (2020, 21).

But such tropes are nothing new in Western society, as the work of Marilyn Francus shows. Her analysis of literary representations of female sexuality and reproduction as monstrous is instrumental for understanding where the video game tropes about pregnancy discussed below originate. Additionally, part of this analysis will draw from Barbara Creed's typologies of the monstrous feminine in horror films. This genre has been a goldmine for video game designers not only because it is also a category of fiction in the ludic medium, but also because it has provided frequently-borrowed visual elements to games across widely differing settings.

Eighteenth-century English literature reflects a time when the patriarchal system of values questions the female presence in changing models of political and social authority (Francus 2012, 26). The easiness for mass publication gave birth to a series of misogynistic tropes in literature, as the prolificity of print allowed women to be published more easily and more often, sparking in some prominent authors a fear of fertility that inspired in them monstrous visions of it, as long as it was independently female: "This literary rendering of fertile maternity correlates with contemporary thought regarding female sexuality, in which the inability to control her fertility (and the lack of desire to repress her sexuality) makes woman monstrous" (ibid.).

Marylin Francus focuses on Milton, Swift, Spenser and Pope with their portrayals of fecund female characters as hideous creatures with abhorrent animalistic bodies that spew forth hellish spawn (Sin in *Paradise Lost*, Criticism in *Battle of the Books*, Errour

in *The Faerie Queene*, and Dulness in *The Dunciad*). According to this author, such nightmarish mothers illustrate maternal agency and authority competing with and overturning patriarchal power. Its unpredictable and unknown fertility is a constant source of anxiety, as well as the cause for fear of the mother's access to the child's body, potentially resulting in his death (Francus 2012, 170). Parallel to literary conflicts, female reproductive capabilities (menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, so forth) are commonly seen as and named "diseases", "disabilities" and "calamity" as medical science advances in the hands of exclusively male practitioners and physicians (ibid.).

Inevitably, the uterus occupies a central position in these ideological approaches. Being the *sine qua non* of procreation, it caused anxiety and jealousy among male authors conditioned by sexist perceptions of human nature and society, thus producing rhetorical and visual systems based upon binary opposition within the patriarchal imagination. Francus illustrates:

> The female body is a convenient site for chaos, as it is located between the created and the uncreated. The chaos of the female in these works is signified by the womb and its products, which embody darkness and void. The womb also generates anxieties attendant upon the inability to fill or illuminate such a space. The darkness of the maternal womb echoes the primordial darkness that is a precondition of divine creation, which begins with the invocation of light (Gen. 1:3). As light is established as a masculine positive associated with order and reason, darkness is construed as its devilish opposite, a feminine force associated with chaos and the imagination. (2012, 28)

The author goes on to identify not just the monstrous female's body, but also the space she occupies within a symbolic womb. Such female creatures often dwell in dark damp spaces, which —to the patriarchal imagination— are reminiscent of the primordial void and non-existence. In video games, the darkness that floods such places often signals danger, and consequently they may be populated with hostile characters whose existence is directly or indirectly dependent upon the female monster. Such a creature is designated by Francus as a phallic mother: insufficiently passive and feminine

to be a mother, yet insufficiently masculine to be an authority (2012, 30). Thus, reproductive endeavors in women are considered a deviance from cultural expectations unless they submit themselves to patriarchal authority and the ideal of domesticity. Video games reproduce this trope frequently by showing female antagonists as monstrous in aspect and devious in behavior, in stark contrast to the hyper-sexualized vision of women on the male hero's side. In one mode of representation, as phallic mothers populate their dens (created digitally as video game levels) with their feral spawn, or as Francus puts it: "As monstrous mothers produce and rear their monstrous progeny in these darkened domiciles, nature perpetuates the unnatural" (2012, 29). She goes on to remind us of the insistence of the works she analyzes on linking the female domain exclusively with the creation of chaos, therefore putting forward an argument in favor of the necessity and even the primacy of the masculine:

> The negative inscription of the female reflects both the tendency to revise in favor of the male and the oppositional relationship between the sexes; what constitutes strength in the female weakens the male, and therefore female power must be reinterpreted in order to be subjugated (ibid.).

This is eerily similar to the stereotypical male hero in video games delving into the domain of female or otherwise feminized characters in order to conquer such a place and defeat its monstrous ruler, often taking the form of 'bosses': "Unique characters or creatures that are more complex and challenging to defeat than normal enemies" (Theodore Agrogianis 2018, 1).

The 'monstrous feminine' is also at the center of Barbara Creed's homonymous book (1993). In it, she sorts different modes of representation of female antagonists in horror films into several categories. Particularly relevant to this article are her vision of the phallic mother, and her predecessor: the archaic mother (Creed 1993, 16). She provides a key idea for understanding the role of the monstrous in spectators' —or, as is the case in this article, players'— emotional reactions: "Although the specific nature of the border changes from film to film, the function of the monstrous remains the same – to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability" (ibid.). This

statement not only clarifies what the role of watching horror films or having horror-themed encounters in games is, but it also resonates with the literature criticized by Francus, which took place in a time where the stability of patriarchy felt as if it was being put into question (2012, 26).

The archaic mother is described by Creed following a series of key characteristics that prove problematic for the patriarchal imagination. One involves the acts of procreation and birth taking place without the agency of the opposite sex, delivering a creature that is primitive rather than civilized, suggesting that humanity is thus brought closer to an animal form, being confronted with an image reminiscent of its own ancestors (1993, 17). Another key aspect is that of the fecund 'mother-as-abyss'. She is the void itself, and confronting her is facing the primordial darkness that Francus links to the uterus as seen by the patriarchal imagination: a space of duality, capable of producing and nurturing a child, yet also of killing it (2012, 28). She is the cannibalizing black hole from which all life comes and to which all life returns; in film, she is the source of the deepest terror (Creed 1993, 27). As in the movies, so it is in video games, also enabling player agency and choice.

However, the archaic mother is construed in patriarchal ideology by bringing her closer to the mother of the semiotic *chora* (Creed 1993, 20). She is a negative force whose presence as a black hole is identified with female genitalia, and her main role is to give birth to horrific offspring who aid her in destroying or incorporating everything in her path (Creed 1993, 27). Comparatively, Francus stated of eighteenth-century English literary monstrous fecund females: "By giving birth these monsters produce death"; and "[o]nce the battle against wit and reason is won and the world is destroyed, there is little left for the maternal monster to achieve" (2012, 41). Such condemnation of the feminization of literature is akin to a contemporary demonization of the feminization of video games, and it reduces the archaic mother to something that the patriarchal order can understand and expunge. In Creed's view, the archaic mother is therefore reduced from the generative pre-phallic mother to the pre-Oedipal phallic (or dyadic) mother (1993, 25). The codification of the concept of female reproduction as a monstrous aspect that can be visually represented in video game design carries

over the same strategy, and takes it further by making the encounter between patriarchal values and the monstrous feminine interactive and engaging. This is best summed up in Francus' words:

> The fertile monster herself is emblematic of this fusion of opposites; monstrous maternity produces chaos by blurring the traditional psychologies of gender, in which femininity and authority do not coexist. Accordingly, the maternal monster is a phallic mother who is targeted as being insufficiently passive and feminine to be maternal and insufficiently masculine to function as a legitimate authority. Thus maternity is both denatured and demonized, as the empowerment of the archetypal feminine destroys all that it encounters. (2012, 29)

I argue that this archetype is one of the most widespread representational strategies for pregnancy and motherhood across Western video games, especially given their ease to confer monstrous qualities on an enemy character to make it clearly identifiable as an antagonist for players. The result is a mixture of archetypes and semiotic symbols that mostly respond to the misogynistic cliches denounced by Marilyn Francus, with fewer instances of differing archetypes, and even pregnancy- and motherhood-related issues that have become conspicuous for their absence. Most examples are unfortunate, as they try to grapple with the unavoidable oversimplification that comes with reducing an ever-complex, nuanced and delicate biological and emotional process to a mere gameplay mechanic, narrative device or statistical choice.

The result is that women's experiences during pregnancy and childbirth are simply left out. Their representations, in addition to following the aforementioned strategies, often swing between the comical and the grotesque, occasionally superimposing both, severely deforming the process while keeping its essential visual elements recognizable, and alienating any players who may be interested in or have gone through the experience of gestation, birth, and motherhood —not to mention the wealth of experiences that surround each of these.

Based on the archetypes described by Francus and Creed, this article puts forward one of the main modes of representation of female fertility and pregnancy in video games as a representational typology serving as an umbrella for several symbolic patterns stemming from the same patriarchal perception of female fertility without male control. From here on, it shall be referred to as: the supernatural birth.

## 3.  The Supernatural Birth

Representations that fall within this category are all marked by the following set of characteristics, taken from the authors previously commented on: the central element is a phallic mother, a monstrous fecund female who breeds monstrous children that bring about chaos against the order of patriarchal authority; she is a destructive force; she lives in darkness, often in an enclosed space symbolizing the primordial void associated with maternal womb; she violates codes of proper female behavior as 'set in stone' by the patriarchal order, certainly defying ideals of domesticity (Francus 2012, 28). More often than not, players assume the position of the male hero proving his worth (therefore, paternal authority) against this monster. In some exceptions not discussed here, the player in fact assumes the role of the pregnant female in a fight for the elimination of her own supernatural fetus or the birth of a healthy child who unknowingly holds supernatural power, implying the potential for an infanticidal drive, albeit often symbolic. The case studies presented in this article are: *Bloodborne* (FromSoftware, 2015), *Dante's Inferno* (Electronic Arts, 2010), and *F.E.A.R. 3* (Warner Bros. Games, 2011).

### 3.1.  *Bloodborne* - Queen Yharnam

In this *lovecraftian* horror action RPG, players take on the mantle of a 'hunter', a trained slayer of unnatural beasts who makes his or her way through a city enveloped in darkness. Such beasts (formerly humans) overrun the place during certain nights, temporarily retreating at dawn. However, the night during which the game takes place threatens to last forever due to the presence of the Blood

Moon, which is associated with a higher being known as Mergo. This entity belongs to a cosmic race of semi-divine creatures known as "Great Ones". Mergo's consciousness is awake, yet they never manifest physically, and they are only perceptible by the sound of a baby crying coming from the night sky and the Blood Moon. In the end, this being never fully comes to life, instead remaining stillborn. The player character must ensure that Mergo's presence is never fully embodied, lest the creature becomes fully aware and unleashes its power upon the world, making the night eternal and allowing in perpetuity the curse of the beastly sickness that is consuming the world's denizens. Due to Mergo's inability to manifest into the world, players confront instead a monstrous supernatural being known as "Mergo's Wet Nurse", though it bears no gender signifiers.

While this game is intentionally unclear when it comes to providing story details —instead relying on context clues and item descriptions to allow players to make sense of the story and game world lore—, it is made clear through visual cues who Mergo's mother is. The former ruler of the city, Queen Yharnam belongs to an enduring humanoid race known as 'pthumerians'. She conceived Mergo via (presumably) the influence of a Great One. She is encountered by the player mostly in non-interactive form during cutscenes, though there is an instance where the main character can find her during gameplay, though she provides no interaction. She can also be faced as a *boss* in one of the game's optional dungeons. Yharnam is always seen wearing a bridal gown stained by a bleeding wound visibly originating from her belly, implying —with help from the context— that it is coming from her uterus, as she did not succeed in fully birthing Mergo. She weeps at the Blood Moon, supposedly lamenting her child's struggle to be born. There are gameplay clues that have been discussed as symbolizing how her corrupted blood condemned her supernatural fetus.

