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**ECOHORROR IN ORCA:  
Was there a maritime stress in the seventies?**

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**Ecohorror in *Orca*:  
Was there a maritime stress in the seventies?**

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## ABSTRACT

One of best-known Ecohorror narratives is *Orca* (1977), by Arthur Herzog, which became popular through Hollywood film studios. This study uses Dante Alighieri's recommendations, which is based on exegesis, in his *Letter to Gran Can* to deal with meaning levels in Herzog's *Orca*. The horror in *Orca*'s narrative is based on Gothic elements that contribute to recognize allegories associated with fears of attacks from a nature run-amok, such as the immensity of sea, hostility and cold of icebergs, deaths in gory attacks, a ferocious mordicant monster, onomatopoeic haunted sounds, and an eerily fearful atmosphere. Consequently, the Ecohorror in *Orca* stems from its Gothic motifs. Following Dante's recommendations, four different meaning levels were recognized in this study. Firstly, the literal meaning indicates that the Ecohorror of *Orca*'s narrative has a connection to real environmental anxieties, such as whaling and orca's captivity. These acts result in the loss of human's ethical virtues due to greed and profit. Secondly, mystical meaning is related to wounded masculinity, which is symbolized in the notched fin of the bull orca. From Ecohorror's perspective, human's wounded masculinity is compensated through consumption of goods, as exemplified by entertainment shows of captive orcas, plastic souvenirs and superficial interpersonal relationships. Consumption is an escapist way found by humans to their wounded masculinity, including the consumption of freedom captive orcas. Humans see whales as "the Others or Them" and, in that way, explain and justify their cruelty by whaling and condemn whales to perpetual captivity. On the other hand, the moral meaning of *Orca*'s narrative is associated with the subjective quest of the human character that mirrors the past memories in the orca-vampire. The red eyes of hybrid orca are the key symbol of the mirroring of humans in the nonhuman aiming to find the human redemption and a balanced survival in the humans and nonhumans interactions. Finally, the anagogical meaning is related to allegories that are correlational with Herzog's beliefs about the risks of nuclear weapons in seawater that input fear and apprehension in the seventies. The body shape and aggressiveness of orca character is an allegorical symbol of nuclear submarines across the seas. The foreign submarines, as "the Others or Them", are ready to attack the humans, "the Self or the Us". Therefore, *Orca* brings representations of interactions of humans and nonhumans that are related to epic struggles of "self" against "them". The fear and horror of *Orca*'s narrative are potentialized through Gothic elements, which contain allegorical symbols of individual and collective anxieties related to social and environmental issues.

*Keywords:* Ecohorror literature, Nautical literature, whale representations, *Orca*, human and nonhuman interactions.

