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Women's Sexuality and Reproductive Rights through Animalistic and Mechanistic Images in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*

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Abstract

The discussion of women's sexuality and reproductive rights is at the core of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972). The Canadian writer explores sex, contraception, pregnancy, giving birth and abortion through the female characters of Anna and the unnamed narrator. In dealing with these issues, Atwood employs images of machines and animals that are deeply rooted in Western culture's understanding of the female body to criticize and expose the exploitation and control of women in patriarchal societies.

Keywords: animals, machines, women's sexuality and reproductive rights, *Surfacing*.

La sexualidad y los derechos reproductivos de la mujer en la novela *Surfacing* de Margaret Atwood

Resumen

El tratamiento de la sexualidad y los derechos reproductivos de las mujeres es un tema central en la novela de Margaret Atwood *Surfacing* (1972). La contracepción, el embarazo, el parto y el aborto se exploran a través de los personajes femeninos de Anna y la narradora sin nombre. Al tratar estos temas, Atwood utiliza imágenes de máquinas y animales fuertemente arraigadas en la concepción del cuerpo femenino en la cultura occidental para criticar y exponer la explotación y el control de las mujeres en las sociedades patriarcales.

Palabras clave: animales, máquinas, sexualidad femenina y derechos reproductivos de las mujeres, *Surfacing*.

Written in the style of a mystery novel about a woman's search of her missing botanist father on a remote northern Quebec island in the company of her partner Joe and a married couple formed by David and Anna, *Surfacing* (1972) delves into key issues pertaining to women's sexuality and reproductive rights (Thakur 214; Feldman-Kołodziejuk 30-33). Through the two female characters of Anna and the unnamed protagonist providing the narrative perspective, Margaret Atwood explores sexual relationships, contraception, pregnancy, labor, and abortion. On dealing with these topics, the Canadian writer resorts to images of machines and animals that are deeply rooted in Western culture's understanding of the female body.

This paper discusses the mechanistic and animalistic iconography surrounding women's experiences with sex, contraception, pregnancy, giving birth and abortion in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. The study begins with an overview of the main metaphors used in the representation of the female body in Western cultures. This will serve as a framework to analyze those images of machines and animals informing the protagonist's and Anna's sexuality and reproductive rights. The conclusion summarizes Atwood's agenda behind the use of these images considering the author's strong feminist strain in her works as well as her social context, since abortion was still illegal in Canada at the time of the publication of *Surfacing*.

1. Metaphors for the female body in Western cultures

In the Western world, women's bodies have often been subject to metaphor (Ancheta 1-10; Clark 214; Hadd 165; Martin 12; Segal 115; Wohlmann 127-145). The female anatomy and its (reproductive) functions are often understood in terms of fauna (i.e., *pussy* for vagina), flora (i.e., *growing the seed* for pregnancy), natural elements (i.e., *moon time* for menstruation), foods (i.e., *apples* for women's breasts), objects (i.e., *a car* for the female body), dwellings (i.e., *a cave* for the womb), machines (i.e., *the biological clock* for a woman's fertile period), construction work

(i.e., *split body* for miscarriage), cleaning (i.e., *wiping* for abortion), and the language of managerial discourse (i.e., *management* and *regulation* for contraception), among many others.

Such imaginaries of the female body have important repercussions in the way people understand women's biological and social functions (García-Fernández 209-211). They can, indeed, influence and shape individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards women, since metaphors are firmly rooted in the ways in which we "perceive" and "construct" the world. Value-laden, ideologically charged and culturally motivated (Deignan 255; Goatly 15; Lakoff and Johnson 25), metaphors are cognitive mechanisms that provide conceptual frameworks to understand people's selves and experiences. As iconographic references, metaphors may force individuals to see something through a specific lens, often leading to a distorted vision of reality that may make people believe in and commit to certain actions, for, as Fairclough's states, "[w]hen we see the world with a particular metaphor, it then forms basis of our action… our perception of the world and behaviour will change according to the use of a particular metaphor" (67).

Seeing women's bodies as objects, foods, animals, flowers, buildings, machines, or factories, thus, may affect not only our understanding of the female anatomy, but also women's sexuality and reproductive rights. Research has emphasized the distorting and potentially harmful dimensions that certain metaphors have in the representation of menstruation, pregnancy, contraception, menopause, miscarriage, and abortion, both in medical and lay discourses (Littlemore and Turner 9-32; Martin 2-61; Wohlmann 127-147).

Plant images are among the most common representations of the female anatomy (Porteous 2). Turning a woman's body into a fertile soil allows for the explanation of conception, pregnancy, and labor as the seeding, growing, and blossoming of a flower. Pro-life advocates tend to rely on this naturalistic metaphor to attack abortion activists since they liken the termination of a pregnancy with the destruction of nature—with the religious overtones that posit God as the creator of all natural things. This symbolic flora, which subtly demonizes abortion, may deter women from terminating their pregnancies. Simultaneously, it can also stigmatize those females who decide to abort (Jamet and Terry 37).

Animals are a common source of metaphors for the female body too. Figurative fauna, such as *chick*, *kitten*, *cougar*, *tigress*, and the highly taboo *bitch*, tends to underscore women's biological role as mothers, their sexual desirability and activity. Apart from contributing to the objectification and sexualization of females (López-Rodríguez, "Of Women" 77-92; Nilsen 252-269), the identification of women with animals brings to the fore the exploitation of both "species" in patriarchal societies (Adams 12-38; Coviello and Borgerson 1-30). Furthermore, this zoomorphic categorization serves to frame (sexual) relationships in terms of hunting and fishing, ultimately giving man control over women's bodies. As a matter of fact, research has underlined how the representation of man as hunter/fisher and woman as prey often justifies and even promotes negative attitudes towards women, including sexual harassment and even rape (Bock and Burkley 262-272; Guntmann 182-187; Rudman and Mescher 1-9).

Medical texts that explain the female reproductive organs in terms of a bureaucratic organization tend to describe menstruation and menopause negatively as a process involving failure and breakdown of central control (Martin 9-31). Similarly, when women's bodies are conceived as a factory or a machine producing desirable goods, that is, babies, menstruation is viewed as the generation of waste products, and debris whereas menopause as the closure of the manufacturing plant or the breakage of the machine (Anchetta 2-6). These images can certainly take a toll on women's self-esteem and body image on rendering them as useless when they do not beget children. This is particularly detrimental as they age or if they face fertility issues (Martin 9-32; Wohlmann 127-142). In fact, framing the infertile body as a defective machine (i.e., one that fails to achieve pregnancy) has been linked to stress and depression among women as well as to the manipulation of the body using biomedical technology. It has also been reported to affect women's choices regarding fertility treatments (Greil 112; Mezinska and Mileiko 36-38).

Within the mechanistic view, the female body can be depicted as a biological clock whose functioning is limited to a woman's timeline for having children (Weigel 5). Reflected in common expressions such as *the clock is ticking*, *hearing the tick tock*, *the clock is getting louder and louder* and *the clock is running near its end*, this metaphor puts pressure on

women to become mothers. Apart from reducing a woman's existence to her biological function of engendering babies, this clock metaphor also pushes women to seek biomedical technology, for it can *slow down* the effects of the passing of time on their bodies. In fact, studies have pointed out that females are more willing to freeze their eggs when presented with the picture of the biological clock (Yopo 765).

Health manuals and parenting guides often recur to the pregnancy-as-technology metaphor to illustrate women's conception, gestation, and labor. The description of the body of a pregnant woman as a technological device that requires instructions for its operation because it is not intuitive (Ancheta 1-3) but highly complex ultimately leads to an exhaustive control of females during their pregnancies and even to the medicalization of labor (Segal 97; Seikel 113). Besides, when applied to miscarriages, the pregnancy-as-technology metaphor implicitly blames women for the loss of their baby, for it presupposes their ignorance and inability with the functioning of their own bodies (Griscom and Volkman 3:12). On the other hand, presenting abortion through a technological lens is supposed to ease a woman's decision to terminate her pregnancy due to the dehumanizing effect attached to technological gadgets. After all, the mechanical and technological body imagery facilitates an unemotional and instrumental approach to the manipulation of the body using biomedical technology (Walker 788-800).

Another metaphor used to describe the female anatomy belongs to the business world (Roberts 817). Adopting a neoliberal economic approach, women's bodies are perceived as goods or commodities whose value depends on their generation of children. Hence, terms like *maximize*, *optimize*, *invest*, *benefit*, *gain*, and *lose* permeate the language of conception. This pecuniary view may certainly have negative effects on women who have no children since they are seen as worthless. Besides contributing to the commodification and exploitation of women's bodies, this commercial rhetoric has important repercussions for fertility treatments and surrogacy. In fact, women—and their partners—are more willing to spend money on assisted reproductive techniques when the female body is represented as a profitable business. In like manner, women may consider becoming surrogates when they envision their pregnancy as an investment (de Lacey 43-47).

A woman's body is often portrayed as an open space where the male needs to gain access. Seen in this light, contraception takes the form of different objects that block the entry. Hence, *putting a fence*, *a wall*, *a gate*, *a barrier*, *a lock*, or *a lid* figuratively explain how contraceptive methods work. Due to the simplicity of this metaphoric frame, women are more willing to take hormonal contraception, since they are less aware of the health risks associated with it (Walker 788-790).

Despite pertaining to different conceptual scenarios (i.e., machines, animals, nature, objects, foods, cleaning, construction, business, and bureaucratic organizations), the wide repertoire of metaphors traditionally used in the representation of women's bodies in Western cultures have important ideological implications that transcend the sole understanding of the female anatomy. In fact, these imaginaries reveal and shape society's expectations and beliefs about the role of women, including key issues related to their sexuality and reproductive rights.

Drawing from this repertoire of metaphors, Margaret Atwood creates a novel that brings to the fore the limitations and control imposed upon women and their bodies in the Western patriarchal world. *Surfacing*, indeed, abounds in images that connect the life experiences of Anna and the narrator with machines and animals.

2. Animalistic and mechanistic images related to women's sexuality and reproductive rights in *Surfacing*

In *Surfacing*, the staunch feminist activist Margaret Atwood re-appropriates well-known Western metaphors informing of the female anatomy to discuss women's sexuality, contraception, pregnancy, labor, and abortion. The Canadian writer interweaves the personal stories of the female characters of Anna and the protagonist unnamed narrator with images of machines and animals in order to explore their (sexual) relationships and (mis)treatment of their bodies in patriarchal societies.

Although Anna seems to be happily married to David, their relationship is actually highly toxic (Bhalla 3; Pina 94). David's patronizing attitude and absolute control over his wife—ranging from her physical appearance to their sex-making and even her contraceptive methods—transpires in the animal images that he uses to describe her.

Feeling stressed because she forgot to put on make-up to please her husband, Anna tells the narrator that David always wants her to look "like a young chick all the time, if I don't he gets mad" (Atwood 45). Apart from reinforcing the stereotype of eternal feminine youth conveyed through a baby animal, the metaphor also suggests attractiveness and sexual desirability (López-Rodríguez, "From the Bible" 131). As a matter of fact, David employs the same image when making unwanted sexual advances to the narrator:

> "How about it?" he said. "You wanted me to follow you."
> His fingers were squeezing, he was drawing away some of the power, I would lose it and come apart again, the lies would recapture. "Please, don't," I said.
> "Come on now, don't give me hassle," he said. "You're a groovy chick, you know the score, you aren't married." (Atwood 67)

Yet, when faced with rejection, David targets several offensive animal metaphors at the protagonist, such as "tight-ass bitch" (Atwood 94) and "third-rate cold tail" (Atwood 96). These metonymic reductions centered around her rear unquestionably contribute to the sexualization of the narrator.

David's animalization of women takes on a special significance in relation to his role as a hunter. Anna observes that "David thinks he's a great white hunter" (Atwood 17), and, certainly, his violent behavior towards animals parallels his treatment of women. Punning on the phallocentric erotic visual sense of *rod* as *penis*, David equates having sex with his wife to fishing while getting ready for still-fish: "Lie down, Anna," he says, "I'm gonna use my own rod" (Atwood 31). Furthermore, both he and Joe engage in photography in ways that are intimately connected with the hunt. In fact, after cleaning a fish he has just caught, David takes pleasure observing its guts on a plate and decides to film it:

> He regards the guts on the plate with interest… He goes for Joe and the camera and the two of them solemnly film the fish inwards, collapsed bladders and tubes and soft ropes, rearranging them between takes for better angles (Atwood 84)

Later, he shifts the camera objective towards his wife, whom he asks to get naked for the movie *Random Samples* that he is filming with Joe during their trip: "we need a naked lady…we need a naked lady with big tits and a big ass" (Atwood 86). Threatening to take off Anna's clothes if she refuses to comply with his commands—"Now just take it off like a good girl or I'll have to take it off for you" (Atwood 88)—, in the end she complies and undresses in front of the camera: "Joe swivelled the camera and trained it on them like a bazooka or a strange instrument of torture and pressed the button, lever, sinister, whirr…" (Atwood 90). Aptly described as a weapon, the camera captures Anna, both in the photographic and predatory senses of the term, for, as Sontag observes, "a camera is sold as a predatory weapon…it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (14).

David's reduction of Anna to the category of an animal is evident in his mental composition of the photographic scene with the juxtaposition of her naked body to the body of the dead heron (Vadilla et al 60): "You'll go in beside the dead bird" (Atwood 99). Besides, the fact that David had previously placed the fish guts next to the carcass of the bird to shoot it— "A dead bird… We need that", David said, "we can put it next to the fish guts" (Atwood 76)—intensifies the identification of Anna with (dead) animals. The corpses of the fish and the bird are, ultimately, an aesthetic delight for David just like his wife's naked body (Sarkar 51). They are, to some extent, his trophies, a display of his supremacy over "other species" (Borrell 38-25; Kalpakli 795).

Later, when Anna is stripped off her clothes and about to dive into the lake, she is visualized by him as "a beetle": "He set her down and stepped aside. Her arms, elbows out, struggled with the fastener like a beetle's on its back" (Atwood 104). The fact that David had killed this insect with his camera while filming the dead heron— "I saw a beetle on it, blueback and oval; when the camera whirred, it burrowed in under the feathers. Carrion beetle, death beetle" (Atwood 76)—further reinforces Anna's connection with dead animals. In addition, David's cinematographic focus on the decaying corpses of the animals and their parts corresponds with Anna's dismemberment through the camera lens: "I saw her cut in half, one breast on either side of a thin tree" (Atwood 99). The male gaze, then, contributes to the objectification and sexualization of Anna, whose forced nude shots verge on pornography. Through their camera,

David and Joe turn animals and Anna into consumable and disposable bodies, whose value is limited to men's (sexual) gratification.

David's (sexual) violence against his wife is similarly conveyed through images of animals. He recurs to the figure of a porcupine to suggest Anna's rape while fondling her: "He crawled over to her on all fours and rubbed his bristly burdock chin against her face and asked her how she would like to be raped by a porcupine" (Atwood 56). The narrator also sees Anna as an animal falling into a trap when she hears her painful screams as David penetrates her: "Then something different, not a word but pure pain, clear as water, an animal's at the moment the trap closes" (Atwood 112).

Animal images permeate the narrator's traumatic abortion. Her former married lover refers to their unborn child as an animal—"He said it wasn't a person, only an animal" (Atwood 185)—to ease the psychological pain produced by the termination of her pregnancy. This dehumanization, far from facilitating the abortion procedure, is projected onto the protagonist, who identifies with "a dead pig" (Atwood 80) while in the illegal clinic. This creature, associated with dirt and whose meat is used for human consumption, encapsulates, on the one hand, her feelings of disgust towards herself for allowing the abortion to take place, and, on the other hand, the exploitation of her body in consumerist patriarchal societies. The narrator's vivid description of the abortion procedure is reminiscent of the slaughter of a pig, as she affirms after the loss of the baby: "After the slaughter" (Atwood 95). The surgical tools include "knives" (Atwood 142) and "a fork" (Atwood 80) that are more likely to be used in a butcher's than in a hospital, as her use of "sliced off" suggests: "A section of my own life, sliced off from me" (Atwood 48). Likewise, the health-care practitioners operating her body resemble "butchers" (Atwood 80).

Casting the foetus as an animal leads the narrator to view her abortion in terms of hunting. She perceives her womb as "a burrow" (Atwood 145) meant to shelter and protect the baby, implicitly represented as a bunny, for this is a symbol of fertility and procreation. The termination of her pregnancy is, thus, depicted as the catching of the baby rabbit: "it was hiding in me as if in a burrow and instead of granting it sanctuary I let them catch it" (Atwood 144-145). Yet, this time, instead of presenting herself as an animal, the narrator has also become a hunter, for she has

agreed to the abortion (Feldman-Kołodziejuk 35-36): "I could have said no but I didn't, that made me one of them too, a killer" (Atwood 35).

Along with the slaughter and hunting of an animal, the vivisection of a frog informs the narrator's abortion. She envisions her unborn baby as a frog trapped in a jar—"I believe that an unborn baby has its eyes open and can look out through the walls of the mother's stomach like a frog in a jar" (Atwood 175)—, reminiscent of the caged amphibians in her brother's laboratory: "He kept [frogs] in jars" (Atwood 157). The fact that her brother used to experiment and even kill frogs mirrors how the protagonist felt during the abortive procedure. This scientific approach towards the female body is further reinforced with images of pickled cats evocative of her discarded embryo: "it was in a bottle curled up, staring out at me like a cat pickled" (Atwood 143) and "Pickled cat pumped full of plastic, red for the arteries, blue for the veins" (Atwood 114).

The protagonist's and Anna's bodies are often visualized as machines to explore contraception, sexuality, pregnancy, labor, and abortion. In a frank exchange about contraception, Anna and the narrator confess that they used to be on the pill but decided to quit due to the side effects it was having on their health. Whereas Anna got a blood clot in her leg, the narrator's vision became blurry. Minimizing these evident risks, David and health-care professionals still encouraged Anna and the narrator, respectively, to continue taking this contraceptive method.

> "You on the pill?" Anna asked suddenly.
>
> I looked at her, startled. It took me a minute, why did she want to know? That was what they used to call a personal question.
>
> "Not any more," I said.
>
> "Me neither," she said glumly. "I don't know anyone who still is any more. I got a blood clot in my leg. She had a smear of mud across her cheek, her pink face layer was softening in the heat, like tar.
>
> "I couldn't see," I said. "Things were blurry. They said it would clear up after a couple of months but it didn't. It was like having vaseline on my eyes but I didn't say that.

> "Anna nodded, she was tugging at the weeds as though she was pulling hair. "Bastards," she said, "they're so smart, you think they'd be able to come up with something that works without killing you. David wants me to go back on, he says it's no worse for you than aspirin, but next time it could be the heart or something. I mean, I'm not taking those kinds of chances. (Atwood 66)

After recalling the latex smell of condoms during sexual intercourse, the protagonist sarcastically comments on the moon-shaped package of the pill. Probably hinting at the popular expression *moon time* standing for menstruation, which is based on the popular belief that predicted women's period by observing the lunar phases, the narrator criticizes the pharmaceutical industry that experiments with women's bodies while giving the impression that what it produces is actually nature-based. Her concluding remark comparing a woman's body to "a chemical slot machine" not only aligns with the well-known mechanistic view of the female anatomy operated by and at the service of males, but it also suggests the idea of playing with women's bodies:

> Sex used to smell like rubber gloves and now it does again. No more handy green plastic packages, moon-shaped so that the woman can pretend she's still natural, cyclical, instead of a chemical slot machine (Atwood 68)

The body as a machine metaphor similarly illustrates the narrator's fake pregnancy and labor, invented as defense mechanisms to overcome her traumatic experience with abortion (Gault 15). The protagonist's pregnant body is experienced by her as an incubator (Atwood 114) that is controlled by her partner: "He measured everything he would let me eat; he was feeding it on me" (Atwood 114). This mechanistic view captures the narrator's sheer lack of autonomy over her own body. In fact, all the decisions—from having a baby to taking care of it while in the mother's womb—have been taken by her lover: "But I couldn't have brought the child here, I never identified it as mine, I didn't name it before it was born even the way you're supposed to. It was my husband's, he imposed it on me" (Atwood 114). Furthermore, this metaphoric transformation of the pregnant narrator into a machine that produces babies makes her body disposable once she has given birth: "after it was born, I was no more use" (Atwood 115).

The protagonist's alleged labor is also seen through a mechanical lens. She recalls being immobilized so that her body is fully controlled by specialists, appropriately portrayed as mechanics and technicians:

> they shut you into a hospital, they shave the hair off you and tie your hands down and they don't let you see, they don't want you to understand, they want you to believe it's their power, not yours. They stick needles into you, so you won't hear anything…your legs are up in a metal frame, they bend over you, technicians, mechanics…practicing on your body, they take the baby out with a fork…After that they fill your veins up with red plastic (Atwood 80)

Her description of the medical equipment stands out for the coldness of the metals ("needles," "metal frame," "fork"), which, somehow, mirror the cold treatment given while giving birth.

The narrator's false mechanistic memory of labor camouflages her abortion. The fusion of these two experiences is made more evident in that both procedures objectify a pregnant woman, reducing her body to a machine (Feldman-Kołodziejuk 33). In fact, later in the narrative, after having sex with Joe, the protagonist imagines getting pregnant and giving birth. This time, however, her description of labor is obviously reminiscent of her abortion, as seen in the explicit reference to "the death machine": "Nobody must find out or they will do that to me again, strap me to the death machine, emptiness machine, legs in the metal framework, secret knives" (Atwood 117). The depiction of the abortion procedure is virtually the same as the process of labor. In both, women are restrained, placed in metal frameworks, and intervened by numerous people and tools.

The metaphor of the pregnant body as a machine similarly resurfaces when the narrator remembers how her former lover organized the termination of her pregnancy in an illegal clinic. He justifies the abortion by presenting her pregnant body as a defective machine in need of repair: "he arranged it for me, fixed me so I was as good as new" (Atwood 211). This technological approach, commonly used to dehumanize the death of the baby, further objectifies and sexualizes the protagonist's body. In fact, from the standpoint of his married lover,

after the abortive procedure, her body can be (sexually) used, for it is "as good as new" (Atwood 211).

The animalistic and mechanistic images permeating the innermost thoughts and experiences of the protagonist and her friend Anna show the commodification, objectification, and sexualization of their bodies. Whether engaged in (sexual) relationships with their male partners, seeking contraception, during pregnancy, labor, and even abortion, their bodies are rendered as (sexually) usable and, ultimately, disposable in male-dominated societies.

3. Conclusions

In *Surfacing*, Margaret Atwood employs metaphors of animals and machines deeply rooted in the collective imagination of the female body in Western cultures to expose the constant (ab)use that her female characters, Anna and the unnamed narrator, suffer at the hands of their male partners and of society in general. Adopting the dominant patriarchal view that animalizes and mechanizes females to render them as inferior and subservient to man's (sexual) desires, Atwood condemns women's deprivation of liberty in vital matters concerning their sexual and reproductive health.

Although published in 1972, *Surfacing* is still relevant today in the context of current debates on contraception, procreation, and abortion all over the world, particularly with the US Supreme court outlawing abortion in 2022, and a number of countries prohibiting the termination of pregnancy or even making it a crime (El Salvador, Brazil, Italy, Poland, Hungary, among others). Certainly, the right-wing revival of tradition-oriented populist governments has meant a regression in women's (reproductive and sexual) rights. These governments neoconservative agendas, which foreground "family values" designed to control and confine women and girls to stereotypical gender roles, are an affront to women's human rights and constitute gender discrimination. Given this prospect, it seems clear, then, that women's bodies, their choices, and, therefore, their lives are at stake. Now, more than ever, *Surfacing* is a must-read.

Notes

[1] David's sexualization of Anna is evident in his remarks—"What I married was a pair of boobs" (Atwood 67), "She's got a neat ass. I'm really into the whole ass thing" (Atwood 83)—and behaviors—"Somebody break me out a beer." Anna brings him one and he pats her on the rear and says, "That's what I like, service" (Atwood 52) or "Goose Anna in the bum and three days later she squeals" (Atwood 74).

[2] See López Maestre's analysis of hunting metaphors in relation to the seduction of women.

[3] According to Bhalla, the filming of nude Anna constitutes an episode of sexual violence where the camera symbolizes the phallus that rapes her (3).

[4] Anna tells the narrator that David uses sex to punish her: "Then either he won't screw at all or he slams it in so hard it hurts" (Atwood 116).

[5] Borrell states that "the novel's images of frogs, being released from jars or killed may be associated in the narrator's mind with her fetus" (50-51).

[6] Significantly, in *Surfacing* the protagonist associates cats with suffering and killings. She is disturbed by her father's use of an expression involving skinning cats because she cannot understand the violence exerted upon animals: "it bothered me, I didn't see why they would want to skin a cat even on way" (Atwood 86).

[7] This is based on the etymology of "menstruation," which stems from the Latin and Greek word for moon, *mene*. In the Ancient world, it was believed that the menstrual cycle synchronized with the lunar cycle ("Is There a Connection?").

[8] The criticism and sarcasm conveyed through the picture of the moon that describes the package of the contraceptive pill is reinforced when considering all the lunar images connected with nature, pregnancy, and birth that appear in the novel (Feldman-Kołodziejuk 42). The protagonist recalls drawing a picture of a woman with a round moon stomach holding a baby during her childhood: "On the left was a woman with a round moon stomach: the baby was sitting up inside her gazing out" (Atwood 158). She also imagines giving birth naturally in a forest with a full moon shining over her: "This time, however, from the moment of conception to the very birth, she is going to have it her way, acting in accordance with nature: I lie down, keeping the moon on my left hand" (Atwood 161).

[9] As opposed to this man-created mechanistic view of the female body, the protagonist envisions herself as a cat licking her kitten to describe the ideal natural birth: "The baby will slip out easily as an egg, a kitten, and I'll lick it off and bite the cord, the blood returning to the ground where it belongs" (Atwood 110).

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Breaking Silences around Postcolonial Sexual Violence: The Urgent Activist Role of Contemporary Haitian American Women's Fiction

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Abstract

This article offers an analysis of three fictional narratives within a literary trend whereby, since the 1990s and early twenty-first century, some contemporary Haitian American female authors have been writing about the consequences of rape culture within the Haitian/Haitian American community. Particularly, the intention of these writers is to denounce and break the silences imposed on a form of gender-based violence overwhelmingly present in a tradition where women's bodies have always been regarded as territories of (post)colonial conquest. Through a comparative close reading of Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), Jaira Placide's *Fresh Girl* (2002) and Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State* (2014), the article aims to examine these novels' dissolving of traditional taboos around rape by means of an explicit portrayal of the sexual violence suffered by their female protagonists at the hands of other Haitian (American) characters and the traumatic consequences resulting from such vicious acts. The article concludes by demonstrating that, in contrast to the Haitian novel that influenced these narratives in their extremely realistic representation of the rape scene and its aftermath—Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Amour, colère, folie* (1968)—Danticat's, Placide's and Gay's heroines are depicted as survivors capable of recuperating their bodies and subjectivity by sharing their traumatic stories with others, including the implied reader.

Keywords: Haitian American literature, rape fiction, repressed trauma, sexual violence, postcolonial violence, silenced voices.

Rompiendo silencios en torno a la violencia sexual postcolonial: El urgente papel activista de la ficción contemporánea de mujeres haitiano-americanas

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece un análisis de tres narrativas ficcionales dentro de una tendencia literaria a través de la cual, desde los años noventa y principios del siglo XXI, algunas autoras contemporáneas haitiano-americanas han estado escribiendo sobre las consecuencias de la cultura haitiana de la violación en la comunidad haitiana/haitiano-americana. Concretamente, la intención de estas autoras es denunciar y romper los silencios impuestos sobre una forma de violencia de género sobrecogedoramente presente en una tradición en la que los cuerpos de las mujeres siempre se han considerado territorios de conquista (post)colonial. A través de una lectura detallada comparativa de *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) por Edwidge Danticat, *Fresh Girl* (2002) por Jaira Placide y *An Untamed State* (2014) de Roxane Gay, el artículo busca examinar la forma en que estas novelas anulan tabúes tradicionales en torno a la violación por medio de un retrato explícito de la violencia sexual sufrida por sus protagonistas a manos de otros personajes haitiano(-americanos) y de las consecuencias traumáticas resultantes de actos tan despiadados. El artículo concluye demostrando que, a diferencia de la novela haitiana que inspiró la representación extremadamente realista que hacen estas novelas de la escena de la violación y sus secuelas—*Amour, colère, folie* (1968) de Marie Vieux-Chauvet—las heroínas de Danticat, Placide y Gay aparecen representadas como supervivientes capaces de recuperar sus cuerpos y subjetividad compartiendo su historia traumática con otros, incluyendo al lector implícito.