There is a powerful symbolism of infanticide in the wound on Yharnam's belly, in her poisonous blood (if she is fought as a boss, she sprays her own blood at the player character, inflicting the "rapid poison" status effect), and in the hunter's violent actions. It should also be noted that the Blood Moon —where Mergo's cries

appear to be coming from— bears an extraordinary size and an eerie red-orange coloring, which is reminiscent of a swollen pregnant belly, a uterus, or even a human egg. Though he/she never physically confronts Mergo, the hunter prevents their full awakening into the world by slaying Mergo's guardian, the Wet Nurse. It is worth mentioning that the player may choose to control a female hunter, but at the same time, this plot is set in motion by a higher-authority male hunter, who also plays a crucial role in whether and how the night ends.

Were Yharnam's child to be fully born, its power would maintain the curse of the blood that turns people into beasts and it would develop into a full-fledged Great One. This can be read as matching the trope of the monstrous fecund female destroying everything around her in an endless appetite deprived of reasoning (associated with the male). Thus, the hunter's male-endowed authority exercises control over the female's offspring, restoring peace, reason and control to the world. Yharnam's pregnancy is also reminiscent of the archaic mother, as she is implied to have been impregnated by an unseen supernatural being, and therefore it appears as if she had done so by herself (Creed 1993, 27). She is generative and positioned as an unstable element for the patriarchal order.

### 3.2.  *Dante's Inferno* - Cleopatra and Mark Antony

In this horror-themed reinterpretation of Dante Allighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, the writer is instead a warrior returned from the crusades to find his wife assassinated and taken to Hell by Lucifer himself. Dante descends through the underworld, and in the third level —associated with lust— he must fight a gigantic nightmarish version of Cleopatra.

To be precise: a monstrous Mark Antony fights in her name —seeing as strength is a presupposed male characteristic— and Cleopatra supports him through the use of other devices and distractions for the player, which falls in line with Francus' hypothesis of the womb serving as a symbol of intellectual deception in English literary works that condemn female reproductive capabilities (2012, 36). This is a typical iteration of the

system of binary oppositions representing men as strong and warlike while women employ less direct, more manipulative tactics. If players succeed in the virtual fight, it culminates in the defeat of Mark Antony, prompting Cleopatra to try to seduce Dante, who resists temptation and slays her as she moans sexually, the warrior's blade literally penetrating her flesh while he is lying on top of her. This is an obvious penetration metaphor, but also one for the elimination of maternal authority outside the symbolic order.

But how is Cleopatra a mother? In this extremely grotesque representation of the historical character, her gigantic body shows her bare breasts with mouths on her nipples (an example of *vagina dentata*). Through these, she expels horrifying murderous monstrous children who hurt the player character, so that both hero and enemy are infanticidal: Cleopatra for spewing forth her children to die for her; Dante for killing them to defend himself. In addition, Mark Antony lives inside her body, leaving it when she regurgitates him to fight for her. According to Francus' research, this would be a visual representation of the disgust of patriarchal perceptions finding acts of mothering physically disgusting (2012, 26). So, the mother is a bad nurturer violating the code of proper female behavior. Dante is effectively eliminating the monstrous progeny that can only act as destroyers, preventing chaos. In conclusion, Cleopatra is the archetypal infanticidal mother: selfish, powerful and dangerous.

### 3.3. *F.E.A.R. 3* - Alma Wade

The reason for choosing the third installment of this trilogy is that the second game shows how the main antagonist of the entire arc becomes pregnant, with her successful gestation being the main point of the third game's story. Alma Wade possesses extraordinary psychic powers. She spent her childhood being experimented on by a corporation trying to weaponize her for profit. While still a teenager, she is used as a breeder to bear children who will inherit her gift. The conception takes place artificially while she is held into an induced coma. She eventually dies, but she endures as a spirit. After certain key events in the first game, her physical body is

resurrected, appearing as a young emaciated woman but keeping her psychic and spiritual powers.

In the second game, she rapes the protagonist, becoming pregnant with a child whose birth threatens the world. This near-apocalyptic event sits at the center of the third game's conflict. As the birth draws near, Alma's psychic world starts merging with the real world, which would eventually result in the consumption of the latter. Commonly known as the *Almaverse*, this is a parallel dimension that exists within her mind but can *leak* into the real world, filling it with monsters born of her imagination and her memories from past traumatic experiences. It can be seen here that there is a representation pattern that follows the key elements in Francus' theory, as female imagination holds dangers for gestation and seems to be the domain of the manipulative fertile female (2012, 36). Almaverse takes several visual forms in the third game, but one of the most noticeable is a reddened sky crossed by lightning bolts and a sort of 'swelling' in the clouds, reminiscent of the changes of a pregnant body. In fact, her cries of labor pain can be heard throughout the game's locales, and psychic disturbances and explosions occur as her contractions intensify. In all manifestations of this dimension, leaking blood is one of the most striking visual characteristics.

In this last installment, players may choose to play as either of Alma's adult children: Point Man or Paxton Fettel, with each of them unlocking a different ending. In the finale, she is seen fully pregnant in a monstrous manner: her womb has grown to unnaturally oversized proportions, it emits a reddish glow, and it produces some sort of membranes that adhere to walls in order to support itself. In this state, she is completely vulnerable and unable to move. This is a visual representation of the concept of obstetric literature starting to refer to pregnancy and menstruation as the "source of numerous calamities", and women as meant to be managed by men when pregnant, starting in the eighteenth century (Francus 2012, 42). Despite advancements in obstetric technology and scientific/medical knowledge, this notion has not disappeared from modern society.

Regardless of which ending plays out, Alma disappears (she is clearly killed in one of the endings, while the other shows her body dematerializing), and with her, the threat of Almaverse destroying the real world. In the 'good' ending, Point Man overpowers Fettel, killing him. He rescues Alma's baby, who has been successfully born. The child is not seen as dangerous, for it is brought into the patriarchal order by a father figure, away from the chaotic and apocalyptic female power of his phallic mother. Even the sky over the city loses the red tint and thunderstorms, becoming blue and luminous once again, echoing Francus' words on the patriarchal 'mission' to illuminate the dark primordial void of the symbolic womb (2012, 28). By contrast, in the 'bad' ending, it is Fettel who wins the struggle against his sibling. It is important to note that the former has more developed psychic powers as a result of his consciousness having been merged with Alma's for some time during his childhood, turning him more violent. The influence of his phallic mother makes him abandon reason and unleash chaos, as this is the effect of maternal authority as seen by the symbolic order (Francus 2012, 28). Fettel talks about raising the baby as his own, but he still kills Alma in a particularly cruel way, as he literally cannibalizes her. He devours her body, including her overemphasized uterus, presumably to gain more extraordinary power from her. This is a different manner to bring the baby into the patriarchal order, as the brother with the feminine remnant is still seen as deviant, and therefore this is considered a bad story ending. It bears mention that Barbara Creed has suggested that in horror films, "when male bodies become grotesque, they tend to take on characteristics of the female body" (1993, 19). While this takes no literal form in Fettel, he does physically consume his mother's body, and his powers (which set him apart from other people psychically and physically) were inherited from her.

As if Alma's pregnancy were not enough, the game also includes different multiplayer game modes for users to play online by following different sets of rules and specific circumstances of the game world. One of these modes is called *Contractions*. In it, a team of players must fend off hordes of Alma's minions while an ever-expanding blinding fog encroaches on them by leaving a constantly-

dwindling circular space in the middle. The villain herself makes several appearances during the course of the game to act as a wildcard that throws in additional difficulties for the players. This is a prime example of how the ambivalent symbolic uterus can be constructed not only in game world and character design, but also by programming game mechanics.

## 4.   Discussion

The scrutinized titles bear the characteristics of Francus' phallic mother, codified as such from the more inscrutable archaic mother as per Creed's description. The same pattern is repeated across dozens of other video game works with slight variations, but with the same key elements in place. These female characters are represented as defying conventional femininity, domesticity and the expectations set for "good mothers". All of these issues are amply discussed by Marilyn Francus, but about the latter, she concisely states: "That actual maternal performance and circumstance had no effect on social expectations suggests the rigidity of maternal stereotypes and the insistence upon controlling maternal narrative" (2012, 47). This also holds in video games, where gender tropes are easily reproducible and have come to be expected in a society whose exposure to such is almost constant and comes from every available fiction format. The children of the women discussed in this article are all threats to the established order, brought to life by chaotic female characters, their offspring malformed or corrupted by their *bad mother's* mind or bodily characteristics. In all three instances, the birthing act is meant to end in death for the spawn of these women's generative capacities. While that can be said about Alma's minions spawning from the dimension she creates with her mind, it is not true of her third child, who is adopted by either of the two protagonists. Instead, we witness the elimination of the monstrous female threat, preventing the formation of the new subject under the influence of the abject mother. According to Imogen Tyler, for the child being born, this is the first encounter with abjection, as it is now outside the protective yet oppressive space of the womb, occupying a space between *being* and *non-being* (Imogen Tyler 2009, 2). Commenting on Julia Kristeva's primary abjection, the

author sums up: "Within the model of subjectivity [Kristeva] proposes, the infant's bodily and psychic attachment to his/her maternal origins must be successfully and violently abjected in order for an independent and cogent speaking human subject to be born" (2009, 3). In *F.E.A.R. 3*, the visual representation of this interpretive perspective is quite literal, with Alma being killed or at least physically disappearing from existence before one of the protagonists walks away with her child.

Such phenomenologies are frequent enough in video games today that they prompt their own typology of representation of pregnancy and childbirth. In such works, female fertility is almost never represented as conventional or taking place through natural means, and the female body is rarely shown in a non-grotesque pregnant state. The divine, the devilish and the otherworldly are the driving forces that conceive their threatening offspring, lacking proper paternal nurturing. Thus, the Supernatural Pregnancy acts as a narrative device that sets gestation up as the origin of chaos that may devour the world. Players' actions set in motion the plot that allows them to discover this fact, but they are also the instrument to terminate it, not only allowing the story to come to an end, but also deriving satisfaction after overpowering the symbolic enemies.

Such emphasis being placed on monstrous fertility as a characteristic of female bodies does not belong exclusively to video games produced in the twenty-first century, as the idea is centuries older. As Francus herself states: "According to eighteenth-century gynecology, the power of fertility resided primarily in the female body. Yet the maternal body is a mystery, either insufficiently fertile or too fertile, at once capable of producing monsters and normally shaped children" (2012, 198).

## 5.  Conclusion

Fear of parenthood is a recurring theme within the fluidity of Western fiction and popular culture, and the human gestation process still remains largely mysterious for males. This mostly leads game developers, designers, and writers to repeat 300-year-old tired

tropes on female sexuality and fertility to fill in the gaps left by this absence of knowledge. If such ideas are still being repeated with no critical perspective, the situation speaks volumes as to what kind of society and culture informs the choices of game developers when managing representations of sexuality, pregnancy, motherhood, and fatherhood. It is no wonder that the phallic mother has such a long history and ample presence in this digital medium. Moreover, there are other modes of representation, each prompting its own issue-ridden typology. The general landscape of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood representation in games seems to be perpetuating the fears, anxieties and misconceptions of development teams, still mostly comprised of male staff and struggling to adopt fair maternity policies in the workplace (Stacy Henley, 2020).

While the solution may still not be in sight, it seems clear that widening the range of representational strategies for the sex-specific issues discussed above starts with allowing more female perspectives to share their experiences in video game design. The lack of knowledge on pregnancy and maternity is also a pressing matter, and easily solved. The study by Alexandra Holloway, Zachary Rubin and Sri Kurniawan points the way:

> Just as game designers study physics prior to building a physics engine, and study human motion prior to creating animated avatars, designers should investigate childbirth prior to creating a birth scene. Games teach players a way of thinking about the domain. Most video game players will go on to be mothers or those in a role of childbirth support. Young players in particular can benefit from an early intervention for positive women's body image, perceptions of pregnancy and childbirth, breastfeeding, and the childbirth process (2012, 8).