## RESUMO

Entre as mais conhecidas narrativas de Ecohorror, destaca-se *Orca* (1977), escrita por Arthur Herzog, a qual se tornou popular nas telas de cinema através dos estúdios de Hollywood. Os múltiplos níveis de significado da narrativa de *Orca* são analisados neste estudo, conforme as recomendações de Dante Alighieri, baseada na exegese, conforme expresso em sua obra *Carta para o Can Grande*. O horror na narrativa de *Orca* baseia-se em elementos Góticos, que contribuem para o reconhecimento das alegorias associadas com os medos que brotam dos ataques da natureza descontrolada, tais como a imensidão do mar, a hostilidade e o frio dos icebergs, as mortes nos ataques sangrentos, a ferocidade de um monstro mordedor, sons onomatopeicos aterrorizadores e uma sinistra atmosfera de medo ao longo da narrativa. Consequentemente, o Ecohorror na narrativa de *Orca* advém dos motivos do Gótico presentes na obra. Seguindo as recomendações de Dante, quatro níveis distintos de significados foram reconhecidos na narrativa de *Orca*. O primeiro deles é o significado literal, o qual indica que o Ecohorror desta narrativa tem uma conexão com as ansiedades ambientais na relação dos humanos (o “Eu” ou “Nós”) e os não humanos (o “Outro” ou “Eles”), tais como a caça às baleias e a manutenção delas em cativeiros. Estes atos denotam que os humanos perdem suas virtudes éticas, devido à ganância e lucro. O segundo significado é o místico, que, por sua vez, está relacionado com a masculinidade ferida, a qual é simbolizada pelo corte na nadadeira da baleia macho. Da perspectiva do Ecohorror, os abalos na masculinidade humana são compensados pelo consumo de bens, tais como shows de baleias em cativeiro, souvenirs plásticos e relações pessoais superficiais. O consumo é um modo de escapismo humano para suas questões de masculinidade ferida, incluindo o consumo da liberdade de animais em cativeiro. Os humanos veem as baleias como o “Outro” e, deste modo, justificam a crueldade da caça às baleias e o aprisionamento delas num cativeiro perpétuo. Por outro lado, o significado moral da narrativa de *Orca* está associado com a busca subjetiva do personagem humano que espelha suas memórias passadas na orca-vampiro. Os olhos vermelhos da orca híbrida são o símbolo chave para o humano perceber suas próprias transgressões no sentido de enfrentar o seu próprio “Eu” com vistas a encontrar a redenção humana e a sobrevivência equilibrada entre humanos e não-humanos. Por fim, o significado anagógico está relacionado com alegorias correlacionáveis com as crenças do autor Herzog sobre os riscos de armas nucleares nos mares, os quais eram motivos de medo e apreensão nos anos setenta. A forma corporal e agressividade do personagem orca é uma alegoria simbólica dos submarinos nucleares cortando os mares. Os submarinos estrangeiros, assim como os “Outros ou Eles”, estavam prontos para atacar os humanos, “o Eu ou o Nós”. Portanto, *Orca* apresenta uma representação das interações entre humanos e não-humanos, que está relacionada com as batalhas do “Eu” contra “Eles”. O medo e o horror da narrativa de *Orca* são potencializados por elementos do gênero Gótico, os quais contêm símbolos alegóricos de ansiedades individuais e coletivas relacionadas com questões sociais e ambientais.

*Palavras-chave:* literatura de Ecohorror, literatura náutica, representações da baleia, *Orca*, interações humanos e não-humanos.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ecohorror is a literary genre whose theme is fear in interactions between humans and the environment. The adaptation of Ecohorror narratives to the cinema by the Hollywood film industry in the 1960s and 1970s gave a strong popularity for this genre of literature. Among the writers of the Ecohorror genre, Arthur Herzog stands out for his novels adapted for the cinema, such as the film *Orca, the Killer Whale* which was based on his novel *Orca* (1977).

Arthur Herzog is an American author who focused his academic life on English literature. He worked as a journalist for *The New York Times*, and afterwards as a writer of Ecohorror narratives before it has been considered a literary genre, or more precisely, a Gothic subgenre (Bowling, 2010; Hevesi, 2010). He deemed this literary genre “near in Sci-fi” in his autobiography because it is based on scientific phenomena and realism. In the 1970s, among his Ecohorror productions are *The Swarm* (1974), *Orca* (1977) and *Heat* (1977), which are related to the collective anxieties into American society. According to Pedroso (2012), in the seventies, American society had faced economic uncertainties, moral remaking and financial losses in the period of Vietnam War and Cold War. Arthur Herzog was born in 1927 and died in 2010; therefore, he grew up and lived in the World War II, Vietnam War and Cold War contexts. In the 1960s, he wrote about nuclear risks:

The 21 years since World War II have been years of international crisis virtually uninterrupted,” he<sup>1</sup> wrote. “Many of us have never lived out from under the shadow of nuclear war, and in this period we have all come to know the Bomb in our bones. Despite protestations of peace emanating from leaders the world over, no one can say we are markedly nearer disarmament than we were a decade or two ago (HEVESI, 2010)

Even though academic studies about *Orca* are lacking, the film based on Herzog’s narrative has received reviews on the website Rotten Tomatoes. The commentaries consider the plot film very complex and it is difficult to follow due to the abundance of issues that tend to justify the whale attacks. Most reviews are influenced by the comparison with *Jaws* film and conclude that *Orca, the killer whale*

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<sup>1</sup> “he” refers to Herzog.

is a *Jaws*<sup>2</sup> thriller. In addition, in the Rotten Tomatoes site, there are some reviews that mention their disappointment in relation to the classic *Moby Dick* film based on Melville's narrative. Certainly, *Orca* differs from the famous *Moby Dick*, because *Orca* is a mordicant whale like vampires, while *Moby Dick* is a swallowing whale, like gargantuan monsters, for instance.