Palabras clave: literatura haitiano-americana, ficción de la violación, trauma reprimido, violencia sexual, violencia postcolonial, voces silenciadas.

1. Introduction

In the Caribbean, violence has always played a significant role even after colonisation because, as Ghanian literary critic Ato Quayson holds, in the postcolony "the violence constituted […] by the colonial order [became] endemic […] and produce[d] a series of persistently violent and political and social disjunctures" (192) which still linger today. For Cuban writer and essayist Antonio Benítez-Rojo, the plantation system "was the most violent and centralized economy known to history" (302) and such violence, as Frantz Fanon explains in *The Wretched of the Earth,* did not end after colonisation. Rather, it adopted new forms, including the fight of the colonised against each other, a sort of internal violence inherited from the white settlers and masters (15). Particularly, the gender-based violence suffered by Caribbean black women during the colonial era—especially in the form of rape—was inherited by the emancipated Caribbean black man who, following the patriarchal order imposed by white settlers, wanted to show his alleged ownership on their closest subordinate subjects: their fellow women. This happened because, as Achille Mbembe holds in his seminal book *On the Postcolony*,

> [d]uring the colonial era and its aftermath, phallic domination has been all the more strategic in power relationships, not only because it is based on […] subjective foundations of masculinity and femininity but also because it […] derives in large measure from […] the individual male's ability to demonstrate his virility at the expense of a woman and to obtain its validation from the subjugated woman herself. (13)

Unfortunately, this patriarchal ideology continues nowadays in the public and private spheres of Caribbean nation-states like Haiti, a country where sexual violence is rampant, yet normally unprosecuted and hidden (Suárez 111; Duramy 36; Jean-Charles 62-63).

In *Conflict Bodies: The Politics of Rape Representation in the Francophone Imaginary*, Haitian American scholar in Black feminist literature Régine M. Jean-Charles argues that violence has been acknowledged as an integral theme in the literature of the former French colonies in the Caribbean (55). In the case of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti, slavery as well as its abolition were all entrenched in violence, so much

that the brutality of these historical experiences has been transmitted and inherited generation after generation (55). Thus, as this scholar puts it, the "ubiquitous and virtually omnipresent" violence in the Caribbean ex-colonies is explained by the historical violent traumas of slavery and colonialism still lingering in these areas (55). Nevertheless, whereas the historical and cultural reasons why violence is such a prevalent theme in the Caribbean archipelago are to a great extent known and discussed by thinkers and researchers such as Fanon and Benítez-Rojo, less attention has been devoted to the gender violence suffered by Afro-Caribbean women and the literature they produce to expose and condemn this ongoing social evil.

Notwithstanding the lack of scholarly work, in the last years a few academics have researched the fiction of some Afro-Caribbean female authors who expose and denounce the perennial problem of gender-based violence in the West Indies. As modern languages scholar Chantal Kalisa argues, throughout the history of the ex-Francophone colonies in the Caribbean and Africa, literature has offered women authors a medium whereby "they attempt to resolve the tension between historical or external forms of violence associated with colonialism and postcolonial conditions and internal forms of violence that result from unfair cultural, social, and political rules based on gender" (3). Hence, as this scholar maintains, these literary artists "are particularly interested in lifting taboos over traditionally silenced discourses about domestic and intimate violence" against their fellow women (3). In order to do so, they often examine the effects of rape, sexual violence, and physical and psychological abuses on their female characters "explicitly" (4), with a lot of detail, without taboos. In this respect, Jean-Charles sees the study of the straightforward or explicit literary portrayal of female rape and its aftermath as a crucial tool for the disclosure of the all too often silenced physical and psychosocial consequences of this sort of aggressions (10). This is what the stories analysed by Kalisa and Jean-Charles do, inasmuch as these narratives, following a responsible depiction of the raped protagonists as women who become "subject[s] *through* rape rather than merely [individuals] subjected to [their] violation" (Rajan 77), concomitantly trace strategies of survival and increase public awareness and consciousness about violence against women.

Although Kalisa and Jean-Charles refer to authors of the French ex-colonies in Africa and the Caribbean, the focus of this article is only on Haiti, a country whose political life and contemporary writing, as happens with other Caribbean islands "is inseparable from its relation with the United States" (Fernández Jimenez, "Decolonial" 28) due to the US' ongoing hegemony on "the peripheral areas" of "the American hemisphere" that it has exerted through distinct projects of neocolonial influence and development (Fernández Jiménez, "Primitivist" 2). In fact, as literary scholar Katharine Capshaw Smith argues, the US has become a province in the so-called "Haitian Tenth Department" (83), that is, "the floating homeland, the ideological one" which joins "all Haitians living [abroad]" (Danticat, *Creating* 49), due to the numerous migratory movements by plane or boat to the "Land of Liberty" motivated not only by its geographical proximity. As Michel Laguerre argues, many Haitians migrate to the US on account of a sustained crisis in their home country resulting, among other reasons, from "kleptocratic dictatorial regimes" and later on democratic but corrupt governments, "an economy dependent on offshore industry and remittances" and "an incremental process of Americanization" (21) which has led Haitians to seek the American Dream.

The aim of this article is thus to offer an analysis of three fictional narratives within a literary trend whereby, since the late 1990s and first two decades of the new millennium, some female writers of the Haitian diaspora in the US like Edwidge Danticat, Jaira Placide and Roxane Gay have been writing about rape culture within the Haitian or Haitian American community. What these authors have in common is their purpose to denounce and break the silence historically imposed on the gender-based and sexual violence suffered by their fellow women. Hence, this article seeks to establish a dialogic relationship between Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), Placide's *Fresh Girl* (2002) and Gay's *An Untamed State* (2014) which evidences the existence of a literary trend among contemporary Haitian American female writers characterised by its breaking of traditional taboos around female rape in Haiti and the diaspora and by its denunciation of the overwhelming presence of such violence in the Haitian and Haitian American culture since colonial times. In addition, the article attempts to show how, by means of these works, Danticat, Placide and Gay offer an example of self-empowerment and resistance through resilient heroines capable

of recovering their bodies and subjectivity by sharing their traumatic stories with others.

2. From Colonial to Postcolonial Sexual Violence in Haiti

A common expression in Haiti is "le viol est comme le bonjour," because rape is widely and regularly committed in the country (Duramy 38). Scholars like Lucía M. Suárez have confirmed that in the Haitian nation-state "rape is rampant yet hidden" because "aggressors often go unpunished, live among their victims with impunity, and boast of their actions" (75). Although a few solidarity groups and associations have been offering help to raped women for years[1], the injury of sexual violence is exacerbated by the Haitian society's and institutions' neglect of this endemic plight (75). This happens as a result of Haiti's culture of denial and shame around rape and the insufficient legal attention aimed at implementing any kind of effective change in the social conduct of the male Haitian population vis-a-vis gender relations and rape culture (75). Despite the country's criminalisation of rape in 2005, it is still extremely difficult to prosecute sexual violence in Haiti on account of this culture of impunity, the fear of reprisal (Suárez 64), the social stigma attached to rape and the fact that sexual aggressions are systemic and even structural due to their relation to Haiti's harrowing social and gender inequalities (James 40, 50, 52; Duramy 18, 34-38). Likewise, the overwhelming presence of sexual violence is based on the fact that in Haiti women's bodies have traditionally been regarded as "territories of colonial conquest" both by *blancs* (whites) and Haitian locals (Jean-Charles 27).

It becomes evident then, that rape against Haitian women is not a twenty-first-century issue but a historical one yet to be resolved. As history has demonstrated, the colonial founding of Haiti was inextricably linked to the rape of the African female slaves and their daughters (Jean-Charles 58; Duramy 19). With the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) and the subsequent independence of the country, Haitians overturned the colonial yoke and the vicious and racist masters. However, one of the central founding myths about the genesis of Haiti's peoples was the story of the rape of Sor or Sister Rose, a black woman who literally gives birth to the Haitian nation after being sexually forced by a French master or a fellow black slave (Jean-Charles 26). Whatever the actual background

of the rapist, this legend which suggests that "the origin of everyone [in Haiti] is common" (Dayan 48) seems to point to the heroic, resilient and altruistic nature of the Haitian people. Their ancestors—the rebellious *maroons* (runaway slaves living in the woods) and the *affranchis* (free mulattoes) who joined together in their pursuit of liberty during the revolution (Trouillot, *Haiti,* 37)—like Sister Rose in the legend, sacrificed themselves for the common good. Additionally, but no less importantly, the story of Sister Rose links the history of Haiti with rape, a form of violence which "operates as a national symbol" (Jean-Charles 30) inasmuch as this national myth is consolidated around the violation of a woman (58). Thus, this legend of courage and martyrdom which could be considered as the "primal scene" (58) of sexual violence in independent Haiti arguably gave rise to a rape metaphor in the Haitian imaginary connecting gender-based violence, especially sexual violence with the postcolonial development of the country.

Over a century after Haiti's independence, the collective trauma of sexual violence was re-enacted during the US occupation of the country (1915-1934), when many Haitian women were raped by the American marines and also the Cacos, the Haitian forces supposedly assembled to protect the nation from the foreign occupants (Frances 77; Jean-Charles 63–64). The local violence exerted by the latter group and, decades later, the sexual aggressions used as a punishment for political dissidence by the Tonton Macoutes, the paramilitary forces at the service of the Duvalier dictatorship (1957-1986), as well as the Zenglendos, the forces of the military junta who overthrew president Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1991 (Jean-Charles 64-66; James 63, 69-70), demonstrate how rape in Haiti became a white settlers' legacy throughout history.

Furthermore, the rapid increase in the number of Haitian gangs during Aristide's last years in office and especially after his second and definitive exile in 2004 was accompanied by a dramatic rise in the number of sexual aggressions in the country (Jean-Charles 67; Duramy 27). These rape figures became more shocking in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, when many of the unprivileged women and children living in the massive displacement camps turned into victims of sexual abuse by locals and even foreign cooperants and UN peace-keeping troops (Jean-Charles 67-69; Sheller 129-131). Thus, it could be argued that colonialism, "slavery, a warlike past, economic deprivation, and political

instability have laid foundations for gender-based violence" in Haiti (Duramy 15)[2]. Such violence, as legal scholar Benedetta Duramy notes, not only is widely employed as a tool of terror and oppression in this Caribbean country but it is also "systematically perpetrated throughout the country across social and economic lines" due to a patriarchal culture that leads to gender inequality and the subordination of women both in the private and the public sphere (99).

In light of the scarce social recognition of rape as a problem and the lack of institutional measures for stopping this type of violence in Haitian society, Suárez sees Haitian and Haitian American women's literature as "a powerful alternative venue for the disclosure of violence" that can raise awareness not only in the Haitian population but also in readers around the world (119). After all, as Haitian American writer and literary critic Myriam Chancy proposes in *Framing Silence,* these women's literature should always "be read as literature of revolution" which searches "for an irrevocable alteration of the status quo" (6).

3. A Legacy of Haitian Female Literary Activism

Haitian exile writer Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Amour, colère, folie* (1968) / *Love, Anger, Madness* (2009) is probably the most influential literary figuration and representation of rape in Haiti (Jean-Charles 14)[3], for, as I will argue later it paved the way for subsequent Haitian and Haitian American female authors eager to denounce the ongoing issue of unpunished gender-based/sexual violence in their country and in the diaspora[4]. This work is a trilogy of three novellas that offers a portrayal of Haiti under the repressive regime of the Duvalier dictatorship. Interestingly, Vieux-Chauvet "deliberately disturbs the culture of silence" (Jean-Charles 59) that surrounds rape in this Caribbean country, for not only does the trilogy revolve around the lives of several female characters that are subject to sexual violence, it also encodes a recognition of the fact that gender violence is overwhelmingly present in the public and private sphere of Haitian locals and diasporic subjects. Particularly significant in this respect is the second novella, *Anger*, which depicts in full detail the rape of a Haitian young woman and its aftermath.

Anger revolves around a Haitian family who has to deal with the illegal deprivation of their lands and the similarly criminal deprivation

of their daughter's body and mind through rape. During the dictatorial regime of an unnamed leader that different critics have linked to François Duvalier (Dayan 122; Kalisa 164; Jean-Charles 72), the lands of a bourgeois family, the Normils, are occupied and gradually taken away from their owners by "men in black uniforms" (Vieux-Chauvet 167) who represent the Tonton Macoutes. The only way in which this family can recover the land that their ancestors had "sweated to acquire" (169) is by paying a large sum of money to a lawyer who works for a Macoute leader referred to as "the Gorilla" (208) due to his ape-like features. This bribe or ransom for the Normil family's land must be delivered by the only daughter of the family, Rose, and although the paterfamilias, Louis, and Rose herself are suspicious of what is to come (204), they understand that this is the only chance the family has to recover their stolen property and eventually accept the deal. Hence, Rose carries the money on the arranged day, yet she is forced to have sex with the Gorilla and become his sex slave for an entire month. In this sense, Rose turns into a victim of sexual violence with a family that proves unable to help her or talk to her about her harrowing experience due to their feelings of fear and shame. Thus, as Jean-Charles argues, the repeated violation and torture of Rose's body for thirty days of sexual coercion is contextualised in the novel "in terms of the system of terror and the culture of fear that reigned under Duvalier" that Vieux-Chauvet wanted to expose with the trilogy, but it also serves as a "critique of a pre-existing culture of silence and patriarchal values that obscures, ignores and even reinforces violence against women" in Haiti (71).

Regarding the silencing of rape in the country, it is worth mentioning that in *Anger* the consequences of the occupation of the land and Rose's rape are always viewed in relation to the Normils and their acquaintances, for all of them give their own depictions and (mis)judgments of Rose throughout different chapters since her first private encounter with the Gorilla. In so doing, as Jean-Charles notes, Vieux-Chauvet "mirrors societal reactions to survivors of sexual violence" at the time but also today (72). The opinions which stand out the most are Paul's, who repeatedly judges Rose's decision, criticises her appearance which he equates with that of a "whore" (Vieux-Chauvet 239), and even plans how to avenge the dishonour of his virginal sister: "She is taboo. Thanks to the Gorilla. An off-limits whore. I will kill him" (242). Paul is worried about how the loss of virginity before marriage negatively affects his sister's and by extension

his family's social reputation as a consequence of the (patriarchal) societal norms in Haiti. Rose becomes "taboo" because she is ostracised by those out of the family who avoid any contact with what they consider a loose woman. For Paul, the only way to counter this damage is by murdering the person who has tarnished his sister and the family name forever.

Nonetheless, in the novella's last chapter, Rose seems to respond to all the gazes and judgements by the other characters, for she recounts her own story through her own perspective. Following Jean-Charles, the fact that this moment of narrative and personal empowerment in the form of an interior monologue arrives at the end of the novella, could respond to Vieux-Chauvet's intention to highlight the public and family silence around rape as well as to show readers Rose's "ability to speak for herself despite the cacophony of other voices" (73). This latter reading, as Jean-Charles puts it, "undermines the idea of a silent survivor who does not understand, reflect on, or speak what happens to her" (73), a literary move which enables readers to learn about the details of the sexual violence suffered by Rose from her own stream of consciousness:

> The lawyer had spoken to me beforehand and I knew what to expect. I began taking off my clothes and once I was half-naked, the man in the uniform pulled me sharply by the arm to drag me behind the screen. "You're not going to struggle […] [b]ecause if you do, you'll be sorry." […] I refused to obey, so he threw me on the sofa. […] He leaned over me for a moment, moaning slowly, his breath short, oppressed. […] He was dripping with sweat and I felt defiled. He rammed himself into me in one rough terrible thrust, and immediately groaned with pleasure. I bit my fist in pain and disgust.
>
> […]
>
> I could see his reflection in every mirror, unsightly and frightening. What's it to me? I would have brought dishonor on myself only if I enjoyed it as he did, but *he slept with a corpse*. […] A month will go by quickly. *I won't tell a soul,* I'll do whatever he wants. He's made me bleed five times and I haven't cried out. […] His awful hands on my body! Inside my body, shamelessly probing my flesh.

> What do I care! *I am dead*" (Vieux-Chauvet 254-256, emphasis added).

Although Rose has been regarded by some critics as a martyr because of her initial willingness to offer herself in exchange for her family's land (Dayan 122), if particular attention is paid to the narration and representation of her rape in the above and later passages in the novel, the idea of martyrdom vanishes (Jean-Charles 74). As becomes evident in the quotation, there is no consent, for Rose is reluctant to obey and be penetrated, at least until she has to repress her emotions, her fear, her disgust, and act as if she were dead. In any case, although after those traumatic thirty days as a sexual slave Rose dies, her resistance and will to struggle is rendered in the novella through the recovery of her voice—even if it is her inner voice—after having been silenced not only by her perpetrator but also by the patriarchal culture influencing her family. This narrative and ethical choice arguably granted Vieux-Chauvet's contemporary readers with an innovative and necessary image in Haitian culture of the raped Haitian woman not as a martyr for the family or the nation as a whole, but as a victim and survivor, as a resilient individual who is able to gain self-empowerment after her ordeal and recover her voice.

Likewise, this novella shows that Rose is a woman turned into a pawn within a male contest for power and manliness who strives to survive and go on living despite her tragic end. This image of the resilient and self-empowered survivor of sexual violence who, after being used and sexually abused by Haitian perpetrators rather than white ones, is capable of telling her own story is arguably inherited by later Haitian female writers in the US diaspora such as Edwidge Danticat, Jaira Placide and Roxane Gay.

4. Rape Denunciation in Haitian American Women's Fiction at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

Among the acclaimed works penned by Edwidge Danticat, the Haitian American author "considered by some the national writer of Haiti" today (Fernández Jiménez, "Decolonial" 28), *Eyes, Breath, Memory* is the novel which most clearly and extensively deals with the topic of sexual abuse and rape. This Bildungsroman revolves around

Sophie Caco, the young daughter of Martine Caco, a woman who was raped at the age of sixteen by a Tonton Macoute whom she came across in the cane fields, significantly, the traditional *lieu* of labour and sexual violations in colonial Caribbean, which, as the novel suggests, lingers as a space of violence. Martine eventually flees Haiti so as to escape her traumatic memories of the event but the child born of the rape, Sophie, makes it impossible for Martine to repress her trauma entirely, especially when the girl rejoins her mother in the US after being raised in Haiti by Martine's sister for twelve years. Recurrent flashbacks and nightmares of the rape scene haunt Martine throughout the novel, yet she struggles in isolation, not telling anyone about her Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) condition and also becoming "disconnected from reality" (Suárez 114) regardless of her efforts to live a new life in another country. As Martine constantly repeats, she cannot escape her past because "[t]here are ghosts […] still very painful for [her]" (Danticat, *Breath* 78).

In addition, as a result of her rape trauma Martine becomes anorexic and looks older, without vitality as the descriptions of the autodiegetic narrator of the story, Sophie, show when she refers to her mother's "long and hollow" face, "her long spindly legs" as well as the "dark circles under her eyes" and the "lines of wrinkles [that] tightened her expression" (42). Besides, as the novel reveals, the traumatic event transforms Martine into a mother who exerts violence against her own daughter. Although Martine justifies her behaviour as necessary for her daughter's own good, her physical aggressions—as readers learn from Sophie herself—take the form of a rape, for Martine violates Sophie through the custom of the virginity test, an abuse which Martine had suffered many years earlier at the hands of her mother. Not surprisingly, such a practice results in Sophie's own difficulty with her self-esteem, her body and her sexuality for years. After all, the testing made her feel "alone and lost, like there was no longer any reason for [her] to live" (87). In this sense, it could be argued that *Eyes, Breath, Memory* reveals a continuum of sexual violence which extends from the public (the state) to the private sphere (family)[5].

Additionally, their respective violations lead both mother and daughter to commit self-violence. Martine's destruction of her own body is replicated by Sophie's post-traumatic bulimia years later. Likewise,

as the novel shows very graphically, Sophie uses a pestle to destroy her hymen in order to fail her mother's tests and thus free herself from such a terrible experience (88). This self-harm could be regarded as a second violation of Sophie, in this case, perpetrated by her traumatised self. Hence, it could be argued that both mother and daughter go through a double experience of sexual violence that both women try to hide and repress for years. However, Sophie's harsh liberation from her pain can also be regarded as an act of resistance and victory over the patriarchal ideology of marriage as the only acceptable site for the expression of women's sexuality embodied by the terrible tradition of the virginity test.

Interestingly, Suárez has compared Sophie's silence during the testing to Martine's reluctance to talk about the rape in her own life (118) which prevents Sophie to "piece together [her] mother's entire story" (Danticat, *Breath* 61) for twelve years. Yet contrary to Martine, who experiences her trauma in isolation and eventually kills herself, Sophie seeks therapeutical and communal help and is eventually able to heal and to turn a traumatic memory into a narrative of her trauma, a necessary task to accomplish post-traumatic healing (Brison 45). Thanks to therapy, the community and the return to the place in Haiti where her family's suffering started, the cane fields, Sophie ends up liberating herself from her family and individual trauma, as her words—"Ou libéré! (I am free)"—(Danticat, *Breath* 233)—at the end of the novel suggest.

In Jaira Placide's *Fresh Girl*, the protagonist of this young adult Bildungsroman about the Haitian diaspora in the US is Mardi Desravines, a fourteen-year-old girl born to Haitian American parents but raised in Haiti who struggles with the repressed trauma of the rape she suffered at the age of twelve following the 1991 coup against President Aristide. Like Vieux-Chauvet and Danticat, Placide "sets her character's violation in a moment of ubiquitous political instability when the rape of women was rampant and used as a weapon of political terror" (Jean-Charles 87). Specifically, throughout most of the novel Mardi remains silent about her rape experience at the hands of a Zenglendo. Nobody in her family, including the relatives who took refuge in the States with her, knows about it. In fact, Mardi is represented as a troubled adolescent who misbehaves at home in Brooklyn, suffers from haunting nightmares and performs self-mutilating acts to wipe out her traumatic memories of the violent event. These actions can be read as clear PTSD symptoms

resulting from Mardi's sexual assault in Haiti. Thus, as will be shown hereafter, Placide's novel offers a large exploration of Mardi's responses to her repressed trauma until she is able to speak up and start healing.

The narrative opens with Mardi lying on the bathroom floor in the middle of the night because her nightmares of the rape have awakened her:

> It's two o'clock in the morning. I'm tired but I don't want to go back to sleep. What if I dream about the soldiers again? What if I dream about Ike [a racist bully that physically abuses her] at school? What if I wake up dead? I get up and wash my hands. I scrub and scrub with the Brillo pad. The backs of my hands hurt, but I feel better. (Placide 1)

As this first passage advances, throughout the novel Mardi continuously appears trying to calm herself so that her family does not discover her secret, but she finds that the only way to control her psychic pain is by inflicting violence on herself, this time with a scouring pad. For this reason, when she feels most uneasy about her past, she sleeps on a bed of rocks she brought from Haiti, and in other chapters she bruises, cuts, stabs and even burns herself.

Despite this non-verbalisation of her trauma, through the present-tense first-person narration used by Mardi throughout most of the novel, especially when referring to themes like sexuality, Haiti and her past, Mardi leaves traces and hints of her traumatic experience in her motherland. Consider the following passage where Mardi recalls the days spent in the Haitian wilderness as she and her sister were trying to escape the junta soldiers hunting for their dissident uncle until both girls could safely join their émigré parents in Brooklyn:

> I don't want to remember too much, but these things are like sleeping hiccups in my head. I know the track got two flat tires from the bullets. Everyone got out running and screaming. Serina and I […] had to spend two days hiding in the woods and cornfields. One morning I went to look for water and I got lost. The cornstalks were tall and yellow like my dress.... When I got back, Serina was crying because she didn't know where I was. Soon after,

> another truck full of people rescued us and took us to the airport. (25-26)

Here, a very significant gap of information reproduces a moment of silence or of conscious ellipsis in Mardi's account whereby the girl avoids telling the implied reader about what happened to her when she and her sister had to hide from the Zenglendos in the countryside.

Later in the novel Mardi recognises not having told her family about what happened with the armed man who sexually abused her in the fields, a recurrent image in her dreams at night (77). More clues can be found in Mardi's speech when her uncle Perri unexpectedly appears in Brooklyn. Despite their good relationship back in Haiti, Mardi's forced exile and especially her traumatic experience in the Haitian fields drives her to develop feelings of hatred against Uncle Perri, whom she internally blames for appearing "too late" (89) and for everything that has happened to her since she was forced to leave Haiti, including the bullying and racism she suffers in the US.

Besides these two examples, the novel offers more clues that can be deciphered through a close reading or, using Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok's terminology, a "cryptonymic" (*Wolf* 19) or "decrypting" (33) reading of Mardi's speech[6]. Precisely these hints enable readers to understand that something very dark and violent happened to Mardi before leaving Haiti, a trauma, or what Abraham and Torok call "phantom" (*Shell* 140), which Mardi tries to repress or hide in her inner "crypt" (*Shell* 140) but which keeps on returning to haunt her through flashbacks and nightmares, especially after her uncle's arrival. Yet, although "[c]rypts engender silence," one way or another, gaps, unspeakable secrets and concealed pain or shame "continue to affect and disrupt the lives of those involved in them" (Schwab 49). This is what happens to Mardi, who provides readers with the most evident clues about her rape towards the middle of the novel, in two particular episodes. Firstly, when her school bully, Ike, corners Mardi in private and lets her know about his attraction to her:

> "Hey island guuurl, you looking pretty tonight," he says.
> But with each step [...] his smile fades.
> My knees shake. I back up against a rack of coats, fighting the need to pee on myself. No, I'm not going to. I won't!

> […]
> I'm scared.
> […]
> I remember Haiti.
> I remember the cornfields.
> I remember there was no one around and how thirsty
> I was.
> I remember what happened there.
> I remember not saying anything. (Placide 148-149)

Mardi is horrified at Ike's physical closeness not only because in the past he had abused her physically and verbally due to her Haitian origins, but also because, as readers will learn later on, his words and gestures, and especially his invasion of Mardi's private space, remind the girl of the soldier who raped her in the fields. Despite her efforts to forget, as the anaphora present in her speech denotes, this disturbing episode re-enacts her repressed trauma.

The second most evident clue offered by the novel can be found in the episode when the girl learns about sexually-transmitted diseases and becomes concerned about having contracted one before leaving Haiti; here Mardi actually considers taking a test, but because she would need to tell the adults first, she forgets about it quickly (158). Certainly, this is a self-imposed silence that yet again highlights the shameful nature that rape has for contemporary Haitian families even those living broad. Significantly enough, it is through written words that Mardi, who is eventually reconciled with Uncle Perri, eventually lets him and his sister (Aunt Widza) know about her sexual abuse in Haiti when she spells the word "VIOLATE" while playing Scrabble. Perri's reaction is to urge Mardi to speak up "what is hidden in [her]" (169), an enquiry to which Mardi responds by telling her two relatives about her decision to look for water in the Haitian cornfields and her encounter with the man who raped her there:

> A man with a rifle is leaning against a tree to my far left. He winks at me. […] Then the cornfield man tells me to lie down. I lie down […]. Cornfield Man smiles at me. His breath stinks. […] He lifts my dress and sticks his rifle in my panties […]. Cornfield Man kisses me on my forehead. It's cold on the inside where he pushes his rifle in. […] Then he

> pulls the trigger. I jump. He laughs. I'm not dead. I wish I were. He pulls the trigger again and again, laughing harder each time. He unbuckles his pants and hugs me. Now the rifle is gone and I feel something different. It hurts just as much, but Cornfield Man enjoys himself. (172-173)

As the above passage shows, Mardi's account in present tense—a token of how, as psychiatrist Dori Laub puts it, the memories of extreme trauma "cannot always be related as past events, but break though the coordinates of time and place with which we commonly organize experience" (Greenspan et al. 199)—can be read as a long flashback through which the girl relives the traumatic event she had been repressing and hiding from her family all along. Here Mardi makes reference to the soldier raping her not only with his sexual organ but also with his weapon, a phallic object full of masculine symbolism which provides the perpetrator with a sense of manliness, power and authority over the young girl he is abusing.