Not every video game needs to be an educational experience. Games, just like films, TV series, or music may be enjoyed just for the sake of entertainment. But that does not mean that development and representation cannot show responsibility when representing pregnancy and childbirth, particularly when a game is presented as a massive, serious endeavor with compelling storytelling and engaging gameplay that invites reflection as well as eagerness to play again. Female voices have been fighting for a bigger presence in the industry for a long time, and they should not be shut down

with misogynistic tropes so vividly burned into the Western collective imagination that they lock out the complex realities of women's experiences.

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# WEST COUNTRY DIASPORA: SOME TRANSPORTED CORNISH TRAITS IN A NINETEENTH-CENTURY WISCONSITE MINING COMMUNITY

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This paper attempts to examine the diasporic trajectory of West Country features, specifically Cornish speech, in the United States during the nineteenth century. The analysis is framed within the migratory waves of miners from the area of Cornwall and Devon who moved to the vast pockets of workable land in Wisconsin, Montana and ultimately California. These miner migrants settled and transformed the geography of the area as well as perpetuated a cultural bloodline still felt today in places such as Mineral Point (southwest Wisconsin). Evidence of Cornish talk during the 1850-60s, as gleaned by Copeland (1898), present in letters from Cornish migrants (Birch 1985-86) and later expected by Holway (1997-98), seems to be rich enough to be explored from a dialect survival angle. This paper examines this evidence from the perspective of surviving transported dialects overseas to determine whether a repertoire of Cornish linguistic traits was identified and employed in nineteenth-century Mineral Point, its perdurance and whether it fell in diseuse. For this purpose, data gleaned from Copeland's reports will be analysed qualitatively in light of nineteenth-century monographs on the dialect of Cornwall as well as contemporary studies in order to ascertain its authenticity and sociocultural weight. The paper seeks to contribute to research on

the Cornish dialect and its diaspora beyond the boundaries of the old country.

**Keywords:** nineteenth-century Cornish dialect; enregisterment; mining communities; Wisconsin

# 1.  Introduction

> "Among the immigrant groups which made a considerable contribution to the development of the United States and of the American way of life the Cornish people must be reckoned."
>
> (Rowe 1959, 4)

The transportation of English to overseas communities that were the result of the vast imperial reach of the United Kingdom has been the focus of attention of research in recent years (Hickey 2004, Kytö 2004). Settlements and colonies beyond the Atlantic, the implementation of the speech of colonisers, the mixture of tongues in areas with high migratory density and the overall conjunction of varieties of English in extraneous locations, such as the Australian encampments of prisoners, have created a landscape of diverse linguistic phenomena. In this scenario, many scholars have devoted pages to the study of linguistic behaviour outside the United Kingdom. Raymond Hickey (2004) poses questions such as "the survival of features from a mainland source," the "independent developments within the overseas communities," or the overall "contact" between "co-exist[ing]" languages alongside English, as well as the processes of creolisation (1). Interest in the testimonies of migrants established permanently on American soil has been fostered through the correspondence of Irish migrants, where Charles Montgomery (1995, 1997a) contemplates the impinge of Ulster Scots on American English; other studies incorporating regional British varieties in epistolary form are also considered by Bermejo-Giner & Montgomery (1997).

This paper seeks to address migratory movements from the communities of Cornwall and Devon to the American Midwest, and the transportation and survival of some Cornish traits, imported to

the United States during the nineteenth century, in the area of Wisconsin, more specifically Mineral Point. Thus, this paper considers, firstly, the sociohistorical context behind the migratory fluxes from British soil to America. Secondly, it presents an exposition on the survival of non-standard dialects and their transportation overseas. Thirdly, it outlines early commentary on western British dialects and the main linguistic features recorded in Cornwall by antiquarian and contemporary sources. Finally, it takes into consideration these sources along with Copeland's (1898) information regarding recognised Cornish traits in Mineral Point to prove items that were acknowledged and indexed in England at the time had been successfully transported to Wisconsin. Holway's (1997-98) expectations on arriving to Mineral Point a century later is used to judge the gradual disuse of those transported items throughout time and their eventual loss.

## 2. Sociohistorical Context: Mining and Migration

The British English expansion overseas has been largely studied in recent years (e.g. Kirwin & Hollet 1986 on Newfoundland English; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1997 on the Ocracoke brogue). Colonial, administrative, and entrepreneurial purposes, as well as migration provoked by social discomfort in Britain, established a persistent flux to North America. Hickey (2004) informs us that "the dissemination of English beyond the island of Britain has a history which is over 800 years old, beginning with Ireland in the late twelfth century" (10). As is well known, this was largely motivated by a series of acts beginning in 1841 with the Pre-Emption Act, followed by the Donation Land Claim in 1850, the Homestead Act in 1862 and the Southern Homestead Act in 1866, which projected a possibly bright future for British and Europeans settlers more generally. Swathes of land conceded by the US government to incoming tenants for reasonably low fees[1] helped expand new

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[1] The Homestead Act of 1862 indicates that prices ranged from "one dollar and twenty-five cents, or less, per acre; or eighty acres or less of such unappropriated lands, at two dollars and fifty cents per acre".

settings and entice possible newcomers from the other side of the Atlantic, pressured by economic difficulties and lack of work opportunities.

Migration came from all parts of Europe in different sizes and frequencies. In the case of the United Kingdom and of the West Country in particular, Cornwall and Devon, possessed a history of mining that allowed these counties to prosper and establish a prolific industry. Schwartz (2006) is more specific: by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cornwall "had emerged as a center of technological innovation in deep-lode mining and steam engineering" becoming "one of Britain's earliest industrial regions with a distinct and specialised extraregional commodity export: copper ore" (171). Rowse (1969) indicates that "the dozen square miles or so around Camborge and Redruth were at that time the most heavily […] mined area in the world" (161). Production seemed to have reached outstanding peaks, topping 209,000 tons by 1856 (161). Improvement in infrastructures consolidated a working relationship with the more industrialised and commercial areas of the country, moving goods and people by train and canals, as well as roads that were tended to and maintained thanks to the Turnpike Trusts, which worked by means of "organization[s] that financed road improvements by levying tolls and issuing mortgage debt" (Bogart 2005, 2). However, discomfort following the lack of jobs and unbeneficial salaries in the first half of the nineteenth century pushed workers to look somewhere else and examine other possibilities, especially overseas.[2]

According to Rowse (1969, 202), Edward James of Camborne (1804 - 1845) is reported to be the first Cornishman to ever arrive directedly in the United States. In 1830, he followed the usual route at the time, which involved crossing the Atlantic to land in Quebec, moving over to Cincinnati and St. Louis, and ultimately arriving in Mineral Point. Schwartz (2006) indicates that the dense

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[2] This scarcity of jobs was mainly due to a process of de-industrialisation occasioned by a "terminal decline created by the restructuring of the global mineral economy" (Schwartz 2006, 171).

migratory traffic moving from the area of Cornwall had set up a network for newcomers to facilitate the translocation of their communities to territories in the US (172). This migration worked reversely as well, meaning that Cornish people already in America would also consider returning home. This may have been prompted by nostalgia or conceived of as an attempt to engage future migrants to move to the US. Thus, 1830 can be seen as the onset of Cornish migration to Wisconsin. Its rich lead-layered mountains were attractive for prospective migrants, although this state was not alone in receiving migrants from Cornwall at the time. California, Michigan and Pennsylvania also took in throngs of Cornish miners enticed by their lands. Notwithstanding this, Wisconsin seems to be unique in this context as it still retains a clear and tangible Cornish legacy. Towns such as Dodgeville, Mineral Point, Hazel Green, Linden and Shullsburg are amongst the urban hubs Cornish newcomers arrived in (Schwartz 2006, 172). All in all, the average number of Cornish people in the Lead Region could be estimated around 7,000 in 1850 and 10,000 by the turn of the nineteenth century (Rowse 1969, 216). Economic differences between Cornwall and Wisconsin were notable to the point that there was no reason to stay behind in England where salaries were half the ones in America: according to Copeland (1898, 314), because salaries "[ranged] from $12 to $13 a month […] (t)he mine laborers thought they could do better in America". Considering such revenue, the Cornish may have found that travelling to the US was more profitable, as Copeland's (1898) comparison between the prices of goods in England and Wisconsin seems to indicate in Fig. 1:

The Cornish settlers that arrived in Wisconsin and other mid-western states became generally known as *Amerikanyon gernewek* (or "American Cornish"), and left a linguistic legacy in these territories where their dialect had been already identified as a "socially recognised register of forms" (Agha 2003, 232).

| | ENGLAND.[1] | | WISCONSIN.[2] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cornwall about 1840. | England in 1849. | 1830. | 1836. | 1850. |
| Beef per lb | $ .12 | $ .14 | ............ | $ .14–.15 | ............ |
| Butter per lb | .14 | .30 | .15–.20 | .25–.31 | .15–.20 |
| Potatoes per bu | .12 | ............ | .37½ | .50–.62 | ............ |
| Tea per lb | 1.25 | 1.25 | ............ | ............ | 1.00 |
| Sugar per lb | .12 | .10½ | .12–.13 | ............ | .05–.06 |
| Flour per cwt | 10.00 | 8.00 | 9.00 | 8.00–9.00 | 3.50–4.00 |

Fig. 1. Copeland's table with figures regarding prices of goods in England and Wisconsin (1898: 315)

## 3.  Survival of Nonstandard Varieties of English

Transported or uprooted dialects underwent what Görlach (1987) defines as "colonial lag" (180), meaning that evolutive processes affecting the dialects in their original locations could take longer to be effective on the uprooted ones. What is more, Hickey argues (2004) that such lag could in fact become a parallel branch where the transported varieties develop their own changes over time instead of remaining "simply preserved versions of earlier forms of the language on the mainland" (9). An example of this can be seen in the evolution of the Irish uvular [ʁ], which is noticed in Newfoundland as an "independent development at this overseas location" (Hickey 2004, 37-38).

The spreading of the language overseas was mainly led by the "more conservative rural forms of English in the mainland" (Hickey 2004, 37).[3] The linguistic situation during America's colonisation is best explained in Kytö (2004), where she highlights

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[3] Kytö (2004) points out that "from 1629 to 1640, 14,000 to 21,000 people left England for the New England counties […] (t)he majority of them (coming) from five eastern counties between the estuaries of the Humber and the Thames" (123).

how "[t]he co-existence of an 'early prestige language' and of local dialects at the time of migration (in England) was of great importance to the unifying and diversifying tendencies influencing the language development in the colonies" (124). The mixture of peoples from different social classes meant that the "development took place […] in favour of the prestigious Southern British English" whilst "lower-rank emigrants most likely had no supraregional features but kept strictly to their local vernacular, whatever that was" (124-125). Hickey (2004) lengthily considers a variety of features that did not survive transplantation to the overseas colonies in America, employing the Salem witchcraft trials as the base for his documentation, dated around the 1690s. Such features include the "lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/", e. g. *marcy* 'mercy', the behaviour of "/f/ as a reflex of former /x/" or /x/ vocalisation, e. g. *dafter* 'daughter', or the "variation among high front vowels," which Hickey comments that are bi-directional, e. g. *weches* 'witches, amongst others (Hickey 2004: 42).

The survival of dialectal types was also dependant on the topography of the area, where "inaccessible, mountainous or isolated coastal regions keep the features which were characteristic of the input varieties" (Hickey 2004, 6). In the case of Cornish migrants, they established themselves in zones where workable terrain was available for mining, and the geography of the landscape in states such as Wisconsin or Montana appears to be wide and mainly composed of low hills, unlike the steeper areas in Appalachia (5).[4] It can be argued that the survival of Cornish traits in the American Midwest was made possible due to their strong cultural background and mass mobility to specific mining areas that were considerably less populated than multicultural territories such as the east coast. Although itinerant given their search for workable

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[4]Appalachian linguistic isolation has produced myths such as the idea that Elizabethan English is still employed in this area. Montgomery (1998) discusses this situation at length and debunks the idea. He considers it little more than a mere "romanticization of mountain life by outsiders, creating a link between "the mountains in general or at least with older, less educated people" (73).

terrain, they became one of the multiple representative communities that gave shape to the United States and whose legacy, if not their speech, has survived until today.

