filosofia unisinos | ISSN 1984-8234
Unisinos Journal of Philosophy

Filosofia Unisinos
Unisinos Journal of Philosophy
26(2): 1-18, 2025 | e26211

Editores responsáveis:
Inácio Helfer
Leonardo Marques Kussler
Luís Miguel Rechiki Meirelles

Declaração de Disponibilidade de Dados: Todo o conjunto de dados que dá suporte aos resultados deste estudo foi publicado no próprio artigo.

Doi: 10.4013/fsu.2025.262.11

Article

Enaction of mestizo identity in *Pedro Páramo*: transgression as care for the embodied soul

A enação da identidade mestiça em *Pedro Páramo*: transgressão como cuidado da alma corporificada

Mindaugas Briedis
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4962-1794
Escuela de Comunicación, Universidade Panamericana, Augusto Rodin 498, Ciudad de México, 03920, México. E-mail: mbriedis@up.edu.mx
Instituto de Humanidades, Universidade Mykolas Romeris, Ateities 20, Vilnius, 08303, Lituânia. E-mail: mbriedis@mruni.eu

Juan Carlos Carrillo
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5821-5395
Escuela de Comunicación, Universidade Panamericana, Augusto Rodin 498, Ciudad de México, 03920, México. Email: jccarrillo@up.edu.mx

ABSTRACT

Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1994 [1955]) is one of the milestones of Mexican literature and it holds an important place in the global canon of the twentieth century. Despite the wide spectrum of interpretative possibilities it offers, there are almost no studies of this important novel from the perspective of embodied cognition. This article draws on the vocabulary of contemporary philosophy to address this critical gap, deconstructing the full range of traditional binary oppositions articulated by Rulfo, which includes: body and mind, cognitive and moral, imaginative and perceptual, mystical and lived, freedom

and responsibility, individual and social. However, to establish the relevancy of our chosen conceptual apparatus, we return to Aristotle to offer a novel interpretation which also allows us to situate and correlate both the universal (human) and particular (mestizo) projects laid out by the author of *Páramo*.

We demonstrate both the usefulness of Aristotle's universal descriptions of the human being and the shortcomings of their rationalism and optimism in the context of the postcolonial world. To modify and extend this adaptation we reflect further on the specific 'movements' of the mestizo soul, which privilege embodied moments of cognition and transgression as the proper care for the soul, a soul that embraces both individual and socio-cultural aspects. This finally allows us to address the question of how the post-logocentric enaction and mediation of mestizo identity is possible.

Keywords: Pedro Páramo, embodied cognition, Aristotle, mestizo identity, transgression.

RESUMO

Pedro Páramo (1994 [1955]), de Juan Rulfo, é uma das obras mais emblemáticas da literatura mexicana e ocupa um lugar de destaque no cânone global do século XX. Apesar do amplo espectro de possibilidades interpretativas que oferece, há pouquíssimos estudos desta importante obra sob a perspectiva da cognição incorporada. Este artigo recorre ao vocabulário da filosofia contemporânea para abordar essa lacuna crítica, desconstruindo o conjunto de oposições binárias tradicionais articuladas por Rulfo, que inclui: corpo e mente, cognitivo e moral, imaginativo e perceptivo, místico e vivido, liberdade e responsabilidade, individual e social. Contudo, para fundamentar a relevância do aparato conceitual escolhido, retornamos a Aristóteles com o intuito de oferecer uma interpretação inovadora que também nos permita situar e correlacionar os projetos tanto universais (humanos) quanto particulares (mestiços) delineados pelo autor de *Páramo*.

Demonstramos, por um lado, a utilidade das descrições universais aristotélicas sobre o ser humano e, por outro, suas limitações — notadamente o racionalismo e o otimismo — no contexto do mundo pós-colonial. Para modificar e expandir essa adaptação, refletimos sobre os movimentos específicos da alma mestiça, que privilegiam momentos corporificados de cognição e transgressão como formas próprias de cuidado da alma — uma alma que abarca aspectos individuais e socioculturais. Isso nos permite, por fim, abordar a questão de como se torna possível a enação e a mediação pós-logocêntrica da identidade mestiça.

Palavras-chaves: *Pedro Páramo*, cognição incorporada, Aristóteles, identidade mestiça, transgressão.

> I remembered what my mother had said: "You will hear me better there. I will be closer to you. You will hear the voice of my memories stronger than the voice of my death—that is, if death ever had a voice. . ." (Rulfo 1994)

1 Introduction

Pedro Páramo by Juan Rulfo is a masterpiece of Mexican literature that explores themes of memory, death, and the fuzzy intertwining of body and soul. The novel begins with Juan Preciado's journey to the ghost town of Comala to find his estranged father, Pedro Páramo. As Juan enters the desolate town, he encounters spectral figures and fragmented memories, blurring the line between the living and the dead. Through these encounters, the novel portrays bodies as vessels that linger in space and

carry echoes of their lived experiences, even after death. It tells the story of the town's cacique, Pedro Páramo, and those who live in oppression around him—and are indeed oppressed by him—against the backdrop of early twentieth-century historical changes impacting the town. Souls in Comala seem tethered to their physical forms, unable to escape the emotional weight of their earthly lives.

In the novel, the characters' bodies often carry the scars of suffering and violence, while their voices reflect the unresolved desires and regrets of their souls. The landscape of Comala itself feels corporeal, a dying entity filled with heat and decay, symbolising the oppressive presence of the past. Through its nonlinear narrative, *Pedro Páramo* reveals how memory and identity are deeply embodied, as the characters' lives and deaths intertwine in a haunting dance of physical and spiritual continuity.

While it has long been a pillar of classic Hispanic literature,[1] Rulfo's novel (hereafter referred to as *Páramo*) has recently been exposed to new audiences through a 2024 adaptation by Netflix. Our study will move between the literary and cinematic versions of the text (specifically the latest cinematic version), especially when the difference in their respective languages is significant for our approach. However, taking an embodied cognition approach implies an understanding that literary, psychological, anthropological, pre-Hispanic, and other interpretations do not exhaust *Páramo*, which remains an open work of art (Eco, 2020) where the murmurs of Comala seem relevant for understanding the rumours in the *zotehuelas* of today's Mexico City (Villoro, 2015, 2021).

The article is structured around a presupposition of one of the biggest questions posed to Rulfo in particular and to Hispanic literature in general: how can we address the subordination of "particular" (Mexico-Latin) to "universal" (Greco-Jewish) interpretative schemes? (Gacinska, 2018). To this end, after offering some reflections on Aristotle's conception of the soul and introducing a contemporary vocabulary of the embodied cognition paradigm (Varela et al., 1991; Gallagher, Zahavi 2008; Chemero, 2009; Barrett, 2011; Shapiro, 2011; Gallagher, 2017; Newen et al., 2018), we turn to the specifics of mestizo "care" for the soul; that is, its transgressions, as they are mediated via *Pedro Páramo*. This also enables us to avoid squeezing the artistic world into ready-made categories and instead explore how the latter can be extended, transformed, and enriched by the former. Hence, rather than engaging in a type of cultural and/or philosophical appropriation, our approach relies on a fusion of the horizons (Gadamer 1989). We do not aim to give a single correct presentation, but rather to show how Rulfo's imaginary power helps us to understand the vocabulary of embodied cognition (and vice versa), and to oppose the bad habits of mind (primarily the oppositions of subject/object, reality/illusion, past/present/future, etc.) that still plague academic interpretations.