Fortunately, Mardi self-empowerment to speak up her trauma in front of her uncle and aunt leads her to tell the rest of her family who, at this point, understand the erratic and "fresh" behaviour of the girl since her arrival in the US and encourage her not to feel that there is something "bad in [her]" (176-177). Such an important lesson helps Mardi understand that she is not a contaminated girl as she had thought ever since her rape, but someone who needs help and who must be resilient in order not to allow her harrowing experience and by extension her victimiser to change her. Thus, it could be argued that, on a first reading, *Fresh Girl* renders a female protagonist who struggles to disclose what happened to her and verbalise it as rape. This serves Placide to criticise the culturally and self-imposed silence and shame around rape Haitian (American) girls and women have to deal with even within the family. In this sense, like Vieux-Chauvet and Danticat, this author also reveals readers how the continuum of violence extends from the public to the private sphere. Nonetheless, Placide undermines that silence culture around sexual violence by allowing Mardi to speak up her trauma, to create a narrative memory of the rape with great detail when she explains her sexual assault to her uncle and aunt, and later on to the rest of her family who, together with a group of therapists, help the girl gradually recover from her psychic wound.

A third work that explores breaking taboos around the sexual violence suffered by a woman with Haitian origins is Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State*, a narrative which revolves around the kidnapping of a Haitian American mother, Mireille Duval Jameson, by a gang from the slums of Port-au-Prince in 2008. The leader of this armed group demands Mireille's father—a wealthy self-made Haitian American—a million-dollar ransom that he refuses to pay even though he can afford it. This negative response, together with the postcolonial antagonism between the gang leader and Mireille's progenitor owing to their different ideologies and the former's view of Americanised expats (yet another form of foreign occupation: see Roldán-Sevillano, "Haiti's" 277-284) results in Mireille's torture and gangrape[7]. Predictably, Mireille —a conspicuous victim of these men's rivalry— ends up suffering a clear case of PTSD after her liberation thirteen days later.

In this first-person narrative with scattered interventions of an omniscient narrator which mixes conventions of the thriller, the postmodern fairy-tale revision and the traditional social realist narrative (Roldán-Sevillano, "Roxane" 4-6), Gay also offers a very realistic and detailed portrayal of rape since the very beginning of the novel. The narrative's full detail echoes that used in *Fresh Girl* and *Anger*, for in this case too, readers are provided with a retrospective account of the violent event by the victim-survivor herself:

> I scratched and kicked and screamed and spit in his face. [...] He stripped me of my clothing, […] pulling me up by my hips, forcing my thighs apart with his, forcing himself inside me. […] With his arm pressed against the back of my neck, forcing my face into the mattress, I tried to breathe, tried to free myself but there was nothing I could do. […] I looked down at my thighs and saw blood in the dim light. (Gay 79-80)

In addition, as happens to Rose Normil in Vieux-Chauvet's novella, here Mireille's complete disempowerment provoked by the repeated sexual abuses and tortures perpetrated by her captors for almost two weeks makes her sink into a process of traumatic dissociation whereby her mind tries to repress the violence she is enduring as evinced by Mireille's inability to recognise her body as her own (106). Elsewhere, I have discussed Mireille's numerous PTSD symptoms (Roldán-Sevillano,

"Haiti's" 271-273). Significantly enough, this character's self-conception as "no one" (Gay 205), as a "dead" (207) individual, echoes the story about Rose Normil, who refers to herself as a "corpse" and a "dead" woman (Vieux-Chauvet 256) while and after being raped by the Gorilla. In addition, Mireille's account of the traumatic sexual abuse she experiences recalls the stories of Placide's and Vieux-Chauvet's protagonists:

> *I became no one*. I became a woman who wanted to live. That was my fight. […] [T]he Commander […] penetrated me with his gun and raised my hips […]. I endured the pain. My hands were not my hands. *My body was not my body*. (Gay 140, emphasis added)

As these words show, like little Mardi, Mireille is raped with a weapon, a symbol of power and masculinity for her victimisers, which later on he replaces with his own sexual organ, and just like Rose, Mireille tries to dissociate herself while she is being violated in order to repress the pain and the trauma so that she can survive such a harrowing experience.

As I argue elsewhere, in Gay's novel Mireille is depicted as a Haitian *zombi* (Roldán-Sevillano, "Roxane" 73), a figure that has been defined as an undead body or spirit subdued to the command of a sorcerer, the *bokor*, which, as Kaiama L. Glover explains, turns the victim into a "being without essence" (qtd. in Roldán-Sevillano, "Roxane" 73). In Mireille's reality the leader of the gang who everybody calls "Commander" is the *bokor* and master of her will and she is the *zombi* deprived of subjectivity who must obey the tyrant. These aspects are also present in Vieux-Chauvet's novella where Rose turns into a *zombi* subdued to the command of another *bokor*, the Gorilla. In this sense, both women are deprived of their bodies and subjectivity by two men asking their families for a ransom (in exchange for land in Vieux-Chauvet's novella and of a person in *An Untamed State*) who are referred to by their nicknames throughout the two narratives. This aspect shows an evident influence of Vieux-Chauvet in Gay's text, a cultural legacy which is also observable in the trade of the two heroines by their fathers and their treatment as sex slaves by sinister thugs for a period of time, as well as in the fully detailed rape scenes and subsequent dissociative processes undergone by the two women.

Yet, the main difference between the two texts is that, contrary to Rose's unsuccessful efforts to work through her trauma and survive, Mireille gradually recovers thanks to the love of her American mother-in-law and a series of *marronage* or escapist acts (Roldán-Sevillano, "Roxane" 74), including a failed attempt to run away from the shanty where she is kept by her captors and, following her liberation, her flight from Haiti, where "[t]here would be no […] trial, no justice" (Gay 234). It is worth noting that Mireille's escapes from several confining or distressing situations during and after her kidnapping exemplify her characterization as a strong and courageous woman. In fact, Mireille is depicted as a clear inheritor of the resistance of her rebellious ancestors, the Haitian *maroons*, who similarly fought for their physical and psychological freedom as well as for the recuperation of their subjectivity by fleeing the plantations and the slaveowners. Nevertheless, although Mireille is able to recover like the heroines of *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *Fresh Girl*, her healing process is only partially completed until she faces her homeland again and specially until she encounters and physically confronts her victimiser in Miami (Roldán-Sevillano, "Haiti's" 276), a violent face-to-face encounter which makes him run away full of fear (Gay 360). Significantly enough, through this direct confrontation with the *bokor* who had subdued her to his will for months and even years which, in a way, echoes the Haitian enslaved people's confrontation of their colonial oppressors in the revolution, "Mireille proves to be the owner of her body and will again" (Roldán-Sevillano, "Haiti's" 276). This recuperation of her self allows Gay's heroine to become empowered and recount her story to an implied reader an indeterminate time later, a verbal act which represents the last stage of Mireille's journey towards recovery as happens with Danticat's and Placide's protagonists. Unlike them, Mireille is the only protagonist who physically confronts the perpetrator who had subjugated her will and body. In this sense it is as if the genealogical empowerment of the literary heroines that have been analysed here culminated with Gay's novel.

5. Conclusion

As this article has attempted to demonstrate, following the example of Vieux-Chauvet, contemporary Haitian American women writers have been trying to break the silences around sexual violence in their

motherland and the US diaspora by penning narratives where full detail of the rape event and its aftermath is provided by the female protagonists of their stories. Notwithstanding their ordeal, these women are brave enough to keep on going and speak up their traumatic experiences. In so doing they epitomise the historical resistant and resilient nature of the people of Haiti, the first Black Republic to become independent from colonial rule after a twelve-year organised slave rebellion. However, contrary to their most evident literary predecessor, Vieux-Chauvet's trilogy, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, *Fresh Girl* and *An Untamed State* show that post-traumatic healing after rape, albeit a difficult process, may be possible for today's Haitian women because they are not eternal victims but fighting survivors like their revolutionary ancestors. For this reason, far from revictimising their heroines, as has been demonstrated, these novels present them as resilient individuals who struggle but gradually return to their lives with more strength. Thus, it can be concluded that by breaking taboos and therefore raising awareness in their global readership, the three narratives expose and denounce the systemic nature of as well as the silence around sexual violence in Haitian culture, a scourge which even reaches Haitian women in the US diaspora. In this sense, it seems apt to claim that Danticat, Placide and Gay use their narratives as a weapon of denunciation and resistance, that is, as activist literature.

Notes

[1] For example, Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen/SOFA or Kay Fanm.

[2] Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot has related the early period of Haiti's Independence with the political and socio-economic instability that the country has been experiencing until the present day. According to this scholar, along with "the heavy indemnity on the Haitian state" imposed by France in order to compensate the former slave owners and a diplomatic ostracism by the international community due to the racist and imperialist Western ideology at the time which tried to silence the revolution (*Silencing* 95), Haiti was affected by a class and colour conflict between the state and the nation that still lingers today. As this scholar explains, post-independence Haiti was followed by a strife between the interests of the state elites—made up by the light-skinned *affranchis* enjoying freedom before the revolution, their descendants,

the merchant bourgeoise and other state-dependent urban groups—and the interests of the peasantry—integrated by the majority of black slaves freed with the revolution (*Haiti* 45) to which Trouillot refers as "the nation" (230). These socio-political circumstances, along with a clear external commercial dependence, the stagnation of peasant productivity (80), the growth of what Trouillot calls "urban parasites" (78-79) as well as an economy mainly borne by the taxes paid by a peasantry gradually forced into "abject poverty" (84) became the breeding ground for socio-economic and political upheavals at the beginning of the twentieth century. This agitation served the US as an excuse to occupy Haiti from 1915 to 1934 as it looked for a strategic geopolitical position during the weakening of Europe in the wake of World War I (100). However, a bursting reaction to this foreign presence and its racism and the US troops' dissolving and replacement of the Haitian army for a militarised police force which efficiently imposed state-sanctioned violence (105-107) paved the way for the Duvalier brutal dictatorship (132-136). Following this totalitarian regime, the subsequent development of the country from 1986 until today has been characterised by a ruling elite that continues to ignore the fundamental socio-economic issues of the country and excluding the vast majority: the urban and rural lower classes (Trouillot, *Haiti* 230; Laguerre 27).

[3] For the analysis of Vieux-Chauvet's piece, I have resorted to the only English translation of her trilogy published by literary scholars Rose-Myriam Rejouis and Val Vinokur in 2009. This twenty-first century translation of a work in French and *Krèyol* allowed the international community and especially the Haitian diaspora to have access to a Haitian classic that had been out of print for decades as a result of the Duvalier dictatorship's silencing of dissidence (Vieux-Chauvet xviii). In this respect, it should be noted that given the time elapsed between the publication of the 1968 original (a time of revolutionary fervour in France) and the late 2000s, public reception of the trilogy has varied notably. Whereas the French version, a politically-committed and provocative second-wave feminist book was read clandestinely in Haiti under the Duvaliers' censorship or passed unnoticed by the French and Francophone-Canadian general public owing to the lack of copies sold before its forced withdrawal, in the new millennium, Rejouis and Vinokur's translation was welcomed as an illuminating information source about Haiti's history, society and culture for new generations of hyphenated Haitians and the rest of the world (Spear 13-23).

[4] After the publication of the trilogy, Vieux-Chauvet fled Haiti to avoid prosecution by the Duvalier dictatorship and located her permanent residence in New York, where she died in 1973.

[5] Since the publication of the novel, Martine's and Sophie's traumas have been thoroughly studied by literary scholars such as Lucía M. Suárez and Donette Francis among others.

[6] In *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy* Abraham and Torok argue that, notwithstanding individuals' endeavour to repress their traumas, these silenced or secret experiences are inscribed in cryptic forms into their discourse and stories which become traceable both in their silences and in their cryptic language with detours and incoherences.

[7] According to Laura Roldán-Sevillano, the violence that the gang leader exerts against Mireille is the by-product of both Haiti's rape culture and a cultural trauma related to Haiti's "(post)colonial history" which prompts this character "to take revenge against those whom he considers his oppressors" ("Haiti's" 280), that is, the Westernised Haitian upper classes and returnees like Mireille's father (274).

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Mind, Heart, and Breath: Embodiment in Allen Ginsberg's Long-Lined Poetry

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Abstract

This paper explores Allen Ginsberg's poetry through the lens of embodiment and corporeality. It shows how, in Ginsberg's poems, the relationship between the physical and the formal is incredibly tight: indeed, the two often coincide. This paper considers two remarkable examples of embodiment: *Kaddish* (1961) and poems from *Mind Breaths* (1977). In *Kaddish*, physical embodiment is embedded in the poetic verse through the representation of female grotesque physicality. This reflects formally, as the line itself leaks in length and unraveling, reflecting unboundedness and fluidity. In poems from *Mind Breaths*, Ginsberg experiments with a new kind of embodiment, one in which consciousness becomes equated with breath. In these poems, he achieves a coincidence between breath and line in both the content and the form of the poems. This paper ultimately sheds light on how Ginsberg's long line creates and facilitates exchanges between the physical and the formal in his poems.

Keywords: American poetry, Allen Ginsberg, embodiment, corporeality, long line.

Mente, corazón y respiración: la corporalidad del verso largo en la poesía de Allen Ginsberg

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la poesía de Allen Ginsberg desde la perspectiva de la corporalidad. En él se muestra cómo, en los poemas de Ginsberg, la relación entre lo físico y lo formal es extremadamente estrecha: de hecho, los dos

a menudo coinciden. Este texto examina dos ejemplos notables de corporalidad: *Kaddish* (1961) y algunos poemas de *Mind Breaths* (1977). En *Kaddish,* la corporalidad física está incorporada en el verso poético a través de la representación del físico femenino grotesco. Esto se refleja en su forma, ya que dicho verso largo se desborda y rebosa, reflejando vastedad y fluidez. En algunos poemas de *Mind Breath*s, Ginsberg experimenta con un nuevo tipo de corporalidad, en el que la conciencia se equipara con la respiración. En estos poemas logra una coincidencia entre aliento y verso tanto en el contenido como en la forma de los poemas. Finalmente, este artículo pone de manifiesto cómo el uso del verso largo de Ginsberg crea y facilita intercambios entre lo físico y lo formal en sus poemas.

Palabras clave: Poesía norteamericana, Allen Ginsberg, *embodiment*, corporalidad, verso largo.

1. Moving Towards Embodiment

At the end of March 1950, 23-year-old Allen Ginsberg wrote a letter that would change his life and jumpstart his career as a poet. This letter from an ambitious young poet from Paterson, New Jersey, was addressed to William Carlos Williams, an already established poet also from Paterson, New Jersey. Almost one hundred years earlier, in 1856, Whitman had likewise written a letter, which included a first version of *Leaves of Grass*, to Emerson. Ginsberg's letter marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship and mentorship. "Williams got this letter and then wrote back saying, 'I'm going to put this in my book, do you mind?' And I said, 'Gee, I'm going to be immortal,' because I thought he was immortal," Ginsberg recalls (*The Best Minds* 360). The poetry which Ginsberg had included in the letter did not, however, impress Williams, who replied that "in this mode, perfection is basic, and these aren't perfect" (qtd. in Ginsberg "The Tradition of Reznikoff" par. 3).

Not discouraged by Williams' reaction, Ginsberg put together a different set of poems in his following letter. These were often based on dream and journal entries, as the poet had attempted to extrapolate from Williams' lessons and adapt them to his own sensibility and

poetry. Together with the direct treatment of the object, Ginsberg was working with techniques or notions discussed by Williams, such as the observation of particulars, a colloquial style, an interest in the ordinary mind, and an often ludic experimentation with line breaks. The poems in this cluster were enthusiastically received by Williams. Many of these poems, written between 1947 and 1952, would be published with an introduction by Williams in 1961 in the volume *Empty Mirror*.

Discussing an object or phenomena concretely and in detail constituted a significant innovation for Ginsberg, whose early poetry had been heavy with an oblique, opaque symbolism which rendered it hermetic and unintelligible to others. Only Kerouac or intimate friends would occasionally be able to decode Ginsberg's highly personal symbolism, and even the poet himself admitted that he quickly forgot what his symbols stood for (see Raskin 72). This early poetry was profoundly influenced by Blake, whom Ginsberg wanted to emulate, as seen in poems such as "The Eye Altering Alters All" (1948), a short, rhymed epigram for Blake:

> Many seek and never see,
> anyone can tell them why.
> O they weep and O they cry
> and never take until they try
> unless they try it in their sleep
> and never some until they die.
> I ask many, they ask me.
> This is a great mystery (1-8).

Some of Ginsberg's *Empty Mirror* poems are crafted and philosophical, and more closely resemble the poet's earlier writing. These poems are often vague and intellectualizing – "I am flesh and blood, but my mind is the focus of much lightning […] All work has been an imitation of the literary cackle in my head" he admits for instance in "Psalm I" (1949) (2, 5), accentuating a lack of embodiment in his poetry. However, *Empty Mirror* also abounds in poems which foreground the ordinary mind and life, and which observe without imposing interpretation or metaphysical discussion on the observed phenomenon. As its title tells us, for instance, "The Bricklayer's Lunch Hour" (1947) depicts a bricklayer eating a sandwich during his break. The poem is highly descriptive: "He / has on dungarees and is bare above / the waist; he has yellow hair and wears /

a smudged but still red cap / on his head" (9-13). There is no judgement or comment imposed on the observation. Towards the end of the poem, "The Bricklayer's Lunch Hour" operates a shift in perception which opens the space of the piece to a larger perspective:

> A small cat walks to him
> along the top of the wall. He picks
> it up, takes off his cap, and puts it
> over the kitten's body for a moment.
> Meanwhile it is darkening as if to rain
> and the wind on top of the trees in the
> street comes through almost harshly (21-27).

"It's a jump of attentiveness of the mind from a small thing to awareness of a giant panorama," explains Ginsberg (*The Best Minds* 369).

Ginsberg's focus on context at the end of the poem represents another switch from the general and abstract to the concrete and particular, to "no ideas but in things." As illustrated, this switch to particularity emerged in Ginsberg's early writing, under the mentorship of Williams. Significantly, Ginsberg's first letter to Williams shows how, as early as 1950, Ginsberg conceives that his poetry follows Williams' axiom "no ideas but in things" in different ways, at different levels:

> All that I have done has a program, consciously or not, running on from phase to phase, from the beginnings of emotional breakdown, to momentary raindrops from the clouds become corporeal, to a renewal of human objectivity which I take to be ultimately identical to no ideas but in things (qtd. in Williams 173).

This assertion holds true throughout his life and work, as Ginsberg reinvents and explores, time and again, this early assertion. This often takes the shape of a progressive embodiment in his poetry. In fact, the poet would continue to progressively move towards an embodiment in writing, an emphasis on concreteness and physicality which manifests, as this paper shows, as both an exploration of the body and an embodiment *of* his poetry as well, in form: in a coincidence between physicality and line. This paper especially considers two remarkable examples of embodiment and corporeality: *Kaddish* (1961) and poems

from the later collection *Mind Breaths* (1977). In *Kaddish*, physical embodiment is embedded in the poetic verse through the representation of female grotesque physicality. This reflects formally, as the line itself leaks in length and unraveling, reflecting the unboundedness and fluidity of the subject's body and individuality. In poems from *Mind Breaths*, Ginsberg experiments with a new kind of embodiment, one in which consciousness becomes equated with breath. Ultimately, this paper shows how Ginsberg's long line creates and facilitates exchanges between the physical and the formal in the poems, so that the two often coincide.

2. *Kaddish* and the Grotesque, Leaking Long Line

"Look what I have done with the long line," Ginsberg writes in a letter to William Carlos Williams in December 1955, sending him a few poems – *Howl*, "A Strange New Cottage in Berkeley," "A Supermarket in California," and "Sunflower Sutra" – and explaining the latest changes in his writing and theories:

> In some of these poems it seems to answer your demand for a relatively absolute line with a fixed base, whatever it is… all held together within the elastic of the breath, thought of varying lengths. The key is in the jazz choruses to some extent; also to reliance on spontaneity & expressiveness which long line encourages; also to attention to interior unchecked logical mental stream. With a long line comes a return, (caused by) expressive human feeling […] The release of emotion is one with the rhythmical buildup of long line (qtd. in Miles 199).

Although only five years had passed since his first letter to Williams, much had changed in life experience for Ginsberg, who now lived in Berkeley, San Francisco, with Peter Orlovsky. After the *Empty Mirror* poems, Ginsberg's writing had been closely informed by Kerouac's notion of spontaneous writing: "He taught me everything I knew about writing," Ginsberg says, acknowledging Kerouac's influence in those years ("The New Consciousness" 80). Around 1953-54, the poet began experimenting with more spontaneous forms of writing, particularly

inspired by Kerouac's "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" (1953, first published in 1959).

Under the mentorship of Williams, with a more natural arrangement of form – often with a verse rendition of prose – had come an ordinary, yet visionary, content which prioritized observation over judgement and faithfulness to reality as perceived and to thought as conceived. The most remarkable step in the liberation of form which Ginsberg undertook consisted of the development of the howling long line which poems such as *Howl* and *Kaddish*, together with many other poems from the ´50s and ´60s, present (see *Howl and Other Poems* and *Kaddish and Other Poems*). Indeed, *Howl* and *Kaddish* are the culmination of Ginsberg's early attempts at spontaneous expression; the line which the poet discovers in writing these pieces would remain the mainstay of his poetic expression. As expressed in his 1955 letter to Williams, the long line enabled Ginsberg to better achieve spontaneity and expressiveness, often through a tuning in with his breath and emotions. It is therefore side by side with his exploration of the long line that Ginsberg embarks on a progressive embodiment, in his poetry, of physical realities and concreteness. The poet's abandonment of abstract, metaphysical lines in favour of an emphasis on the physical and concrete finds expression, this paper shows, in an embodiment *of* his poetry as well, so that themes which pertain to the body, especially the grotesque body, are reflected in the poet's verse, which duly becomes a grotesque, leaking line.

Kaddish, Ginsberg's elegy for his mother, allows the poet to tap into unhindered emotion and channel it into writing: "I wrote a lot of that weeping anyway, and got idea for huge expandable form of such a poem," he tells Kerouac in a letter (Morgan *The Letters* 171). The expansion in form of this poem, spearheaded by a very long line which is constantly interrupted by multiple dashes, allows for breath, mind, and emotion still further to coincide in the poem. The first lines of the poem immediately establish a rhythm, one which is carried throughout the poem, as the long text is unified by its form and tone; this rhythm is dictated and inspired by the speaker who has been "up all night, talking, talking," and listening to prayer and music:

> downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon, and I've been
> up all night, talking, talking, reading the Kaddish aloud,

> listening to Ray Charles blues shout blind on the phonograph
> the rhythm the rhythm – and your memory in my head three years after – And read Adonais' last triumphant stanzas aloud – wept, realizing how we suffer –
> And how Death is that remedy all singers dream of, sing, remember, prophesy as in the Hebrew Anthem, or the Buddhist Book of Answers – and my own imagination of a withered leaf – at dawn – (2-4).

The abundance of dashes intuitively suggests an interruption in breath which mirrors the poet's crying while writing, but it also invokes the notion of alluvials, of adding thought-spurts after the main thought is exhausted, when another one comes up, as in "or the Buddhist Book of Answers – and my own imagination of a withered leaf – at dawn" (4). Referring to another poem, "Television Was a Baby Crawling Toward That Deathchamber" ("TV Baby"), Ginsberg recalls his use of commas and dashes in the lines to a similar, orgasmic purpose: "it's like a series of staccato comes, spurts, within the line," he explains; "the breathing there, if read aloud, would be like a heavily labored breathing, with like a gasp for breath after each comma" ("Improvised Poetics" 22). From the beginning, then, formal elements such as the dash and an interrupted but long line allow the poet to better align the piece to his thought process, emotion, and breathing pattern.

Kaddish's long lines also embed a grotesque physicality which, as the line unravels, underscores an undoing of the poem's subject, Naomi, Ginsberg's mother, in both her body and her mind. The long lines of the poem thereby mirror a movement of fluidity and openness to a grotesqueness which may be equated with Otherness, as it spans femalehood, different states of mind, and monstrous bodies. The elegy focuses on the mother's history of mental illness, beginning with her arrival in the United States, through breakdowns, mental institutions, and ultimately her death. As Loni Reynold notes, Beat Generation writers were part of a historical shift that began in the 1940s, with the institutionalization of mental difference, and continued in the ´60s, with the anti-psychiatry movement ("'The Mad Ones'" 155). While difference was still suspect, the Beats' works would allow for safe identification with it (Reynold 156). Ginsberg also underlines how

difference was considered pathological and treated as an individual ailment, decontextualized from the social, historical moment (Linton "Reassigning Meaning" 162). He argues, as stated in his account of "How *Kaddish* Happened," that it was not only his mother's issues he was discussing, but also the "mind-illusion mechano-universe of unfeeling time in which I saw my self my own mother and my very nation trapped desolate our worlds of consciousness homeless and at war" (169). Cold War scholars have indeed noted that, often, the literature of the ´50s reflects an age of anxiety: the breakdowns, traumas, and neuroses of the characters are national as well as individual (see Alves 2001).

Together with detailing the mental deterioration of his mother, Ginsberg does not shy away from detailing her physical deterioration too, as caused by her hospitalization – "I'm getting fat – I used to have such a beautiful figure before I went to the hospital," Naomi says on one occasion (147). Her physical breakdowns recount a body which unravels, and becomes entirely grotesque, both in a modern sense and in the Bakhtinian sense. Lines such as these herald an almost complete opening of the body to the world, one in which the individual has no control, no borders, and not even the luck, or mercy, to lose consciousness. Naomi becomes entirely fluid and liquid:

> One night, sudden attack – her noise in the bathroom – like croaking up her soul – convulsions and red vomit coming out of her mouth – diarrhea water exploding from her behind – on all fours in front of the toilet – urine running between her legs – left retching on the tile floor smeared with her black feces – unfainted – (140).

The mother's physicality is consistently represented as monstruous throughout the poem, with an emphasis on the grotesqueness of her body – "varicosed, nude, fat, doomed" and "with your eyes with the pancreas removed / with your eyes of appendix operation […] of abortion […] of ovaries removed […] of shock […] of lobotomy" (141, 303-08). However, Naomi is doubly monstruous, because of her mental illness as well: as Katherine Kellett notes, following Nuzum, "any individual or group that can be marginalized or viewed as standing outside the norm may be monstrosized" (208).

Naomi's body is specifically rendered monstrous in its sexuality, which borders on incestuous in situations that are grotesque in themselves, as incest constitutes a universal, timeless taboo. In one of what is, significantly, one of the longest lines of *Kaddish*, the speaker recalls the mother attempting to seduce him, and focuses on the grotesqueness of her body and genitals:

> One time I thought she was trying to make me come lay her – flirting to herself at sink – lay back on huge bed that filled most of the room, dress up round her hips, big slash of hair, scars of operations, pancreas, belly wounds, abortions, appendix, stitching of incisions pulling down in the fat like hideous thick zippers – ragged long lips between her legs – What, even, smell of asshole? I was cold – later revolted a little, not much – seemed perhaps a good idea to try – know the Monster of the Beginning Womb – Perhaps – that way. Would she care? She needs a lover (158).

In an almost cleansing, purifying act, this line is immediately followed by a prayer uttered in Hebrew: "Yisborach, v'yistabach, v'yispoar, v'yisroman, v'yisnaseh, v'yishador, v'yishalleh, v'yishallol, sh'meh d'kudsho, b'rich hu" (159). Whereas the Oedipal nature of the relationship between Naomi and her son may be highlighted, as related in the poem, *Kaddish* also attempts to rewrite the mother-son roles. In this sense, it follows an impulse antithetical to the Oedipal motive of establishing the father: as Tony Trigilio notes, the speaker aims to essentially reclaim the mother, further redeeming her madness through an analysis of its history and causes (784-85). This attempt to redeem the mother may suggest, indeed, a redemption, on the part of the speaker, of the female principle as well; whereas *Howl* propounds male comradeship, Trigilio suggests, *Kaddish* embodies female divinity (773).

The female grotesque body and mind – liquid, unbound, and dissolved – become then the focus of the long prayer, being depicted in their monstrosity but simultaneously being reclaimed and redeemed. In lines such as these, Naomi is depicted as an unraveling woman: "One hand stiff – heaviness of forties & menopause reduced by one heart stroke, lame now – wrinkles – a scar on her head, the lobotomy – ruin, the hand dipping downwards to death –" (206). *Kaddish*'s long,

prolonged lines reflect the fluid, leaking movements of Naomi towards the world (or, indeed, "dipping downwards to death"), of the speaker towards his mother, and of an invoked openness towards Otherness, including states of mental illness, as found in sections of the poem such as "Hymmnn."