## 4.   Nineteenth-century Cornish Dialect

Awareness of the existence of a British western dialect dates back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An early example can be found in George Puttenham's (1529 – 1590) renowned *The Art of English Poesie* (1590), where he wrote:

> theirs is the purer English Saxon at this day, yet it is not ſo Courtly nor ſo currant as our Southerne English is, no more is the far Weſterne mās speech: ye ſhall herefore take the vſuall speech of the Court, and that of London and the ſhires lying about London within lx. Myles, and not much aboue. (121)

Alexander Gill (1565-1635) would supplement this admonitory remark with his own in his publication *Logonomia Anglica* (1619), where he describes the western dialect in the following terms:

> But of all the dialects the Western has the most barbarous flavour, particularly if you listen to rustic people from Somerset, for it is easily possible to doubt whether they are speaking English or some foreign language. For even now (…) English words are replaced by their own (…) [and] they have this peculiarity, that they alter certain irregular nouns of either number ending in z in order to distinguish the number, e.g. hooz hose. (103)

A general increase in the amount of related evidence is attested during the nineteenth century, comments that can be taken to inform our knowledge of the historical characteristics of south-western speech.

The geographical location of Cornwall proved to be fundamental to the perdurance of its native language until as late as 1777, when the last native speaker, Dorothy Pentreath, passed away. Cornered in the westmost area of England, the Celtic inhabitants of the peninsula retained the purity of their mother tongue until the outset of the Industrial Revolution, having resisted the overbearing influence of Saxon communities spreading throughout England (see

Jago 1882, Payton 2004). The most iconic and relevant piece of literature regarding the history of the Cornish language until the nineteenth century is penned by Frederick William Pearce Jago (1838 – 1892), who in 1882 published *The Ancient Language and Dialect of Cornwall*. In essence, it is a prolix treaty that recounts the beginnings of the Cornish tongue and the subsequent stages it underwent until it became a rich and recognisable dialect at the time of Jago's book's publication and, to this day, a cornerstone of nonstandard English. His work is without doubt a remarkable record of Cornish features, composed with the purpose to encapsulate a culture that the industrial momentum of the era could have erased completely.

In his book, Jago narrates how "the ancient Cornish was [still] understood, and spoken, from one end of Cornwall to the other" in the late sixteenth century, whilst by the beginning of the 18th, "its use [was] confined to the Land's End district, about St. Paul, and St. Just" employed mainly by workers and labourers (45). All but "scattered words are all that are left" by the end of the nineteenth century, he explains, which for him signifies the end of a language with outstanding lineage and pedigree. Jago considers the composition of the Cornish dialect in his era the combination both Cornish and English tongues, and that and points at a levelling process as the responsible for dialectal lexical losses (46-47).

Contemporary improvements in Jago's society, among which locomotion[5] and refinement of roads stood out, as mentioned above, posed a peril to the survival of dialects. Jago also places blame on the ever-increasing educative system. It is in the classroom where ideology met language and pupils were instilled with what was considered an acceptable form of English, thus "bring[ing] about a great change in Cornish speech" (49). The diversity of the dialect leads Jago to consider it a "motley" given that it possessed a mixture of Cornish words, Old English ones and insertions of English words "used in a provincial manner" (52). Jago elaborates

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[5] Jago informs that the opening of the Cornwall railway in 1859, putting the county in contact with the rest of the country, "accelerated" the process of dialect levelling due to "greater intercommunication" (49).

further, providing a few paragraphs to consider the most elemental traits one could find in the speech of Cornwall at the time. Table 1 displays these features as presented in Jago (1882) with examples divided in phonological changes related to vowels and consonants:

| Vowels | Consonants |
|---|---|
| "I is pronounced like *e*," e.g. *selver* "silver" | "the *s* (is pronounced) like *z*." e.g. zaid "said" |
| "the *e* (is pronounced) like *ai*," e.g. *raide* "read" | "the *f* (is pronounced) like *v*," e. g. *vaather* "father" |
| "the *a* (is pronounced) like *aa*," e.g. *traade* "trade" | "*g* is almost always dropped at the end of a word," e.g. *writin* "writing" |
| "the *o* (is pronounced) like *aw*," e.g. *awnly* "only" | Periphrastic "do": "There is a frequent use of the word *do*" (57), e.g. *I do know* |
| "the *u* (is pronounced) like *oo*)," e.g. *oogly*, "ugly" | "In such words as *thick, thing* and *thin*, the *th* is pronounced not like a *d*, or like *th*, but in a manner half-way between the two," e.g. *theek*, *theeng*, *theen* |

Table 1. Traits of Cornish speech, collected by Jago (1882, 57-58)

Some of these features are coincidental with later descriptions of West Country English during the nineteenth century. Ihalainen (1994) also notices the quality of periphrastic "do", and supplies the example "*they da peel them,*" along with the voicing of fricatives, transforming /s/ and /f/ into /z/ and /v/, e. g. *zay* 'say'. Given the proximity of counties within the West Country, it is only normal that even a closer inspection like this one could not be precise since some of the traits listed above may still seep into neighbouring counties. However, it presents a more detailed account of what we should expect from Cornish speakers to have sounded like at that point in

time. Drastic changes from this moment forward cannot be anticipated given that, as Ihalainen (1994) explains, "it would seem that from 1776 till the second half of the nineteenth century dialects were stable" since "in the second half of the nineteenth century, an active policy to eradicate regional features" (205) was implemented in public schools to erase any trace of rurality and protect the English language (at least from the point of view of the prescriptivism from that era).

## 5.  Mineral Point: An Exemplary American-Cornish Mining Community

Taking into consideration the information discussed thus far, it seems pertinent to return to southwestern Wisconsin and address Mineral Point as a case study of transported recognised Cornish traits during the nineteenth-century migratory movements. The situation of Cornish miners becomes substantially relevant, since Jago (1882) asserts that "[t]he miner holds to his peculiar form of speech, apparently with more tenacity than the husbandman" (54), meaning that miners could have secured the successful transplantation of their native speech to new communities across the Atlantic more efficiently than other Cornish demographic groups.

Rowe (1959) provides details on the movements of Cornish migrants in America. He indicates that "several went to Mexico to instal and work pumping machinery in silver mines," yet "[in] the eighteen-thirties a fair number came to the lead mines of Wisconsin, there to build Cornish villages of white-washed cottages and 'Methody' chapels that were replicas of the hamlets from whence they came" (6). Rowse (1969) offers helpful insight regarding the migratory movement of Cornish people once in the Lead Region. He enumerates the principal areas in Wisconsin and thereabouts they moved to:

> the southeastern part of Grant County, centering upon Platteville; the southwestern part of neighboring Lafayette County, around Benton and Shullsburg; almost all the southern half of Iowa County, including Mineral Point, Linden and Dodgeville. An, across the Illinois border, the northwestern part of Jo Daviess

> County, focusing upon Galena. All this territory was, of course, one area [since] the Cornish tended to settle thickest where the best mines were. (Rowse 1969, 217)

It is among these that Mineral Point poses itself as an appropriate scenario to analyse the presence of Cornish dialect features. [6] Located in Iowa County, in the southwest part of Wisconsin, it was settled in 1827, an attractive point due to its vast mines of zinc and lead. The present population tops the 2,581 inhabitants in 2020, and the current number in 2023 is none the different to a significant degree. It occupies an area of 3.08 square miles, water and land combined, as per a report issued by the United States Census Bureau in 2020. Mineral Point is known for its annual celebration, the Cornish Festival, which in 2023 will take place in the last quarter of September. Mineral Point is also the location of a historic and emblematic site, Pendarvis, which is included in the National Register of Historic Places, and consists of nineteenth-century cabins that were inhabited by Cornish migrants. The name is a clue to its origins, reflected in the famous rhyme "By Tre Pol and Pen / Shall ye know all Cornishmen" (recorded by Carew 1602, 55).

Attraction to this location is based on its history, being one of the places where a true Cornish bloodline was felt and recognised by others in neighbouring communities (and which in fact is still celebrated today). The available records from American inhabitants noticed the difference in speech and customs and commented on it. Rowse indicates that "[w]hat struck people most, as in the Copper Country, was the strong and unmistakable Cornish dialect" (1969, 222). The integration of Cornish people into the new host society put in perspective what aspects of their original sociocultural background could still be preserved and which would be seen as different and eventually discarded to welcome new habits that were

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[6] In fact, its popularity invited other communities from England to settle in the area surrounding Mineral Point, such as Devonshire inhabitants (Birch 1985-86, 129). These migrants from Cornwall's neighbouring county and spiritual Celtic sibling formed another community close-by that was named Devonshire Hollow, located "just east of Mineral Point […] in a number of ravines […] in northeastern Lafayette County" (129).

purely American. Barkan (2004, 341) comments on this in the following terms: "preserving homeland ties involve[s] the struggle to determine how far to go in adapting to the new host society, balancing cultural maintenance with cultural retreat as well as prior social connections with new social bonds" (quoted in Schwartz 2006, 176). There are reports which show how new inhabitants did not seem to quite grasp the lengths they had gone and how far apart from their homeland they were. This can be perceived in examples gathered by Rowse (1969), where he cites with a dialect rendering the statement from a man that was questioned whether he knew how far England was from America, to which he responded: "I cudn' tell 'ee 'zackly, but 'tedn' far apart," or the amazement registered on a woman who marvelled at the idea of the moon being the same for both Wisconsin and Cornwall, expressed thus: "Mary Ann, do 'ee come out 'ere. Do 'ee see that moon? I reelly believe 'tes the same old moon we d' 'ave in Cornwall." (222).

The use of Cornish features was abandoned by those who moved further West. Given the distinct characteristics of their dialect, they were soon recognised and marked as different, some of them deciding not to employ their homeland speech. This is reported by a miner who decided to move to California in the peak of the gold fever, William T. George. Arriving in 1885 in California, he reported that: "I soon dropped my [Cornish] accent when I got to school here [Grass Valley]," he stated, "because everyone made fun of me." (Ewart 1998, quoted in Schwartz 2006, 176).[7]

## 6. Methodology and Data Analysis

This paper considers mainly the account provided by A. L. Copeland in 1898 as proof of Cornish dialect activity in Mineral Point during the nineteenth century and its survival. Such account is reviewed with a qualitative methodology, given the scarcity of available

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[7] This is perhaps part of the famous "melting pot". To fit in, mix and not be singled out, which is why Cornish "made a concerted effort to become what Thurner has described as 'un-hyphened Americans'" (Schwartz 2006: 176).

material. Thus, features gathered by Copeland are displayed in a two-column table to indicate Cornish dialect examples and their Standard English counterparts. This is followed by a brief interpretation of phonological changes reflected in the spelling variants presented by Copeland. Such data is intended to represent the transported Cornish features to Southwestern Wisconsin. Additional reference to a nineteenth-century letter referenced in Birch (1985-86) is appended to illustrate dialect employment in a primary source during Copeland's timeframe. Data is then employed to contrast with Holway's (1997-98) indication that Mineral Point had lost most of its non-standard features, since none of the traits displayed in Copeland a century before are noticed.

## 7. Transported Cornish Features in Mineral Point and their Gradual Disappearance

In 1898, A. L. Copeland published what he called a "sketch of the Cornish in Southwest Wisconsin," which, according to him, had not been "obtained (…) from books or newspapers" given that "no article, written upon this subject, ha[d] been found." In fact, he claims that "(a)ll the information here given—little as it is—has been obtained in conversation with pioneers of the lead region, and by any personal observation of the manners and customs of the Cornish settlers" (301).