On the other hand, three academic works also mentioned *Orca* film among other Ecohorror films: a master dissertation by Turkington (2018) from Sudbury University (Canada); a PhD thesis by Bourke (2019) from Trinity College (Ireland) and a paper by Thompson (2015). All of these researches recognized the complexity of *Orca* as a product of the multiple interactions between humans and nonhumans worlds.

Considering the controversy in understanding *Orca*'s narrative, I analyze it from a standpoint originated in Dante Alighieri's recommendations for the reading of literary devices in his *Letter to Can Grande*<sup>3</sup>. Since the Middle Ages, literary studies of the Bible have enabled the development of interpretation techniques aimed at identifying the true message of the Master Creator. The exegesis was developed from bible studies in order to assist in textual interpretation. Dante Alighieri used exegesis to make some recommendations to the Gran Can on how to interpret his writing, as recorded in the Letter to the Gran Can. Thus, *Letter to Can Grande* points out a procedure for the reader to understand the issues of the allegories and the author's intention hidden in the novel. As suggested by Dante Alighieri, there are multiple meanings: literal, mystical, moral and anagogical, which the reader should use to understand the narrative. The allegories are disseminated in the mystical, moral and anagogical meanings and they are reading guidance (FREDRIKSEN, 2019).

The recent advances in the discussion about the interactions among human-beings, nature and science point out to more complex relations than merely environmental anxieties. Nowadays, the Ecohorror films based on "the nature bites back" from the 60s and 70s have evolved to "an awareness of waste, pollution, and unsustainability at the heart of North American society" (Bourke, 2019, p.4).

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<sup>2</sup> *Jaws* film is based on the *Jaws* book by Peter Benchley.

<sup>3</sup> <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/dantes-letter-can-grande-selections>. Date accessed: 12 dez 2022.



In view of that, this work intends to analyze Herzog's *Orca* narrative to answer the following questions:

- What makes *Orca* an Ecogothic narrative?
- How are nonhumans represented in *Orca*?
- What is the relationship between *Orca*'s narrative and the collective environmental fears in the seventies?

In chapter 1, this study focuses attention on reviewing of the state of the art of eco fictional narratives to highlight the typical symbols of the Gothic genre in Ecohorror narratives. Chapter 2 presents a discussion about the possible meanings of *Orca* following the structure suggested by Dante in his *Letter to Can Grande* to guide the reader in the analysis of nonhumans representations in Herzog's narrative. Chapter 3 relates the collective anxieties to Herzog's apprehensions about nuclear issues and war in American society in the seventies. In the final considerations, the differences between individual and collective anxieties are discussed from the perspective of the historical context of American society in the 1970s. These differences help to identify in *Orca* the cultural, political, economic and environmental anxieties that were haunting the American people.

The emphasis of the discussion of this final paper is based exclusively on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition (reprinted in 2003) of the novel *Orca* by Arthur Herzog. Although the homonymous film is almost parallel to the book narrative, some adaptations and alterations had been introduced in the film (e.g., the name of the Captain; his past biography; and the ending the narrative is completely different, among others) and do not belong to the scope of this final study.

## 1 HORROR IN THE SEA

### 1.1 STATE OF ART: ECO FICTIONAL LITERATURE

Writers, poets and script writers have used the natural world as theme in their writings from different points of view, including descriptions of landscapes, escapism, tales of wildlife, and interactions between the humans and the environments, among others. World War II (1939 - 1945) left a legacy of dread and uncertainties, in particular, due to the use of atomic weapons triggered a general feeling of fear of the unknown. Consequently, the fear of the unknown became a theme for productions which have made the Ecohorror genre very popular and profitable for media and publishers.

After World War II, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson (1962) focused on the nature world as a victim character of the narrative. The monstrosity in this narrative is the chemical contamination of the natural world by humans. According to Bourke, “with *Silent Spring*, Carson emphatically condemned the widespread, unrestricted pesticide use that became increasingly common in the United States following World War II, and brought the issue to the forefront of the popular imagination” (2019, p.13). Therefore, *Silent Spring* is a fictional narrative that uses the fear of the unknown to create an atmosphere of anguish in an environmental narrative.