3. *Mind Breaths* As Meditative Poetry

In the 1970s, Ginsberg's long line became increasingly influenced by and concerned with breath, physiology, and meditative practices. After coming back from a long journey through India and Japan, which concluded with "The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express" (1963), Ginsberg read his works at a poetry conference in Vancouver. His friend and fellow poet Robert Duncan pointed out that he was not using his body as much, in poetry, as he was when chanting mantras; this prompted Ginsberg's resolve to employ his body more, the more effectively to break "the barrier of fear of energy, or fear of expression" which was obstructing a more complete expression and embodiment of poetry (Ginsberg "First Thought" 106). One way to do this was to value breathing, in composition and expression. After meeting and beginning a long friendship with Tibetan lama Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, in 1971, Ginsberg starts to experiment more decidedly with oral poetry. The teacher would spur the poet towards extemporaneous composition, often pushing him to improvise on the spot, in both private and public contexts.

Another way in which Ginsberg attempts to foreground physiology in his poetry is through a focus on vocalization, and employing the whole body in his readings. Mantra chanting would become the poet's cornerstone in any public appearance, and led him directly, almost naturally, into songwriting and singing, via the focus on the articulation of vowels of chanting, as Paul Portugés points out (*The Visionary Poetics* 131). These, together with improvisation, helped him foreground a poetics which increasingly became oral and public. According to Daniel McGuinness, the poet's long line was apt for this purpose: "The long line, generally, has been traditionally a public line, a symptom of the showman or the shaman, the poet on a raised surface: altar, stage, soapbox" (273). Ginsberg would show an emphasis on poetry as spoken through the use of intentional, rather than stress-based, meter when performing poetry

(as found by Patrick Dunn's study of several performances of Ginsberg's; see Dunn 2007).

Ginsberg would trace this intentional meter back to Ezra Pound. Referring to some tapes he found of Pound reading his poetry, Ginsberg notes how, in Pound's performance, "every syllable is intentional" and the line is condensed to its essential elements: "If you condense it all down to what you mean to say, then you can make a music out of the intentional and significant… syllables. And you can *pay attention to the tone-leading of the vowels*," he remarks; "It's not pay-attention-to-the-tone, but you can pay attention because EACH THING… MEANS… SOME… THING. And that […] gives a density to the line" ("Improvised Poetics" 32-33, emphases in original). This intentional meter Ginsberg named "vowel-length consciousness," owing to the intentionality and purpose of every syllable in this mode (which he finally equates with good poetry in general) (Ginsberg "Improvised Poetics" 36-37).

Vocalization might be considered another step in the process of externalization and attention to what happens *outside* of the body. As noted in this paper, the poet had begun to develop this focus with poems such as "The Bricklayer's Lunch." Here, he had refrained altogether from judgement or superimposition of thought. This may be seen as already tending towards Buddhist philosophies. In an interview discussing mantra chanting, Ginsberg and Portugés agree that chanting consists of a sort of surrender to the surrounding (empty) space; "surrendering to the inevitability of day or night and seeing other people there," adds Ginsberg (qtd. in Portugés *The Visionary Poetics* 132). Surrendering, and opening, to empty space becomes the norm for the poet: in meditation, in chanting, and in poetry. From 1972, under the guidance of Trungpa, Ginsberg specializes in *samatha* meditation. This consists of the practice of mindfulness, or wakefulness, with the addition of a specific attention to the breath as it leaves the nostrils, moves into the surrounding space, and finally dissolves, beginning anew from the nostrils; in this sense, it is a meditation of egolessness (as it focuses on what happens outside the body, rather than inside) and an exercise in continuous attention (Ginsberg qtd. in Portugés 135-36).

Interestingly, an expansion into space may be considered a characteristic feature of American writing. As Tony Tanner remarks, American authors exhibit a centrifugal movement into surrounding

space which comes from their exposure to a sense of geographical sense of vastness ("Notes for a Comparison" 86). Moreover, the internal differences of the United States also stimulates the writer to expand (through "the wondering vision," which finds form in the catalogue) into surrounding space as a method of inclusion, the assimilation of variety (Tanner *The Reign of Wonder* 10). Ginsberg's poems from *Mind Breaths All Over the Place (1972-1977)*, as the title of one the collection suggests, reflect exactly such an expansion "all over the place" through breath, meditation, and long lines – and some coincidence between these three. "Mind Breaths" (1973), the title poem, exemplifies thought and lines moving externally, outwards, from the nostrils of the speaker, through the streets outside the window, through the geographical United States, to the other sides of the ocean and every corner of the world, and finally back to the speaker in Teton Village. The poem reflects the exercise in attention which, in meditation, is brought to the breath, its exhalation, movement, dissolution, and new beginning; the poem begins and ends in the same place, in a renewal of attention to the speaker's physiology.

The poem starts by briefly setting the speaker in place and time and by shifting the focus to his breath. Significantly, this appears to become longer as the lines also progressively become longer throughout the poem. Thus, a first coincidence between line and breath, through length, is established:

> Thus crosslegged on round pillow sat in Teton Space –
> I breathed upon the aluminum microphone-stand a body's length away
> I breathed upon the teacher's throne, the wooden chair with yellow pillow
> […]
> breathed outward over aspen twigs trembling September's top yellow leaves twilit at mountain foot (1-3, 8).

The first lines employ "I breathed" or "breathed" as anaphora, but after eight lines the word becomes implicit, leaving only the prepositions of place and movement which normally follow the word. The prominent use of these prepositions echoes Whitman's catalogues, employed by the poet to highlight both an overhead vision and large spans of movement, especially in Section 33 of *Song of Myself*, which contains the longest and most descriptive catalogues of the poem. Anaphoric or repeated words

which Whitman uses throughout Section 33 include "over," "along," "by," "upon," "at," "down," "to," and "through." This may be noted, for example, in this extract:

> Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance,
> Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,
> Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of
> base-ball,
> At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances,
> drinking, laughter,
> At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through a straw (749-53).

The lines of "Mind Breaths" are similarly descriptive and detailed, but do not continuously use strict anaphora or repetition at the beginning of the line, resulting in a still greater spontaneity:

> out towards Reno's neon, dollar bills skittering downstreet along the curb,
> up into Sierras oak leaves blown down by fall cold chills
> over peaktops snowy gales beginning,
> a breath of prayer down on Kitkitdizze's horngreen leaves close to ground,
> over Gary's tile roof, over Montgomery Street, pigeons flutter down before sunset from Washington Park's white churchsteeple (15-19).

After following the journey of his breath, the poet returns to the first image of the poem, re-setting the time and place; Teton Village, September:

> a breath returns vast gliding grass flats cow-dotted into Jackson Hole, into a corner of the plains,
> up the asphalt road and mud parking lot, a breeze of restless September, up wood stairways in the wind
> into the cafeteria at Teton Village under the red tram lift

> a calm breath, a silent breath, a slow breath breathes outward from the nostrils (51-54).

In this way, Ginsberg achieves a coincidence between breath and line not only in the content, but also in the form of the poem. He achieves this through embodying, to some extent, in the length of the line, the length of the breath and through imitating, in the poem, what happens in his breathing meditation: focus originates in the exhalation of breath through the nostrils, moves into the surrounding empty space in Whitmanesque motion of recording catalogue, and comes back to the nostrils with a new breath.

As Stefanie Heine notes, Ginsberg's contention that the length of the thought coincided with the length of the breath in his poetry is problematic, and his theories are often grounded in discourse, rather than in actual physiology (95). In fact, when writing poetry by hand, or on the typewriter, the poet would not have had the chance to overlap the physical need of drawing a breath with the span of the thought, because thoughts may be further prolonged in the mind (93-95). To the purpose of this paper, it is significant to note that, in fact, Ginsberg's own theories contain some contradictions and ultimately unclarified points. For instance, the poet remains ambiguous on whether *Howl*'s sentences are strictly breath units or units of thought as well. Luke Walker dives into this matter specifically, pointing out that Ginsberg's theorization contains its own problematization: the 'breath unit' is more of an ideal rather than a practice (45). In his statement on poetics included at the end Allen's *The New American Poetry*, in fact, Ginsberg remarks that "Ideally each line of Howl is a single breath unit. Tho in this recording it's not pronounced so" (416). "My breath is long," he then concedes, "that's the Measure – one physical-mental inspiration of thought contained in the elastic of a breath" (416). It therefore remains rather unspecified whether the poet's idea of a mind-breath unit is to be taken more literally or more metaphorically, as breath or as 'physical-mental inspiration of thought' (Walker 45). In the best cases, these two views seem at least theoretically to coincide: in fact, Ginsberg defines the long line as a form that captures the "great inclusiveness of the mind that can enjamb – put in one breath a great many associations" ("A Conversation" 97).

Another poem in which Ginsberg emphasizes movement in vision, in a manner similar to that of Whitman, is "Thoughts on a Breath" (1975). Here, the poet foregrounds the prepositions of place by removing syntactical elements such as conjunctions, which might hinder the flow, and by predominantly using verbs which indicate movement (such as "slide," "roll up," "roll," and "rise"):

> Cars slide minute down asphalt lanes in front of Dallas Hilton Inn
> or roll up toward the city's squared towers under electric-wire trestles gridded cross countried trees brown bare in December's smog-mist towards the water tower
> distanced under cloud streak crossed with fading vapor trails.
> Majestic rolling in a skirt of human fog, building blocks rise at sky edge (1-4).

Significantly, "Thoughts on a Breath," like other poems in *Mind Breaths* such as "News Bulletin" (1973) and "Thoughts Sitting Breathing" (1973), incorporates the news into its lines, as Ginsberg's poems from the 1960s characteristically did. "Thoughts on a Breath" (1975) depicts a meditating mind angered by current affairs: after describing common meditative practices – "I sat again to complete the cycle, eyes open seeing dust motes in the eye screen" (6) – the speaker's mind wanders: "What Was it I began my meditation on? // Police state, Students, Poetry open tongue, and the anger and Fear of the Cops, / the oil Cops, the Rockefeller Cops, the Oswald Cops, the Johnson Cops the Nixon Cops the president Cops" (13-15). As in other poems, the mention of orgasm reflects a climax in the poem, here one in which a mounting, overwhelming rage starts to transform into compassion and understanding:

> Nothing but massive metal bars about, monster machines that eat us, Controlled by the army the Cops, the Secret police, our own thoughts!
> Punishment! Punish me! Punish me! we scream in our hearts, cocks spurting alone in our fists!
> What thoughts more flowed thru our hearts alone in Dallas? (21-23).

The poem then concludes on an elevated, renewed note: "Sentient beings are numberless I vow to liberate all" (53).

"Thoughts Sitting Breathing" is exemplary of the incorporation of the news, or of contemporary, political, and social contexts into an openly spiritual poem. Structurally, this poem comprises three sections, the lines of each of which begin with a syllable from *om manipadmi hum*, a mantra associated with Avalokiteshvara and the path of compassion. With every mantra chanting cycle, the speaker quiets down more and reaches some form of conciliation with the current state of affairs. The first chant is the angriest: an excerpt reads: "OM – the pride of perfumed money […] MA – How jealous! the million Pentagon myrmidons with dollar billions […] DMI – alone the misery, the broken legs of carcrash alcohol, gimme another cigarette, I ain't got a dime for coffee," and "HUM – the pigs got rocks in their head, C.I.A. got one eye bloody mind tongue […] hate Gook Heaven, hate them hippies in Hell" (1, 2, 5, 6). The second chant transcends the first one and becomes more compassionate or understanding: "OM – Give it all away, poetry bliss & ready cash […] MA – sit down crosslegged and relax […] DMI – I forgive thee Cord Meyer secret mind police," and "HUM – Miserable victims flashing knives" (7, 8, 11, 12).

The third chant further transcends rage and both calls forth and embraces a spiritual elevation, repeating at the end of each line the anaphoric phrase "free space for Causeless Bliss" like a prayer or invocation:

> OM – the Crown of Emptiness, relax the skullcap wove of formal thought, let light escape to Heaven, floating up from the heart thru cranium, free space for Causeless Bliss –
>
> MA – Speech purified, worlds calmed of alcoholic luxury & irritable smoking […]
>
> NI – How vast, how brightly empty and how old, the breath within the breast expands threefold, the sigh of no restraint, sigh love's release, the rest and peacefulness of sweetheart's ease, from Heart to Heart – free space for Causeless Bliss! (13-15).

This process of self-transcendence in poetry, which the poet primarily achieves through breathing and meditation, was probably inspired by Trungpa's analogy of the telescope. Ginsberg's guru, Trungpa instructed the poet to employ meditation to build on and layer thoughts, comparing the practice to continuously opening a telescope, further enlarging the same image (Schumacher 577). This may clearly be noted in "Thoughts Sitting Breathing," as the repetitive structure of the poem also indicates a repetition in thought which slowly changes each time. The telescope technique may also be noted in "Mind Breaths," as, in the poem, each breath leads the speaker a little further in the world, and each line builds upon the previous one in that it moves both the speaker and the poem further on. Yet another poem in which this effect may be observed is "Ego Confession" (1974). Here, the speaker constantly transcends himself (or rather attempts to transcend himself), with humorous contradiction – "I want to be known as the most brilliant man in America," he begins, later repurposing: "his extraordinary ego, at service of Dharma and completely empty," and "I want to be the spectacle of Poesy triumphant over trickery of the world," "– All empty all for show, all for the sake of Poesy" (1, 14, 18, 31). Another exemple of this technique is "Teton Village" (1973):

> Snow mountain fields
> seen through transparent wings
> of a fly on the windowpane (1-3).

Like the longer lines of other *Mind Breaths* poems, these lines build upon each other, reflecting an expansion into space of the vision of the speaker which is accompanied by deepening attention and sharper focus. Ultimately, the lines of this collection are "all over the place," literally, as they expand in length and expand into space, coinciding with the poet's breath and consciousness with a new mindful, embodying, transcending quality.

Returning to "Thoughts Sitting Breathing," the third and final mantra cycle of the poem interestingly presents an imagined physical release and liberation in the final syllable of the mantra:

> HUM – I shit out my hate thru my asshole, My sphincter loosens the void, all hell's legions fall thru space, the Pentagon is destroyed

[…]
I loose my bowels of Asia
I move the U.S.A.
I crap on Dharmakaya
And wipe the worlds away (18, 23-26).

This adds an element of humorous release to the poem and might also (again humorously) suggest the speaker's own *physical* creation of "free space for causeless bliss," which then becomes a literal as well as metaphysical action. Moreover, the grotesque body might in this case accompany a grotesque individuality just like in *Kaddish*, but on a more positive note: where in *Kaddish* the dissolution of the body was accompanied by the dissolution of identity in the sense of madness, here it is rather related to a dissolution of the self into empty ecstasy, or enlightenment.

Characteristically, grotesqueness and the unraveling of the body are symbolic of processes which occur within the self. This unraveling finds a reflection in form, as these lines break the form of the poem, which was otherwise neatly structured following the syllables of the mantra in three chants, with the use of anaphora at the end of each line in the last cycle. Looseness in the body therefore accompanies looseness in form, in the lines. In these ways, "Thoughts Sitting Breathing," similarly to *Kaddish*, therefore embodies a grotesque physicality in different ways: through expressive form at the end of the poem, in a physical, emotional, and spiritual release, and by cleverly combining form and content in the lines so that the repetition of a mantra accompanies a transcendence in the speaker's mind. Associated with the path of compassion, the Hindu mantra *om manipadmi hum* brings about a renewed compassion in the speaker as he utters and breathes each syllable and each line.

4. The Long Line and Embodiment

"All that I have done has a program, consciously or not, running on from phase to phase," Ginsberg wrote in his letter to Williams in 1950, "from the beginnings of emotional breakdown, to momentary raindrops from the clouds become corporeal, to a renewal of human objectivity which I take to be ultimately identical to no ideas but in things" (qtd. in Williams 173). This statement precedes the composition

of most of the poems published in *Empty Mirror*. However, throughout his life, Ginsberg continued to value Williams' advice and the older poet remained an important influence, as later poems such as "Written in My Dream by W. C. Williams" (1984) suggest. Often, in the more experimental poems of *Empty Mirror*, Ginsberg's lines follow Williams' instruction to find "no ideas but in things" through a direct treatment of the object or phenomena observed, which does not attempt to impose judgement, as in "The Bricklayer's Lunch." These poems exhibit a switch, towards the end, in perception: often, a switch from a smaller, or internal panorama to a larger, or external panorama. This process reminds of the analogy of the opening telescope. In fact, throughout the 1970s, Ginsberg combines the physiological notions of breath and vocalization with his thought as his poetry becomes "expression in really the easiest and most natural way of your own nature, which is by breathing, and making a sound while breathing. Just like the wind makes a sound in the leaves" (Ginsberg "First Thought" 109). His long line expands on the space of the page as breath expands into the surrounding space; following Trungpa's suggestion, like a telescope which opens endlessly. Thoughts and lines build upon each other, layer after layer, as can be seen in "Mind Breaths."

These processes pertain to Ginsberg's continued experiment with embodiment in poetry. Moving beyond the hermetic, disembodied nature of his early poems, he begins, in *Howl* and *Kaddish*, to embody his breath, thought, and emotion in the line, attempting to replicate, in form, breathing patterns apt to convey specific feelings. In *Kaddish*, the physicality described is grotesque, as it depicts the physical and psychological undoing of the poet's mother. The poem's long line embodies physicality in its form, as the line itself leaks, in its length and orgasmic unraveling, reflecting unboundedness and fluidity. *Kaddish*'s lines reflect an unfinished, grotesque nature, which finds embodiment in Naomi's mental and physical conditions. The leaking, unraveling lines accompany the leaking, unraveling body and mind of the mother, and underscore an openness to Otherness and difference which includes female-hood together with mental illness. The Buddhist-inspired *Mind Breaths* poems faithfully follow both the mental and physiological processes of the speaker, replicating these on the page through line length and mindful recording of perceptions. In "Thoughts Sitting Breathing," meditation allows the poet to transcend reality and himself in a final,

humorous grotesqueness which renders both his self and his body wide open. Ultimately, it is specifically Ginsberg's signature expression, the long line, which facilitates exchanges between the physical and the formal in the poem, allowing these, in their most successful moments, to coincide.

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Spelling and Punctuation Practice in London, Wellcome Library, MS 3731 (ff. 3r–43r, f. 125v)

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Abstract

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the standardization process of the English language in the Late Modern English period (Auer 939–948, Percy 55–79, Tieken-Boon van Ostade 37–51), with various factors contributing to it, such as the printing press, spelling reforms, normative grammars and dictionaries. In the process of standardization, which "involves *the suppression of the optional variability*" in a language (Milroy and Milroy 6, original emphasis), prescriptivism played a crucial role, and it has been argued that, by the early eighteenth century, English spelling had become standardized and stable (Scragg 80). However, Tieken-Boon van Ostade points out that in the eighteenth century two spelling systems coexisted, i.e., a public and a private one (11). The present study provides additional evidence to the existing knowledge of the topic through the analysis of the spelling and punctuation system of the text in London, Wellcome Library, MS 3731, an eighteenth-century collection of medical instructions and cookery recipes. By means of the study of contractions, superscript letters, capitalization and line breaks, this article unveils new insights into the variability and characteristics of the spelling and punctuation system in this period. The findings provide valuable evidence and enrich our understanding of the broader standardization process in English historical linguistics.

Keywords: spelling, punctuation, medical manuscripts, standardization, Late Modern English, MS Wellcome 3731.

Características ortográficas en Londres, Biblioteca Wellcome, MS 3731 (ff. 3r–43r, f. 125v)

Resumen

Un amplio y creciente volumen de estudios ha investigado el proceso de estandarización de la lengua inglesa en el periodo del inglés moderno tardío (Auer 939–948, Percy 55–79, Tieken-Boon van Ostade 37–51), siendo varios los factores coadyuvantes, tales como la imprenta, las reformas ortográficas, las gramáticas normativas y los diccionarios. En este proceso de estandarización, que "implica la *supresión de la variabilidad opcional*" en una lengua (Milroy y Milroy 6, énfasis en el original), el prescriptivismo jugó un papel clave y se ha argumentado que, para principios del siglo XVIII, la ortografía del inglés se había estandarizado y estabilizado (Scragg 80). No obstante, Tieken-Boon van Ostade señala que, en este periodo, existían dos sistemas ortográficos, uno público y otro privado (11). El presente trabajo contribuye al conocimiento ya existente y aporta información adicional sobre este proceso a través del análisis de la ortografía del texto albergado en Londres, Biblioteca Wellcome, MS 3731, una colección de instrucciones médicas y recetas culinarias del siglo XVIII. Mediante el estudio del uso de las contracciones, los superíndices, la capitalización y los saltos de línea, este artículo muestra nuevas aportaciones acerca de la variabilidad y las características del sistema de ortografía en el siglo XVIII. Los hallazgos ofrecen un testimonio significativo y enriquecen nuestra comprensión del proceso de estandarización en la lingüística histórica inglesa desde un punto de vista más amplio.

Palabras clave: ortografía, manuscritos médicos, estandarización, inglés moderno tardío, MS Wellcome 3731.

1. Introduction

For the purpose of this paper, the level of orthographic standardization in the eighteenth century will be assessed through an examination of a Late Modern English scientific manuscript. Specifically, this article investigates the spelling and punctuation practice found in London, Wellcome Library, MS 3731, an eighteenth-century collection primarily consisting of medical recipes, with a few cookery ones, used in the private sphere. The study focuses on the following spelling features: (i) contractions, (ii) superscript letters, (iii) capitalization, and (iv) line breaks. The objective is to determine the degree of orthographic standardization in the analyzed text by taking into consideration the differences in language use between printed and privately written documents. The analysis of the data, together with a discussion of the historical context, will shed light on the standardization process in the history of the English language.

The present study is structured as follows. After this introduction, Section 2 offers background information related to the process of language standardization and medical writing. Section 3 discusses the employed methodology and provides a brief description of the source of evidence. In Section 4, the role of each analyzed spelling and punctuation feature and the degree of orthographic standardization of the text are examined. This section also presents the key findings related to the spelling and punctuation features. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper by providing a summary of the findings and offers insights into potential future research lines.

2. Background

The process of language standardization, characterized as "*the suppression of the optional variability*" (Milroy and Milroy 8, original emphasis), affects all levels of a language, including orthography, vocabulary, grammar, syntax and pronunciation (Auer 942). The term "standard" is closely associated with canonical literature, referring to a "literary form of a language that is to be used and recognised all over the national territory" (Crowley 84). Variety is usually tolerated in spoken language, while standardization has a greater impact on written language (Milroy and Milroy 18). The standardization process also

encompasses a distinction between a standard and non-standard variety, often evaluated in terms of prestige, which also applies to spelling and punctuation, the focus of this study.

Language standardization has been the subject of various theoretical and methodological approaches across different disciplines, aiming to describe the process of standardization. Based on Haugen's fourfold stages in the development of language (110), one of the most popular models was proposed by Milroy and Milroy. This model comprises seven stages: selection of a variety that is considered to be more prestigious than others, acceptance of this variety, diffusion through the press and the educational system, maintenance, elaboration of function, codification of the norms and prescription (22). Auer states that it is reasonable to argue that, in terms of spelling, English was undergoing the codification stage by the eighteenth century, "with the subsequent stages partly overlapping with the latter stage and also covering the rest of the Late Modern English period" (940). This phase may be defined as the "reduction of variability within the selected language or variety and the establishment of norms" (Beal 90).

The efforts at reducing variation in English can be traced back to the introduction of the printing press in Great Britain in the fifteenth century. Orthoepists were involved in "the first concerted movement for the reform of the English spelling [which] gathered pace in the second half of the sixteenth century and continued into the seventeenth century" (Carney 467). In terms of orthography, researchers generally agree that English spelling had become stable by the beginning of the eighteenth century (Scragg 80).

In the process of the implementation of a standardized spelling and punctuation system, prescriptivism played a crucial role. Famous writers, such as Jonathan Swift, sought to prevent the decay of English. Thus, in his work *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712), he argued that one of the reasons that contributed to the "maiming" (23) of the English language was that a great variety in terms of spelling was tolerated, depending on the region and the register. To prevent this, for instance, he proposed to stop clipping and curtailing words to maintain their original spelling (23).

As British society was gradually becoming more literate in the eighteenth century, normative grammars and dictionaries began to be more widely used. The latter also played a decisive role in the codification of English because speakers regarded them "as authorities" (Milroy and Milroy 22). The English writer Samuel Johnson wrote in his *Dictionary of the English Language* that he "found it necessary to distinguish those irregularities that are inherent in our tongue … the duty of the lexicographer [is] to correct or proscribe" (A1^{v}). A large number of textbooks which indicated proper and improper spelling "were supplemented in the early eighteenth century by word-lists which aimed only at teaching spelling and accentuation, such as Thomas Dyche's *A Dictionary of all the Words Commonly Us'd in the English Tongue* (1723)" and its second version *The Spelling Dictionary* (1725) (Salmon 45). However, the contribution of dictionaries in the process of standardization has been undervalued by other authors. For instance, Osselton argues that dictionaries followed the printers' spelling practice and not the other way around ("Dr. Johnson" 308).

The question of class was also closely related to the standardization process. The eighteenth century can be regarded as a time of increased social advancement. Hickey claims that there was a growing concern of the emerging middle class about their linguistic expression ("Standards" 145). This was visible in their interest in buying books, which represented the desire to seek acceptance from the elite ("Attitudes" 8). Indeed, at the dawn of industrialization, having access to the standard patterns of a language was often associated with the notion of prestige. For example, the decline in the contracted forms *-'d* and *-d* for *-ed* toward the end of the eighteenth century was a marker of good education (Sairio 96) (see subsection 4.1.1 for more information).

It can be argued that the aforementioned assumption made by Scragg (80) that spelling by the early eighteenth century had been standardized is a broad generalization which does not take into consideration the changes in spelling practice across different types. The notion of the existence of a dual standard for spelling in the eighteenth century originates from Osselton's comparison between Samuel Johnson's private correspondence and his *A Dictionary of the English Language* published in 1755. Osselton contends that Samuel Johnson's spelling was far less homogeneous in his personal correspondence than in his dictionary ("Dr. Johnson" 308, "Informal" 124). This idea of the coexistence of two spelling systems

(namely, a public system and a private one) has been confirmed by other scholars (Auer 942, Salmon 44). Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade claim that "by the middle of the seventeenth century [...], printing-house practice had reached a high degree of uniformity in spelling" (290). While "printers had to adhere to the standard spelling system" (942), Auer further clarifies that variation in spelling still persisted in private writings due to the greater informality tolerated in correspondence between family and friends compared to printed texts (942). This can be seen, for instance, in the common use of final *-e* in inflected verbs such as *comeing*, *haveing* and *takeing* in private letters, as pointed out by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (41), which was not found in printed books.

Sairio provides a plausible explanation for this difference, suggesting that the "[d]ictionary presented a public standard, which was largely based on the printer's conventions, whereas a private standard might be observed in Johnson's epistolary spelling" (92). In her discussion, Sairio employs the term *private standard* as a concept that is, in Osselton's words, "a graphic system which leads its own linguistic life; […which] has its own rules and tendencies: it is independent of, though it stands in a clear relationship to, the system of spelling used by the printers" ("Informal" 125). In other words, private writing showed "a kind of variation [... with] certain degree of regularity in its own right" (Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade 290). Kaislaniemi et al.'s analysis of the results extracted from the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (*CEECE*), which include the binary variables single/double <l/ll> and the word-medial <ei/ie> (190–203), shows their gradual elimination of variation in the eighteenth century and the development of an emerging standard in private correspondence, which took almost all the eighteenth century to be completed (205–206).

The linguistic analysis of the texts of recipe books, one of the types of medical writing, shows this divide in terms of spelling between printed and private documents. Recipe books constitute one of the six main groups of medical writing in the eighteenth century, according to Taavitsainen et al.'s classification of the materials in their corpus: "General treatises and textbooks, Texts of specific diseases, methods, therapeutic substances and midwifery, Recipe collections, Surgical and anatomical texts, Public health and Periodicals" ("Late Modern" 138). Recipe book texts share fixed generic conventions of writing and

discourse, such as the use of the imperative forms with the verb *take* in instructions (Taavitsainen et al., "Topics" 64). They were originally found in remedy books, "with traditions deriving from Old English" (Taavitsainen et al., "Sociohistorical" 23). Recipe books are of particular linguistic interest, since the eighteenth century marks the beginning of a new phase in medical communication, which is visible in the raised awareness of linguistic issues as English gradually replaced Latin as the *lingua franca* (Taavitsainen et al., "Sociohistorical" 23–24). On the one hand, institutional recipe books represented the public side of learned medicine (Lehto and Taavitsainen 280), while, on the other hand, handwritten recipe compilations illustrate how the household was a site of knowledge gathering and production (Leong 9), where medical knowledge was transmitted from generation to generation in an intimate, familiar and collaborative setting (Allen 334). Such is the case of the text under consideration in this article, which served as a valuable resource within the domestic sphere, offering guidance and medical support. Its linguistic study is useful for assessing spelling and punctuation features in private writing.