Most readings of Rulfo's narrative are mythological and have a tendency to "Europeanise" in their interpretations (Lienhard, 1992; Gacinska, 2018). Unlike existing mythical or symbolic readings, the present study attempts to locate the structures of embodied cognition within a given culture and determine how they (dis)function in specific social constraints, thus avoiding merely cataloguing mythical and/or social, psychological universal invariants and reviewing certain categories (see further) regarding a concrete cultural landscape (Stanton, 1988). This in turn opens up the possibility of exploring how *prima facie* universal psychic structures ("ghosts") are shaped and incarnated by the specific culture and its mediation/mediatisation, which brings us to the rich possibility of ethnographic research regarding the expression of ghosts by the affection of cultural media—for example, the pre-reflective anxiety regarding ontological insufficiency (as a philosophical abstraction) is illustrated by specific cultural media. In

[1] The novel in fact helped to shape the foundation of magical realism in Latin America (Quezada et al. 2019). For example, some of its dominant themes, such as the inevitable and inescapable repetition of history, being controlled by the past, and the complexity of time, bear comparison with those of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (García Márquez 2002 [1967]), which was also adapted by Netflix in 2024. Throughout García Márquez's novel, characters are also visited by ghosts, alienated and estranged from their own history, and are victims not only of the harsh reality of dependence and underdevelopment but also of the ideological illusions that haunt and reinforce such social conditions. This is why Octavio Paz rightly states that Juan Rulfo is the only Mexican novelist who has given us an image—not a description—of our landscape (Paz, 1950).

this sense, *Páramo* in itself serves as a *vade mecum* into the experiences Mexico underwent at a critical time in its history, and how this imagery continues to influence Mexican self-apprehension.

Moreover, the *Páramo* world discloses the specifics of Mexican embodiment and historicity, no less than the work of Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, and other Mexican intellectuals did. The vocabulary of embodied cognition and phenomenology is of great help in this task as both approaches acknowledge a certain equality of all phenomena or givenness to human (embodied) consciousness through various interactions, such as perception, phantasies, intersubjectivity, and memory. This vocabulary addresses all aspects of concrete reality, refusing to discriminate between "existent" and "non-existent" elements, thus deconstructing the basic binary oppositions of Western logocentrism. What is particularly important is the spectrum of embodied (direct or modified) intentionalities that position human being spatially, temporally, and intersubjectively, as well as in respect of phenomenology; as Ceserani observes, "the use of first-person narration is common in fantasy" (1999, 102). This novel is also a disclosure of the subjectivity of *lo Mexicano* (Uranga 1951).

As the article's conceptual apparatus is heavily rooted in the paradigm of embodied cognition, "the body" here means several complementary things:

- *Body schema* (as opposed to *body image*), as the space for meaning to appear and as a condition for certain experiences and identities to be enacted via certain actions.[2]
- As the extension into the physically and symbolically mediated environment(s).
- As affected by the environment and temporality.
- As socially situated, hence, as powerful or oppressed.
- As the embodied genesis of privileged cognitive and existential moments.

In order to use this conceptual basis of embodied cognition, we also rely on classical phenomenology as formulated by Husserl (2012) and its enactive extension. As a philosophical method, phenomenology has undergone many transformations, and instead of offering static, a-contextual studies of consciousness structures, today it focuses on bodily and social (intersubjective) constants of cognitive formation in specific activities. In the project, phenomenology will also be applied to the analysis of imaging technologies. This makes modern phenomenology very suitable for interdisciplinary research. Enactivism (Varela et al., 1991; Di Paolo, 2005; Gallagher, Zahavi, 2008; Chemero, 2009; Barrett, 2011; Shapiro, 2011; Stapleton, Froese, 2016; Gallagher, 2017; Noë, 2006, 2012) is a relatively new methodology, also characterised by a pragmatic orientation, which combines the latest developments in cognitive sciences, with the possibilities of phenomenology, psychology, and ethnography. Enactivists place particular emphasis on the importance of action in the fields of knowledge and practice, and therefore they analyse pre-reflective states, structures of attention, the importance of the body in task performance, and the significance of other subjects in individual activity (for example, the "we-intentions" phenomenon). Another constant of enactivism is the subject's mutual connection with the environment, that is, through active meaning-making of the environment, purposeful exploitation of the opportunities provided, formation of habits, etc.

From these perspectives, *Páramo* suggests a horizon for the overview of the embodied subjective experiences of Mexican historicity. And such a perspective avoids the simplifications brought by the *Conquista*, the conquerors, or Eurocentric expansion; it divides the responsibility for the lost land and earth to the ones who speak (or murmur) across the pages of the book. It thematises and presents a specifically Mexican intersubjectivity. In a world full of simplified and falsified information, such texts aim to give affordances to make amends with the souls of readers who are at once individual and enculturated.

[2] The difference between body image and body schema (Ponty 1962; Gallagher 1986; Weiss 1999) is a difference between the perception (or conscious monitoring) of one's own or another's movement (image) and the actual pre-reflective sensorimotor accomplishment of (meaningful) action (schema).

2 Aristotle's embodied souls and Rulfo's murmuring ghosts

"The murmurs killed me."
—Juan Preciado (character in Rulfo 1994)

Despite myriad scholarly interpretations, it is generally accepted today that Aristotle sees the soul (of any living being) as incarnated, perhaps with the exception of the intellect (of a human being) which can comprehend immaterial entities (see in this regard Scheiter 2012).[3] Hence, unlike Plato, he does not prioritise the soul over the body ontologically, but rather suggests a coexistence of the two. This coexistence, in turn, becomes evident when translated into the lexicon of contemporary embodied cognition (Simpson, 2001; Scheiter, 2012), which includes terms such as dispositions to act, affections and affordances in the environment, body schema, the sense of ownership of one's own actions, and memory as skilful habit.

Importantly, in *De Anima* (1961) Aristotle notes that all the *capacities* of the soul seem to require the body in order to function. The soul of a living thing can be understood as the meta-capacity to engage in the activities necessary to that living being.[4] Aristotle lists some of the specific capacities (or dispositions to act) required for human beings in DA II.1-2, such as self-nourishment, growth, decay, movement, and all other manifestations of metabolic life processes (Stapleton, Froese 2016). Thus, by enabling the body's ability to nourish itself, to grow, to move from place to place, and by enabling the person to perceive and conceive, the soul actualises the capacities of the body, including "anger, courage, appetite, and sensation generally" (DA I 403a57). For us (not for Aristotle yet) it is also important that this general list of capacities as abstractions makes sense only in a socio-cultural (and mediated) environment, as Rulfo documents.

Furthermore, the soulful physics (or incarnated metaphysics) of Aristotle also ties the conceptions of space and time to the logic of the soul (incidentally, the discontinuity in the structure of *Pedro Páramo* is clearly more akin to thought processes than "objective" space-time events). Rather than being primary realities, time and space are regarded by Aristotle as non-independent attributes related to the entities that inhabit them (and vice versa). It is not that entities are placed in a spatial-temporal environment; rather, entities, their actions, affections, memories, desires, etc. are what first make this environment possible. They themselves spatialise and temporalise a certain ecology, i.e. an inhabited environment as a field of affordances (Postman, 1985; Gibson, 1950). Thus, a place without a body (or its modification, for example, as memories-murmurs—see further), an empty space or "vacuum", is impossible (Aristotle, 1963, 213b 31–33).