The Ecohorror narratives highlight the fear, dread and environmental anxieties in the dichotomy between the interests of the human and the nonhuman world (PARKER; POLAND, 2019). According to Keetley & Sivils, 2018:

(...) the darker aspects of the human cultural relationship with the North American natural world, a land that has variously served as predator and prey, refuge and abattoir, fertile paradise and haunted wilderness. As it has since the first Europeans set foot on the soil of the so-called New World, the nonhuman environment supports and defines the American experience while also instilling fear and, at times, even violating the bodily integrity of its human denizens (KEETLEY; SIVILS, 2018, p.16).

Since the Industrial Revolution, the organizational model of Western societies is based on mass production and massive consumption of all natural resources.

Therefore, the relationships between human beings and nonhuman have become more intense. The Ecohorror is a consequence of the narrowing of these relationships, which are impregnated with uncertainties anxieties. Carson (1962) highlighted these relationships in her book *Silent Spring*, which starts with a description of an Arcadian landscape that is destroyed. For example:

THERE WAS ONCE a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. The town lay in the midst of a checkerboard of prosperous farms, with fields of grain and hillsides of orchards where, in spring, white clouds of bloom drifted above the green fields. In autumn, oak and maple and birch set up a blaze of color that flamed and flickered across a backdrop of pines. Then foxes barked in the hills and deer silently crossed the fields, half hidden in the mists of the fall mornings.

(...)

Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours (CARSON, 1962, p. 1-2).

The narrative of *Silent Spring* focuses on the thesis that human beings poison the natural resources slowly through using chemical products. This narrative highlights an apocalyptic atmosphere of destruction that associates environmental science and Gothic literature (e.g., “a shadow of death”, page 2).

The uncertainties about the future combined with the fear of environmental predictions based on scientific hypotheses were registered in literature through an excessive pessimism. Therefore, the key components of Ecohorror literature are based on repugnance and phobia, which comprise a mixture of fear, horror, blood, anxieties, and memories of evil. Although, *Silent Spring* is the first narrative that focus is on the environmental awareness (e.g., “the evil spills from pesticides”), Rust & Soles (2014) explained that:

The term Ecohorror has been in use since at least the mid-1990s to describe works of literature and film in which human characters are attacked by natural forces —typically animals and plants—that have been altered or angered by humans in some way (RUST; SOLES, 2014, p. 510).

Nowadays, the scope of Ecohorror literature includes environmental awareness related to natural crisis that threat the human beings, such as global

warming, microorganisms, pollution, transgenic food, among others; all of them, side by side with “traditional monsters” (e.g., enormous animals and poison vegetables) that feed the Gothic imagination of writers. A possibility of unpredictable or uncontrollable revenge on the nonhuman world is the source of mankind phobias. According to Rust & Soles (2014), the Ecohorror literature aims to “promote an ecological awareness”, as exemplified below:

A more expansive definition of Ecohorror, which we would like to elucidate via this special cluster of essays, includes analyses of texts in which humans do horrific things to the natural world, or in which horrific texts and tropes are used to promote ecological awareness, represent ecological crises, or blur human/nonhuman distinctions more broadly (RUST; SOLES, 2014, p. 509).

Indeed, the academic dimension of this new literary genre will grow, because it has a strong potential to contribute as a point of contact between the cathartic entertainment and the holistic evolutionary thinking about welfare of interactions between human and nonhuman worlds. Ecohorror narratives have valuable potential for outcrops burial truths (e.g., individual, social and environmental injustices), which are key points to cultural discussion about interactions of environmental crisis, human welfare and public policy, as exemplified by ecofeminism (PLUMWOOD, 1986) and eco-nationalism (SHAMIS, 2023).

## 1.2 LITERARY IMAGES OF SEAS: POWER VERSUS DISGRACE

The sea is present in numerous literary and artistic works, both in texts of conquests and terror. For example, the Greek poet Homer mentions the struggle between man and the sea in the epics of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In these narratives, Poseidon, the god of waters and earthquakes, controls the seas, which are tools for him to punish the humans.

On the other hand, in the Christian era, the strength of the sea is also invoked to hell the human beings as exemplified by poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Coleridge, 1834), in which the fisherman is cursed to sail alone and haunted by his crew. According to Connel (1969), Coleridge introduced a new element of Gothic literature, namely the sea with its immensity and the unimaginable barriers.

Almost a century after Coleridge, Edgar Allan Poe was also inspired by the maritime theme to write *The City in the Sea*<sup>4</sup>. In this poem, the duality between the known and the unknown at the seafloor creates the Gothic setting, according to Almeida (2021).