3. The Manuscript: Ms Wellcome 3731

MS Wellcome 3731 is a recipe book. It contains instructions to cure different kinds of illnesses and it was used as a source of advice and medical assistance. The medical recipes in the text follow a regular structure: (a) title of the disease or short phrase with an indication of use; (b) instructions on the preparation of a cure and list of ingredients; and, sporadically, (c) final evaluative statement, like *approved*, followed by the name of the doctor or another person. This is a feature noted in other recipes (de la Cruz Cabanillas 16). The manuscript is housed at the Wellcome Library in London and is divided into two sections: the first one deals with medical recipes (ff. 3r–43r, f. 125v), which are not listed in any particular discernible order, while the second section contains a glossary of medical terms and characters (ff. 127v–128r). Only the first section has been analyzed here. Notably, there are multiple blank folios between the penultimate recipe and the last one (ff. 43v–125r, ff. 126r–127r), suggesting a possible interruption, missing content or space left for new recipes. MS Wellcome 3731 is estimated to have been written between 1720 and 1749, as indicated in f. 2r and f. 42r.

Regarding authorship, this collection is attributed to Letitia Mytton (1690–1755), as shown in the inscription of her name on the second folio. She was married to Richard Mytton (c. 1687–1731), of Halston, Shropshire (Leong and Pennell 152). Letitia Mytton compiled medical recipes from several friends and doctors, as exemplified in the inscription in f. 42r: "25 July 1749 Doctor Nichols gave me this Receipt when I was very Ill and weak – London." The possibility that Letitia Mytton had received a recipe from Frank Nicholls (1699–1788), a reader of anatomy at Oxford University, suggests that she belonged to the upper middle class. Little information is available about the remaining recipes, which were likely shared among family members, friends and neighbors. Consequently, it remains unclear whether Letitia Mytton was the author of these medical recipes or simply a copyist.

The present work is based on the transcription of MS Wellcome 3731, a hitherto unedited manuscript. As for transcription conventions, all superscript letters have been lowered to the line and abbreviated letters have been expanded in italics. Contractions of past participles and past tenses have been retained so as to reproduce the original spelling practice. Ampersands have been replaced by *and*. In addition, original word division, capitalization and punctuation reproduce the source text as faithfully as possible. The original lineation and pagination have also been preserved. Approximately 7,700 words have been transcribed altogether in a text transcription (it has not been encoded in XML format). The transcription has been carried out based on the digitized images provided by the Wellcome Library.

The analysis of the spelling and punctuation features of MS Wellcome 3731, which is representative of the medical tradition in the household in the early eighteenth century, may become a source of interest for those interested in exploring the differences between private and printed medical texts (see, for example, Tyrkkö 67–93), and for picturing the general scene of spelling standardization.

4. Spelling and Punctuation Variation in Ms Wellcome 3731

This section presents the analysis of the spelling and punctuation used in the text of the manuscript by taking into consideration abbreviations (more specifically, contractions and superscript letters),

capitalization and line breaks. Recent research has approached these spelling features from a number of angles, often employing epistolary communication as the main source of data. For example, the use of contractions (Sairio 93–106) and capitalization have been previously examined from a diachronic perspective (Osselton, "Informal" 123–137, "Spelling-Book" 49–61). Regarding medical writing, much of the current literature has focused on Early Modern English handwritten texts, some of these works dealing with the evolution and the regularization of abbreviations (Calle-Martín, "Corpus" 114–130) and line breaks and hyphenation (Alonso-Almeida and Ortega-Barrera 146–168; Criado-Peña, "Orthographic" 13–14). All the findings of this and other relevant literature are contrasted with the results of the analysis of MS Wellcome 3731 in the following subsections. However, to date, and to the best of my knowledge, the study of the spelling features in private writing in the Late Modern English period, and more specifically, in recipe books, remains unexplored. The findings in this present paper seek to obtain data which will help to address this research gap.

4.1. Abbreviations

A word or phrase can be shortened with the use of an abbreviation. In the history of English, different types of abbreviations have been employed to "save time and space" (Petti 22) in writing. In the register of medicine, "most recipes [were] concise in form, making frequent use of various conventionalized abbreviations and contracted forms that at least the professional readers of the texts can be assumed to have shared" (Pahta 128). In Calle-Martín's quantitative-led diachronic research, the data show the general decline in the use of abbreviations in recipes written from 1500 to 1700 ("Corpus" 123). The subsequent subsections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 provide further context on the use and development of the abbreviations studied in the eighteenth century.

Clemens and Graham's classification, which is followed for this study, divides abbreviations into three main groups: *suspensions*, *contractions* and *symbols* (89). As these authors indicate, "in suspensions, one or more letters are omitted at the end of a word" (89), whereas "in contractions, the abbreviation includes, at least, the first and the last letter(s) of the word" (89). Symbols include *brevigraphs*, which "might resemble one of

the omitted letters or be apparently arbitrary in shape" (Petti 23), and *superior letters*. The latter are also referred to as superscript letters. Their presence indicates "that the letters preceding them had been omitted" (Petti 24). This article deals with contractions and superscript letters, two types of abbreviations listed by Clemens and Grahams. There are no suspensions recorded in the text studied (ff. 3r–43r, f. 125v). Although there are instances of brevigraphs, no definitive conclusions can be reached at the level of standardization as there is little evidence regarding the general practice of this spelling feature in medical texts from the eighteenth century.

4.1.1. Contractions

The first decade of the 1700s witnessed the widespread acceptance of contractions and confirmed the earlier "development of the late seventeenth century" (Haugland 172). A campaign led by Addison's and Swift's grammars and spelling books in the 1710s triggered a gradual decline in the use of contractions (Haugland 172), which persisted in some writings until the end of the eighteenth century, partially because its acceptability depended on genre (Haugland 176, 180). The contractions discussed in this subsection are *-'d* and *-d* in past participles and past tenses in weak verbs and those of the neuter pronoun *it* and the verb *be* (*it's* and *'tis*).

In the eighteenth century, the different variants of inflectional endings of past participles and past tenses in weak verbs were: "the emerging standard *-ed*, the *-'d* variant commonly used by early printers, *-d* of more private spelling styles, and the more uncommon *-'t* and *-t* variants" (Sairio 95, original emphasis). The apostrophe was not a standard form, so it was not always considered necessary to employ a punctuation mark to indicate the contraction (Petti 22). Osselton's comparison of the use of the apostrophe between epistolary writing and printed documents shows that, even though there is a time lag between these two types of documents, there is a general correlation in the "clear pattern of the rise and fall of the apostrophe in these verb forms" from 1600 to 1800 ("Informal" 134). According to Oldireva-Gustafsson's study across different written genres, by the 1800s the dominance of the *-ed* variant was evident (94).

In MS Wellcome 3731, there are 64 occurrences of the variants *-'d* and *-d* of past participles and past tenses of weak verbs, whereas there are no recorded instances of *-t* or *-'t* endings. Fragments of this variation extracted from the text are listed below (examples 1–2):

> (1) "Take a pound of Hipps, clean from the Seeds, then put them in a Mortar, with a pound of double **refin'd** Sugar, bruising them till they goe to a conserve". (f. 15v, emphasis added)
>
> (2) "**rub'd** *w*ith butter till they be cold *and* y*e*n let y*e*m be **opend** and **Stretch'd** out Smooth" (f. 4v, emphasis added).

Table 1 presents the distribution of all *-ed* forms in the text of the manuscript.

	-ed	*-'d*	*-d*	Total
Occurrences (raw and %)	48 (43%)	58 (52%)	6 (5%)	112

Table 1. *-ed* forms in MS Wellcome 3731

A preliminary interpretation that can be obtained from this data is that the use of the *-d* ending in MS Wellcome 3731 is marginal and that the past participle and preterit are mainly rendered through either the apostrophized or the expanded variant. Although the number of instances of the full form *-ed* and the contracted form *-'d* are similar, a more detailed analysis of the different uses of these contractions is needed. Otherwise, no observable patterns would allow us to discern why the *-ed* forms of past participles and preterits appear expanded in some instances and contracted in others. Table 2 below presents the *-ed* forms classified by function.

This data suggests that, in almost all cases, the contracted forms *-'d* and *-d* are only used with the past participle. This pattern had previously been recorded by Criado-Peña in her analysis of this spelling feature ("Elizabeth" 189). Further research reveals that there are 9 verbs which appear both contracted and expanded, as listed below in Table 3.

	Occurrences (raw and %)		Occurrences (raw and %)
-ed past participle	45	*-ed* preterit	3
	(94%)		(4%)
-'d past participle	57	*-'d* preterit	1
	(98%)		(2%)
-d past participle	6	*-d* preterit	0
	(100%)		

Table 2. *-ed* forms in MS Wellcome 3731 sorted by function

	Occurrences (raw and %)			Total
Base form of the verb	*-ed*	*-'d*	*-d*	
approve	2	3	0	5
	(40%)	(60%)		
powder	3	2	0	5
	(60%)	(40%)		
bruise	1	3	0	4
	(25%)	(75%)		
stone	1	1	0	2
	(50%)	(50%)		
swallow	1	1	0	2
	(50%)	(50%)		
prepare	3	1	0	4
	(75%)	(25%)		
dissolve	1	1	0	2
	(50%)	(50%)		

	Occurrences (raw and %)			Total
slice	4	2	0	6
	(67%)	(33%)		
prove	1	1	0	2
	(50%)	(50%)		

Table 3. Verbs showing variation of *-ed* forms in MS Wellcome 3731

These findings provide new evidence that contributes to the existing research, highlighting that the process of spelling normalization in the private side of medical writing was not fully accomplished by 1749.

Another interesting aspect which deserves special attention is the contraction made up of the neuter pronoun *it* followed by the verb *be*. Peitsara's study of the evolution of the variants *'tis* and *it's* demonstrates that the former is older than the latter, since *'tis* was first employed in drama in the fifteenth century, whereas the first appearance of *it's* is recorded in the seventeenth century (80). Based on her analysis of the *Helsinki Corpus*, Peitsara claims that *'tis* was far more popular than *it's* from 1640 to 1710 (81). In Thomas Dyche's *Guide to the English Tongue* (1707), the English lexicographer preferred the form *'tis* over *it's* (Haugland 172). In MS Wellcome 3731, there does not seem to be any predilection for either of these two forms. There are 3 occurrences of *'tis* (60%) versus 2 of *it's* (40%).

4.1.2. Superscript letters

Superscript letters were placed above the line of writing. The raised letters, which showed that one or more preceding letters were omitted, were commonly used in the Middle and Early Modern English periods. Initially, in the sixteenth century, superscript letters were still found in printed books (Edwards 65). However, by the eighteenth century, they were associated with greater informality and were gradually less employed in printed texts (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 125).

There are 564 superscript letters in MS Wellcome 3731. The normalized frequency of this type of abbreviation per 1,000 words is

73.25. All of them are found in final position, although sometimes, as Petti points out, some could also appear "in the middle of a word (e.g., *wthout* for *without*)" (24, original emphasis). The use of the superior letters is not consistent and depends on the scribe's practice. However, some tendencies can be charted. The vast majority of the superscript letters are found in the abbreviations *y^{n}*, *y^{e}*, *y^{m}*, *y^{t}*, *y^{u}* and *y^{r}*, which stand for *than* or *then*, *the*, *them*, *that*, *you* and *your*, respectively. They represent 94% of the total number of instances (531 occurrences). The first four words mentioned above are rendered with the modern form <th> elsewhere in the text. The difference in distribution between these two spelling practices, illustrated in Tables 4 and 5 below, shows that there is a slight preference for the use of expanded forms for most of the words aforementioned except for *the*.

Superscript letters as parts of abbreviations	Occurrences (raw and %)	Expanded forms	Occurrences (raw and %)	Total
y^{n}	0	*than*	1	1
			(100%)	
y^{n}	31	*then*	44	75
	(41%)		(59%)	
y^{e}	174	*the*	118	292
	(60 %)		(40%)	
y^{m}	28	*them*	37	65
	(43%)		(57%)	
y^{t}	12	*that*	17	29
	(41%)		(59%)	
y^{u}	7	*you*	40	47
	(15%)		(85%)	
y^{r}	6	*your*	16	22
	(27%)		(73%)	

Table 4. Distribution of <y> followed by a superscript letter vs. expanded forms in MS Wellcome 3731

	Superscript letters as parts of abbreviations	Expanded forms	Total
Occurrences (raw and %)	258	273	531
	(49%)	(51%)	

Table 5. Total number of occurrences of <y> followed by a superscript letter vs. expanded forms in MS Wellcome 3731

The remaining 33 superscript letters (6% of the total) are English honorifics. *Mistress* and *Mister* always appear in their contracted forms M^{rs} (9×) and M^{r} (2×). There are no instances of M^{ss}. The full form *Doctor* (6×) is also written elsewhere in the text with the shortened forms D^{r} (1×) and Doc^{r} (2×). Additionally, this spelling practice is applied to prepositions and relative pronouns, as exemplified by the use of w^{th} (17×) and w^{ch} (2×), respectively (Figures 1 and 2). However, the expanded forms *with* (42×) and *which* (5×) are more frequent.

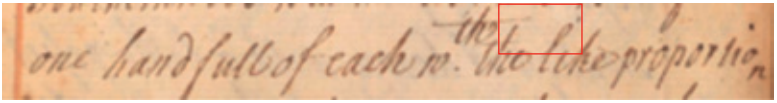

Figure 1. '*wi*th'

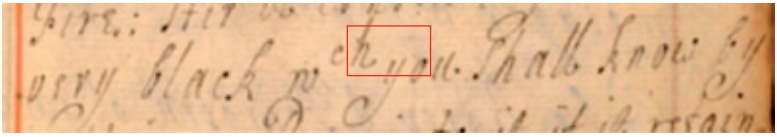

Figure 2. '*wh*ich'

4.2. Capitalization

Capitalization patterns have undergone substantial modification over the centuries. One of the first spelling reformers who addressed this

issue was John Hart in 1551 in his work *The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of Our Inglish Toung*, where he advised English speakers to capitalize the first letter of the first word "at the beginning of a sentence, proper name, and an important common noun" (Crystal 69). The history of capitalization in English in the following centuries is discussed by Crystal (69, original emphasis):

> By the early 17th century, the practice had extended to titles (*Sir*, *Lady*), forms of address (*Father*, *Mistris*), and personified nouns (*Nature*) […] By the beginning of the 18th century, the influence of Continental books had caused this practice to be extended still further (e.g. to the names of the branches of knowledge), and it was not long before some writers began using a capital for any noun that they felt to be important […] perhaps for aesthetic reasons, or perhaps because printers were uncertain about which nouns to capitalize, and so capitalized them all.

Osselton's quantitative analysis of capitalization between 1500 and 1800 confirms its widespread usage in the early eighteenth century. However, data from the 1770s reveal a decline in the percentage of nouns with an initial upper case that would not be capitalized today ("Spelling-Book" 50). The excessive use of capital letters during this time began to face criticism. The English lexicographer Thomas Dyche voiced his disapproval in the following terms: "it is unnecessary, and hinders that remarkable distinction intended by a capital" (*A Guide* 103 [1729]). The frequent spelling practice of capitalizing all nouns which bore "considerable stress of the authors [...] to make them more conspicuous and remarkable," was considered "ornamental" (*A Guide* 103 [1729]). He provided a list of words that should be written with a capital letter at the beginning (*A Guide* 3–74 [1729]) and some recommendations, such as writing the first word of books, proper names, and the interjection *O* and the pronoun *I* with a capital letter, among others (*A Guide* 104 [1729]).

The text under study was written when the trend of capitalizing all words reached its peak. Almost all content words (nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs) tend to be capitalized in MS Wellcome 3731. Based on an analysis of the capitalization patterns used by Letitia Mytton, it seems reasonable to suggest that she used capital letters for words that she considered relevant or important in the field of science.

For instance, key terms related to medicine and health are always capitalized, such as the names of illnesses like *Imposhtumes*, *Botches* and *Plague*, and names of herbs and plants like *Egrimony*, *Mugwort* and *Caraway Seeds*. In addition, capital letters are also used for quantities (e.g., *Ounce*), which are important elements in homemade recipes. Additionally, numerals always appear with initial capitals (e.g., *Six*, *Seven*), as well as titles of address and occupational titles (e.g., *Physick*, *Doctor*, *Mistress Surgeon*). Sometimes, it seems that there are no clear and observable patterns in the text, as illustrated below (examples 3–4). Boldface is used for highlighting the difference in spelling regarding capitalization:

> (3) "**Take** half a pound of **Red Lead Searced** very fine, put it into a pint of **Olive Oyle** boyle *ye*m together on a **Slow Fire**: **Stir** it continualy till it's very black wen you **Shall** know by dipping a **Rag** into it". (f. 4r, emphasis added)

> (4) "**Mistress Henson Receipt** for the **Jaundice Take** a pint of hempseed, take 2 spoonfull of it and bruse it and boile it in a pint of **Milk** till it comes to half a pint and drink it every **Morning** till the hempseed is done". (f. 12r, emphasis added)

4.3. Line breaks

In MS Wellcome 3731, there are 34 instances of line-final word division rendered in three ways. The first two are represented with a hyphen, which began to be used in English from the thirteenth century until the end of the seventeenth century mainly to indicate line breaks (Petti 26-27). In the eighteenth century, Dyche described this function in the following way: "being set at the end of the line, [the hyphen] denotes that the syllables of a word are parted, and that the remainder of it is at the beginning of the next line" (*A Guide* 107 [1729]). In Alonso-Almeida and Ortega-Barrera's (164) description of the punctuation system of John de Feckenham's sixteenth-century medical recipes "Booke of soueraigne medicines," the authors indicate that this hyphen was also doubled to show word division at the end of the line (164). This equal sign continued to be used in the eighteenth century (McDermott

13) and, in the text under study, this general practice is often followed, as 10 line breaks are marked in this way (29%). An example is illustrated in the line-final division of *morning* (Figure 3).

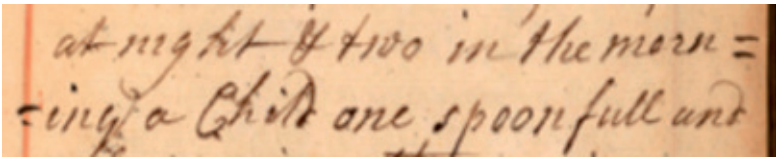

Figure 3. Representation of a line break with a double hyphen at the end of the line and at the beginning of the following line for *morning*

In line-final word division, the double hyphen can be witnessed both at the end of the line and at the beginning of the following one (4×), as in Figure 3, only at the end of the first line (2×), or at the beginning of the second line (4×). The latter case is clearly noticeable in the rendering of the word *turpintine* in Figure 4.

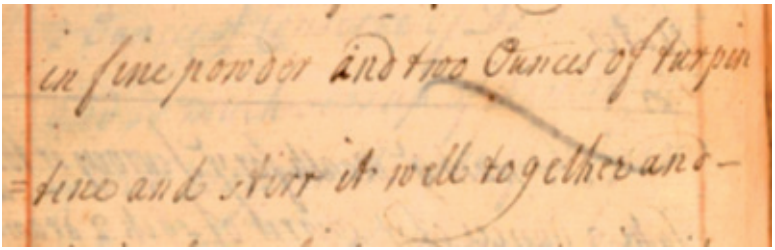

Figure 4. Representation of a line break with a double hyphen at the beginning of the second line for *turpintine*

In addition, line breaks are also marked with a single hyphen on 23 occasions (68%). They appear at both lines (9×), at the end of the first line (7×), or at the beginning of the second (7×), as illustrated in the word *spoonfull* in Figure 5.

The hyphen is omitted in one instance (3%), as shown in the line break for *Occasion* in Figure 6.

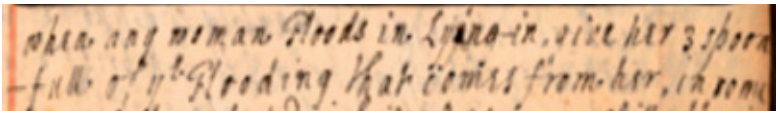

Figure 5. Representation of a line break with a single hyphen at the beginning of the second line for *spoonfull*

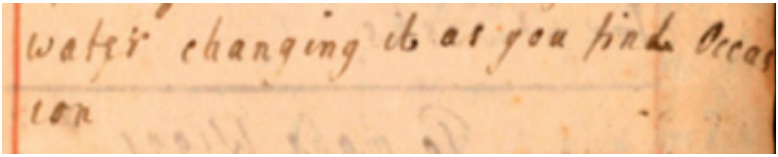

Figure 6. Representation of a line break without hyphens for *Occasion*

With regard to the general context of the practice of line-final word division, Calle-Martín concludes that "we have to wait until the late modern period to observe a more conventional pattern of word-division usage in English" ("Line-Final" 50). In Criado-Peña's case study, where she assesses the level of orthographic standardization of London, Wellcome Library, MS 3009, a recipe book written in the second half of the seventeenth century, she demonstrates that "there was no regular pattern" ("Orthographic" 14) in line-final word division.

Following Hladký's analysis of word division in English, we can distinguish two principles or dimensions in terms of line-final word division, namely, morphemic and phonological (73–82). Phonologically, words can be divided at the end of a line between two consonants (the C–C rule), e.g., *ton-gue*, between two vowels (the V–V rule), e.g., *dre-am*, and at the end of an open syllable (CV–CV rule), e.g., *ori-ginal* (73). Calle-Martín expands upon this classification with the inclusion of two new division rules. Specifically, he examines the division between the pair *-st* (ST rule), e.g., *cas-te*, and the division between the pair *-ct* (CT rule), e.g., *confec-te* ("Line-Final" 45). As far as phonological breaks are concerned, the CV–CV rule can be observed in the text under scrutiny in 6 instances (18%), e.g., *cammo-mile*, the C-C rule in 21 occurrences (62%), e.g., *quan-tity*, and the V–V in one instance (3%), i.e., *eno-ugh*. There are no ST or CT rules in the text. These scenarios do occur (i.e.,

there are words which contain these consonant clusters), but there are no line breaks of these types. Other word division practices (i.e., those which do not follow any of the rules aforementioned) signal morphological division with a suffix and are attested in 6 instances (28%), e.g., *occas-ion*.

5. Conclusions

The main objective of this article was to study the variability in the use of several spelling features, including contractions, superscript letters, capitalization and line breaks in MS Wellcome 3731, an eighteenth-century medical text employed in the private sphere. Several conclusions have been reached.

When it comes to contractions, the existence of a three-fold representation of inflectional endings of the past participles and past tenses in weak verbs shows that the process of spelling regularization was still developing. The *-'d* variant, which is in the majority of the cases the contraction of the past participle, is the preferred form as opposed to the *-ed* and *-d* forms. As for the contraction of *it* and *be*, the use of *it's* does not predominate over the use of *'tis*, which proves that there was not a standardized practice in this regard. Concerning superior letters, the analysis suggests that the process of standardization had not reached a completion stage. Most noticeably, there is still a slight preference for the use of the superscript <e> preceded by the form <y> instead of <th> in the rendering of *the*. The capitalization system is perhaps a more interesting indicator that proves that there is not a high degree of standardization in the text. Even though some patterns can be observed, as in the use of capital letters for nouns, in other particular cases there does not seem to be any rule. Line-final breaks had not been regularized yet, even though the majority of occurrences follow the C-C rule.

Overall, this article provides insights into the spelling and punctuation practice of medical writing in the domestic realm and, more specifically, of an English recipe book from the eighteenth century. The findings demonstrate that there was not a full degree of spelling and punctuation uniformity in the text studied. This suggests that the process of standardization was still in progress in private medical writing. Further research needs to be done to provide a fuller

picture of this issue. A natural progression of this work is to analyze other spelling features in Late Modern English medical texts from a diachronic perspective which may show further evidence of variability in spelling, such as the distribution of graphemes <i> and <y> and consonant doubling. The study of these features may shed further light on the level of orthographic standardization in Late Modern English.

Notes

[1] The Late Modern English period here is understood as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as indicated by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (viii).

[2] It is interesting to understand the motives that lie behind the production of this proposal. In the 1700s, for Swift and other writers like Shaftesbury, Addison and Steele, the notion of "a fixed, prestigious standard language" was a "chimera" (Watts 172). Hence, corruption of the language had to be avoided.

[3] There is another manuscript (MS 3730) written by the same person.

[4] I am currently preparing a semi-diplomatic edition of the text for my doctoral dissertation.

[5] Other taxonomies have been proposed to classify the types of abbreviations. For instance, Petti's terminology includes brevigraphs (special signs), contractions, curtailments (or suspensions), superior (or superscript letters), elisions, special signs and sigils (22–25). Honkaphja's categorization divides them into suspensions (alternative names: truncations, curtailment), contractions, sigils, abbreviations by signs of abbreviation, including brevigraphs, superscript letters, abbreviations by special signs, elision and other categories (pars. 9–39). For the sake of clarity and consistency, this article follows the classification provided by Clemens and Grahams (89). Petti's definitions have been referenced in the article whenever they coincide with Clemens and Graham's.

[6] Petti's description of contractions is different, since he considers that they "consisted in the omission of one or more letters from the middle of a word" (22).

[7] The only type of brevigraph found in the text of the manuscript is the ampersand. The comparison between the number of occurrences of *&* (212 instances, 78%) and the full form *and* (59 instances, 22%) shows the dominance of the former form over the latter. Except for Sairio's

study, where the author noted that this abbreviation dominated epistolary writing (103), as far as I am aware, no other piece of research gives any indication of the standard in the eighteenth century in this regard.

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Recensións / Reseñas
Reviews / Rezensionen

Stuart D. Lee, editor. *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien. 2nd edition*. Wiley Blackwell, 2022, xxxiv + 556 pages

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In his excellent analysis of Tolkien's prose, Steve Walker pointed out that "seldom has a literary work stirred such a maelstrom of critical controversy as swirled around *The Lord of the Rings* at its publication" (1). More than half a century later, this statement remains more than correct. That maelstrom of critical approaches has increased steadily to reach an impressive number of publications on Tolkien's work in recent times.

The book reviewed here is an heir of the new approaches and reassessments of Tolkien's *oeuvre*. Furthermore, it brings some order in this morass of publications and posthumous books, so diverse in scope, academic depth, and quality. Tolkien and his work have finally entered the canon of Anglo-American studies, a milestone marked by its admission into the prestigious Blackwell Companion collection next to topics such as "American Gothic," "Translation Studies," "Victorian Literature and Culture," and "Modernist Poetry," just to quote the topics of the immediately previously published four volumes of the series when the first edition was released in 2014. Carefully edited again by Stuart D. Lee —one of the outstanding names of recent Tolkien critical scholarship and co-author of one of the most imaginative books on the relationships between Tolkien's fiction and medieval English literature (Lee & Solopova)—, the volume maintains its original division into five main thematic areas—Life, The Academic, The Legendarium, Context and Critical Approaches—preceded by an editorial introduction and the customary explanation on the reasons to pursue a second edition; these are mainly three, namely a) the possibility to include extra essays on areas that were neglected in the first edition; b) to cope with the appearance of a vast number of important publications in the field (from 2104 to 2021) that needed to be taken into account; and c) to consider the new visual materials that appeared in that same period, namely the Tolkien 2019 'biopic' directed by Dome Karukoski, Peter Jackson's take on *The Hobbit* and the Amazon series *The Rings of Power*, which was finally released last year. With the fantasy genre placed back in the

mainstream, a new revised and expanded second edition seemed the most appropriate path to tread. Assuming no prior knowledge of the contents of the first edition, I will proceed with a thorough examination of the volume's organization and materials.

After the customary and, in this case, rather extensive pre-introductory material—Acknowledgements, Notes on Contributors, Editorial Practices and Abbreviations and a Bibliography and brief Chronology (i-xxxiii)—, the editor offers a brief and concise introduction that appropriately describes the philosophy of this second edition. In a volume of considerable length and with so many sections and chapters, the reader appreciates not having to read a review-like introduction. With this brief account the reader has the essential information needed to immediately plunge into the different and well-structured sections of the volume.