Bodies (or their imaginative modifications, i.e. their givenness via dreams, desires, regrets, etc., as in *Páramo*) spatialise and temporalise through *motion*. And insofar as space and time depend on motion, they are determined by the *telos* which acts as the final cause of the motion of a particular being (again, for Aristotle the main division was human-nonhuman, but today we are living in a far more diverse universe of life forms). Having observed (as Aristotle and Rulfo did in their respective ways) an organism's development from an embryo to an adult and then down to its senescence, decline, and death, we see, in retrospect, its goal. For Aristotle, however, movement (life) is not just the vehicle for this goal; rather it expresses the goal in itself and in its own way. That is why movements differ in style, because "movement is not simply what realizes goals, it itself is a goal" (Mensch, 2015). Understood in these terms, the soul and its life are the correlations of such movement.

[3] Aristotle (1961) also states that if reasoning requires imagination, which is a faculty of the soul that requires the body, then reasoning also requires the body.
[4] Aristotle says that if the eye were a living being, its soul would be its vision.

The goal of life is ever present, which breaks the linearity of time. This already gives us a hint of how terrifying the experience of time is when the all-directing goal is transformed into an illusion. Illusion is a product of imagination in the broadest sense, including memory and the apprehension of physically given images and free play, and it is independent of direct perception, which is modified (Husserl, 2005). Imagination, for Aristotle, is not produced out of itself; rather, it utilises images that result from motions through a medium that reaches the sense-organs. Hence, imagination and recollection are essential to cognition, which leads us through a hermeneutic U-turn (Ricœur, 1978) back to embodied reality, but in Rulfo's case this is a reality now broken and scattered across the streets of long-vanished dreams and duties. A key point here is that, if imagination and memory are essential, then it is the body that finally gives cognitive access to such abstractions as humanity, love, unity, etc. (Scheiter, 2012). On this basis, it is impossible to access a concept without the use of imagination. Our awareness of ourselves as unified and the same may thus owe as much, or more, to our external awareness of our body as to our internal awareness of our own acts. Moreover, there is perhaps no awareness of the unity of the self apart from awareness of the body.

We know that for major thinkers such as Kant and Husserl, the appearance of the world is a result of the activities of the subject. In contrast, Jan Patočka, an expert on both Aristotle and phenomenology, states that "in a-subjective phenomenology, we take the subject, like everything else, to be a 'result'" (Patočka, 1988). The subject is simply a point of view. Patočka calls it an "empty ego" since its entire content originally comes from what manifests itself. This follows because the movement that makes something stand out or exist also makes it present to its environment. This is important with regard to the wandering "ghosts" in Comala as certain manifestations and movements (from recollections and fantasies to transgressions and profanations) make reality more fundamental than its subjective counterparts: it is Mexico that suffers, not individuals (this is a Platonic aspect of Patočka's thinking (2002).

After reflecting on the relation between embodied souls and their space/time/goal constitution we can now relocate our analysis to the streets of Comala—a half-mythical town where stories-manifestations-movements unfold in the voices of the dead, and where geographical and chronological linear logic is annulled. It is true that Rulfo's themes are developed in regional and rural environments, where voices and rumours are the most prominent embodied elements of his fictional work.[5] While Rulfo's sources of inspiration go back to the conversations of the village, the ranches of grandparents, and everything that surrounded the atmosphere of the Jalisco countryside, this does not negate the universal aspects at play.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, it is helpful first to conceptualise the impressions of the early lived spaces and temporal experiences for the sensorimotor system of a child, which is later reused (only modified) in a plethora of more sophisticated cognitive orientations to the environment, as well as in socio-cultural encounters (see further). Thus, imagination must be viewed as an *attunement* (Colombetti, 2017) between embodied souls and places that were important for the constitution of the ego, which is always a dynamic process.[6] Here, as we also see in Tarkovsky's films, the human use of paraphernalia, joys and tragedies, encounters and departures, remain as imprinted time (the measure of movement) in things and spaces, which may or may not be recalled by will (Proust, 2003) or haunt us through psychological and/or moral flashbacks (Rulfo).[7] But imagination as the constitutive power uniting the soul and body cannot function without its ecology or place:

[5] It was originally called *Los Murmullos* (Zepeda, 2005).
[6] Note how Eriksen (2024) describes these dynamics: "I had lived within walking distance of Ullevål Sykehus [Oslo University Hospital] for many years, but it was only after a few months of checkups, treatments and hospitalisations that it became part of my embodied experience and space became place. It became my fourth home, after our family home, the university and our cabin".
[7] Recent films like *Here* (dir. Zemeckis, 2024) and *The Brutalist* (dir. Corbet, 2024) explore these topics; the latter even thematises the re-use of the traumatic environmental past of the Holocaust, while the former documents a more family-based ecology (an intergenerational house) for the genesis of individual consciousness.

> *The space captured by the imagination can no longer be the indifferent space given over to the measurement and reflection of the geometer. It is lived. And lived, not in its positivity, but with all the partialities of the imagination. In particular, it almost always attracts. Concentrating on the limits that protect. The game of interior and intimacy is not, in the realm of images, a balanced game. (Bachelard, 1994)*

In this sense (as the extension of embodied souls) places may be regarded as the central character of the story (Rulfo, 1994, p. 4) and are even exposed to "character development" as the sunny and lively streets of Comala undergo a horrific transformation along with their inhabitants (Juan Preciado enters a house like a catacomb, and beds appear as graves[8]). The environment becomes static in order to stress the howl of murmurs imprisoned here. For this effect, Rulfo masters the language of embodied metaphors (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993), which is loaded with metonymic connotations.

3 A universal sense of spiritual care and the *vivencia* of the mestizo soul

If we refer back to Aristotle's capacities of the soul, in Rulfo's novel the dead sleep, dream, speak, remember, and judge. However, all these capacities seem "as if" (Husserl) they were real, but this lack of reality alongside a *sense of agency* over one's own life has multilayered significance in Rulfo's novel. Recent research in embodied cognition and on its relevance to psychopathologies in particular (Gallagher, 2000, 2007b, Blanke, Metzinger 2009, Seeger, 2014, Braun, 2017) centres on the concept of a sense of agency and its correlate, i.e. a sense of ownership (or sometimes authorship). While avoiding a rather complicated discussion here, we may still see the advantages of applying this distinction to the events happening in Rulfo's novel, because a sense of ownership means the pre-reflective experience or sense that I am the subject of a thought or movement ("I am thinking", or "I am moving"). However, a sense of agency is the pre-reflective experience or sense that I am the cause or author of the thought or movement, which concerns not only the body (slave experience while transferring the sense of agency of your own body to the master) but also mental processes (for example, in the schizophrenic symptom of thought insertion). Shaun Gallagher (2007b) explains:

> *The distinctions between ownership and agency at either level can be worked out by considering the difference between voluntary and involuntary movement. If, for example, someone pushes me from behind, I sense that it is my body that is moving (ownership/ subjectivity), but that I did not cause the movement (no agency). This is like the complaint in schizophrenic delusions of control: My body moved (ownership), but I did not cause the movement (no agency); moreover, the subject complains, someone else caused the movement.*

These senses usually remain unnoticed as they are part of our pre-reflective horizontal orientation in the world and our coping with that world.[9] However, both experiences are thought to play an important (Blanke, Metzinger 2009), if not indispensable (Gallagher, 2000, 2007a), role in any self-experience (Braun, 2017). Pre-reflective awareness of being a bodily and agentive self can, however, be disrupted by different clinical or, we must add, historical socio-cultural conditioning, as media insert, personalise,

[8] "He waited until Pedro Páramo helped her sit up and arranged her pillows against the headboard. Susana San Juan, still half-asleep, held out her tongue and swallowed the Host. Then she said, 'We had a glorious day, Florencio.' And sank back down into the tomb of her sheets" (Rulfo, 1994, p. 111).
[9] This can also be reflective—an attribution of subjectivity: the reflective (retrospective) realisation or judgement that I am the one who moved or had a specific thought.

and extend human memories—for example, memories of the Mexican Revolution. Whereas a sense of ownership or authorship describes the feeling of possession towards one's own body parts, feelings, or thoughts (Gallagher, 2000), a sense of agency refers to the experience of initiating and controlling an action. Although those naturally coincide, both experiences can also be had in isolation.