The immensity of sea is also represented in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Brazilian literature with a Gothic tone. The sea is the witness of the anguish, pain and death of the African slaves in the poem *The Black Ship* (CASTRO ALVES, 2022). The invocation of the sacred (“Lord God of the disgraced”) added to the immensity of the sea and the risk of madness (“an atrocious fatality that crushes the mind!”) suggest a Gothic atmosphere as exemplified in the following excerpt when the poet refers to Brazilian slavery:

Lord God of bastards!  
Tell me, Lord God!  
If it's crazy ...if it's true  
So much horror before the skies?!  
O sea, why don't you  
erase the sponge from your waves  
From this cloak this blur? ...  
Astros! nights! storms!  
Roll of immensities!  
I swept the seas, typhoon!”<sup>5</sup>

The Gothic tone of *Black Ship* poem is due to the despair of the poet, who pleads for the sea to intervene in favor of the slaves, because God remains disregarding their suffering. Therefore, it is useless to ask God for mercy; thus, the Gothic atmosphere of the poem makes the sea one of the characters to whom the slaves ask for help in the struggle between good and evil (or Heaven against Hell). In this sense, the sea became the place and character of *Black Ship* poem, which is typical of Ecohorror narratives, as explained by Parker & Poland (2019).

The immensity and shapelessness of the seawater combined with the strangeness of the exotic marine life are the ingredients for the Gothic imagination by possibility of death, which replaces order with unforeseen events that re-evaluating the existence and purpose of mankind. The isolation at sea brings out the irrationality

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<sup>4</sup> Poe, E. A. 1845. *The City in the Sea*.

<sup>5</sup> Senhor Deus dos desgraçados! / Dizei-me vós, Senhor Deus! / Se é loucura... se é verdade / Tanto horror perante os céus?! / Ó mar, por que não apagas / Co'a esponja de tuas vagas / De teu manto este borrão?... / Astros! noites! tempestades! / Rolai das imensidades! / Varrei os mares, tufão!.

hidden in the depths of human emotions and thoughts, as exemplified by *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville (2014). The role of sea in *Moby Dick* was analyzed by Connel (1969), who wrote: "Further, the sea can embody both death and the overcoming of death—the escape into a new life and the chance to expiate old crimes" (CONNEL, 1969, p.10).

The open sea is an important element in Orca's narrative, as well as in the classics cited above. The vastness and isolation of the open sea combined with the fog and the presence of icebergs make the environment hostile to the fisherman and his crew in Orca's narrative. The fragility of humans in the open sea highlights the horror atmosphere of the fictional story.

## 2 INDIVIDUAL FEARS

### 2.1 BLOODYTHIRSTY CREATURE

The literal meaning of narrative restricts the discussion to the **description about what happened** in the narrative (FREDRIKSEN, 2019, p.2). Literally, *Orca* consists of the narrative of a couple of whales that swam in the open sea until a fisherman captured a pregnant orca, which miscarried and died. Because of this, the male orca (bull) chased the fisherman to the North Pole, where they had the final struggle.

There is also a consensus among critics who wrote about the film entitled *Orca, the Killer Whale*, that the whales were humanized in the script, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

Therefore, in order for the whale to be seen as an agent, it must first be understood as more than a mindless predator seeking out prey. It must be recognized as human-like. The distinction is somewhat **ambiguous at first**, but as the film develops and the whale's need for retribution continues there is an emphasis on the whale becoming-human. I would argue that is paralleled by Nolan's own experience becoming-whale (TURKINGTON, 2018, p. 43)

The ambiguity recognized by Turkington disappears if the reader realizes that there is more than one group of whales in the *Orca*. For example, the humanized whales have human names, Hugo and Helga, which live in the Seaquarium. Their behavior is altered by training and captivity:

The killer whale can be a friend to man. There have been occasions when these animals pushed sinking ships and drowning people to shore. On the other hand, even Hugo and Helga, raised in captivity since they were pups, can be difficult to deal with.<sup>6</sup> Their feelings seem easily hurt by harsh words; they have temper tantrums; they are cantankerous and proud and often engage in contests of wills with their trainers (HERZOG, 2003, p. 11).

Hugo and Helga are members of the orca group doubly acculturated: Firstly, they were confined in a tank with limited space, like prisoners sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Captain Campbell estimated that their tank was about 35 feet deep

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<sup>6</sup> P.S.: *Orca, the killer whale* film was based on Herzog's *Orca* book.