"Part I: Life" (1-18) presents a biographical approach to Tolkien's life. Dealing with Tolkien's biography in fewer than 20 pages constitutes, as the Old English poet once said, an *enta geweorc* indeed, a highly difficult task, as attested by the in-depth previous work of Carpenter (*Tolkien*) and the exhaustive thousand-page long chronology by Scull and Hammond (Vol. 1). Notwithstanding, John Garth's "A Brief Biography," the only chapter included in this section, succeeds at presenting an excellent contribution to the topic. Garth, author of two of the most fascinating biographical books on Tolkien, manages to summarize the essence of Tolkien's life in a well-built chapter. Those who have never read a biography of Tolkien will be able to have a clear picture of the necessary background to go on reading the rest of the volume. Those who are already familiar with Carpenter's Tolkien biography and *The Inklings* and Scull and Hammond's *Companion & Guide* will have a perfect summary of the main events to refresh those readings and to have the appropriate contextual/historical perspective for the other sections in this *Companion*.

"Part II: The Academic" (19-64) contains three articles covering Tolkien's main occupation as medievalist, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford and member of the British *academia*. Since his fiction was so deeply influenced by his love and knowledge of medieval languages and literatures, it is most logical that this *Companion* opens with a section devoted to trace this area in his life. Thomas Honegger's "Academic

Writings" deals with Tolkien's scholarly publications on words, language, and literature, covering from the most famous ones on *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, to the lesser-known works on some Old English poems and texts. Honegger's survey is sound and provides the reader with the necessary understanding of how these academic pieces "have become increasingly inter- and metatexts for the interpretation of Tolkien's works of fiction and thus gained a new lease of life" (30). A separate chapter is devoted to his philological editorial activity. Tom Shippey's "Tolkien as Editor" deals with a central issue in understanding Tolkien's attitude towards philology and writing: editing as the central role of his professional activity, with translation as a "more personal by-product of his editorial work" (34). Shippey deals at length with Tolkien's most famous and influential editions—*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Exodus* and *Beowulf*'s Finnsburg episode—and translations, and offers enough discussion on the rest of his less known editorial work. The reader, thus, appreciates the importance of this activity for Tolkien and his fictional creativity. Closing this initial section, Stuart D. Lee's "Manuscripts: Use, and Using" covers another aspect of this division between the author and the academic as it discusses "how Tolkien the medievalist worked with manuscripts (…) but also how his professional experience filtered into his creative work" (49). After introducing the topic, which deals with the presence of manuscripts in Tolkien's fiction, and considering Tolkien's own manuscripts, since he was a constant rewriter of his own work, Lee offers a practical analysis to exemplify this fact, reviewing the process of how the "Shelob's Lair" chapter from *The Two Towers* was composed. This analysis of the manuscript variants of the chapter made by collating them all enables the reader to understand how crucial manuscript studies are in the study of Tolkien's fiction; this has been recently well attested by the exhibition (and subsequent catalogue by Schaeffer & Fliss) *J.R.R. Tolkien: The Art of the Manuscript*, held at the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University (home of the second most important Tolkien Ms archive), from August 19th to December 22nd, 2022.

The next block, "Part III: The Legendarium" (65-188), contains ten articles that review Tolkien's main body of fictional work, commonly known by that label. The two initial chapters of this section give the necessary theoretical background to understand the meaning of the legendarium. In "Myth-making, Sub-creation, and Word-building",

Carl Phelpstead covers the foundation of the theoretical concepts that built Tolkien's mythology, while Leslie A. Donovan, with "Middle-earth Mythology: An Overview," offers an accurate description of the mythical architecture of Tolkien's world of fiction. The remaining eight chapters of this section go into specific works.

The Silmarillion is a complex corpus of mythological texts written by Tolkien over many years, whose image is shaped not only by the fragments written by Tolkien through his life but also by the volume of that name edited and published by his son Christopher Tolkien. Gergely Nagy's "*The Silmarillion*: Tolkien's Theory of Myth, Text and Culture" deals with how this body of work helps readers to understand the depth of the remaining works of Tolkien's legendarium.

John D. Rateliff is one of the most noted experts on *The Hobbit*. His monumental analyses of the novel's textual history constituted a landmark for Tolkien studies, combining philological accuracy with outstanding literary criticism and critical analysis. His expertise is distilled in a brief and brilliant chapter ("*The Hobbit*: A Turning Point") devoted to the book's writing process, the influence that Tolkien's medieval scholarship had on its themes, and the connections that it shares with the rest of the legendarium and with children's literature as a genre. This chapter is immediately followed by John R. Holmes' review of *The Lord of the Rings*. Holmes signals the reasons to consider Tolkien's major work a modern classic, and offers a brief note on the origin of the novel, its structure, and thematic depth.

In "*Unfinished Tales* and the History of Middle-earth: A Lifetime of Imagination", Elizabeth A. Whittingham provides an analysis of the different materials that Tolkien wrote throughout his life that were edited, profusely annotated, and published by Christopher Tolkien as *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* and as *The History of Middle-earth* in twelve volumes. Whittingham spells out the contents of those works and highlights the importance of the huge editorial task carried out by Christopher Tolkien to grant us access in a readable form to these essential texts, which provide phenomenal density to Tolkien's created world. This huge task has been fully recognized quite recently by Richard Ovenden and Catherine McIlwaine (2022) in the volume of essays in his memory, published by the Bodleian Library, home of the most important Tolkien Ms archive. His passing opens for sure

an unknown stage for the future editorial history of Tolkien's (un) published materials.

The last four chapters of this section focus on the rest of Tolkien's works. All of them try to establish that, although their subjects are considered sometimes as minor or less relevant works, they do belong with Tolkien's legendarium in their own right. Thus, Verlyn Flieger's "'The Lost Road' and 'The Notion Club Papers': Myth, History, and Time-travel" aptly examines Tolkien's unfinished time-travel stories and their connection with his major works. Corey Olsen's "Poetry" reviews the Tolkienian poetic corpus by analyzing not only the poems published by Tolkien in different journals through his life but also those forming part of his main body of work. Maria Artamonova's "'Minor' Works" deals with *The Father Christmas Letters, Roverandom, Mr. Bliss, Farmer Giles of Ham, Leaf by Niggle* and *Smith of Wootton Major*. She reviews them not only in isolation—explaining why most of them are works of outstanding literary qualities—but also in their connection to the legendarium outlining the reasons why they are perfectly related to the mythology and the themes Tolkien was so deeply interested in. Arden R. Smith's "Invented Languages and Writing Systems" is a detailed account of Tolkien's languages as they appear in his works and on their narrative influence.

"Part IV: Context" (189-352) constitutes an interesting and rather novel section. Although filled with extraordinary chapters, the customary work-by-work coverage offered in Part III conforms to a classic critical approach to Tolkien, similar in organization to what has been offered in earlier critical works. This section presents a different and innovative way of organizing the information, placing Tolkien's works in a thematic context and reviewing accordingly general areas that have influenced Tolkien's creation. They offer, thus, a literary context or a tradition into which Tolkien's works could be inserted.

We could separate the thirteen chapters that form this section into three different subparts. The first one places Tolkien in the wider context of fantasy literature with three newly commissioned chapters: Edward James's "Fantasy: An Introduction", which traces the history of fantasy and the fantastic, and the critical approaches to its academic study, in a succinct but complete and very clear manner; Hamish Williams's "Classical Literature", whose contribution, as the author himself states,

"discusses the influence of Classical literature, that of ancient Greece and Rome, on the life and creative works of J.R.R. Tolkien (203)"; and Juliette Wood's "On Fairy-stories and Folktale research", which not only revises the famous lecture—and its subsequent publication—that Tolkien gave at St. Andrews University, but also offers a practical application of his folklore theories with a comparative analysis of Galadriel's mirror in *The Lord of the Rings* with the mirror motif in Snow White and related folktales. By doing this, Wood sets clear, as the previous two sections also contribute to back up, that Tolkien's "essay "On Fairy-stories" is essential for understanding his ideas about fantasy (…) a better understanding of the interplay between fantasy writing and traditional folk narratives can deepen our appreciation of both "fairy-tale fantasy" and folk narrative and of those qualities that keep fairy-tales alive. (222-223)".

The second one deals with Tolkien's medieval background. Here we find five chapters that analyze not only Tolkien's knowledge of several medieval languages and literary contexts but also how such knowledge shaped important aspects of his works. Dealing with the earliest stages of the English language, Mark Atherton's "Old English" and Elizabeth Solopova's "Middle English" present introductions to the divisions of Tolkien's most relevant medieval background in language and literature. They complement Honegger's chapter on Tolkien's academic writings by expanding on traditional approaches to this subject in which specific elements of both contexts were traced. Atherton includes this standard approach (elaborating his point on Anglo-Saxon culture and language and their influence on aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* using Shippey's *Road to Middle-earth*). Moreover, he goes beyond that, offering an account not only of Tolkien's professional expertise on Old English but also of how he used such expertise creatively, how he exploited as a writer Old English language and names, Old English texts and literature, and the philosophy contained in them. Atherton's section on "Anglo-Saxon Attitudes and the poem *Maxims II*" offers a practical example of how to connect Old English literature with the use Tolkien made of it in a given work of fiction, which is complementary to previous discussions on the subject such as the one offered by Lee and Solopova (232-233). It is sound that Atherton finishes his piece by connecting his point to Lee and Solopova, as Solopova herself complements Atherton's chapter with an excellent depiction of the connections between Tolkien

and Middle English. From a general description of Tolkien's scholarly achievements in the field through his many publications, she proceeds to highlight how "Tolkien's fiction and literary-critical writing were also influenced by his study of Middle English language and literature" (239). Middle English themes, plot elements and fictional models are studied by Solopova with great detail and concision despite the brevity of the chapter.

Tom Birkett presents a similar approach in "Old Norse," which reviews the influence that this language, literature, and culture exerted on Tolkien's work. By granting that "well-attested influence" (247), Birkett starts his essay with a definition of the label "Old Norse" and continues with an extensive analysis of Tolkien's scholarly works on Old Norse and of the traces of it in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Birkett also provides a brief section on *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún* and its relation to Tolkien's legendarium.

The admiration that Tolkien felt for Finnish in general and for *Kalevala* in particular has also been well-attested by Tolkien himself and his critics. Lenna Kahlas-Tarkka's "Finnish: The Land and the Language of Heroes" begins by acknowledging earlier studies on this topic (specially Chance and Petty). From this initial section on the state of the art she proceeds with brief and precise short sections on Lönnrot, Tolkien and *Kalevala,* Tolkien and Finnish, and Tolkien and the story of Kullervo. Nothing is left uncovered.

This subsection on medieval influences finishes with J. S. Lyman-Thomas' piece on "Celtic: 'Celtic Things' and 'Things Celtic'—Identity, Language, and Mythology," an issue sometimes neglected in discussions of Tolkien's medieval background. Lyman-Thomas sees Tolkien's own distaste of "things Celtic" as one of the reasons little attention has been paid so far to this topic (271). Recent times have seen a great deal of work on this area, though; after acknowledging those pioneer scholars, Lyman-Thomas discusses the issue from the point of view of identity (Tolkien's sense of what is Celtic through language and culture), language (Welsh as a model for Sindarin) and mythology (Elves and Welsh mythology). He presents a neat summary of what has been stated so far and defines some avenues of research to follow.

The third subpart of this section concerns the placement of Tolkien in English literature as a whole and in the fantasy fiction genre he did so much to shape and even create. Nick Groom's "The English Literary Tradition: Shakespeare to the Gothic" succinctly covers an enormous topic, as wide in Tolkien's scholarship as the previous one on Celtic issues. He begins the discussion by defending the existence of "important strands of thought in the period 1550 to 1800 that profoundly affected Tolkien's overall vision" (284); he tackles the traces of English literary sources of inspiration other than medieval in Tolkien's works, and establishes an adequate link between medieval influences and the subsequent modern ones covered by the final four chapters.

These final pieces deal mainly with pre- (Rachel Falconer's "Earlier Fantasy Fiction: Morris, Dunsany and Lindsay") and post- (Dimitra Fimi's "Later Fantasy Fiction: Tolkien's Legacy") Tolkienian fantasy fiction and with the context in which Tolkien wrote both in (David Bratman's "The Inklings and Others: Tolkien and His Contemporaries") and out of the Inklings (Anna Vaninskaya's "Periodizing Tolkien: The Romantic Modern"). Vaninskaya's essay addresses the important question of setting "what exactly, then, was Tolkien's period?" (338) for a writer who "was active … from the 1910s, which may (arguably) be classified as the tail end of the nineteenth century, to the 1970s—the height of postmodernism" (338). That Tolkien as a writer (modern, modernist, and even post-modernist as Verlyn Flieger has aptly argued in her wonderful 2005 essay) belongs to the literary period(s) he wrote in is a fact these final contributions (especially Vaninskaya's piece) to Part IV emphasize convincingly.

"Part V: Critical Approaches" (353-534) continues with the novel approach of the previous section with a thorough examination of critical approaches to Tolkien's works from almost every possible point of view. The section begins with two excellent chapters that place the reception of Tolkien's fiction and its style in context.

Patrick Curry, known in Tolkien scholarship particularly for his controversial and excellent *Defending Middle-earth: Tolkien, Myth and Modernity* (1997), starts this section with a splendid piece—"The Critical Response to Tolkien's Fiction"—that examines the negative (and frequently wrongly grounded) criticism Tolkien's works have received since *The Hobbit* was first published. Dismantling such wrongly

constructed criticism with an accurate historical survey, Curry not only describes the critical unfairness Tolkien suffered but also states how recent critical studies have presented better-grounded analyses that have highlighted the literary quality of the Tolkienian legendarium. Curry puts special emphasis on Tom Shippey's seminal works *The Road to Middle-earth* and *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, and several other critics who followed his example. In the next essay, "Style and Intertextual Echoes," Allan Turner follows this lead by focusing on how Tolkien's style (or rather Tolkien's *poor* style) has always been dealt with negatively by critics as a kind of biased mantra that has been repeated without giving real examples demonstrating such a conclusion. As Turner points out, when critics have severely judged Tolkien's style "in spite of giving examples of writing that they find unsatisfactory, neither of these critics manages to explain clearly and concisely what it is that they object to, but both seem to assume that the reasons for their conclusions will be evident to the reader" (374). Using Shippey's seminal works, Turner tries to cover this critical gap in the field of in-depth analyses of Tolkien's style. Despite limited space, Turner manages satisfactorily to cover the essential arguments defending Tolkien's stylistic excellence. This chapter constitutes certainly a must for subsequent future stylistic analysis of Tolkien's works, such as the one recently published by the very editor of the volume, Stuart D. Lee ("Were many paths and errands meet").

The remaining chapters of section V cover several main anthropological and conceptual themes that contribute to create the complex *Weltanschauung* of Tolkien's legendarium. Two separate subsections can be found in this final part: the first subsection contains essays on thematic/ideological concepts that are self-explanatory in their titles. Despite their obvious labels, the authors offer insights that are excellent in every case. Anna Caughey's "The Hero's Journey" deals with the obvious Campbellian mythic heroic structure in narrative fictions present in every quest adventure. Many authors have explored this aspect before in Tolkien's fiction and heroes (and she quotes the important references) but this anthropological quest analysis is enlarged by Caughey as she establishes a sound connection to the Quest genre of the Middle Ages and its role in Tolkien's works, especially in the development of the so called "eucatastrophic turn" of events in story-telling. Caughey's expansion is more than adequate and her understanding of this complex topic helps to clarify the issue. The same level of clarity and

concision is found in Christopher Garbowski's "Evil," which addresses this complex category from different points of view: Tolkien's war experience as a source (following Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*), evil and sub-creation, power and dominance as key issues in the good-evil divide and its subcategories (polyphonic good, monological evil, evil as action, evil as privation). He succeeds, thus, in describing the huge importance evil has as a topic in Tolkien's legendarium. There is no less complexity to Liam Campbell's "Nature," a masterly handling of an issue that, mainly since Curry and ecocriticism, has been considered a vital element in Tolkien's works. Readers will benefit enormously from Campbell's deep knowledge of this subject matter (see his 2011 *Ecological Augury*) as he unfolds a clear analysis of how Nature "is never a trivial matter for Tolkien" (421), either personally or thematically as a writer.

The same personal point of view appears in Pat Pinsent's "Religion: An Implicit Catholicism," which starts from Tolkien's religious background to develop a brief study on certain religious aspects of his writing, mainly connected with *The Hobbit*. Although for the author "religion" is exclusively Catholicism, I think that the essay would have benefited from a wider spiritual perspective. That "further research investigation" (435) Pinsent calls for at the end of her essay could include this perspective as a complement to her account of Tolkien's Catholicism.

While Christopher Garbowski in his section on "Evil" mentioned Tolkien's war experience as a source he used to develop his ideas on evil, Janet Brennan Croft's "War" offers an excellent complement to that by elaborating on war as a motif in Tolkien's books, one drawn directly from his own war experience. After describing this experience and Tolkien's transformation of it into literary material, Croft includes two final and highly interesting sections: "The Wounds That Will Not Heal," in which she applies some elements of trauma theory to define Tolkien's interest in depicting how some mental war wounds never heal in the real world; and "War: Just or Unjust?," two pages which provide a concise and accurate account of the (un)just motivations of warfare itself, the morale behind fighting, and the role these questions play in Tolkien's use of war as a topic. An excellent conclusion provides suggestions for further research.

This first subsection of Part V ends with two essays on two infrequently discussed topics in Tolkien's Criticism, namely otherness and difference, and women and the role female characters play in his works; Adam Roberts' "Women" elaborates extensively on the latter trying to "challenge the view that Tolkien's treatment of women is fatally limited" (448). Roberts succeeds in doing so, as the argument that he builds and the analysis of female characters that he offers are sound and relate the issue to other topics that open the mind of the reader to a new understanding of femaleness in Tolkien's art. A similar goal is attained by Cristopher Vaccaro in the newly commissioned chapter "Difference and Otherness", which defends the current need of such studies in a time like ours "when ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual minorities are scapegoated by some to promote right wing, nationalist attitudes that are staunchly xenophobic" (460). Vaccaro's take on this complex issue calls for a close reading of his texts as something that should compel any reader that J.R.R. Tolkien was as aware of difference and otherness as much as any writer of his time. Vaccaro aptly covers the essentials on the abject, women and feminine as the other (completing Roberts's previous view), gender studies and the queer, Peter Jackson's films and Tolkien studies today. There is a lot to be done as far as the study of otherness and difference in Tolkien's writings is concerned, but Christopher Vaccaro's piece contributes enormously to set firm, well-grounded foundations to be expand in future analyses.

The second subsection of Part V contains chapters that place Tolkien's works in relation to other forms of artistic expression. Christopher Tuthill's "Art" deals mainly with illustration and painting by reviewing the work of several illustrators (John Howe, Ted Naismith, Jef Murray and, secondarily, Alan Lee) in three specific iconic examples taken from *The Lord of the Rings*: The Balrog scene at the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, Éowyn and the Witch King, and the architecture of Minas Tirith. The analysis is excellent and highlights how this visual representation of Tolkien's fiction influenced the way in which generations of readers approach the visualization of his works. Although he quotes Hammond and Scull (*Artist & Illustrator*, but not *The Art of The Hobbit*), no specific section is devoted to discuss Tolkien's own art. Perhaps an essay on this topic, Tolkien as illustrator, should have been commissioned for this second edition, especially bearing in mind how since Catherine

McIlwaine's 2018 volume, *Tolkien. Maker of Middle-earth,* we all have a new understanding of Tolkien as painter and illustrator.

Concluding that "research on Tolkien's musical references and use of musical allusions through his mythology is a vast topic waiting to be explored" (494), Bradford Lee Eden's "Music" tries at least to start that exploration by presenting the essential lines of such an approach with the analysis of some sketches on music in *The Silmarillion* and some other works of the legendarium, and with a brief critical survey of the scholarship on this topic and of specific music based on Tolkien's works. This article was written with the aim of presenting a basic panorama to encourage research and Eden succeeds in such encouragement.

No consideration of Tolkien and the arts could be complete nowadays without a discussion of film adaptations, almost a separate topic on its own. Kristin Thompson, an expert on film studies and Tolkien on film, presents a detailed panorama of their history in "Film Adaptations: Theatrical and Television Versions". Rather than offering an in-depth examination of a specific film or set of films, Thompson chooses an exhaustive approach to give the reader—after a brief introductory background section—a complete and coherent overview of the film adaptations made—or never made—from Tolkien's material: the Morton Grady Zimmerman Project of 1957-1959, the 1967 *Hobbit* Short, the 1969 United Artists contracts and projects, Saul Zaentz and the Ralph Bakshi version, Rankin/Bass's *The Hobbit* and *The Return of the King*, a Soviet *Hobbit* from 1985, Finnish *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* TV movies from 1993, Peter Jackson's epic films on *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, produced by New Line, and a final couple of paragraphs on the new Amazon Prime series. These complete and informative accounts, excellent in their neat presentation of the most relevant details, could have been complemented with an additional essay giving a deeper critical analysis of the main films—Jackson's and Bakshi's—as works of art or/and as adaptations of Tolkien's works, along the lines of what readers could find—by Thompson herself among others—in Bogstad & Kaveny or in other pieces like Shippey's insightful article on Jackson's films ("Another Road to Middle-earth").

Part V closes its coverage of critical approaches with two interesting and complementary pieces by Péter Kristóf Makai and Cait Coker. Makai's "Games: Playable Arda" covers in detail the "story of how

Tolkien's creations have made their way into material and virtual games" (511). To trace that story Makai starts by highlighting the importance of "On Fairy-stories" (and Tolkien's definition of Enchantment, Fantasy, Primary and Secondary Belief) as a foundational theory for the development of gaming based on Tolkien. From this background, Makai develops a historical account of Tolkien-based games in chronological (and technological) order: wargaming and board games, role-playing games, computer games, and Massively Multiplayer Online RPGs. Makai also offers, in a brief concluding section, an analysis of certain general trends that analog and digital gaming have in common. Coker's newly commissioned chapter, "Fandom", addresses a very contemporary issue: Tolkien as a mega-franchise similar to Star Wars, Star Trek, Harry Potter or the Marvel Common Universe, just to quote the usual suspects. Coker describes, thus, the evolution of the concept revising Tolkien's early fandom from the 1950s and 1960s, the transformative fandom from the 1970s-1990s, the boom of the mega-franchises from the 2000s-2010s, and a final section that looks towards the future, from 2020s and beyond. The perfect way, indeed, to end the volume.

As a summary, all these final chapters are written with a high level of critical analysis and display an excellent degree of concision. In the brief space allotted to each chapter all authors succeed in covering deep topics with the utmost clarity and the widest critical scope possible. Virtually no important aspect is left unexamined and no major critical bibliographical reference is missed.

Regarding overall structure and organization, each chapter presents the same layout, with chapter endnotes (always contextual and informative, never just bibliographical), works cited exclusively in the chapter and, in the majority of them, a brief further reading list on the chapter's topic.

As a complement to the list of works cited in every chapter, this companion offers a General Bibliography (535-543) that does not reproduce the previously quoted works, but rather contains the following new information: a) a complete list of the "Works by J.R.R. Tolkien" (guiding the reader to Hammond & Scull's chronology to expand precise references) that is organized by the most recent edition of every work but with an extensive indication of its publication history, which facilitates a great deal the location of materials; it is fully updated as to

include Carl Hostetter's *The Nature of Middle-earth* (2021), first volume of the post-Christopher Tolkien era. Being closed for any further additions, the companion was late to include Brian Sibley's standalone edition of *The Fall of Numenor* (2022) and *The Battle of Maldon: together with The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth* (2023) edited by Peter Grybauskas; b) a "Further Reading" section offering, as the editor states, works which "supplement the individual bibliographies at the end of each chapter and are recommended to allow further explorations of the themes and topics in this volume" (539); and c) a list of Key Journals and Web Sites. The companion closes with an index of key words, works and authors (544-556).

All things considered, I think that the work presented in this new edition is really impressive. Tolkien, as an academic subject, is a complex and deep field of analysis. Such complexity was stated by Tolkien himself in a well-known letter to Milton Waldman (Carpenter: *Letters* 143) reprinted in some recent editions of *The Silmarilion*:

> You asked for a brief sketch of my stuff that is connected with my imaginary world. It is difficult to say anything without saying too much: the attempt to say a few words opens a floodgate of excitement, the egoist and the artist at once desires to say how the stuff has grown, what it is like, and what (he thinks) he means or is trying to represent by it all.

Every Tolkien expert knows that doing justice to the multilayered density of Tolkien's works is impossible in a brief sketch; instead, "a floodgate of excitement" is always opened in every companion, handbook, encyclopedia, guide, or specific study.

The volume described in this review opens such a floodgate again, so we all should celebrate its second expanded edition as it covers even in more detail every necessary aspect needed to understand the discipline. It keeps on constituting the essential reference to guide how this complex issue will be dealt with in the future, by offering at the same time new avenues for future research and a state-of-the art approach to the subject that complements what previous companions (Drout) or independent studies (Rosebury, Walker, and Zettersten) have already offered.

Note

This review is based on the text that I wrote to revise the first edition from 2014, which appeared in *Tolkien Studies* 12 (2015): 177-189, DOI 10.1353/tks.2015.0016. Since it was most coherent to maintain my arguments as I expressed them originally when reviewing those sections of the book with minimum or no changes and the philosophy of the book as a whole, using that text of mine as the main skeleton of this review had to be the only approach. The reading scope of both journals is also different, which gives even more sense to its being used as the basis of this review. My thanks go to Sara Georgi, Managing Editor, West Virginia University Press, publishers of *Tolkien Studies*, for granting me permission to use such content.

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Clark, David. *Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000*. Peter Lang, 2022, 440 pages

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Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000 is the first part of a two-volume exploration of the development of Irish crime fiction, from its origins in the late seventeenth century up to the emergence of the "Emerald Noir" genre in the late 1990s. The main objective of this volume is to shed light on the significant yet underappreciated contributions of Irish authors and literature to the field of crime fiction. While several studies have addressed the subject, this volume represents the first extensive analysis of Irish crime and mystery writing. The volume is divided into twenty chapters, each of which provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the genre through an examination of distinct time periods through meticulous scrutiny of the socio-historical context and recurring themes present in the literary works. Thus, it offers a profound insight into the development of the genre over time.

Following a brief yet comprehensive introduction that provides an in-depth overview of the historical context relevant to the challenges faced by Irish writers in the genre as well as a summary of the subsequent contents to be covered, the opening chapter explores the origins of contemporary crime narratives in Ireland. In this regard, the author analyzes the prevalence of picaresque and rogue tales, broadsheets, and Newgate Calendars during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The chapter emphasizes the influence of such forms on Irish crime writing, particularly the adaptation of the picaresque narrative to the English-language rogue tale by the Irish author Richard Head. The chapter also notes the popularity of criminal biographies, from "black-letter" broadside ballads to the Newgate Calendars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the insatiable demand for stories about crime and criminals. All in all, the chapter underscores the emergence of a robust market for crime writing in Ireland, as well as the eagerness of readers to assimilate an array of diverse criminal narratives.

Chapter 2 examines the significant historical events that followed the Irish Rebellion and parliamentary Union, and how those events

influenced the development of Irish crime fiction. The author notes that the Irish Constable Act, which highlighted the distinct role and unpopularity of the Irish police, and the decline of the Irish publishing trade were key moments in the genre's evolution in the country. Several well-known Irish writers, such as Maria Edgeworth, Gerald Griffin, and William Carleton, captured this turbulent setting in their works. Other writers such as John and Michael Banim, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, and Anna Marie Hall, addressed the theme of agrarian unrest in their novels. Additionally, poet Thomas Moore's *Memories of Capitan Rock: The Irish Chieftain with Some Account of His Ancestors* (1824) provides an insightful exploration of the secret societies of the time, while Charles Lever provided an adaptation of the picaresque model. Together, these authors painted a vivid picture of the era and its cultural and historical significance.