In the world of Comala, certain characters seem not only as if they belong to another person in a bodily, mental, and moral sense, but also their narratives, principles, sense of justice, etc., are in turn responsible (*agency*) for "their" (*ownership*) movement or thought, and their inserted thought consists of a specific message or content (quote), often of a moral character. Seeger (2014) stresses that agency might be attributed to either some other person or a thing, which is reflected in the loss of sense of agency and the feeling of alienation in the primary (pre-reflective and self-apprehending) experience.

As already acknowledged in Aristotle, the body can be estranged and divided from itself, as is the case with disease, deformity, paralysis, and so on, when its parts do not act in coordination or do not follow the commands of reason and will. Similarly, disease and paralysis can afflict the psychic powers too, as when one passion conflicts with another or with reason itself. A person may be one self in their substance but many (and conflicting) selves in their acts.

In Aristotelian ethics (1998), it is virtue that brings the soul to unity and turns humans into a single unit as opposed to multiple selves. Virtue is what founds acts and the good man is good in action, not merely in having the power and disposition to act. What Aristotle is stating here is that the bad man is not a self but many selves, and these selves have no intrinsic connection but are in fact opposed to one another. The only unity that his many selves have is that they all are states, moods, or acts of one and the same body/soul composite. The bad man may thus be a single self in ontological terms (for he is one animal body), but he is not existentially one self. On the contrary, his lived experience (*vivencia*) is a bundle of conflicting acts and emotions (the second condition would be the lack of a sense of agency).

It is through an activity of the soul that the good man comes fully into being as a self, and this action is itself completed in and through the body. For humans, self-motion must be deliberate and the outcome of a choice, and choice is impossible without self-awareness, since without such awareness we could not know our acts as our own and so could not, as choice requires, direct ourselves to and via these acts. We would instead remain in a state of being directed or moved by something else, and so we would be acted on rather than acting. The perfect self is, as it were, the unimpeded flow of existence from substance to powers to acts.

Patočka speaks about Aristotle's ethical project in terms of "care for the soul". Such "care", in Greek philosophy, assumes two forms. In its Platonic version, its object is "to render our soul [into] that firm crystal of being in view of the eternity" that is one of the soul's possibilities (Patočka, 1970, 82). However, in its Aristotelian version, the goal was not personal immortality, but rather to "care for the soul so that it could undertake its spiritual journey through the world" (Patočka, 1970, 82). In Patočka's system, this journey entails leaving the safety of the familial home and the opposition to and eventual reduction of humans to their social role.

In *Páramo*, Comala is full of examples of the two types of relations: for instance, happy memories and the safety of the hacienda space (the first type), and Páramo's objectivation and exploitation of others (the second type). Thus, there is here an "ever-present impulse to exploit the other wherever possible" (Mensch, 2015), since we ourselves are under the same pressure, and so *Páramo* illustrates perfectly how, just as we use *things* for our projects, we fail to grasp *other people* in their autonomy.

In contrast to these initial two modes of being (or *movements*, as Patočka calls them)—that is, rather than losing oneself in one's instinctive, affective life, or in the world of work—one must confront oneself as a motion of existence, as a person who realises possibilities through his or her activities. At issue is this realisation of possibilities. This can be put in terms of the fact that the third movement shifts the temporal emphasis of our standing out to the future. In this change of focus, the future is not regarded in terms of the possibilities of our given situation—possibilities that we can project forward

as goals to be realised. In Patočka's words, "the accent on the future requires, on the contrary, that the *already* existent cease to be regarded as the decisive instance of possibilities" (1990, 246). The point is not to let them "conceal the essential", which is our action of realising them. In this motion, I confront my responsibility not just for realising and, hence, manifesting these possibilities; I also confront myself—namely my "possibility either to disperse and lose myself in particulars or to find and realize myself in my properly human nature" (Patočka, 1990, p. 246). Thus, in the authentic movement of care, we break our "bondage to the particular" and face our freedom with regard to its appearance.

This description of the motion of existence through which we actualise ourselves has to be read as a description of our souls. The care for our souls is, for Patočka, a care for such motions. Both of the first movements (the care provided by our parents and guardians and social existence in the world of work) are crucial to human development. However, it is the third one (courage) as the transcendence of safety and particularity and certainty—of social hierarchies and gender roles, for example—that leads to freedom. And, as always, freedom demands that we take responsibility for it, that we acknowledge that the certainties that we assume are not fixed, but are, in part, the result of our choices.

However, the universalism of classical philosophical anthropology has been heavily questioned in contemporary Mexican philosophy, primarily by Uranga (1951) in his analysis of the *vivencia* (lived experience) of *lo Mexicano*. Uranga was reflecting philosophically on Mexicanidad at roughly the same time as Rulfo. To look for something as specific as Mexicanity means going, first, against the universalism of traditional philosophy and, second, against positivism. *Páramo* does this while expressing the humanity of lo Mexicano in its *historical* parameters, i.e. it considers how insufficiency is *lived* by Mexicans. Let's take a closer look.

The Nahuatl word chosen by Uranga, *Nepantla* (literally: "in the middle", a state of transition and incompleteness of being Mexican), pre-reflectively serves as a tactic of opposition, where the undecided mind becomes the ground for a power to resist. This ground is expressed in such embodied metaphors as being centred without a centre, being in and out of consciousness, or being a substance which depends on accidents, is groundless and oscillating or rootless, and in turn these metaphors (Lakoff, 1993) stress the carnal nature of mestizo consciousness. However, this "vulnerability" (which includes the body, psyche, and founding ontological structure) makes community and intersubjectivity possible. While European nationalism usually preserves disembodied and static imaginative communities and identities (Uranga, 1951; Anderson, 2016), the true humanism of Mexican accidentality is not an essence but rather manifests as opening, sharing, empathy, etc. Another term, *zozobra* (a correlate of *Nepantla*) manifests in Mexican intersubjectivity specifically as: 1) shared suffering; and 2) the outcome of an accidental coming together of different historical and ethnic factors, and it is still commonplace. Through *zozobra*, one transcends the solipsistic state into the communal one, and this suffering and transcending, in turn, can be shared and amplified by media such as Rulfo's work.

However, according to Uranga, the sharing of suffering and the experience of accidentality is not enough for communal experience. There needs to be an answer to ontological and psychological insufficiency, and that answer is love. This is because love (through empathy) constitutes the reality of other consciousnesses (*zozobra*) and thus paradoxically suspends the negation of one's own consciousness. Here, intersubjectivity and pairing-with-the-other are founded in randomness, not in essential similarity: it is *that same* suffering, not *the same* (Husserl, 2005). As Uranga puts it, in isolation the self slips through one's fingers, but it gathers itself in acts of love. On the other hand, a particular Latin recognition of insufficiency enables a cynical attitude—not to invent new values, but to reverse them. Cynical here does not mean amoral but rather suggests a certain acceptance of one's own ontological limitations (see the analysis of transgressive movements, further), which may be interpreted as a neglect of such ontic characteristics as health, success, family, etc. Then, to *create* values is a logocentric politics, while to *reverse* them is accidental, cynical, Latin (*la Catrina* and *la Santa Muerte*).