This statement seems to make the data collected by Copeland reasonably new and relevant to a study of enregistered traits of Cornish outside England. Given that it is merely an assemblage of picked-up expressions and words that cannot be quantified for comparison, I have applied a qualitative methodology.

The following examples in Table 2 are noted by Copeland, which are "still in use among the 'thorough Cornish people' of the old lead region" (1898: 324). Copeland did not catalogue them in terms of lexis, grammar or phonology, therefore they appear in the same order as given in his sketch:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Art en* | 'Are not' |
| *I'd as lev do en as not* | 'I'd as leave do not' |
| *The bal* | 'The mine' |
| *Crabit* | 'Scarf' |
| *Cligy* | 'Candy' |
| *En* | 'Him' or 'it' |
| *Braav* | 'Excellent' |
| *Chack* | 'Check' |
| *Crib* | 'Lunch' |
| *Click-hand* | 'Left-hand' |
| *Dussen 'ee* | 'Do you not?' |
| *Fuchin'* | 'Walking lazy', 'throwing away time' |
| *Forthy* | 'Bold' |
| *houzen* | 'Houses' |
| *Nist* | 'Near' |
| *Oo* | Pronounced as in 'moon' |
| *Wor* | 'Was' |
| *Wessen 'ee* | 'Will you not?' |
| *Iss* | 'Yes' |
| *To clunk* | 'To swallow' |
| *Gove* | 'Gave' |
| *Bould* | 'Bold' |
| *Gate* | 'Great' |

Table. 2 Some examples of the Cornish dialect noticed by Copeland in Mineral Point (1898)

Given that Copeland did not purport himself to be anything but a half-Cornish antiquarian at heart, these examples only provide an explanation to clarify their meaning. However, some of the phenomena he notices can be also interpreted given they hint changes at a phonological level:

- *Lev* may imply a non-standard evolution of the FLEECE lexical set (Wells 1982).

- *En* is a recognised form of accusative in the West Country, vastly present in Devon as well (see Chope 1891, Hewett 1892).

- *Dussen 'ee* may be a transfiguration of the more antique form "Doesn't thee?".

- *Houzen* appear to be anemployment of t Old English weak noun plural suffix *-en*, noticed in words such as "children," or "oxen."

- *Wor* could possibly be an instance of what Trudgill addresses as the r-variant, whose employment is based on preference rather than a fixed evolutive tendency (see Trudgill 2020).

- *Gove* may be considered to present a case of diphthong shifting, from /ei/ to /oʊ/, given Copeland's interpretation as it being "gave."

- *Gate* appears to have dropped the "r," given Copeland's interpretation of it being "great."

Copeland's catalogue of features seems to be the largest available so far regarding Cornish expressions and words heard in the vicinity of Mineral Point. It represents a compact and comprehensive list of traits collected in the southwest of Wisconsin. Additionally, the following example extracted from a letter to John Pile, a Cornish migrant that became an important figure in Mineral Point as local reverend, could be added as a primary source where Cornish dialect is noticed: "make up your mind befor you leave that you wil not setell befor you get in the western part of America for thear you can purchas land at 10 schillings per acer.... whear *I be* it is selling for 50 or 60 dollars per acer and some 100 per acer" (quoted in Birch 1985-86, 134, my emphasis). Perhaps here the most relevant trait is the example of finite *be*: "I be."

In the 1998 issue of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Chester P. Holway and Larry A. Reed published a relevant piece to document their visit to Mineral Point and Taliesin (roughly 24 miles apart). Whilst Holway's paper is closer to a travelogue than anything else, it is of tantamount importance what he writes about his walking Mineral Point's streets in the late twentieth century:

> It is on the tip of my tongue. I have re-hearsed it carefully, and I am sure I can say it nicely. I stroll up the main street of Mineral Point and nod pleasantly to friendly looking passersby. They nod back.
>
> "Good morning," they say, or, "Fine day, isn't it?"
>
> Not a single one will oblige me. I keep hoping to hear someone greet me with, "'Ow ist 'ee gettin' on, you?"
>
> Then I shall answer, "Braav and keenly."
>
> I never get the chance. Mineral Point is all American, too. (Holway 1998, 113)

In this brief reference to the features that are already familiar thanks to Copeland (1898) and some of the sentences recorded in Rowse (1969), Holway demonstrates that there was, as late as 1998, an expectation on the part of non-natives to find an indexed set of Cornish features still working in the area. Holway anticipated his presence would be met with the casual Cornish expressions alive during the migratory movements of the 1850s, known to him and understood as peculiar to the place. Yet he is disappointed to discover nobody would produce such sentences, which he assumes is due to the overall Americanisation of Mineral Point.

This situation seems to prove that the characteristics supplied by Copeland were still accepted as likely in the latter half of the twentieth century, defining the Cornish character and personality of the place. Thus far we could surmise that those features were recognisable at the peak of Cornish mining communities as part of their linguistic register and that their transportation from England to Midwest America had been successful. That Holway's fancy is not indulged by twentieth-century Mineral Point inhabitants probably leads us to conjecture that a process of de-registerment (Williams 2012, 55) took place at some point in time between Copeland's

sketch and Holway's purported travelogue. Cooper (2017) aptly exemplifies this process of de-registerment with fossilised forms of the Yorkshire dialect; his explanation poses a scenario where "features are 'deregistered' to the point where their salience is lost altogether, and their meanings are virtually no longer understood by anyone" (50). It is most probable, nevertheless, to think that all vestiges of Cornish in Mineral Point have shimmered down to a few pieces of folklore, such as recipes, buildings and traditional clothing. We assume that, given the overall influence of General American, "varieties introduced at a later stage have a correspondingly slight influence" (Hickey 2004, 13). This could be the case of the Cornish dialect in Mineral Point.

## 8.  Conclusion

Promises of a better and profitable future led Cornish people to embark towards American soil during the nineteenth century. Different records cast pertinent data concerning Cornish settlements in the Lead Region area, Mineral Point becoming the most pertinent in southwestern Wisconsin. This specific community displayed a series of nonstandard English traits that left a lasting impression and was recognisable by other US inhabitants in the area at the time. This situation supports the idea that some possibly enregistered Cornish dialect features were transported to the US from Cornwall and indexed a specific type of person, the Cornish miner, or cousin Jacks.

A. L. Copeland's (1898) commentaries on Mineral Point's Cornish community exhibit a set of recognised Cornish features, listed in antiquarian monographs at the time, which transported overseas during the migratory movements in the nineteenth century. During this time, Cornish settlers informed their neighbours back home about the situation in America with extensive missives detailing daily affairs and events. Such letters, as provided by Birch (1985-86), also show dialect traits coincidental with Copeland's timeline. However, by the end of the twentieth century those traits were no longer representative of a collective or community and

therefore have been progressively de-registered as the original Cornish miners those features were associated with eventually segregated and moved to other parts of the country. This fall in disuse and overall Americanisation of Mineral Point is represented in Howley's (1997-98) remarks during his visit to Mineral Point and thereabouts, where the cousin Jack persona is nowhere to be found and its speech gone.

Whilst this paper has examined existing Cornish traits in a single town of popular mining area for Cornish migrants during the nineteenth century, other parts of the US could have retained West Country or, specifically, Cornish features as well. This could be the case of the Smith and Tangier Islands in the East Coast, where the Ocracoke brogue has aroused scholar attention. Future research on these parts could be beneficial to form a comprehensive map of enregistered (and de-registered) West Country features overseas. Hopefully, this paper will generate more interest in the linguistic heritage of Cornish miners in the United States and its effect on contemporary American English.

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# Notes

# "DYING IS AN ART": CATHARSIS AND THE PURIFYING MAKING OF THE SELF IN SYLVIA PLATH'S "FEVER 103º", "LADY LAZARUS", AND "ARIEL"

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**W**hen asked about the possible autobiographical origin of her poems during an interview a year prior to her death, Sylvia Plath answered that they emerged from a kind of non-narcissistic emotional experience purposely manipulated to come as "relevant to the larger things" (Orr 1966, 170). In the decades after Plath's passing, her poems came to acquire several new, quite narcissistic interpretations that enhanced her status as a poet of death and suicide. As a result, the true nature of her writings was greatly misread and the emphasis on these "larger things" has been since then chiefly obliterated. This note aims at the revalorization of the intensely philosophical depth that her poetry entails, and thus focuses on Plath's initiatory process of the making of the self in her poems "Fever 103º", "Lady Lazarus", and "Ariel". Following Kroll (1976), Rosenblatt (1979) and Patea's (1989, 2007) theorizations on Plath's philosophy of cathartic death and rebirth, the aim of this paper is to analyze such mythic process of initiation in said three poems. Written in 1962 amid a creativity burst, these poems follow a similar structure regarding mythic rebirth, and Plath masterfully evokes in them the self's emotional experience against a deeply oppressive background. The making of the poetic self in these texts

serves Plath to explore her metaphysical concerns on the larger things of life and death. Therefore, this note concludes that, in a progression that is highly influenced by archaic rites of initiation as well as historical, literary, mythological, and biblical texts, the poetic persona faces her enemies and is made anew after purgation as she overcomes the oppressive hindrances caused by earthly life.

**Keywords:** death, rebirth, catharsis, Plath, initiation

## 1.   Introduction

Through the years, many critics and scholars have dismissed Sylvia Plath's interest and emphasis on the "larger things" (Orr 1966, 170) in life—motherhood, technology, the nuclearization of society, marriage, death, nature, among others—as a direct result of her polemic suicide in 1963. [1] Plath inevitably became a poet of suicide and death, and the complexities of her work were largely obliterated. The emergence of new sociopolitical movements regarding civil and human rights in the following years—mainly second-wave feminism—accentuated Plath's figure as a victim of oppressive domesticity and reduced her poems to a series of connotations different, or less diverse, than those intended by the poet (Rosenblatt 1979, 4; Patea 1989a, 21; Patea 2007b 59-61).

Consequently, the interpretation of her poetry often falls short of analytical depth regarding her philosophy, as a result not only of Plath's biography but also of the ideological and cultural context of the time. During a rush of creativity in the autumn of 1962—and soon after her separation from Ted Hugues, which arguably added to her final depressive episode—, Plath wrote a series of poems involving mythic rebirth that would later be published posthumously in the 1965 *Ariel* collection. In these poems, among

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[1] See Phyllis Chesler's *Women and Madness* (1972) and Otto Friedrich's *Going Crazy* (1976). Jon Rosenblatt explains in *The Poetry of Initiation* that these works, along with popular magazines such as *Time* and *Literature and Psychology*, have largely contributed to Plath's suicidal image (1979, x).

which are found "Fever 103º", "Lady Lazarus", and "Ariel", Plath skillfully illustrates the self's emotional experience. In a strong urge to be reborn, the self in these poems must undergo an initiatory process of purgation in order to overcome the limitations imposed by her oppressors and be transmuted into a superior liberated identity.