In the third chapter, the author explores the influence of Gothic fiction on Irish crime narratives. The author contends that Gothic fiction has been a significant force in shaping crime narratives, given the shared elements between the two genres. This discussion is contextualized within Ireland's historical and cultural connections to the Gothic genre. Edmund Burke's identification of the sublime, alongside Ireland's unique linguistic, religious, and cultural distinctiveness, are cited as factors that made Ireland a "fertile ground" for the development of gothic literature (54). To illustrate the connection between the gothic and crime fiction within the Irish context, the author highlights the works of Charles Robert Maturin and Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) is noted for its anticipation of the detective model through the protagonist's investigations. Similarly, Le Fanu, renowned for his supernatural and occult fiction, was a trailblazer in the genre of sensation fiction in the 1860s as well as one of the very few Irish writers to be regularly mentioned in mainstream stories of crime fiction.

The growth of sensation fiction and the Irish contribution to the genre in the second half of the nineteenth century is examined in chapter 4. The author acknowledges that the "Irish contribution to the mode of sensation fiction was limited" (76), and even though some elements of sensation novels might be found in Irish writers over the next three decades, effectively, only two Irish authors—Charlotte Riddell and Frances Hoey—are typically included in the faction of 1860s sensation

boom writers. Nonetheless, the author also references some other Irish writers whose literary production involved some features of the sensation model, such as Annie French Hector and, more notably, Richard Dowling, whose fiction provides "a fascinating link between sensation-fiction and the end-of-century detective tales" (93).

In chapter 5, the author investigates the final two decades of the nineteenth century as a highly productive era for those Irish writers who explored the themes of mystery and criminal behavior. The author argues that the resurgence of interest in criminal affairs in Ireland was triggered by historical events such as the rise of Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party's electoral successes, the expansion of the Land League, the start of boycotting, the Phoenix Park Murders, the Fenian bombing, and Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill. These events propelled Ireland and Irish issues to the forefront of public consciousness, making them topical and compelling to both Irish and non-Irish readers. To illustrate this growing interest, the author highlights the work of Elizabeth Thomasina (L.T.) Meade, a representative of the era. Despite having been ignored by contemporary critics, Meade is regarded as a pioneering figure in the genre, as she adhered to the dominant conventions of crime storytelling prevalent at the time, introducing innovative elements such as a female investigator in her novels, a doctor as a detective, implausible crime narratives, and central female criminals.

In chapter 6, Clark continues his exploration of detective and mystery literature in the turn-of-the-century period by critically analyzing the works of several authors, including Bram Stoker, Somerville and Ross, Oscar Wilde, Matthew Phipps Shiel, Matthias McDonnell Bodkin, Robert Cromie, James Owen Hannay and Dorothea Conyers, and Erskine Childers. Through a meticulous examination of their respective crime narratives, Clark demonstrates the significant contributions made by these authors to the establishment and evolution of the conventions of the detective novel genre. The chapter thus serves to lay the groundwork for the development of the Golden Age of crime fiction that would follow in the subsequent century.

As anticipated in the previous section, in chapters 7 and 8, the author investigates the influence of Irish literature on the Golden Age of crime fiction through the works of Freeman Will Crofts, Nicholas Blake, and Mrs. Victor Rickard. Clark argues that although the Golden

Age was predominantly a British phenomenon, the Irish contribution to the genre is significant and should not be overlooked despite its limited representation. He attributes this underrepresentation to the political upheaval in Ireland during the emergence of the Golden Age, marked by the struggle for independence, the Civil War, and the establishment of newfound status, which occupied Irish writers and led to a departure from the typical style of crime fiction. In this context, the author highlights the crucial role played by Freeman Will Crofts, Nicholas Blake, and Mrs. Victor Rickard as three pioneering writers, considering Crofts and Blake to be among the most accomplished practitioners, although Rickard's works have been neglected. By conducting a detailed analysis of the mystery literature of these writers, Clark concludes that "three of the great writers of the Golden Age were Irish, and their impact and importance should not be discounted." (170).

In chapter 9, the impact of conflict and political upheaval in Ireland during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods on crime writing is explored. Clark argues that while the interwar years in England were marked by the dominance of Golden Age murder mysteries, crime writing in Ireland was scarce, and literature addressing prevalent criminal activity was in stark contrast to the political and social conditions in the new Free State. Despite this, some authors who had participated in revolutionary activities, including Eimar O'Duffy, Robert Brennan, and Liam O'Flaherty, found it impossible to overlook the evidence, resulting in notable depictions of this critical interwar period in Irish crime fiction.

Chapter 10 examines the influence of American hard-boiled crime fiction on Irish literature. The author argues that although the genre's impact and reach may have been limited during the 1940s and 1950s, it remains of great significance within the Irish literary context. Works by authors such as J.B. O'Sullivan and, to a lesser extent, Brian Moore, demonstrated the willingness of Irish writers to engage with the international hard-boiled narrative style and brought it to the attention of the Irish reading public. These pioneering efforts paved the way for the emergence of a new generation of successful Irish crime writers in the early twenty-first century, who continued to advance the hard-boiled genre within Ireland.

Clark analyzes the development of Irish crime fiction during the mid-twentieth century in Chapters 11 and 12. These two chapters focus on the

Second World War era in Ireland, also known as the "Emergency," and the way in which that period provided a rich background for crime and espionage novels. However, despite the fertile ground for international intrigue, most Irish crime fiction of the 1940s did not reference global affairs. The author highlights two exceptions to this rule, namely Nicholas Blake and Freeman Will Croft, who chose the wartime period as the context for some of their works, though they predominantly preferred English settings. The author also examines the rise of spy fiction, which was embraced fairly quickly by Irish writers, especially Manning O'Brine and John Welcome. Their thrillers anticipated two of the main tendencies that would predominate in Irish crime fiction during the 1960s and early 1970s, namely the introduction of national glamour against a background of espionage and the renewed interest in Irish settings. Chapter 12 focuses on the significant figures in the development of the genre in this era, including Edwards Plunkett (who wrote under the pseudonym Lord Dunsany) and Flann O'Brian, whose novel "The Third Policeman" is a seminal work of metaphysical crime fiction drawing on the Irish fantasy tradition. The contributions of other significant figures in the field, including Nigel Fitzgerald, Desmond O'Neill, Liam Redmond, Leonard Wibberley, and Patricia Moyes are also acknowledged. Through a critical examination of their works, the author contextualizes the evolution of Irish crime literature in the mid-twentieth century, emphasizing the diverse styles and themes present in the genre.

In Chapter 13, the author explores the emergence of spy fiction in Ireland during the 1960s and 1970s, using Brian Cleeve and Jack Higgins as archetypes. The chapter begins by tracing the origins of the genre back to Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), a seminal work that marked the significant beginnings of Irish spy fiction. The author argues that in the early stages of the genre Irish spy fiction was characterized by amateur and whimsical spies. However, with the emergence of writers like Brian Cleeve and Jack Higgins, the genre shifted towards contemporary spy thrillers that incorporated elements of crime fiction. The author highlights how these writers emphasized the ethical opposition between the national and the international in their works. They moved the Irish spy novel away from the 1950s while still incorporating elements of mainstream crime fiction. In this sense, these early Irish narratives preferred to set their stories in the past, specifically

during the Second World War. Indeed, in an unanticipated turn of events, by the early 1970s, writer Jack Higgins would even begin to incorporate the contemporary Northern Irish Troubles as a background in his spy thrillers, anticipating the appearance of the Irish context in the crime production of the following decades. Throughout the chapter, Clark emphasizes the contributions of Brian Cleeve and Jack Higgins to Irish spy fiction while also acknowledging the contributions of other writers like John Kelly, Shaun Herron, Joseph Hone, or Michael Kenyon who also incorporated the Irish context into their works.

In Chapter 14, the author discusses the evolution of crime fiction in Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s, challenging the notion that this was not a productive period for the genre. Clark argues that Irish writers made a significant impact during that era, despite the limited availability of crime fiction for Irish readers at the time. Three prominent writers, Patrick McGinley, Bartholomew Gill, and Ruth Dudley Edwards are highlighted as examples of Irish writers who defied the apparent lull in Irish crime fiction and paved the way for a promising future for the genre.

In Chapter 15, the focus is on "Trouble thrillers" produced during the 1990s in Northern Ireland. The author argues that the literature produced during this time was significant due to both the quantity and quality of works that emerged from such a dark historical period. The body of literature produced by Irish writers, including those from both Northern and Southern Ireland and representing ideologically opposed factions, offered a stark contrast to the generic thrillers written by foreign authors who lacked a genuine understanding of the country and its circumstances. Authors such as Maurice Leitch, Glenn Patterson, John Morrow, Benedict Kiley, Terence De Vere White, Jennifer Johnstone, and John Broderick are deemed to have contributed to this body of work.

In Chapter 16, Clark conducts an in-depth examination of Irish crime fiction during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period characterized by an escalating crime rate in Ireland that was not accompanied by a commensurate increase in the production of crime fiction. Although some established authors continued to publish during this period, there was a notable scarcity of emerging new authors. In this context, the literary output of Mike Shelley at the beginning of this decade is highlighted together with the four novels by English novelist Barnes written under the pen name of Dan Kavanagh, and the start of the long

careers in literary crime fiction of Peter Cunningham, J.B. O'Neill, and Carlo Gébler. Towards the end of the decade, however, Ireland would witness enormous changes. The Celtic Tiger and the murder of the investigative reporter Veronica Guerin in June 1996 would evolve into a growing interest in the reading and production of crime narratives. Multiple writers —including Joe Joyce, Tom Phelan, Vincent Banville, Rory McCormac— would, as a result, discuss these issues that would become well-liked later in the decade and into the new millennium and used them as inspiration for their creative works. To bring this decade's final years to a close, the Dublin publisher Glendale would appear, introducing a cheap but interesting crime series —including works by H.J Forrest, Vincent Caprani, Howard R. Simpson and Desmond Moore—, which did much to promote the popularity for the narratives involving Irish crime being set in an Irish context, a field which would grow in popularity with the rise of the Celtic Tiger.

In Chapter 17, a comprehensive analysis of the Irish crime fiction genre produced in Northern Ireland during the 1990s is undertaken. The examination incorporates various aspects such as the correlation between the genre and the Troubles, the significance of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and deviations within the genre. Despite the limited output of crime literature in Northern Ireland during that period, there were several notable authors in the genre, including Colin Bateman and Eoin McNamee. The representation of the RUC in literature was often unfavorable; however, the author identifies Blair McMahon and Eugene McEldowney's literary works as significant exceptions to this trend. The chapter concludes by referencing several works produced during the 1990s that deviated from traditional genre boundaries, including Briege Duffaud's *A Wreath Upon the Death* (1993), Kate O'Riordan's *Involved* (1995), Patric Quigley's *Borderland* (1994) Martin Dillon's *The Serpent's Tail* (1995), Ian McDonald's *Sacrifice of Fools* (1996), and Ronan Bennett's literary thrillers. These works are qualified as "some strange but interesting anomalies" (317) that offer a captivating perspective on the events taking place during the time period.

Chapter 18 explores the landscape of Irish crime fiction in the 1990s, with a focus on the popularity of Irish thrillers. The chapter highlights several prominent authors of this period, including Daniel Easterman,

Glenn Meade, Victor O'Reilley, Conor Cregan, Tom Phelan, Brian Gallagher, Rory McCormarc, Joseph O'Connor, Paul Carson, Maurice Manning, and Neville Thompson, who arguably brought a unique Irish perspective to the genre and contributed to the establishment of a significant tradition in Irish crime writing. The chapter celebrates the diversity and quality of Irish crime fiction during this time, featuring international thrillers, police-based thrillers, and political mysteries. Overall, it is argued that the works collectively made a significant impact on Irish crime writing.

Chapter 19 focuses on the police procedural and private detective novels that emerge in the 1990s, and examines the way in which publications of authors like John Brady, Jim Lusby, Sheila Barrett, Hugo Hamilton, T.S O'Rourke, John Galvin, Ken Bruen, Paul Charles, Maggie Gibson, K.T. McCaffrey, Paul Kilduff, Maureen Martella and Seamus Smyth, contributed to lay the groundwork for what would grow into the enormous boom in Irish crime fiction by creating a market for a large number of up-and-coming writers with talent and ambition who were motivated by the changes that had occurred in the final years of the millennium.

In the final chapter, Clark explores the emergence of successful writers from Ireland in the new millennium. In this regards, the 1990s were an important period for thrillers and crime novels set in Northern Ireland, and Colin Bateman and Eoin McNamee are mentioned as prominent authors from this period. The chapter also notes the emergence of writers who would attain great success in the following years, including Peter Tremayne, John Connolly, and John Boyne, whose debut novel "The Thief of Time" demonstrates a hybrid blend of crime and other genres. The author concludes by highlighting the remarkable growth in popularity of Irish crime fiction in the early years of the twenty-first century, triggered by the rise and fall of the Celtic Tiger. The chapter ends by acknowledging the emergence of "Emerald Noir" and the worldwide acclaim that Irish crime fiction would go on to receive, suggesting that this phenomenon requires further examination in a separate volume.

To conclude, in *Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000,* Clark conducts a comprehensive and extensive exploration of the crime fiction genre in Ireland, spanning from the seventeenth century to the

beginning of the twenty-first century. The author highlights the most significant contributions by both Irish and non-Irish authors, some of whom have not received proper recognition. The study attends to the complexity and richness of Irish crime fiction and offers a profound analysis of its evolution, socio-historical context, and thematic concerns. Clark's meticulous research and critical analysis emphasize the interplay between crime fiction and Irish culture, politics, and society, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the genre's significance in shaping the Irish identity and its representation in literature. Moreover, this volume constitutes a vital contribution to the growing body of scholarship on Irish crime fiction, expanding our knowledge of the genre and offering a fresh perspective on its development and diverse authors. In conclusion, *Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000* is an essential resource for scholars and students of Irish literature, crime fiction, and cultural studies. Overall, it is an impressive and engaging study that fills a crucial gap in the field of Irish literary studies, enhancing our appreciation of Irish crime fiction and its enduring impact on the literary landscape.

Burney, Frances. *Dúas comedias. Volume I. The Witlings. O club do enxeño; Volume II. A Busy Day. Un día a toda présa*. Introdución de María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia, tradución e notas de Carmen Mª Fernández Rodríguez. Universidade da Coruña, 2022. 883 páxinas

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En dous volumes que suman 833 páxinas en total e co número 74 da Biblioteca-Arquivo Teatral Francisco Pillado Mayor da Universidade da Coruña, aparece por primeira vez vertida ao galego a británica Frances Burney (1752-1840), en tradución de Carmen Mª Fernández Rodríguez e con introdución de María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia. Suceden estes volumes ao número 73 da colección, o *Soño dunha noite de verán,* de William Shakespeare, autor venerado e profusamente citado nas obras de Burney.

Sorprende, de primeiras, que as obras elixidas polas responsables dos volumes para introducir no sistema cultural galego a que pasa por ser "a autora da mellor novela escrita por unha muller a finais do século XVIII" —pioneira da *novel of manners,* con tanta tradición na literatura en lingua inglesa, e creadora da coñecida e influínte *Evelina (1778)*, ademais de *Cecilia, Camilla* e *The Wanderer*— sexan dúas pezas teatrais, nomeadamente *O club do enxeño* (1779) e *Un día a toda présa* (1802), dúas obras que nunca chegaron a ver en escena os coetáneos de Burney. Sen embargo, isto sorprende menos cando se sabe que Burney era unha apaixonada do teatro e que este foi o xénero ao que dedicou máis obras e moito tempo vital e o que descobre a Burney menos coñecida.

O traballo que se nos presenta divídese en tres grandes bloques. O primeiro confórmao a Introdución xeral, a cargo de Lorenzo-Modia, que forma parte do primeiro volume. O segundo contén a tradución de *O club do enxeño* (1779), realizada por Fernández Rodríguez, obra coa que remata o primeiro volume. O terceiro bloque, que ocupa todo o segundo volume, constitúeo a tradución de *Un día a toda présa* (1800-1802), tamén en versión de Fernández Rodríguez.

No comezo da Introdución dáse conta da intencionalidade dos volumes, que non é outra, en palabras de Lorenzo-Modia, que a de "botar unha ollada ao teatro británico de autoría feminina no século XVIII dende unha perspectiva de xénero, o que supón un labor innovador

dentro da investigación feita en Galicia" (p. 11) e contextualízase esta tradución no marco doutras realizadas en Galicia nos últimos anos de autoras británicas dos séculos XVII e XVIII como Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft, Eliza Haywood ou Aphra Behn, sinalando que, se dalgún xeito o ámbito novelístico e dramático están representados nas traducións referidas por Modia, faltan mostras do traballo poético realizado polas escritoras británicas deses séculos, non só en galego, senón tamén nas restantes linguas da Península Ibérica. Agradécese que Lorenzo-Modia deixe sinaladas, negro sobre branco, tarefas pendentes que investigadoras e tradutoras no futuro deberían acometer.

A Introdución, que ocupa 65 páxinas das 883 totais, está moi amplamente documentada, ademais de ser ben ilustrativa e de lectura máis que agradable. Nela aprendemos didáctica e informadamente sobre a vida e a obra de Burney no seu contexto literario, social, político e económico. Este estudo introdutorio organízase a través das seccións tituladas "O contexto histórico e literario de Burney", "Dramaturgas e actrices", "A novelista metida a dramaturga", "*O club do enxeño* e a muller literata" e "*Un día a toda présa* e o Imperio Británico", rematando cunha ampla "Bibliografía" final de grande utilidade.

Sabemos a través da Introdución que Burney naceu en 1752, non se nos di onde (King's Lynn, Lynn Regis no seu tempo), no seo dunha familia acomodada. Era filla do compositor e musicólogo Charles Burney, intelectual moi valorado na época xeorxiana, integrante do "The Club" de Samuel Johnson. Coñeceu a personaxes destacados do mundo cultural do seu tempo, como Joshua Reynolds, Hester Thrale, David Garrik, James Boswell, Samuel Crisp, Richard Sheridan e o propio Samuel Johnson. Viviu, pois, nun ambiente propicio para o cultivo literario e varios de seus irmáns tamén se dedicaron ao mundo das letras.

Sabemos, tamén, que empezou a escribir dende noviña e que en 1778 publicou anonimamente a primeira novela, *Evelina*, que tivo un enorme éxito e que viu impresas sucesivas edicións en pouco tempo. Ademais, xusto despois da publicación de *Evelina* escribiu *O club do enxeño* e puxo grande empeño en que se representase, pero a súa situación persoal e social fixeron imposible que isto fose unha realidade. Todas estas circunstancias son explicadas con notoria claridade por Lorenzo Modia, que se serve dun fondo coñecemento dos recursos e bibliografía sobre o tema.

Tamén se nos informa do seu traballo na corte durante un lustro (1786-1791) como camareira real, "Keeper of the Robes", facéndose cargo do vestiario da raíña Charlotte, e de como esta frustrante e absorbente experiencia serviu de material para a súa futura creación dramática e novelística. Infórmasenos, ademais, de como despois desta experiencia en Windsor entrou en contacto cun círculo de emigrantes franceses exiliados en Gran Bretaña, onde coñeceu o seu futuro esposo. A estes acontecementos seguiron a publicación das novelas *Cecilia* (1782), *Camilla* (1796), o ensaio *Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy* (1793), o nacemento de seu fillo, a súa viaxe a Francia en 1802, a publicación de *A Mastectomy: Letter to Esther Burney*, crónica da súa operación dun tumor de peito, e o seu regreso a Inglaterra (Bath) con *The Wanderer* na equipaxe, que resultou a súa novela máis reivindicativa. En fin, o lectorado atopa unha vida chea de experiencias, viaxes e literatura en diversos xéneros que tivo unha fonda repercusión póstuma coa publicación do seu diario, epistolario e pezas teatrais, estas últimas aparecidas en edicións completas nas últimas décadas do pasado século XX.

Este introito vital e autorial dá paso á análise estrutural, social e de xénero de ambas as dúas pezas teatrais, análise sintética, pero moi clarificadora, na que Modia pon esta en relación coa narrativa de Frances Burney. Para iso, divide o apartado dedicado a "*O club do enxeño* e a muller literata" nas seccións "Estrutura da obra", "A familia inglesa de finais do século XVIII e o seu poder" e "A participación da muller na cultura". Pola súa banda, ao abordar o apartado «*Un día a toda présa* e o Imperio británico», Lorenzo-Modia sérvese das seccións "Estrutura da obra", "Unha hindú en Londres" e "Xeografía humana de Londres".

A comedia, ou, mellor, traxicomedia, "O club do enxeño" preséntanos unha muller, Cecilia, que ten que facer fronte a unha situación difícil na que fica completamente soa nunha sociedade por completo estamentalizada e patriarcal. Trátase da perda da súa fortuna cando está a piques de casar. Burney constrúe unha personaxe sólida de fortes convicccións, unha muller na procura da súa individualidade, que consegue manter o seu punto de vista e abrirse paso nun medio social hostil que tenta marcar o novo rumbo da súa vida. Os personaxes que a rodean, moitas veces nomeados a partir de características persoais (Lady Smatter, Codger, señora Voluble, Dabler, Censor, Señora Sapient ou Señora Wheedle), crean esta peza en cinco actos, ambientada na xeografía urbana do Londres da época, que

profunda na vacuidade da alta sociedade inglesa suxeita á convención e ás aparencias, como a de manter por snobismo, na procura liviá do coñecemento, o salón literario que dá titulo á obra.

En *Un día a toda présa*, Burney desenvolve en cinco actos, como facía en *O club do enxeño*, a ironía, ás veces a sátira, que pon ao servizo da crítica social, tanto contra a clase aristócrata coma contra os novos ricos (*nababs*) retornados da India que tentan buscar acomodo en Londres, amosando o choque entre ambos os dous mundos. É unha peza áxil e dinámica que, ao ver da crítica, tal e como recolle Modia no seu estudo introdutorio, "non debe relegarse de novo á escuridade, xa que cunha edición coidadosa podería converterse nun clásico nacional", como pode lerse nunha recensión publicada no *Western Daily Press* que Peter Sabor recolle nun seu traballo (por certo, a referencia bibliográfica da introdución, na páxina 45, non coincide coa da bibliografía final, páxina 64). Doutra volta a protagonista é unha moza resolta e moderna que se ve inmersa nun grande enredo do que acaba saíndo airosa, non sen facer fronte antes ás ben ríxidas convencións sociais.

Tras este amplo e documentado estudo introdutorio que presenta, explica e analiza as obras, aparecen as traducións de *O club do enxeño* e *Un día a toda présa* asinadas por Carmen Mª Fernández Rodríguez en edición bilingüe, que figuran pertinentemente anotadas, o que moito ha de axudar ao lectorado a descodificar algúns extremos culturais de difícil interpretación na actualidade, ademais de presentar a tradutora algunhas decisións tomadas no seu traballo, como, por exemplo, a nota da páxina 521 na que se nos aclaran as razóns das eleccións do nome e os diversos diminutivos elixidos para designar a Eliza, a protagonista de *Un día a toda présa*.

Como é adoito nun labor destas características, amplitude e dificultade, a valiosa tradución de Fernández Rodríguez ofrece indubidables achados e moitas achegas que arroupan e iluminan con ben os complexos textos de Burney, como acontece coa meritoria aposta por manter a rima na tradución dos poemas inseridos en *O club do enxeño*. Secasí, tamén se rexistran algunhas solucións que talvez cumpriría reconsiderar nunha, agardamos que pronta, vindeira edición.

Algúns exemplos do que se sinala concrétanse en vacilacións semánticas (por exemplo, na tradución de "cap" unhas veces como

"capa" e outras como "sombreiro", coa consecuente falta de concordancia gramatical en xénero con outros elementos da secuencia ante a variabilidade da tradución, p. 73); problemas na escolla das partículas comparativas ("tan rápido como eu falo" por "tan rápido coma eu falo", p. 79); reiteracións ("É mais nova que o noivo, seguro, pero estou segura de que...", p. 89; ou, na mesma secuencia, "con el", "porque el di", "como el di" e "el di", p. 99); castelanismos léxicos ("alabado" por "louvado", pp. 101 e 375; "non lle importa falar comigo un ratiño?" por "non lle importa falar comigo un momentiño?", p. 133; "habitación" por "cuarto", *passim*); "deslizábanse" por "esvaraban" ou "escorregaban", p. 223); solucións fraseolóxicas e xiros varios non idiomáticos ("Que a leve a peste, irmán!" por "Mala peste a mate, irmán!", p. 105; "Ceos, señora" por "Meu Deus, señora" ou similar, p.141; "Non atopo en vostede ningunha porción de actividade..." por "Non atopo en vostede mostra [ou rastro ou exemplo] ningunha de actividade...", p. 111); formas gráficas non normativas ("tal vez" por "talvez", p. 133); ou desaxustes na transitividade e na escolla de tempos verbais ("E lle favorece tanto!" por "E favorécea tanto!", p. 97; "non tan ben como desexara" por "non tan ben como desexaría"; p. 121; "Odio aos cans" por "Odio os cans", p. 139; "Oxalá puideras" e «Oxalá non dixera" por "Oxalá puideses" e "Oxalá non dixese", p. 169; "oírlles a todos falando" por "oílos a todos falando", p. 315; "obedézote" por "obedézoche", p. 501; ou "Con todo, eu non recibirei a ese tolo" por "Con todo, eu non recibirei ese tolo", p. 791).

Agora ben, estes pormenores, todos de doada solución, non deben distraernos do principal: a importancia de contar en galego cunha tradución destas dúas pezas, o plausible esforzo que para logralo fixo Carmen Mª Fernández Rodríguez, o acaído estudo introdutorio asinado por María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia e o acerto editorial da Biblioteca-Arquivo Teatral Francisco Pillado Mayor da Universidade da Coruña, que con tanto ben dirixe a profesora Teresa López, por sumar estas comedias de Frances Burney ao acervo dos clásicos do século XVIII inglés que xa podemos, por fin, ler tamén na nosa lingua. Vaian pois, para todas elas, os máis sonoros parabéns.

Barth, Kathleen, directora. *The Death of Anne Brontë*, distribuidora independiente, 2022

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The Death of Anne Brontë es un cortometraje estadounidense de diez minutos y veinticinco segundos perteneciente al género dramático. Fue escrito, dirigido y coproducido por Kathleen Barth y finalizado el 28 de julio de 2022. Kathleen Barth es una joven guionista y directora de escena asentada en Washington D.C con una sólida formación teatral. Obtuvo su licenciatura en Bellas Artes, en la especialidad en Teatro, por la Universidad George Mason en 2015. Tras la finalización de sus estudios dirigió obras para diferentes compañías teatrales en su área natal. Recientemente ha comenzado a trabajar en filmografía, inicialmente, escribiendo los guiones para *On Repeat*, dirigida por Tony Márquez y *Decision Day*, dirigida por Meredith Kirkman. El cortometraje *The Death of Anne Brontë* es su debut como directora cinematográfica, con el que ha recibido dos premios: resultó ganadora en enero de 2023 en el Festival de Cortos de Berlín en la categoría de "Mejor Guión Original" y "Mejor Corto de Empoderamiento Femenino", al igual que también fue ganadora en el Festival Internacional de las Artes en Austin, en 2022, en la categoría de "Mejor Directora de Cortometrajes". El cortometraje también quedó semifinalista en el Festival de Cine White Vulture, en 2022, para la categoría de "Mejor Corto Dramático".

Kathleen Barth afirma en su página web que tiene un interés particular en representar y dar voz a las mujeres o a cualquier otro sector de la sociedad que considere desfavorecido. Es por ello que, durante su investigación para la creación del corto *The Death of Anne Brontë,* Barth descubre que mientras que las hermanas mayores de Anne, Charlotte y Emily son globalmente conocidas por sus respectivas novelas, *Jane Eyre* y *Wuthering Heights*, Anne ha permanecido más en la sombra, silenciada, sin tanto reconocimiento a su brillantez y legado literario a las letras inglesas. Barth se postula como defensora por la visibilización de la más joven de las Brontë, admitiendo que "there was a third Brontë sister, Anne" y se sorprende de que la autora de una de las primeras novelas feministas, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), continúe siendo "a footnote in literature." Sensibilizada con la falta de reconocimiento hacia Anne

Brontë, Barth se plantea la siguiente pregunta: "Why doesn´t Anne have the same passionate fan-base that her two older sisters have?" (véase www.kathleenbarth.net).

En la búsqueda de una respuesta, Barth descubre varios aspectos que irá segmentando en el cortometraje: el prolífico trabajo de Anne, el rechazo de Charlotte ante la segunda novela de su hermana, la poderosa defensa que Anne hizo sobre su novela cuando incluyó un prefacio a la segunda edición y, finalmente, el discurso empleado por Charlotte para que la novela de su hermana desapareciera del mercado literario. Fruto, por tanto, de su indagación, la intención de la directora es contar la historia de Anne incorporando algunos datos biográficos reales, pero incluyendo también algún elemento ficticio con el objetivo de demostrar la determinación y pasión de Anne por escribir.