Uranga's Mexican ontology suggests that mestizo souls (in Comala) cannot reach Aristotelian happiness; that is, they cannot *do* things, but only *undergo* them, passively experiencing the pleasures or

satisfactions—however temporary—that the conflicting actions of the past bring. According to Aristotle, dormant powers that lie deep within the subject must be awakened and developed to their appropriate potential, but in Comala everyone is cut off short (even Pedro Páramo himself, the town's power man whose will prevails above all others). For Comala's residents, nothing works, nothing reaches actualisation apart from disappointments, so the brutal act of transgression is the only disposition of the soul left. All other dispositions are given via modifications by memory and fantasies of this non-actualised potential, which create momentary ghostly encounters. Even when it is not perceived directly but as a sensible object of the past, the latter is there, always available for *modified* perception. Its potentiality signifies its being there, its *being available* for perception. Hence, by this we assert that being is not equal to perception but only to the ability to be perceived. Being is what *can* be brought into presence and, if it is not virtue, then embodiment performs the unification tasks via memories and phantasies which lead to freedom for the transgressive movement (see further). Therefore, contrary to the naive rationalism of Aristotle and the phenomenological optimism of Patočka, the characters of Rulfo's work dwell in the limbo between reality and illusion where the senses of agency and authorship are greatly reduced or already modified by memories and fantasies. And these descriptions of "paradise lost" are, for Rulfo, rooted in embodiment.

By way of example, Susana San Juan, a central figure in *Páramo*, epitomises the deep entanglement of body and soul that reflects an existential fracture. She was Pedro Páramo's girlfriend in youth, and she returns years later when he asks her to marry him, after a past of supposed abuse by her father followed by a loving marriage with Florencio, who died leaving her a mentally ill widow. Her character is portrayed as being trapped in a liminal space where physical suffering, psychological trauma, and spiritual disconnection converge. Susana's body is marked by vulnerability, particularly through her illness and the oppressive control exerted by Pedro Páramo. Yet, her soul resists being wholly subdued, as her inner world remains detached from the external reality of Comala.

Susana's retreat into memories and delusions of love with her deceased husband Florencio illustrates the embodiment of memory as it serves as an anchor for her fractured identity. These memories, vivid and corporeal in their sensual detail, contrast sharply with the desolation of her present existence in Páramo's hacienda. Susana's mental and emotional states manifest physically, as her body becomes a site of suffering and resistance. Her refusal to conform to societal and religious expectations, even in death, highlight a soul that seeks liberation but is bound by the weight of her embodied experiences.

By recollecting her permanent loss of the (erotic) space constituted by Florencio's body, Susana experiences her body as empty and aimless (here we might recall Aristotelian teleology). This desired but irremediably lost erotic space is similar to the paradise described by Dolores—Pedro Páramo's legitimate wife and the mother of narrator Juan Preciado—which ended up becoming an infernal void, filled only with complaints or murmurs about life or death. Consider this description:

> *I went back. I would always go back. The sea bathes my ankles, and retreats; it bathes my knees, my thighs; it puts its gentle arm around my waist, circles my breasts, embraces my throat, presses my shoulders. Then I sink into it, my whole body. I give myself to its pulsing strength, to its gentle possession, holding nothing back.*
> *"I love to swim in the sea", I told him.*
> *But he didn't understand it. (Rulfo, 1994, p. 96)*

Similarly, the one who didn't understand, Pedro Páramo, also faces the impossibility of filling the void:

> *I waited thirty years for you to return, Susana. I wanted to have it all. Not just part of it, but everything there was to have, to the point that there would be nothing left for us to want, no desire but your wishes (Rulfo, 1994, p. 82).*

This situation is akin to some concepts of psychoanalytic philosophy, such as Lacan's *Objet petit a*, which broadly refers to the unreachability of an object of desire. And it is not an object per se but the cause of desire. The object *a* is the form which lack assumes when it is *represented* (Lacan, 2001). This lack is a remainder of the *Real*, the price for being a subject, that sets in motion the symbolic movement of interpretation, the ultimate secret against which all explanations fail. It is not the object that desire aims at; rather it organises the imaginary scenario of the fantasy which orders desire: *a* is thus the cause of desire (Lacan, 2001). Object *a* is also outside of the phenomenal field, perceptible neither in the image of the body nor in objects in the world. Lacan then defines object *a* as the loss produced by the articulation. It lies beyond the symbolic and the imaginary (including the erotic), and hence demands transgression into the Real.

Despite the fact that Susana San Juan and Pedro Páramo live in the Hacienda La Media Luna, they are in fact completely submerged—possessed—by the erotic dreams of the past. Pedro Páramo, the absolute owner of everything, the master of all women, the stallion of Comala, can now only observe; in both the novel and the film, we see him spy on the ardent convulsions of Susana's naked body as she copulates with a ghost before his helpless gaze. This is not a nostalgia for something lost but an inability to grasp the immediate presence:

> *He thought of the young girl he had just slept with. Of the small, frightened, trembling body, and the thudding of a heart that seemed about to leap from her chest. "You sweet little handful," he had said to her. And embraced her, trying to transform her into Susana San Juan. (Rulfo, 1994, p. 108)*

Viewed this way, Comala appears as a paradise turned into hell on earth. From the perspective of embodied cognition, this exactly opposes the more subjectivist dictum that hell is not a place but a state. With the conception of the embodied soul we see how the experience of "hell" is not distinguishable from the place, even if modified (in a novel, movie, dream, desire, memory, fantasy, etc.). Moreover, the aforementioned transformation that seems to be a logic of life for Rulfo is a logic that no one escapes. However, this inescapability of faith (Greco-Judean) takes on a particularly dark mestizo Mexican twist in Rulfo's work.

First of all, this hell, or rather purgatory in this case, is not individual. Rulfo clearly stresses the shared nature of suffering.[10] The experiences that he describes are always related to consequences of past actions, but this past extends to the dead too. Every space here, as in a therapy room, is full of dead people (McFarland, Givens, 2021). It reminds us that dead people are a big part of our cognition, whether we are aware of it or not. Hence, Rulfo creates a space where interactions are still social, albeit in a special way. In this sense, the novel talks about the intergenerational trauma that the country suffered as a result of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917, though its effects lingered in the years that followed) and the three aspects required to process it: creating safety, remembering and mourning, and reconnection (Herman, 2015).

For Comala's ghosts, this safety is space created by death. It offers the conditions for facing pain calmly, and this is also helped by the time frame, which is facilitated by the absence of everyday demands and rushing around. Mexico's intergenerational trauma is such that "the sins and virtues of past generations have shaped the landscape of possibilities for the living" (Juarrero, 2002), which limits the sense of authorship greatly. The old notion of sins inherited from ancestors (Exodus, 20:5:6; Deuteronomy, 5:9) is a reality for the Mestizo community. In Rulfo's work, death, in its multitude of guises, offers the chance for a community to understand injustice and to act accordingly. The pain those souls endured might simultaneously be the condition of hope. In this sense, speaking theologically, death is not the end.

[10] It is purgatory rather than hell because, as etymology tells us, the word purgatory comes from *purigare*: purus and agere—"to set in *motion*" (McFarland, Givens, 2021, p. 191).