## 2. Death and Rebirth

Plath dramatized death and rebirth in her poems through a mythic rite of initiation. As previously explained, such archaic process can easily be appreciated in "Ariel", "Fever 103", and arguably in less degree, in "Lady Lazarus". Although written in 1962, these poems receive the influence of 1959, a crucial year in her career, when Plath began dramatizing initiatory death. By using this form, the poet was able to "explore interpersonal relationships and tabooed, morbid experiences", hence being "objective and subjective at the same time" (Govindan 1997, 153) and thus honoring her views on poetry writing. In these monologues, the poetic persona encounters both human and natural listeners and dramatizes the self's need for transformation:

> Plath employs numerous personae; she establishes objective settings within which the speakers of her poems dramatize themselves; and she consistently employs imagery in a nonrealistic manner. Rather than using the personal image or autobiographical reference to reflect back upon herself, Plath uses personal allusions as the foundation for dramas of transformation and psychological process. (Rosenblatt 1979, 17)

Therefore, the dramatic monologue plays an essential role in the self's externalization of her inner conflict, as the poetic voice tends to address the very destructive forces that hinder the way towards rebirth. Paradoxically, death is the only plausible way towards liberation. Replicating archaic rites of initiation,[2] dying in Plath's poems implies the end of "chaos", hence providing "the clean slate

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[2] See Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) and Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* (1969).

on which will be written the successive revelations whose end is the formation of a new man" (Eliade 1958, xiii). The lived experience must be shredded to achieve the essence of the self; death is staged as a rebirth.

Ritualistic death is a purifying, regenerating force; it does away with the deteriorating agents affecting the self and opens the gate towards transcendence. As explained by Patea,"the annihilating aspect of death gives way to a cathartic and purifying function of union with the universal and the eternal" (1989a, 216). Customary experience is unable to induce substantial rupture. In order to regain control and become one with the cosmos, the self must enter darkness and die fighting her oppressors: e.g., the husband, father, and doctor in "Lady Lazarus", "Fever 103º", or the even in the renowned "Daddy"; and death and darkness in "Ariel". Plath's poems "depict the encounter with otherness and represent a threatened self, oppressed by a coercive society that violates the intimacy of being" (Patea 2007b, 62). The self and the destructive other return to darkness, which according to Rosenblatt is often equated to the return to the mother's uterus. Rosenblatt links this merging to the unity present in the infant mind before the acquisition of consciousness (1979, 24) and thus, the journey towards the center of life often equates the journey towards the center of death (1979, 25). The defeat of the self over the oppressive force is often symbolized in the shape of a newborn, which embodies the transformation of the poetic persona into a pure, clean, renovated being thanks to the purging powers of death. In the end, the old, false self, who lived a kind of "death-in-life", is vanquished by the true self, who finally finds a "life in death" (Kroll 1976, 13). Through a nuanced dramatization of a ritualistic process of initiatory death, Plath manages to carefully describe the oppression of the poetic voice and the making of a renovated self.

## 3.   Burning into Paradise: "Fever 103º"

In "Fever 103º", the reader attends to the decomposition of a body as a result of the high temperatures instigated by a strong fever. All the old selves dissolve in the fiery ascension into Heaven, as the

heroine resurrects into a luminous "glowing" virgin after suffering the heat of "sin" and "sickness" (Lant 1993, 641). Uneasily moving between history and myth, the poetic voice describes the self's cathartic journey into "Paradise" using an extremely sensorial language: "wheezes", "licking", "cries", "the indelible smell", "smokes", "flickering" (Plath 2018, 231-232). The poem is framed by a mythical pattern. Whereas in the first lines the reader is located within the gates of "hell", guarded by "dull, fat Cerberus" (lines 2-3), the final stanza testifies to the self's cathartic transformation as it transcends life: "(My selves dissolving, old whore petticoats)- / To Paradise" (lines 52-54). Distinctively, the rest of the poem is filled with allusions concerning current affairs of her time, such as the threatening technologization of society— "Hothouse baby in its crib" (line 19), "Radiation turned it white / and killed it in an hour" (lines 23-24)—and historical events— "Greasing the bodies of adulterers / Like Hiroshima ash and eating in / The sin. The sin" (lines 25-27). In contrast to the sustained and vivid mystical images framing the poem, Strangeways argues that "the historical— political image transitions in the center of the poem appear violently swift and lack the resonance of the mythic imagery" (1996, 379). In fact, leaving the old self behind implies a detachment from the past. Kroll explains that in several of Plath's poems—such as "Lady Lazarus", "Ariel", and "Getting There"—the poet "associated the risk of death with the shedding of the past and the achievement of a state of transcendence (or rebirth)" (1976, 171). Once again, through this contrast between past and present, Plath constructs her poetry in relation to the "larger things" (Orr 1966, 170).

The sins of humanity permeate the self in "Fever 103º", and transfiguration against them is necessary to conquer renovation. In the midst of the fire, the poet fears death as she compares the smoke with the death of American dancer Isadora Duncan, caused by the entanglement of her scarf in the wheel of the car she was riding: "Love, love, the low smokes roll / From me like Isadora's scarves, I'm in a fright // One scarf will catch and anchor in the wheel" (Plath 2018, 231, lines 12-13). The self struggles in the "yellow sullen" smoke (line 14), "and because it is the product of man's inhumanity, it not only threatens the speaker but pervades and poisons the entire atmosphere" (Sanazaro 1983, 70). The fire is not yet cathartic, but

rather the opposite: it oppresses the self. Plath herself explained in a note to the BBC that "this poem is about two kinds of fire—the fires of hell, which merely agonize, and the fires of heaven, which purify" (qtd. in Kroll 1976, 179). Fire cleanses the self into death; and death establishes the boundary between torment and rejuvenation, as it "does not imply a total annihilation but the source of new life, capable of abolishing the part of the being stained by time and of promoting an initiatory resurrection" (Patea 2007b, 74). The self flickers "off, on, off on" (Plath 2018, 231, line 29) as the first fire "suffers itself into the second" (qtd. in Kroll 1976, 179); and for "Three days. Three nights" (line 31) suffers a kind of metamorphoses that turns her body too pure "for anyone" and allows for the ascension onto a superior reality: "I think I am going up / I think I may rise" (Plath 2018, 232, lines 43-44). In the fashion of the dramatic monologue, the victorious self addresses her oppressor, which, in this case is the "disintegrated state" of human existence (Patea 1989a, 239): "I am too pure for you" (Plat 2018, 232, line 34), "Does not my heat astound you. And my light." (line 40). Finally, the self, like syntax, crumbles: "Not you, nor him / Not him, nor him / (My selves dissolving, old whore petticoats)/—to Paradise" (lines 52-54). The poem ends with the self's total awareness as it sheds the past and cathartically ascends anew into the sublime.

## 4.   The Big Strip Tease of Lady Lazarus

Following a similar pattern to that of "Fever 103°", the exhibitionist self in "Lady Lazarus" dramatizes the destruction of her old body and personality in an urge to achieve final re-definition in transcendence. The poem is written as a "big strip tease" (Plath 2018, 245, line 28) in which the poetic persona revengefully stands in front of a "peanut-crunching crowd" (line 26) composed of her enemies, flaunting about how she has "nine times to die" (244, line 21); this is her third. Like Lazarus of Bethany in the Bible, the poetic self comes back to life in a kind of miraculous event. "Lady Lazarus" has been linked to Plath's own suicidal nature—she tried to overdose on her mother's pills in 1953 and attempted to die by crashing her car into a river in 1962 (Lachman 2008). The poetic

voice describes herself as a "walking miracle", with skin "bright as a Nazi lampshade" and a "featureless" face, "fine Jew linen" (lines 4-9): through death, she has peeled off "the napkin / O [her] enemy" (lines 10-11) and transformed into a "smiling woman" (line 19). Death acquires a double meaning: it puts an end to existence, but it also enables a new life as it facilitates the transcendence onto a superior realm. Despite the associations with Plath's mental condition, Rosenblatt contends that similarly to "Fever 103⁰'" and "Ariel", "Lady Lazarus" replicates a rite of initiatory drama. The poem obeys to "the three-part structure that most students of myth see as basic to initiation: entry into darkness, ritual death, and rebirth" (1979, 27). The poetic persona of "Lady Lazarus", like in "Fever 103⁰'" is composed of many selves that fight against the decadence: "What a trash / To annihilate each decade" (Plath 2018, 245, lines 23-24). The entry into darkness of this third attempt at dying takes place as Lady Lazarus offers herself to her enemy, the Nazi doctor:

> And there is a charge, a very large charge
>
> For a word or a touch
>
> Or a bit of blood
>
> Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.
>
> So, so, Herr Doktor.
>
> So, Herr Enemy.
>
> I am your opus,
>
> I am your valuable. (lines 61-68)

The ritual death takes place as "the pure gold baby"—the oppressor's creation, the result of their coercion—"melts to a shriek" (lines 69-70). She turns and burns until she is finally reborn as a demon "with red hair" (line 83), and like the Phoenix, rises "out of the ash" (247, line 82). The final line "And I eat men like air" (line 84) signals her cathartic revenge against the oppressive forces

destructing her: the deteriorating passing of time and the Nazi physician.

The oppressor in "Lady Lazarus" might signal, on the one hand, Plath's own struggles with the inclemencies of 1950s psychoanalysis, which she also portrayed in her semi-autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar* (1963). As Deborah Nelson (2006) argues:

> Adjusting to the ambivalence of the role of woman, housewife and mother was aided by the (usually) male doctor. Plath need not be speaking just of her own experience, but more generally of an institution that demands secrets and hands them back in a new form, one which the patient has not given them.

In fact, the audience is composed by males in its entirety: "Herr Doktor", "Herr Enemy", "Herr God, Herr Lucifer" (lines 65-66, 79), which highlights the female quality of the self and hints at the coercive power dynamics of society affecting women at the time. As she memorably does in "Daddy", Plath strikingly uses the German language as well as the metaphor of the Holocaust to refer to her emotionally oppressive experience. The self is a "Jew" who disintegrates, cremated into "ash" and "bone"; she is a victim of Nazi experiments—"my skin / Bright as a Nazi lampshade" (Plath 2018, 244-246)—and concentration camps (Patea 1989a, 241; Bagg 1969, 35) who is similarly imprisoned by existence on earth. In fact, many critics accused her of banalizing the implications of Nazism (Leon Wieseltier, Joyce Carol Oates, Seamus Heaney, among others). As Rose explains, "the key concept appears to be metaphor — either Plath trivialises the Holocaust through that essentially personal [it is argued] reference, or she aggrandises her experience by stealing the historical event." (1991, 206). Leaving aside this dilemma regarding whether Plath had the right to appropriate such events for her poetry, Young argues: "Her metaphors are built upon the absorption of public experience by language itself, experience which is then internalized and made private by the poet, used to order her private world, and then re-externalized in public verse" (1987, 132). It is undeniable that by including the issue of the Holocaust, Plath draws on human public experience to proficiently highlight the extremity of the self's private oppression. Although

Lady Lazarus' final purgation might be less obvious than that of the self in "Fever 103º", the oppression in the environment allows the reader to still get a final sense of liberation, of the cleansing of an old identity.

## 5. Horse-Back Riding into Transcendence: "Ariel"

Comparably to Lady Lazarus, the self in "Ariel" triumphantly describes her journey towards transcendence, this time, while horse-back riding through the bushes from dusk till dawn. In fact, Plath's husband Ted Hugues, as well as poet Robert Lowell, who wrote the foreword for the first edition of posthumous collection *Ariel* (1966), confirmed that "Ariel" was the name of Plath's horse. Smith points out:

> What she sought at the end was more than the artist's wish to break down divisions between imagination and reality, more than the neurotic's need to span fantasy life and actual, habitual life. She wanted, at last, unity which can spiritualize, consecrate, and transubstantiate, the most earth-rooted, foul things. (1972, 338)

Plath impregnates the mundane experience of horse-back riding with a mythical quality, merging reality and spirituality through dramatization. The poetic persona of "Ariel" is "God's lioness" (Plath 2018, 239, line 4)—the Hebrew translation of Ariel—, who ecstatically travels from "the stasis in darkness" (line 1) into "the red // Eye, the cauldron of morning" (lines 30-31). The title of the poem—which also stands as the self's own name—not only alludes to Jerusalem ("the city destined to be destroyed by fire" [Britzolakis 2006]), but also to the spirit in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Like she more explicitly does in her other poem "Full Fathom Five", Plath might be hinting at "the theme of transformation and specifically transformation wrought in language" (Gill 2006) also present in the 17th-century Shakespearean play.