Kathleen Barth rinde tributo a las técnicas narrativas empleadas por Anne Brontë en su novela *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, dividida en tres partes que reflejan, en primer lugar, el tiempo presente y a continuación, el pasado de la protagonista para, finalmente, regresar al tiempo de apertura de la novela. Barth respeta esta técnica narratológica transfiriéndola al cortometraje, que comienza en el tiempo presente mostrando a la escritora muy enferma de tuberculosis y tratando de escribir su tercera novela (elemento ficticio). Charlotte Brontë entra en escena arrebatando a su hermana el manuscrito y exigiéndola que descanse.

En el minuto 2.16 retrocedemos al pasado, a once meses antes, cuando Anne se enfrentó a su hermana Charlotte por la carta que esta última había escrito manifestando su desagrado con la reciente publicación de *The Tenant*. En esta discusión entre las hermanas, que no se pudo producir en realidad, tal como explicaremos más adelante, Charlotte se mantiene firme en su crítica reprochando a su hermana el contenido de la novela afirmando: "You´ve written about a wife who leaves her husband" (3.05) y Anne defiende los méritos y el realismo de su novela alegando: "Yes, she left an abusive alcoholic husband to build a better life for herself and her child (…) I wanted to portray real people as they really are" (3.11). Este momento de flashback es relevante, ya que sirve a la directora para revelar las opuestas filosofías literarias entre las hermanas, pero, principalmente, para dar visibilidad a la voz firme, realista y ávida de justicia social de Anne Brontë para combatir

desigualdades y proponer mejoras en las situaciones de maltrato o abuso que sufrían las mujeres de la época.

A partir del minuto 3.53 volvemos al tiempo presente, a los últimos instantes de vida de Anne, cuando está muy enferma y, sobre todo, muy angustiada porque lo único que desea es terminar su tercera novela. Así, Anne desafía las órdenes de su hermana y retoma su manuscrito, pero en un ataque de tos, que resultará letal, Charlotte acude en su auxilio preguntándole a Anne: "What´s wrong?" (5.51). La respuesta de Anne es fiel a los hechos biográficos cuando expresa: "I wanted to do so much more with my life" (5.56). Cabe recordar que una frase similar fue la que la propia Anne Brontë escribió a su amiga, Ellen Nussey, el 5 de abril de 1849, cuando estaba a punto de morir: "I long to do some good in the world before I leave it. I have many schemes in my head for future practice – humble and limited indeed – but still I should not like them to come to nothing, and myself to have lived to so little purpose" (Gaskell 274). En esta misma escena, la imagen proyectada de los dibujos de los hermanos ya fallecidos, Branwell y Emily, sirven de soporte para demostrar no solo la angustia que debía sentir Charlotte ante la inminente muerte de su última hermana viva sino también la sensibilidad y el carácter generoso de Anne cuando le susurra a su hermana "Take courage" (6.22), en un último esfuerzo de inferir fuerza a Charlotte que está a punto de quedarse sola.

Tras el fallecimiento de la más joven de la familia Brontë, Charlotte recibe la visita de Mr Newby, el editor de las novelas de Anne Brontë *Agnes Grey* y *The Tenant,* y de Emily con su única producción novelística, *Wuthering Heights*. La incorporación de este personaje es interesante debido a la polémica que giró en torno a él y a sus pésimas gestiones en la publicación de las novelas de Emily y de la misma Anne. Mr Newby le pide a Charlotte reeditar la novela *The Tenant* al mismo tiempo que le pregunta por la veracidad de la existencia de una posible tercera novela de Anne. La respuesta de Charlotte es incisiva para ambas peticiones. En relación con la primera, Charlotte afirma contundentemente "No, that novel was an entire mistake and I will not permit it reprinting" (6.53), fiel adaptación a lo que la propia Charlotte escribió en una carta a W. S. Williams, indicando que "the choice of subject was an entire mistake" (Smith 176). En cuanto al rumor sobre la existencia de un nuevo manuscrito de Anne, Charlotte también declara: "No, just a rumour

I´m afraid" (7.23). Una vez que el personaje de Mr Newby abandona la escena, se produce el que se podría considerar el momento más emotivo y sensible del cortometraje. Se trata de la imagen de Charlotte Brontë de espaldas a la cámara y frente a la chimenea, observando cómo se quema el manuscrito de la tercera novela de su hermana.

Desde el minuto 7.36 hasta el 8.59, en el que finaliza el cortometraje, el silencio se convierte en protagonista, acompañado únicamente por los ruidos naturales del crepitar de las hojas del manuscrito desapareciendo en el fuego junto a los suspiros y gemidos de Charlotte mientras llora en el proceso de la quema y aniquilación de la inédita novela no publicada de su hermana pequeña, Anne.

En tan sólo nueve minutos de duración del cortometraje, la directora y guionista consigue transmitir la historia de la invisibilización de la escritora anglosajona del siglo diecinueve Anne Brontë. Kathleen Barth decide hacer hincapié en dos de las personalidades que tuvieron un papel fundamental en el proceso de silenciamiento de Anne Brontë: su hermana Charlotte Brontë, por un lado, y el editor Thomas Cautley Newby, por otro.

Debemos recordar que las tres hermanas Brontë escribieron sus novelas bajo pseudónimos masculinos porque no querían que sus obras fueran prejuzgadas por cuestiones de género sino por su valía en el estilo de escritura. La publicación de *The Tenant* fue un éxito de ventas sin precedentes, lo cual generó la publicación de una segunda edición en la que Anne Brontë, bajo el pseudónimo de Acton Bell, se dirige directamente a sus lectores en el prefacio explicando ciertos aspectos de la novela que habían recibido duras críticas en las revistas culturales de la época. La representación del protagonista masculino como un personaje corrupto, alcohólico, adúltero y manipulador emocional provocó la severa sentencia de Charlotte de considerar la elección del tema como un error absoluto. Sin embargo, sabemos que Charlotte criticó la novela de su hermana tan ferozmente porque tenía miedo a que el protagonista masculino en *The Tenant* pudiese ser identificado con su hermano Branwell Brontë y, en consecuencia, este hecho contribuyese a revelar las verdaderas identidades de las escritoras escondidas tras la máscara de los novelistas bautizados bajo el apellido Bell. Un año después del fallecimiento de Anne, Charlotte publicó la "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" (1850), documento en el que revela que

tras esos pseudónimos se escondía la identidad de sus hermanas Emily y Anne respectivamente. Charlotte critica la incapacidad de los críticos para entender la verdadera fuerza y belleza de *Wuthering Heights*, pero afirma que la elección del tema de *The Tenant* había sido un error (Brontë 34). Samantha Ellis y Elizabeth Langland lamentan que Charlotte no percibiese y defendiese el realismo social y la dimensión feminista de esa novela (Ellis 30 y 246; Langland 156). Su comentario negativo en "Biographical Notice" sin duda contribuyó a que Anne Brontë empezase a ser infravalorada en comparación con sus hermanas; "the other Brontë", como dice Ellis (142). Además, poco antes, Charlotte había comunicado en una carta a su editor, W. S. Williams, que había decidido que la novela de Anne no se reeditase, afirmando que "it hardly appears to me desirable to preserve" (Smith 176). La voz de Charlotte fue atendida y *The Tenant* desapareció del mercado literario hasta que murió la propia Charlotte.

Todas las críticas literarias biográficas de la familia Brontë coinciden en que Newby no fue muy sensato en su labor de edición y publicación de obras literarias. Anne y Emily Brontë le enviaron sus novelas *Agnes Grey* y *Wuthering Heights*, pero el proceso fue tan lento que a Charlotte Brontë le dio tiempo a escribir *Jane Eyre,* y a encontrar a W. S. Williams como editor antes de que las novelas de sus hermanas fueran publicadas por Newby. Esta tardanza provocó el estigma que *Agnes Grey* ha tenido que soportar al ser la novela eternamente comparada con *Jane Eyre*, cuando sabemos que Anne fue, en realidad, la primera de las hermanas que dio vida a una institutriz como protagonista.

En definitiva, tanto la investigación previa de Kathleen Barth como su posterior capacidad creativa demuestran ser exquisitas, al poder resumir en tan breve espacio de espacio de tiempo la situación de infravaloración de la escritora Anne Brontë, justificándola en cierta medida por el bloqueo de Charlotte a la reedición de la novela *The Tenant* y a la publicación de una supuesta novela inédita. *The Death of Anne Brontë* es una contribución más que necesaria en el ámbito académico y popular relacionado con la escritora debido a la escasez de productos audiovisuales en torno a la obra de esta autora. Hasta el momento, no existe adaptación audiovisual de la novela *Agnes Grey*. En cuanto a *The Tenant*, ya no se puede acceder fácilmente a la primera miniserie de la BBC de 1968, dirigida por Peter Sasdy. Por lo que respecta a la adaptación dirigida por Mike Barker en 1996, asimismo producida por

la BBC, no logra plasmar la verdadera dimensión feminista y el discurso asertivo que Anne Brontë refleja en su novela. Por consiguiente, la aportación de Kathleen Barth a la recuperación de la obra y voz de Anne Brontë es recomendable, pues consigue transmitir la esencia del espíritu de generosidad y reforma social de la escritora.

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Medina Calzada, Sara. *José Joaquín de Mora and Britain: Cultural Transfers and Transformations*. Anglo-Iberian Studies Series. Peter Lang, 2022. 259 pages

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The publication of a book about the life and work of the nineteenth-century Spanish anglophile José Joaquín de Mora (1783-1864) was already peremptory and should therefore be received with joy. Until recently, only a few serious and compact studies have been published on Mora's multifaceted range of cultural, political and literary endeavors, but they concentrate only on specific aspects of de Mora's life and written production, thus lacking a sense of completeness and definitiveness.

Mora was the best disseminator of the British models to follow in Spain and in the new American countries regarding the urgent reformation of what was perceived as decadent and defective or inadequate in them. For the first time, a monograph has been published assembling with consistency and almost scientific thoroughness —it contains 675 footnotes— on his biographical highlights, trips, occupations, and the numerous activities carried out by this Spaniard, placing a special interest on his literary work. In her volume, Dr. Medina Calzada has collected Mora's life, deeds and oeuvre laying her studious emphasis on analyzing his regenerative enterprises within the literary, historical, social, economic and political framework in which he carried out his extensive and valuable work of encouragement of Anglo-Hispanic relations.

Mora is remembered today, above all, for his literary work *Leyendas españolas* (1840), for his personal recreation of Byron's *Don Juan*, and for being one of the first translators into Spanish of two novels by Walter Scott, namely *Ivanhoe* (1825) and *The Talisman* (1826). The Spanish translations of Scott's novel, completed between 1825 and 1840, exerted an unquestionable influence on the Spanish narrative of the time. Most of the existing translations had been done from the French versions of such novels (Peers and Montesinos). Thanks to the translations of Scott's historical novels, the so-called "scottismo" became fashionable in Spain, as numerous writers translated, adapted, imitated or published historical

novels set on Spanish soil.[1] The anglophile author was trying to separate Spanish literature from its close attachment to French literature.

Mora aptly demonstrated his intellectual versatility, an aspect on which the Medina insists. She provides ample evidence that Mora's oeuvre (generally not sufficiently known or widespread at his time and, as a result, difficult to access today) is indeed very extensive. Mora left no stone unturned as to the variety of activities and literary genres that he practiced during his adventurous life: he was a soldier during the Peninsular War (1807-1814; known in Spanish historiography as "Guerra de la Independencia"), a French prisoner, a spy, a political exile in London, a diplomat in England, a political commentator in numerous Spanish and Latin American newspapers and magazines, a journalist, a pedagogue, a historian, a translator (from English and French), an economist (a promoter of free trade à la anglaise and a disciple of Jeremy Bentham), a poet, a literary critic, a professor, a secretary, a political and legal advisor in Argentina, Peru, Chile and Bolivia, an active participant in the writing of the constitution of Chile of 1828, a member of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, a political authority in Madrid, as well as (probably) a convert to Protestantism. In each of those tasks, he stood out for his efficiency and his sincere endeavor to attempt to improve the countries, societies and people for whom he worked at different periods.

Medina Calzada has collected in a single volume what other researchers had done before her meritoriously, without a doubt, but only partially. In her book, the author insists on showing Mora's three fundamental ideas, namely a) that he was 'a multi-stringed guitar', a condition that turned him into a prolific and versatile intellectual and, therefore, a particularly respected scholar whose written production was of the highest relevance for the understanding of Spain, Latin America and Britain as well as the political, cultural, literary relations existing among them all, always from the perspective of a convinced Anglophile; b) that he tried to promote the much-needed reforms in a decadent Spain and a Latin America which was still in its infancy, all following the model of his admired Britain; c) that he tried to spread the the British achievements, which were at the peak of its international prestige at that particular point in time, among the Spanish-speaking countries for the benefit of them all. All in all, Medina Calzada has

thus tried to update and put the finishing touches on the meritorious but incomplete biographies of Mora written by Miguel Luis Amunátegui and Luis Monguió.

Medina Calzada's book is divided into four chapters. The first one analyses Mora's admiration of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain and British customs and political administration. In the second chapter, the author focuses on studying the educational accomplishments that Mora carried out on both sides of the Atlantic in order to disseminate Utilitarianism and the British economic theories of the time as well as the advantages of Smith, Mill and McCulloch's economic liberalism and the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense. In chapter three, she focuses on explaining Mora's attempts to spread the literary models of Romantic Britain in Spanish literature, with Byron, Scott and Shakespeare as his favorite authors. In the fourth chapter, Medina Calzada examines Mora's own literary work during the period in which he collaborated with the German publisher specializing in Spanish literature in London, R. Ackermann, as a result of which four issues of *No me olvides* (1825) and his collection of poems *Meditaciones poéticas* (1826) were published. In the latter, he evinced the powerful literary influence exerted by the British Romantics on his written production as well as by William Blake on a more visual level. Mora's books, speeches, pamphlets, articles and translations became genuine examples of what Blanco White came to label as "Anglo-Hispanic literature" (Torralbo Caballero 248).

The author closes her work with valuable appendices of the hitherto disseminated and sometimes even unknown complete oeuvre of Mora's. In the first appendix, she orders Mora's written production chronologically, from 1814 to 1859. The second appendix is devoted to the chronology of the correspondence between Bentham and Mora. The third appendix deals with the entries on political economics that Mora wrote for *Enciclopedia moderna* (1851-55). Finally, the fourth one presents the translations and adaptations of texts that Mora consulted and employed in order to write his *No me olvides* (1825). Finally, Medina Calzada includes a very extensive bibliography of Mora's primary sources and other 19th-century texts that influenced him, as well as a long list of secondary sources on the life and work of this prolific Spanish intellectual.

For all that has been explained, one cannot but conclude that Sara Medina Calzada's book is a mandatory one on the library shelves of any British, Spanish or Latin American scholar interested in the Anglo-Hispanic literary and political relations of the nineteenth century.

Notes

[1] Enrique Gil y Carrasco's novel *El Señor de Bambibre*, evidently influenced by *Ivanhoe*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Talisman*; or *El golpe en vago*, by José García Villalta, also influenced by *Ivanhoe* and *Guy Mannering*; or Telesforo de Trueba y Cossío, an exile in London and highly knowledgeable of English to the extent of being able to write and publish in this language relevant historical novels for an Anglophone readership such as *Gómes Arias or the Moors of the Alpujarras, Life of Hernan Cortes,* o *The Castilian*; José de Espronceda was also imbued in "scottismo", perceivable in his only published novel, *Sancho Saldaña o el Castellano de Cuéllar*; the same applies to Francisco Martínez de la Rosa in *Doña Isabel de Solís, reina de Granada.*

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Martín-Lucas, Belén. *Yo soy porque nosotras somos. Identidad y comunidad en las auto/biografías de autoras en inglés*. Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2022. 190 páginas

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Señala Milan Kundera en *La insoportable levedad del ser* que el carácter único del yo "es aquello que se diferencia de lo general, o sea, lo que no puede ser adivinado y calculado de antemano" (203) y por lo tanto, ha de ser fabulado e inventado. En esta misma línea, la crítica de arte Estrella de Diego plantea la autobiografía como mentira, como ficción enmascarada de la realidad en la que el yo se repliega, fragmenta o duplica para interpretarse a partir de un extrañamiento, una transmutación y una impostura de sí mismo. Esta noción de la autobiografía "como sospecha" es justamente el eje que atraviesa el cuestionamiento teórico de la subjetividad y de la identidad autorial que Belén Martín-Lucas lleva a cabo en su volumen *Yo soy porque nosotras somos: Identidad y comunidad en las auto/biografías de autoras en inglés*, publicada por la Universidad de Zaragoza dentro de la colección Sagardiana de Estudios Feministas.

Con una trayectoria plenamente consolidada en los Estudios de Género y con una extensa producción crítica en torno a la escritura autobiográfica femenina (como evidencia el anexo que la propia autora decide incluir con las referencias bibliográficas de sus numerosas publicaciones nacionales e internacionales en este campo), Martín-Lucas toma como punto de partida la tradicional relación de extranjería y alienación de la mujer respecto al género mencionado (un correlato del silenciamiento de lo femenino en la historiografía y el canon literario) para centrarse en el sentimiento de autoafirmación y legitimación que este tipo de textos proporciona a numerosas mujeres, tanto autoras como lectoras. Más allá de esta cuestión central, el volumen aquí analizado deja claro que el yo femenino resultante es un yo en conflicto entre la virtud y el pecado, la sexualidad y el celibato, la sumisión y la rebeldía, el anonimato y la notoriedad—y articulado a través de una escritura a menudo compleja y contradiscursiva. De hecho, los diez textos autobiográficos abordados y organizados en cinco capítulos (excluyendo Introducción y Epílogo) desafían lo que Philippe Lejeune llama el "pacto autobiográfico" (esa identidad tripartita que debe quedar garantizada

entre autora, narradora y protagonista), adoptando estrategias experimentales como la metaficción, el desdoblamiento o el travestismo literario que problematizan "la construcción del yo individual, pero especialmente del yo en relación con la comunidad, particularmente con la comunidad de mujeres —familiar, nacional o étnica— en la que se inscribe cada autora." (12). Es este criterio uno de los que vertebran la elección del corpus, pues este se compone de textos que, aun centrados en el autodescubrimiento de la propia identidad, parecen subrayar que esta es siempre relacional y está articulada de forma dialógica respecto a las "otras" (el dialogismo bajtiniano es, de hecho, una cualidad que resuena constantemente en los análisis). En términos convencionales, tomando la autobiografía como una expresión supuestamente egocéntrica y narcisista del sujeto (un sujeto fundamentalmente blanco, varón y occidental), la autora elige obras que escapan de dicha tentación solipsista para centrarse en el carácter relacional de la subjetividad, al entender que esta se construye precisamente en interacción y co-dependencia con sus otras. Esto resulta particularmente evidente en el caso de testimonios de mujeres pertenecientes a grupos minorizados (las afroamericanas, en el capítulo 3; las nativo-americanas, en el capítulo 4; o las mujeres de Cachemira, en el capítulo 5) que combaten el solapamiento de violencias de género, raza y clase justamente a través de la búsqueda de alianzas con sus comunidades oprimidas y resilientes. Frente al individualismo de raíz eurocéntrica y patriarcal, las autobiografías presentadas se conciben como proyectos colectivos en los que articular el yo desde y para el nosotras, como queda patente en el título mismo del volumen.

Martín-Lucas asume que las autobiografías femeninas, articuladas desde el misticismo de Margery Kempe, la oralidad de Billie Holiday o el *Bildungsroman* de Alice Munro, están siempre condicionadas por una conflictiva relación con el patriarcado como cultura o ideología que lo impregna todo, esto es, tanto la realidad material y cotidiana como la naturalización inconsciente de la propia subalternidad de las mujeres. Como señala Terry Eagleton,

> [a]un cuando la opresión de la mujer es sin duda una realidad material, de la cual forman parte la maternidad, el trabajo doméstico, la diferenciación injusta en los empleos y en los salarios, no puede reducirse a esos factores; también intervienen la ideología sexual, la imagen que

> hombres y mujeres tienen de sí mismos (individualmente y en sus relaciones) en una sociedad dominada por los hombres, las percepciones y la conducta, lo cual abarca desde lo bestialmente explícito hasta lo profundamente inconsciente. (92)

En este sentido, las estructuras patriarcales opresoras sustentadas por el cristianismo, el capitalismo o el colonialismo son confrontadas por la escritura autodiegética de Margery Kempe y Margaret Cavendish (capítulo 1), de Margaret Laurence y Alice Munro (capítulo 2), de Billie Holiday y Maya Angelou (capítulo 3), de Maria Campbell y Mary Crow Dog (capítulo 4) o de Sheila Gilhooly y Yasmin Ladha (capítulo 5), que se ofrece como un contrapunto que denuncia la *vulnerabilidad* sistémica de las mujeres además de poner el foco en los espacios y prácticas de *resistencia*. En definitiva, nos permite, siguiendo a Judith Butler, repensar ambos conceptos —vulnerabilidad y resistencia— en términos no opuestos sino complementarios, puesto que, entendida como una exposición deliberada ante el poder, la vulnerabilidad también implica el significado de la resistencia política desde la agentividad encarnada del sujeto y la movilización de la respuesta colectiva.

Por otra parte, el planteamiento intercultural y transhistórico en la elección del corpus de Martín-Lucas parece confirmar que, como sugiere Mercedes Arriaga, haya que considerar la escritura femenina "no en un sentido de sucesión cronológica y ubicación nacionalista, sino de continuidad simbólica y transnacionalista" (192). Incluir textos producidos en el amplísimo espectro que va desde la Inglaterra católica del siglo XV al Canadá postcolonial del siglo XXI permite detectar las convergencias de autoras pertenecientes a contextos históricos y geopolíticos muy diferentes, aun asumiendo el riesgo de desespecificar producciones y modos de recepción literarios muy concretos que merecen lo que Donna Haraway llamaría una aproximación "situada" en la que la particularidad como objetividad encarnada y no la universalidad ha de ser la condición. (331). Este es un riesgo del que Martín-Lucas sale airosa, el enfoque comparatista y la estructura dialógica tanto de cada capítulo (integrado por dos autoras pertenecientes al mismo contexto cultural y geográfico) como también de toda la monografía, planteada como reivindicación de una genealogía de escritoras que han practicado el género autobiográfico a lo largo de seis siglos y a lo ancho de dos

continentes, permite al lectorado superar los moldes encorsetantes de su propia praxis epistemológica y reconocer la horizontalidad de las luchas feministas en momentos y entornos diferentes pero con aspiraciones compartidas.

Esta cualidad dialógica que permea el volumen hace posible la interlocución con el extenso corpus sobre la autobiografía femenina y feminista, que la autora del mismo conoce en profundidad, hasta el punto de aventurarse en una suerte de conversación crítica con especialistas internacionales en el género como Paula Gunn Allen, Leigh Gilmore, Françoise Lionnet, Leigh Stanley, Sidonie Smith, e incluso algunas colegas pertenecientes al ámbito académico español como Isabel Durán, Nieves Ibeas o Julia Salmerón y Ana Zamorano. Esta red de referentes explícitos e implícitos estaría incluida, sin duda, en el "Feminario y las constelaciones adyacentes" a quienes homenajea en la dedicatoria del libro. Es importante señalar que esa *red en femenino* incorpora también al diálogo a las biógrafas de algunas de las autoras seleccionadas (como es el caso de Clarissa Atkinson, sobre Margery Kempe o de Julia Blackburn, sobre Billie Holiday); e incluso a las traductoras, que a menudo quedan invisibilizadas en la industria editorial, al decantarse por textos traducidos al castellano (como es el caso de Iris Menéndez con *Lady Sings the Blues* o Aurora Echevarría con *La vida de las mujeres*). Sólo cuando no existen traducciones publicadas aporta Martín-Lucas su propia versión.

Podría decirse igualmente que el universo bajtiniano anteriormente citado del dialogismo, la polifonía y la heteroglosia se manifiesta en la cualidad intertextual e interdisciplinar de las obras analizadas, en las que la literatura parece abrirse al intercambio discursivo con otras epistemologías y con sus lenguajes. Es el caso de la autobiografía de Billie Holliday, que no puede entenderse sino como correlato de su producción musical, de la que toma también prestados formatos y recursos, pues como afirma Martín-Lucas, "el cuestionamiento de la primacía del discurso escrito abre un espacio para la articulación oral de las experiencias propias de la cultura negra." (92). Ese carácter multimedial es incontestable en la autobiografía documental *Still Sane*, donde Sheila Gilhooly se sirve de esa enunciación coral en la que confluyen el discurso médico, los discursos artísticos de la fotografía o la escultura, la teoría feminista y los testimonios de lectoras y espectadoras para denunciar la misoginia

y la homofobia en las instituciones psiquiátricas. Se trata de un ejemplo palmario de escritura encarnada y en palimpsesto, pues a esa materialidad imperfecta y transgresora del cuerpo estigmatizado se superpone una escritura igualmente disidente en la que la narración fragmentaria del trauma va dando paso a una crónica de reparación, sanación y resistencia, como sugiere el título de la obra de manera bien elocuente.

A la vista de la personal y heterodoxa selección de escritoras y textos que encontramos en *Yo soy porque nosotras somos,* puede afirmarse que cualquier corpus es una clasificación subjetiva, arbitraria y también "autobiográfica," que refleja la vida académica, las prioridades, compromisos y afectos de quien lo elabora. En este caso, y dado que Martín-Lucas es una prestigiosa canadianista, no es de extrañar que la mitad de las autoras que incluye (cinco de diez) sean canadienses, porque es justamente este ámbito literario y cultural el que mejor la interpela como *sujet en procès* que cuestiona la tradición establecida abriéndola a nuevas interpretaciones. En este sentido, citando a Potvin, Martín-Lucas nos invita a

> [c]ambiar el énfasis crítico del producto al proceso, como ha hecho la aproximación postmodernista a la autoreflexividad, [que] nos permite comprender el proceso en el que se forman las autoidentidades de las mujeres y sus memorias. Esto está a gran distancia de la crítica autobiográfica centrada en la "verdad" históricamente verificable, o las aproximaciones psicológicas que buscaban delinear el crecimiento creativo de la artista o la búsqueda heroica de la identidad. (61)

Ese paradigma postmoderno de la subjetividad inestable, fluida y desdoblada también se refleja en una propuesta abierta, provisional e inacabada como la que aquí se nos ofrece y a la que, en esta clave, podrían incorporarse otras voces anglófonas más allá de Gran Bretaña, Estados Unidos y Canadá, con las que articular las experiencias femeninas del Sur Global narradas en primera persona. Es cierto que la escritora Yasmin Ladha, cuya obra *Women Dancing on Rooftops* se analiza en el capítulo 5, es de ascendencia india y tanzana, pero, como señala Martín-Lucas (153-54), "es perfectamente consciente de que su localización diaspórica en Canadá condiciona notablemente la recepción de su representación de la violencia sexual experimentada por las niñas y mujeres de Cachemira."

En la línea en que ya lo hicieran Gayatri Spivak y Chandra T. Mohanty en la década de los 90 del siglo pasado, la autora alerta sobre el riesgo de apropiación de las experiencias de mujeres subalternizadas que puede ejercerse por parte del feminismo hegemónico.

En cualquier caso, y aún conscientes de que la aspiración a la inclusividad es siempre en sí misma un ejercicio de exclusión, sería interesante considerar, quizás en una próxima edición que garantizara la continuidad de este proyecto, testimonios de mujeres transgénero, ancianas, mujeres con cuerpos e identidades no normativas, con diferentes capacidades, enfermedades crónicas, y otras tantas experiencias infrarrepresentadas en el canon de la autobiografía. En este sentido, en la lectura del Epílogo resulta bien interesante todo lo que excede y queda fuera del corpus seleccionado, pues evidencia el profundo conocimiento del tema y el extenso bagaje de lecturas, relecturas y contralecturas del que se nutre este trabajo, abriendo, como admite la propia autora, espacios de reflexión, debate y aprendizaje que no se cierran aquí, pues si verdaderamente "lo personal es político", la narrativa de la intimidad se convierte para las mujeres en un lugar de reconocimiento de su identidad pero también de su propia alteridad, una celebración reivindicativa del *yo* y del *nosotras*.

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