Furthermore, Rulfo counters another logocentric stereotype regarding death: that of a brave stoic-existentialist meeting death face-to-face. In his world, souls disintegrate rather slowly, when images found language, memories, inferences, doubts, and beliefs. We become spectators rather than participants. For example, Pedro Páramo becomes accustomed to seeing each of his pieces die. And thus we witness the backwards process of a mirror stage (Lacan), in which one does not gather oneself into a whole while controlling parts but allows discrete intentionalities found the reality instead. Pedro Páramo thus appears as the emblem of a frustrating power, of the inconsistency of a violent and unjust order whose logic ends up emptying itself. As if every accumulation of power (in Spanish: "poder", an anagram of Pedro) always generates devastation and waste. Spaces that were previously full of life are contaminated by our consciousness of lost time and people (lost movement and meaning). The literature therefore thematises nocturnal creatures and not the abstract humanity presented by logocentric science.

These creatures are socio-political too, and as such Comala also represents "the failed world of the revolution" (González Boixo, 1983, p. 43), which, while disintegrating promises of equality, liberty, and human rights, established new hierarchies of terror. From this angle, we may see the characters of the novel not only as individually devoured by guilt and lost, unable to touch the real, but also as passive heroes in the socio-political climate of Western Mexico.

However, the horrors of reality produce liberation and equality in death. We see how the dead no longer fear Pedro Páramo and enjoy a certain negative democracy, not only because they are all equal in terms of mortality, but also because the relationships they maintain no longer tend to be with others (as oppression, violence, crime, etc.) but with themselves and, in particular, with their own memories (as guilt, loss, shame, etc.). Rulfo shows that only the dead can have freedom in a feudal society where Pedro (power) manages a community under the dictates of fear and small gifts, where relations between humans are defined by social status and the weak are stripped of a sense of agency with regard to their actions (life) while Pedro Páramo's arbitrary and despotic personality grows to the extent that his opponents are deprived of the nerve and rebellion to confront him (Castellanos, 1998 [1962]). And if Páramo's world increasingly belongs to death, then he makes the supreme choice that all of Comala be contaminated with death: "He swore to wreak revenge on Comala: 'I will cross my arms and Comala will die of hunger'" (Rulfo, 1994, p. 116–117).

The topic that Rulfo opens up here recalls the strategies adopted by the marginalised to oppose power through alternative embodied or modified embodied (imaginative) praxis (Navarro, Briedis, 2023). The ancient author Luciano has already explored this, for example, when he describes travelling to Hades only to laugh when he sees "rich people, and satraps and tyrants (…) remembering the vicissitudes of their life on earth" (Prado, 2017). This is not to mention Bakhtin (1984), etc. Hence, memory performs the *function* of an inferno.

Finally, the invocation of the dead is inserted in a context of political disappointment, but it has another, more national objective, that of staging a certain reconciliation between the protagonists of a conflict. The trauma of revolution runs deep in mestizo blood, and it seems that there is no way to resolve it in the context of class struggle, oppressive economic systems, machismo, etc. Here, it seems, Rulfo tries to redirect strategies for a solution from bad theology (where the other is always guilty) to an authentic human encounter. In this vein, the final part of this article will sketch such a universal (Eurocentric) vision of human authenticity in the terms provided by Aristotle (again) and Patočka, but, as will soon become apparent, this universalism cannot be sustained in the face of mestizo identity, thus leaving for the latter only strategies of transgression.

4 Transgression as the movement of care for the mestizo soul

In the vocabulary of embodied cognition, transgressive actions (even when performed with modifications or in a passive fashion) are meant to: 1) gather the fractured self; 2) establish social equality on

the ontological level; 3) produce an ironic hermeneutic distance where it is impossible to satisfy desire; and 4) regain a sense of authorship.

Páramo initiates the Mexican (both individual and social) way of transgression (both in art and life), but this is not the flamboyancy of Sade or Nietzsche. As we saw earlier, the erotic experiences that Susana San Juan undergoes (not performs) displace, decentre, and reduce power to impotence, that is, to non-power, only for her to regain a modified sense of agency. It is also no coincidence that most attitudes of resistance, dignity, and courage in the story appear in relation to women, madness, and death (Lespada, 1996, p. 70). By revealing the unavoidable limits of any project of domination, Susana presents herself as a discontinuity; as a parenthesis of free desire and unattainable otherness and a utopian horizon against which the possessive ambition of power represented in Pedro Páramo crashes.

In the context of the time it was written, we might say that Rulfo's *Páramo* is a transgressive fiction because it focuses on characters who feel confined by social norms and expectations. It is even more interesting that Rulfo discloses a uniquely mestizo way in which certain characters (as ghosts when alive and souls when dead) break free of those confines in unusual or illicit ways. For example, Sade advocated for the pursuit of personal pleasure, even at the expense of others, without concern for social or moral norms. Nietzsche believed that sadism is not merely physical or sexual, but rather metaphysical and existential. These thinkers represent the idea that life itself, through the will to power, involves pleasure in the assertion of strength over weakness, the destruction of old values, and the creation of new ones which is rarely the case in Mexico.

In turn, another transgressive thinker, Georges Bataille (1960), was concerned primarily with the build-up of waste in the economy, which he believed could only be addressed through transgressive acts of exchange, erotic activities, and other forms of 'non-useful' expenditure that would disrupt the logic of productivity. In this sense, both Páramo and the souls that suffer because of him are the products of surplus, of sheer human invention, which in a way brings them (humans) back to animality (embodiment).[11] Hence, humanity can never truly transcend reality or its inherent animality on account of *base materialism* (Bataille, 1985), that is, matter that already starts to rot and decompose thus making illusory the seemingly stable structures of body and society.

Unlike classical materialism, where matter is taken as a stable ground for existence and thought, Bataille's 'base matter' is dynamic, formless, and disruptive, continually reshaping reality from within. Similarly, Rulfo's work defies any stable, hierarchical classification, whether material or ideal, economic, religious or political. Ontology, then, is born from and transformed by matter, as all things and subjects (including Páramo himself) submit to the shifting and ungovernable nature of matter itself. This is demonstrated in the novel through one of the characters Juan Preciado encounters, a woman who claims to be "a sea of mud" on the inside (Rulfo, 1994, p. 51) and then *actually* becomes mud—one of the most shifting forms of matter—in front of Preciado a few scenes later. This scene is described only briefly in the novel but is depicted graphically in the recent cinematic adaptation.

Bataille asserts that the experience of the limit is fundamental to the human experience, but it is often suppressed or denied by societal and cultural norms. By embracing the experience of the limit and engaging in acts of excess and transgression, Batailleanism seeks to open up new possibilities for human understanding and experience. Similarly, the imagery created by Rulfo signifies both an encounter with the absolute horror of physical annihilation and an ecstatic rupture, i.e. a moment where suffering transcends the body's limits and approaches something almost sacred or divine. It is important to note that embodiment is a necessary condition for this experience. Hence,

[11] Another form of identification or confusion that occupies an important place in the novel is that of the transformations or metamorphoses of human beings into animals and vice versa. Belief in this phenomenon, known as *nagualism*, is widespread in Mesoamerican cultural traditions (Gacinska, 2018).

rather than seeing the "will to power" (Nietzsche) as a quest for domination, here it occurs as a vital force embracing possibility and uncertainty—a rejection of any rigid structure or instrumental purpose (Aristotle, Patočka). This way of existing renounces utility and approaches a limit-experience: an impulse towards unpredictability, incompleteness, and complete freedom, which contrasts with the logic of power as understood in terms of control and stability. Instead of a will that clings to a fixed goal or an ideal of supremacy (as with Páramo or the priest—opposing figures of different kinds of power), the wandering souls of Comala seek to transgress limits, embracing disorder, destruction, and constant renewal.