Hurriedly, the initial calm of nightfall is interrupted by a loss of control as the rider cannot catch the horse's neck. She is hooked and torn by the wild berry bushes in a kind of sacrificial rite that gives way to the decomposition of the self. The I turns into "White / Godiva" and loses the "dead stringencies" (lines 19-21), that is, the

old selves that burdened her (Kroll 1976, 174). For Sanazaro, Godiva, the devout wife of Earl of Leofric who rode naked through Coventry to save its inhabitants from excessive taxation, stands as a religious allusion (1983, 74). Nonetheless, in the poem, Godiva unpeels to spiritually save herself. Through a metamorphosis of consciousness similar to that of "Fever 103º", the self is now "foam to wheat, a glitter of seas" (Plath 2018, 239, line 23) and enters the final initiatory stage of immortality as a rejuvenated persona: "The child's cry // Melts in the wall" (lines 24-25). The wheat stands for "the epiphany of eternal life" and belongs to both "the natural and absolute order", as it is a divine emblem which marks "the fainting and rebirth of universal life" (Patea 1989a, 238). Nature acts not only as the main stage for the rite of initiation, but also as another component of the whole mythic process. It mirrors the emotional experience of the self. She transmutes into suicidal "dew", ready to merge into the red flames of the morning sun (Plath 2018, 240, lines 28-31). Unlike in the previous two poetic works, the imagery in "Ariel" does not give way to distraction: the poem "draws the attention into the sense of this central experience, which the images unify and from which they do not detract. Godiva, the split furrow, the hooks of the berries, the cauldron of morning all directly evoke the sense of ecstatic transcendence" (Kroll 1976, 180). The result is a compact description of the self's journey towards the eternal center of life, the promise of absolute reality, which achieves the desired regeneration by means of once again shedding all impurities. As Britzolakis puts it, "the trope of the horse and rider unfolds an ambiguous celebration of embodied movement ('at one with the drive') as intensely pleasurable, yet self-immolating" (2006). Such effect is achieved also through the enjambment, which provides a sense of immediacy and adds to the rush of transmutation. As the poetic I rides into the red light of daybreak, she joins a superior reality in the shape of a new, pure self.

## 6. Conclusions

The making of a new self is arguably the driving force beneath the 1962 poems "Fever 103º", "Lady Lazarus", and "Ariel". Plath's metaphysical concerns come to life in the shape of a mythical rite of

initiation clearly marked in the development of these poems. Each in their own way, the three poems follow the three-stage structure of archaic initiatory processes which sets in motion the cathartic renovation of the self. In "Fever 103º" the access to darkness is symbolized by the Cerberus-guarded gates of Hell, where the self will begin burning in a fire of purgation. This stage takes place in "Lady Lazarus" when the self poses herself in front of an audience of her male enemies in a big strip show. In her riding journey, the poetic persona of "Ariel" also parts from darkness, more specifically, that of the night. The three selves then undergo the dying stage: the self in "Fever 103º" burns as she does away with all the impurities in her past, Lady Lazarus sheds the remains of her old self as she perishes for the third time, and in "Ariel" the self similarly starts unpeeling the impurities in the ritual sacrificing of her horse.

Similarities can be appreciated in the initiatory rites of the three poems: in "Fever 103º" and "Lady Lazarus" Plath resorts to historical events as a metaphor of the constricted state of the self previously to transmutation. Likewise, the self faces her enemy in the three works: Lady Lazarus confronts her audience, rebels against the passing of time, and teases the Nazi doctor; Ariel defies death and its deteriorating effects in a riding accident, and the self in "Fever 103º" lets the fires of hell consume her in order to experience those of Heaven. The presence of the newborn child to signify rebirth is also present in all poems. The self is finally made anew: by resorting to a rite similar to those of archaic societies, Plath is able to cathartically initiate a new identity into a superior, absolute dimension through her writing.

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# NIN O CHITHAEGLIR LASTO BETH DAER; RIMMO NIN BRUINEN DAN IN ULAER!: THE CELTIC ELEMENTS IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

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*T*he Lord of the Rings (1954-55) world has been subject to numerous studies and comparisons that have sought to establish a link with all those cultural elements that may have influenced its creation. While Norse mythology has been commonly accepted as one of the main references in the creation of Tolkien's fictional world, the role of cultural and mythological elements of Celtic origin has aroused some controversy. The aim of this study is to highlight those elements of *The Lord of the Rings* that are closely related to the Celtic world and to highlight their connection, whether intentional or unintentional, and how some of the artistic design aspects of Peter Jackson's trilogy have brought out or reinterpreted aspects of the original work in a Celtic key. The methodology is based on the traditional empirical scientific method through the detailed study of the film pieces that make up the *Lord of the Rings* and the three books. It is evident, therefore, that, despite Tolkien's irrational dislike of Celtic, there are several concepts and features of the cultures that cohabit in Middle-Earth where numerous echoes of that culture resonate. For the most part, these are unconscious and unintentional choices, and they underline the persistence of Celtic culture even in the last two centuries.

**Keywords:** The Lord of the Rings; J.R.R. Tolkien; Celtic culture; English literature; Celticism

## 1.  Introduction

Tolkien's dislike for 'Celtic things', expressed in his 1937 letter to Stanley Unwin "is well known and could be taken as a definitive discouragement to research in Tolkien's Celtic sources" (Fimi 2007, 1) stating that "Needless to say they are not Celtic!" (*Letters* 26). Nevertheless, among the years scholars have identified whether Tolkien's statements were truly real. Over his trajectory, as J.S. Lyman-Thomas (2014, 272) claims in his article *Celtic: "Celtic Things" and "Things Celtic" —Identity, Language, and Mythology* that Tolkien's fascination with Welsh commenced at early stage with his personal Celtic library even "referring to himself as a "Celtophile" as early as 1929". Thomas (2014, 272) also considers that both his letters and literary works "reflect a consistent interest in and affection for 'things Celtic, particularly Welsh." Dimitra Fimi, in *"Mad" Elves and "Elusive Beauty"* (2006, 3) states that in his letter to Naomi Mitchison in 1954 (*Letters* 144[1]) Tolkien "was far from ignorant about 'things Celtic' and he later described his stories of the Grey Elves as being of a 'Celtic type'." The same author (2007, 2) claims that Tolkien wanted to create a mythology for England and that *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983) was "the earliest version of Tolkien's early nationalistic project for a "mythology for England", including Celtic elements. In his letter to Milton Waldman (*Letters* 131), Tolkien expressed his desire to craft an own mythology to have "the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic" (Carpenter 1891, 144). Among *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983), Ælfwine's voyage is associated with the Celtic Irish tradition of the *Imrama*, concretely to St. Brendan's voyage to the West. The same can be applied to the Celtic otherworld where he would later establish a parallel in his poem *The Nameless Land* (1927) and, that would also suppose in a certain way a kind of inspiration when

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[1]  Cited following the guidelines from Journal of *Tolkien Studies*.

crafting some lands from Middle-earth like Lothlórien and Rivendell. Tolkien's attempt for his mythology for England also went hand in hand with that Arthurian influence even his perspective "on the Arthurian legend did not qualify as 'English' mythology as expressed in his 1951 letter to Milton Waldman" (Fimi 2007, 4).

## 2.  The Otherworld in Middle-Earth: Bridges to the Beyond

According to Dimitra Fimi (2007, 14), in the LotR "are some impressively descriptive places in Celtic texts involving wonderful colourful scenes, often associated with the otherworld or with supernatural characters and events". When we conceive a depiction of the 'otherworld' some common aspects come to our mind, especially death and magic. Steve Blamires, *Magic of the Celtic Otherworld: Irish History, Lore & Rituals*, defines 'otherworld' as a word used for "describing a world beyond death or even for some mortals as a present reality" (2005, 10). Other scholars like Marjorie Burns (2005, 25) consider that the Celts "conceived an otherworld to house their otherworld beings, a spirit world shared and magically juxtaposed with the primary and everyday world." Tolkien himself included in LotR's Middle-earth a primary world represented by mortal races (men, dwarves, and hobbits) and a "secondary world", as Tolkien himself stated, that could be tied to the elvish lands of Lothlórien and Rivendell. Consequently, the author uses different ways to introduce the readers the transition between both worlds, by using bridges, doors, tunnels, archways, and gateways. As Lyman-Thomas (2014, 282) states Marjorie Burn's "insightful analysis from her chapter *Bridges, Gates and Doors* is representative", pointing out that Tolkien's Rivendell and Lothlórien assimilate to the Celtic otherworld and associating those Welsh and Irish elements with his Elves among that mystical and colorful settings.

As Robin Markus Auer describes in his paper *Sundering Seas and Watchers in the Water: Water as a Subversive Element in Middle-earth* as part of the book *Sub-creating Arda: World Rebuilding in J.R.R. Tolkien's work* edited by Dimitra Fimi and Thomas Honegger, "Middle-earth is incredibly physical and the elements of nature (mainly fire, water, earth and air) work to

highlight this physicality (Markus 2019, 238)". At the same time, the same author (2019, 241) considers that "some of landscapes in Middle-earth are strongly connected to the own 'watery' element, mainly lakes and rivers and therefore, to a concrete type of physicality making of that spaces unique cognitive spaces", especially for foreigners. For this reason, watery elements such as lakes and wells also define Tolkien's elvish landscape. To reach Rivendell, the Hobbits and Aragorn must cross a river, which also happens to be a symbol of the entrance to the Celtic otherworld. In Lothlórien, when the fellowship are arriving and must cross the Nimrodel, Legolas feels compelled to wash saying "I will bathe my feet for it is said that the water is healing to the weary" (*FR*, II, vi, 339), implying to what extent water is not only a path between two worlds but a sacred element for those not cohabiting in the land.

Rivendell and Lothlórien are elven cities surrounded by water, not only because water is a sacred element but also because, as its etymology indicates, it provides protection from evil. This can be seen in Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), when Arwen takes Frodo with her to Rivendell to heal the wound the Witch-king inflicted him in Amon Sûl. When the Nazgûl approach the edge of the river, the spectres stop at the border. While the Nazgûl are shown to be neither living nor dead, they are beings that cannot be exposed to light or water:

> They themselves do not see the world of light as we do, but our shapes cast shadows in their minds, which only the noon sun destroys; and in the dark they perceive many signs and forms that are hidden from us: then they are most to be feared. (*FR*, I, xi, 189).

As seen, water in the LotR plays a 'cognitive space' that enables the hobbits to avoid the evil, as seen in the ford of the river Bruinen. Markus (2019, 248) states that Frodo is saved from the Nazgûl as they try to cross the Bruinen and are dragged by the downstream, once again their fear of water and alluding to banshees. In Celtic Irish mythology, banshees are emissaries from the otherworld who foresee the death and are usually found near rivers, dressed in dark robes with cloaks and tend to have pale hair and skin: "There were five tall figures: two standing on the lip of the dell, three advancing.

In their white faces burned keen and merciless eyes; under their mantles were long grey robes" (*FR*, I, xi, 255). The Nazgûl cannot cross the water because, like banshees, have been condemned to wander in darkness. Therefore, both come from the afterlife and are associated with death and their screams and cries can be heard from farther distances.