This brings us back to Bataille, for whom true sovereignty is not simply political power but embodies an essential refusal to be dominated or subsumed, a stance that leads to a richer, if tragic, exploration of the human spirit. The destiny of sovereignty is ultimately tragic. True sovereignty is fleeting, existing only in the intensity of a transitory instant, which cannot be sustained indefinitely within the confines of worldly structures. Pedro Páramo dies in a physically symbolic and anticlimactic manner, reflecting the crumbling of his power and the weight of his own deeds. After years of exerting absolute control over Comala, Pedro becomes increasingly withdrawn and apathetic, embodying the emptiness of his once-mighty authority. Apparently stabbed by his former servant Abundio—and this is more clearly the case in the cinematic adaptation—his actual death occurs as he collapses under the literal weight of his actions: after one last thought of Susana San Juan and fearing being left alone with the voices of the dead, Pedro falls, striking his head against the ground. This sudden and mundane act underscores the fragility of his seemingly unassailable power.

The imagery surrounding his death is significant. Pedro's body, once a representation of his dominance, becomes lifeless and inert, a pile of stones, mirroring the desolation of Comala and the collapse of his legacy. His fall is not just a physical event but a metaphor for the inevitable downfall of tyranny and the impermanence of human sovereignty. This unceremonious end strips him of the grandeur often associated with powerful figures, reinforcing the novel's themes of decay, mortality, and the transient nature of authority.

Bataille (1985) states that authority, agency, and sovereignty can manifest in various forms throughout history, including in the Christian ascetic who defends their faith or the melancholic philosopher who contains and sublimates desires. Bataille emphasises that sovereignty is not limited to individual acts; it can also manifest collectively through communal acts of transgression that transcend societal and rational boundaries. These experiences, which defy the utilitarian logic of production and consumption, express sovereignty through acts of excess, waste, and passion, such as eroticism, violence, and sacrifice. This is a critique of capitalism for commodifying human desire and creating an insatiable cycle of consumption based on simulacra and repetition. But worse than the fetishising of the desire is the shrouding of its illusory, horizon-like nature.

This is why the Comala fiesta scene (Rulfo, 1994, p. 116) can be interpreted in transgressive terms. In *The Accursed Share* (1988), Bataille distinguishes between the "restricted economy" and the "general economy". "Restricted" economic theory focuses on the rational and efficient management of limited resources within a closed system in which production, distribution, and capital accumulation are prioritised. In contrast, Bataille's "general economy" is broader and includes excessive or unproductive expenditure, such as rituals, festivities, and art, which makes it essential for understanding the entirety of human economy. Bataille argues that excess energy and resources must be consumed in some way, and a complete understanding of the economy must recognise both the accumulation and the expenditure of *surplus* (associated with the aforementioned *object petit a* by Lacan).

Pedro watches how the communal experiences of sovereignty arise during the fiesta. Although the participants are worn-down losers in life, when they immerse themselves in a shared transcendence, the boundaries of everyday life are dissolved, and existence is exalted beyond utilitarian values. This scene recalls Bakhtin's (1984) description of the "carnivalesque":

> *the feast is the people's temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival is the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It is hostile to all that is immortalized and completed.*

However, it is unbearable for Páramo that there is life besides or beyond his power. "I will cross my arms and Comala will die of hunger" (Rulfo, 1994, p. 117), he says grimly.

Again, transgression in Páramo challenges the traditional view of death as a definitive boundary and suggests an experience that goes beyond death, affirming a connection with the transcendent but in an everyday, embodied, mestizo way. This *profanation* (Agamben, 2007) liberates people, objects, and practices from the sacred sphere and returns them to a state in which they have practical, unrestricted value. For example, when sisters perform rites on their own, it liberates human interactions from the privileging definitions and ceremonies that caused so much pain for Comala's inhabitants. Profanation, in this context, dismantles this isolating power structure by reintegrating sacred objects and practices into communal life, restoring free access to what had been distanced by power ("Life is hard enough as it is. The only thing that keeps you going is the hope that when you die you'll be lifted up this mortal coil; but when they close one door to you and the only one left open is the door to Hell, you're better off not being born… For me, Juan Preciado, heaven is right here" [Rulfo, 1994, p. 66]). To profane is thus not to destroy but to reclaim, to take what has been removed from everyday life and restore it to shared use.

Both transgression and profanation address the issue of distance, offering a more radical way to overcome the separations created by power, presupposing the ecstatic embodied experience, rooting it in the imagery of ecstasy as the body leaving the soul, not the other (traditional, logocentric) way around. Thus, transgression appears not as merely a breaking of the rules but as a fundamental experience that reveals the continuity between the sacred and the profane, allowing for a more complete understanding of human existence from a mestizo perspective.

5 Conclusions

Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* suggests a horizon for the overview of the embodied subjective experiences of Mexican historicity. This work of literature renders these *prima facie* eternal universal cognitive structures incarnate and mortal. All archetypes, be they Greek or Aztec, are mediated. Hence, Rulfo's ghosts and/or souls are mediated culturally and are embodied via specific transgressive movements (scattered dwelling, profanation, and death). Such an approach tends to differ from the "universalist" line insofar as it seeks universality precisely in the structures present in the local culture and not via comparison with privileged Western texts. This novel also enables us to apply the classical logocentric analysis of the human being (Aristotle) to Mestizo identity and at the same time to grasp its universalistic limitations and to transgress them.

The basic embodied metaphor of *Páramo* is the unbridgeable distance which is manifested socio-culturally (class society, revolution, gendering), psychologically (perception, memories, dreams), and physically (touch, violence, lust). Thus, Rulfo masterfully oscillates between the individual and social responsibilities and injustices, blending specific care for the soul with the potential reanimation of the discourse on human rights and subjective insight with a radical critique of established thought. To defend such rights is to defend the motion of questioning that actualises us as political and social beings. Furthermore, Rulfo is able to use imagination and embodied aspects of human cognition to give this discourse a new voice.

References

AGAMBEN, G. 2007. *Profanations*. New York: Zone Books.

ANDERSON, B. 2016. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

London: Verso.

ARISTOTLE. 1961. *De Anima*, translated by David Ross. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ARISTOTLE. 1963. *The Physics*, translated by Philip H. Wickstead and Francis M. Cornford. London: William Heinemann Ltd.

ARISTOTLE. 1998. *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by D. P. Chase. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

BACHELARD, G. 1994. *Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press.

BAKHTIN, M. M. 1984. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

BARRETT, L. 2011. *Beyond the Brain: How Body and Environment Shape Animal and Human Minds*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

BATAILLE, G. 1960. *Eroticism*. Buenos Aires: Edit. Sur.

BATAILLE, G. 1985. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

BATAILLE, G. 1988. *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy. Volume I: Consumption*, translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Zone Books.

BLANKE, O.; METZINGER, T. 2009. Full-body Illusions and Minimal Phenomenal Selfhood. *Trends in Cognitive Science,* **13**: pp. 7-13. doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2008.10.003

BRAUN, N. 2017. *Neurocognitive Aspects and Clinical Relevance of Bodily Self-awareness*. Oldenburg: University of Oldenburg.

BRIEDIS, M. 2019. Phenomenological Ethnography of Radiology: Expert Performance in Enacting Diagnostic Cognition. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences,* **19**: pp. 373-404.

CASTELLANOS, R. 1998 [1962]. *Oficio de tinieblas*. New York: Penguin.

CESERANI, R. 1999. *The Fantastic*, translated by J. Díaz de Atauri. Madrid: Viewfinder.

CHEMERO, A. 2009. *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

COLOMBETTI, G. 2017. The Embodied and Situated Nature of Moods. *Philosophia,* **45**: pp. 1437-1451.

DI PAOLO, E. A. 2005. Autopoiesis, Adaptivity, Teleology, Agency. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences,* **4**: pp. 429-452.

ECO, U. 2020. *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cancogni. Kindle version.

ERIKSEN, T. H. 2024. Turtle Life. *Etnofoor,* **36**(1): pp. 109-118.

FROESE, T.; DI PAOLO, E. A. 2011. The Enactive Approach: Theoretical Sketches from Cell to Society. *Pragmatics and Cognition,* **191**(1): pp. 1-36.

GACINSKA, W. 2018. El movimiento en Pedro Páramo creencias. *Revista de Letras,* **58**(1): pp. 93-106.

GADAMER, H. G. 1989. *Truth and Method*. New York: Crossroad.

GALLAGHER, S. 1986. Body Image and Body Schema: A Conceptual Clarification. *Journal of Mind and Behavior,* **7**(4): pp. 541-554.

GALLAGHER, S. 2000. Philosophical Conceptions of the Self: Implications for Cognitive Science. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, **4**: pp. 14-21. doi: 10.1016/S1364-6613(99) 01417-5

GALLAGHER, S. 2007a. The Natural Philosophy of Agency. *Philosophy Compass,* **2**(2): pp. 347-357.

GALLAGHER, S. 2007b. Sense of Agency and Higher-order Cognition: Levels of Explanation for Schizophrenia. *Cognitive Semiotics,* **0**: pp. 32-48.

GALLAGHER, S. 2017. *Enactivist Interventions: Rethinking the Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GALLAGHER, S.; ZAHAVI, D. 2008. *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. Oxford: Routledge.

GALLEGOS, F. T. 2018. Surviving Social Disintegration: Jorge Portilla on the Phenomenology of Zozobra. *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy,* **2**(17): pp. 3-6.

GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, G. 2002 [1967]. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

GIBBS, R. W.; LIMA, P. L. C.; FRANCOZO, E. 2004. Metaphor is Grounded in Embodied Experience. *Journal of Pragmatics,* **36**: pp. 1189-1210.

GIBBS, R. W.; MACEDO, A. C. P. S. 2010. Metaphor and Embodied Cognition. *Delta,* **26**: pp. 679-700.

GIBSON, J. J. 1950. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception.* New York: Psychology Press.

GONZÁLEZ BOIXO, J. C.. 1983. *Claves narrativas de Juan Rulfo*. España: Universidad de León.

HERMAN, J. L. 2015. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books.

HUSSERL, E. 2005. *Collected Works. Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory (1898–1925)*. New York: Springer.

HUSSERL, E. 2012. *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology.* New York: Routledge.

JUARRERO, A. 2002. *Dynamics in Action: Intentional Behaviour as a Complex System*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books.

LACAN, J. 2001. *Écrits*, translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Routledge.

LAKOFF, G. 1993. The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. In: *Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Andrew Ortony. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LAKOFF, G.; JOHNSON, M. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LESPADA, G. 1996. *Pedro Páramo* o el poder de la escritura. (Anfibología e incongruencia en la novela de Juan Rulfo). *Literatura Mexicana,* **7**(1): pp. 61-78.

LIENHARD, M. 1992. El substrato arcaico en *Pedro Páramo*: Quetzalcóatl y Tláloc. In: *Juan Rulfo: Toda la obra*, edited by Claude Fell, 842–850. Mexico: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

MCFARLAND, K. L.; GIVENS, T. 2021. Purgatory as a Metaphor for Therapy and Associated Ethical Implications. In: *Dante and the Other: A Phenomenology of Love*, edited by Aaron B. Daniels. London: Routledge.

MERLEAU-PONTY, M. 1962. *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: Humanities Press.

MENSCH, J. R. 2015. *Patočka's Asubjective Phenomenology: Toward a New Concept of Human Rights*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

NAVARRO, M.; BRIEDIS, M. 2023. Enactive Approach to Social Interactions in Religious Media Ecologies. *Explorations in Media Ecology,* **22**(3): pp. 275-287.

NEWEN, A.; BRUIN, L,; GALLAGHER, S. 2018. *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NOË, A. 2006. *Action in Perception*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

NOË, A. 2012. *Varieties of Presence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

PATOČKA, J. 1970. *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, translated by Erazim Kohák, edited by James Dodd. Chicago: Open Court.

PATOČKA, J. 1988. La conception aristotélicienne dumouvement: signification philosophique et recherches historiques. In: *Le monde naturel et lemouvement de l'existence humaine*, edited by E. Abrams. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

PATOČKA, J. 1990. Nachwort. In: *Die natürliche Welt als philosophisches Problem*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, Ausgewählte Schriften III: Phänomenologische Schriften I.

PATOČKA, J. 2002. *Plato and Europe*, translated by Petr Lom. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

PAZ, O. 1950. *El laberinto de la soledad [The Labyrinth of Solitude]*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

POSTMAN, N. 1985. *Amusing Ourselves to Death.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

PRADO, B. C. 2017. Pedro Paramo, de Juan Rulfo, y la Tradicion Filosofico Literaria de los Dialogos de los Muertos. Época, **22**: pp.141-160.

PROUST, M. 2003 [1913]. *In Search of Lost Time*, translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. New York: Modern Library.

QUEZADA CAMBEROS, S.; VILLALPANDO, M.; AKIRA, I. 2019. Lo fantástico-maravilloso en *Pedro Páramo. Sincronía,* **23**(76): pp. 296-312.

RICŒUR, P. 1978. *The Rule of Metaphor*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

RULFO, J. 1994. *Pedro Páramo*, translated by Margaret Sayers Peden. New York: Grove Press.

SCHEITER, K. M. 2012. Images, Appearances, and Phantasia in Aristotle. *Phronesis,* **57**: pp. 251-278.

SEEGER, M. 2014. Authorship of Thoughts in Thought Insertion: What is it for a Thought to be One's Own? *Philosophical Psychology,* **28**(6): pp. 837-855. doi:10.1080/09515089.2014.942897.

SHAPIRO, L. 2011. *Embodied Cognition*. New York: Routledge.

SIMPSON, P. L. P. 2001. Aristotle's Idea of the Self. *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* **35**(3): pp. 309-324.

STANTON, A. 1988. Estructuras antropológicas en *Pedro Páramo*. *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica (NRFH),* **36**(1): p. 567.

STAPLETON, M.; FROESE, T. 2016. The Enactive Philosophy of Embodiment: From Biological Foundations of Agency to the Phenomenology of Subjectivity. In: *Biology and Subjectivity: Philosophical Contributions to Non-reductive Neuroscience*, edited by Miguel García-Valdecasas, José Ignacio Murillo, and Nathaniel F. Barrett. Cham: Springer.

URANGA, E. 2017 [1951]. Essay on an Ontology of the Mexican. In: *Mexican Philosophy in the 20th Century: Essential Readings*, edited by C. A. Sanchez and R. E. Sanchez Jr. New York: Oxford University Press.

VARELA, F. J.; ROSCH, E.; THOMPSON, E. 1991. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

VILLORO, J. 2015 [1999]. Rulfo: Lección de arena. *Nexos*, 1 August.

VILLORO, J. 2021. *Horizontal Vertigo: A City Called Mexico*. New York: Pantheon.

WEISS, G. 1999. *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality.* London: Routledge.

ZEPEDA, J. 2005. *A recepción inicial de Pedro Páramo (1955–1963)*. Mexico: Juan Rulfo Foundation and University of Guadalajara (General Outreach Coordination).

Submetido em 16 de março de 2024.

Aceito em 10 de abril de 2025.