J.R.R. Tolkien mentions the passing of time through depictions of entrance and departure, depictions which are closely connected to these lands. John Carey in his study on *Time, Space and the Otherworld* (1987, 8) shows that time in the otherworld "is not only out of alignment with mortal time, but that it is fundamentally different in kind". Time in the otherworld can function differently: it can continue in the middle of the present or return to a distant past. This is seen in some Celtic Irish stories as Carey (1987, 2-4) analyses how the Irish tale *Tucait Baile Mongaín* where the Prince of the Cruthin attends to an assembly at Uinsech and a storm forces him to look for shelter. Eventually, he faints. When the prince awakes, he feels as if a full year had passed even though it was just a single night. Frodo awakes in Elrond's House, in Rivendell, asking Gandalf the Grey about the place and the time:

> Elrond has cured you: he has tended you for days since you were brought in. Days? -said Frodo. Well, four nights, and three days, to be exact. The Elves brought you from the Ford on the night of the twentieth, and that is where you lost count. (*FR*, II, i, 285)

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when the fellowship arrives at Rivendell and Frodo catches up with Bilbo, he talks about how time feels there: "Oh, I don't know. I can't count days in Rivendell," (*FR*, II, iii, 385). The same can be applied to Lothlórien, especially when the fellowship departs, "awakening" from the dreamy feeling that Lothlórien spreads and being conscious about how time felt during their stay:

> After their morning meal, The Company said farewell to the lawn by the fountain. Their hearts were heavy; for it was a farewell to Lothlórien, a fair place and it had become like home to them, though they could not count the days and nights that they had passed there. (FR, II, viii, 370)

## 3.  The Forging of a King: The Reflection of Aragorn and Gandalf in the Arthurian Cycle

Tolkien gained an interest for the Arthurian world at an early age with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which he later edited, and that "must have enhanced Tolkien's interest in Celtic studies (Fimi 2007, 4). To Tolkien, Anglo-Saxons "were the true ancestors of the English and he was as much opposed to the cultural heritage of the Celts as to that of the Normans" (Fimi 2007, 7). That would explain why Tolkien considered that the Arthurian myth did not comply with the standards for this English mythology. However, it is clear how Tolkien "adapted and used things Arthurian in his characteristically nuanced way" (Thomas 2014, 283). Also, in the letter he wrote to Milton Waldman in 1952 (*Letters* 131), Tolkien confirms an Arthurian influence in his work: "Of course, there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalised, associated with the soil of Britain but not with the English" (Carpenter 1981, 167).

A good example of this Arthurian influence are the parallelisms established between Frodo, Aragorn, and Arthur. Nozick (2010, 2) claims that King Arthur is "embodied primarily within Aragorn, son of Arathorn." Even though Peter Jackson's films do not show Aragorn's desire for claiming the throne, the books show the opposite. The predisposition in Aragorn's will is more visible there and showcases a cavalry temper of fidelity, sovereignty, and leadership over his people, even before being crowned as King of Gondor and men. Besides, in Roman de Brut's version, when Arthur is born, he is entrusted to be raised by the faeries, stating that they enchanted the child with strong magic and granted him good virtues. Aragorn is raised in similar circumstances, being nurtured by the elves in Rivendell and living with Elrond as a foster father, after Arathorn, his father, is killed by orcs. At the same time, the legendary swords they carry and use to proof their power, 'Narsil' and 'Excalibur', also exemplify this parallelism between Aragorn and Arthur. Both swords serve as a strong artefact and, most importantly, are essential to claim their

respective legitimacy and prophesize the symbolization of the King and his return.

While on the subject, the prophetic symbolism which carries the sword in a message also matters in the study. In Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) a prophecy of Excalibur is written in gold on the base of the plinth where the sword is impaled: "Whoso pullet out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England" (Mallory 1485, 38). In Narsil, a prophecy is also provided in the book *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954) in the Council of Elrond stating:

> All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost. From the ashes a fire shall be woken, a light from the shadows shall spring; renewed shall be the blade that was broken, the crownless again shall be king. (*FR*, II, ii, 247)

To add, Frodo's metaphorical departure to Aman by ship assimilates to that one from King Arthur's to the land of Avalon. As Flieger (2005, 42) states this departure confronts "a deliberate echo of the departure of the wounded Arthur", meaning that J.R.R. Tolkien does not only suggest this Celtic influence in his work but also reinforces it by establishing this parallelism of the two wounded Frodo and Arthur submitted into a 'final' voyage to this 'Celtic' otherworld.

## 4.   Galadriel: "Stronger than the Foundations of the Earth! All Shall Love me, and Despair!"

The term 'faerie' has been generally taggled to define supernatural beings "which can be benevolent or evil, which can destroy or help and live in subterranean places" (Haase 2008, 321). Other scholars like Miller (2014, 35-36) claim that fairies are "natural faeries, guardians of natural spaces such as streams, lakes or forests". Laura Gálvez (2022, 148) considers that Galadriel is probably "one of the most powerful female characters in Tolkien's work." Galadriel is a proud, jealous, and vengeful character, attributions that match with some prominent figures from Celtic paganism such as the Morrigan, the goddess of death, and Morgan Le Fay. Burns (2005, 134)

describes Galadriel as a fairy queen to which "those who have never met her tend to consider her perilous or worse."

In the movies, Galadriel's gaze is full of mystery and fear, a gaze to which mortal beings such as Boromir or Frodo feel (and are) tamed. Even so, Tolkien goes further and confirms Galadriel's demonic side in the *Fellowship of the Ring*, when Frodo offers the ring to her:

> Beautiful and terrible as the morning and the night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair! (*FR*, II, vii, 366)

Galadriel's mother gives her the name of Nerwen, which is strongly associated with the mind, will and strength of the body, features shared with Morrigan as well. At the same time, Galadriel dreams of dominions to control, something related to her pride and strong vision which clearly connects to this goddess. Nonetheless, the Morrigan is also connected to foreseeing and shapeshifting, a common practice in Celtic gods or demigods, and versatility. Like Morrigan, Galadriel owns her own garden in the lands of Lothlórien, hidden from mortal eyes and surrounded by sacred elements such as water, trees, and wells. Besides, Galadriel is also associated with water because of Nenya, the ring of waters and the power of water she inflects when using it to achieve her commitments. At the same time, Morrigan derives primarily "from an ancient Celtic divinity of the waters, an element strongly associated with fertility" (Burns 2005, 122).

Galadriel "echoes the figure of the fairy queen resembling to those from Arthurian literature, Morgan Le Fay" (Burns 2008, 94). Lucy Allen Paton in her book *Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance* (1970) describes the term 'fairy queen': "a supernatural woman, always more beautiful than the imagination can possibly fancy her, untouched by time, unhampered by lack of resources for the accomplishment of her pleasure, superior to human blemish, contingency, or necessity, in short, altogether unlimited in her power" (Allen 1903, 25). In the books, Galadriel is depicted as the 'Mistress of Magic' as also is Morgan Le Fay described as a

sorceress, with "a great clerk of necromancy" (Malory 2000, 4). The first parallel remains in their fear towards mankind. Both Morgan Le Fey and Galadriel "are especially feared because of their power and wisdom, which may be seen as a threat" (Gálvez 2022, 149). As seen in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gimli feels disturbed when entering in the woods of Lórien warning his companions about the 'witch' living there: "but I almost should have said that she was tempting us and offering what she pretended to have the power to give" (*FR*, II, viii, 349). At the same time, both enchantresses share healing skills. As Clarke (1973, 101) claims Morgan Le Fay echoes as a healer who "has learned the uses of all plants in curing the ills of the body." Morgan is the one to set up her brother's departure to Avalon, where he will be healed from his wounds caused in battle. In the case of Galadriel, she heals Gandalf in Dol Guldur when facing Sauron using her powers portrayed in her ring, Nenya.

## 5. Conclusion

Tolkien's dislike for 'Celtic things' as expressed in his 1937 letter to Stanley Unwin marked the beginning of 'Celticism' in Tolkien's work *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55). His Celtic library from early 1929 as well as his definition as a "Celtophile" made scholars to consider Tolkien's inspiration from Irish and Welsh mythology and folklore. Tolkien's longing for an own mythology for England was clearly reported when crafting his first steps in *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983) and later in the LotR. It is clear that J.R.R. Tolkien was influenced by Celtic Irish and Welsh folklore, emphasizing the importance of water in some spaces of his Middle-earth as Lothlórien and Rivendell. Tolkien considered the elvish lands as a secondary world surrounded by rivers and waterfalls that also reinforce the idea of 'cognitive spaces' between the two worlds. Besides, the watery element also aims at protecting from evil beings such as the Nazgûl, that somehow remind of the Celtic Irish banshees.

Besides, Tolkien professed a great interest on the Arthurian Cycle at an early age with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as well as all the Arthurian myth, and that was clearly portrayed when trying

to consider the Arthurian myth as part of mythology for England. It has been seen that even though Tolkien's standards for the Arthurian myth were not appropriate to be included in his work, it is evident that some of that traits were introduced in the LotR in Aragorn, Arthur, and Frodo through the return of the king, prophecies, and departures. At the same time, Tolkien might have taken Morgan Le Fay and embodied her in Galadriel, the fairy queen beautiful, tamed, great mistress of magic and well-skilled in healing. Of course, Galadriel can also embody the goddess Morrigan due to their fertile functionality, watery power, and foreseeing.

As a general implication, this study can provide a further shove on the analysis on Celtic studies in J.R.R. Tolkien's LotR especially towards the elvish landscapes in Middle-earth and their relevance in this mystical conception that assimilates to the Celtic Irish otherworld. Besides, future possibilities on this study can be carried out towards the defense of 'things Celtic' in Tolkien's work as part of his mythological legacy.

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## TITLE

**Abstract**

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**Keywords:** keyword; keyword; keyword; keyword

## Body

Use a 12-point Times New Roman font for the body of the manuscript. The first line of each paragraph should be indented 0.5 (please use the indentation tool included in Word, not the tab key), with the exception of the first line in the first paragraph of each section. **Do not leave a blank space between paragraphs.**

## Headings

Section headings must be used with discretion. They must begin from the left margin, without a period at the end. They must be preceded by Arabic numerals followed by a period (e.g., 1.). Examples are provided below:

# 1.1. Heading 1 (Times New Roman 14, bold)
**1.1. Subheading 2 (Times New Roman 12, bold)**
*1.1.1. Subheading 3 (Times New Roman 12, italicised)*

**Do not capitalise headings or subheadings in full; only content words should be capitalised.**

## Footnotes

Footnotes must be kept to a minimum – they should be limited to comments that cannot be easily accommodated in the body of the text. They should not be used to give bibliographical references that can appear in parenthetical form within the text. They should be numbered, superscripted and placed after the closest punctuation mark. The text of the footnote should be single-spaced and the first line should be indented (0.5 cm).

## Dashes

Long dashes (—) should be used for additional comments, and the spaces between dash and comment should be removed: "I think — and this is just my personal view— that…"

## Spelling

Spelling should be coherent throughout the whole text: British or American English.

## Punctuation

All punctuation marks, except colon and semicolon, should precede closing quotation marks (e.g., "the bed," she replied).
Do not use commas before "and" and "or" in a series of three or more. Never use a comma and a dash together.

## Tables and figures

All tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and referred to by their numbers within the text (e.g., *as shown in Table/Figure 1*). The table/figure must be centred, and the title must be placed below it (Times New Roman 12, bold). The description of the table should follow the title (Times New Roman 12), as in the following example:

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| 3 | 4 |

**Table 1**. Brief description of the contents of the table

## Exemplification

If the author provides a list of examples including sentences, they should be listed, indented (0.5) and written in an 11-point font following the example:

(1) Hi there! My name is Lauren.
(2) Goodbye! It was nice to see you.
(3) I am really glad you finally came here.

Examples must be referred to by their numbers within the text (e.g., *as shown in (1)*).

## Further guidelines

— Double inverted commas should be used for "Titles of articles" or "Quotes embedded within running text"; simple inverted commas for 'Emphasis' and 'Meanings'; and italics for *Book Titles*, *Foreign Words* and *Lemmas*.
— No bold font should be used in the text body.
— When page numbers are used for citation, they should be included within parentheses and without abbreviations such as p. or pp.