(HERZOG, 2003, p. 13), which corresponds nearly the 10 meters, while "the adult killer measures up to 30 feet" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 10). The disproportion between the orca size and the depth of a tank suggests that Hugo and Helga whales underwent behavioral adaptations due to confinement. Secondly, Hugo and Helga had their temper altered by their interactions with humans. For example, "they are cantankerous and proud and often engage in contests of wills with their trainers" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 11). To sum up, Hugo and Helga whales were acculturated due to their captivity and humanized training. They were turned into entertainment animals for the audience's pleasure, although it is unnatural, and probably stressful, for them, as shown in the following excerpt:

The trainer on the platform gestured vigorously, and the whales **obliged** with noises – strange, eerie, pinging, ponging, singing, wailing sounds, like harmonics from outer space, seemingly happy yet **sad**, childish yet **old** as the **earth** itself. Campbell leaned forward to hear better, wishing he could understand (HERZOG, 2003, p 13)

In the aquatic show, Hugo and Helga whales were consumed due to their performance, as indicated by "the audience applauded wildly" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 10). Consequently, the entertainment show is a sentence for the trained whales to perpetual captivity. Although Captain Campbell is aware that "great creatures trapped in the pool, from which there could be no escape into the infinite expanse, their real home in the sea. The adventure that was meant to be their lives had been denied them" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 18), he desires the profit of their captivity ("It's the money that interests me, Campbell replied" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 64).

How is it possible to justify Captain Campbell's greed at the expense of the freedom of orcas? He considers whales to be inferior beings, irrational, different from humans and, therefore, the nonhuman is the "Other", as defined by Childs & Fowle (2006). The Other is seen and treated as inferior (Melani, 2009). In this sense, Campbell represents the Self or Us, while the whales are the Others or Them without importance. That is why, the captive whales in Herzog's narrative are just one more thing to be consumed for pleasure of humans.

In addition, there is also a group of the free whales in open sea are mentioned in the narrative as "whale", "animal", "orca", "beast", "Nickfin", "notched fin", "Fin", "the monster", "creature", "the bloody thing", "goddam thing" and "it". Although "Nickfin" is written with capital letter in Herzog's narrative, it refers to a nickname to designate



killer whales, which is used by character Umilak, as explained by the scientist character, Rachel Bedford, in the following excerpt of the narrative:

He<sup>7</sup> knows some things about our favorite killer whale, and I thought you should hear them. The Indians even have a name for the whale.” She paused. “They call it Hole-in-Fin. I guess the best translation would be Nickfin.” Umilak nodded, and she went on. “No one knows how it got the nick—maybe in a fight with another bull whale over a cow. It’s been in these waters before. Killer whales commonly return to the same locale (HERZOG, 2003, p. 81).

To sum up, the designations to refer to free whales in the open sea suggest that the Herzog avoided humanizing them. Hunting and living in pods is a part of the orca nature (MASS et al., 2013; DENKINGER et al., 2003); therefore, from biological point of view, the word “family” is a technical word to refer to an objective system of classification of organism based on biological similarities without any subjective connotation of affective bond. Consequently, the tautological axiom, “whales are whales” (HERZOG, *Orca*, p. 89), cited in Herzog's narrative highlights the predictable behavior of animal nature of the whales based on biological standards. It is important to remember that Herzog considered his writings “near Sci-fi”, because he based his narratives on real facts; so, the mention that orcas swim in pods in “same locale”, in excerpt above, means technically whale pods have migration routes.

The group of orcas in the open sea only follows their biological standards that have been repeated for millions of years. For example, they usually migrate following millenary trajectories in open seas according to the food availability; therefore, they migrate to poles (Arctic and Antarctic) in the warm seasons. According to Higdon (2012), seals and sea lions have pups in the warm seasons (spring and summer) and, therefore, there is an increase in availability of easy prey for killer whales to feed on in the poles. This Herzog’s “near Sci-fi” narrative started in the spring; precisely in May in Florida (the U.S.) and the incident between Captain Campbell and killer whales took place in Newfoundland (Canada). Thus, the season and the place of Herzog's novel suggest that the killer whale couple have been swimming with their pod to the Arctic, due to their biological inheritance. Captain Campbell and his crew had been following free wild animals in their known migratory route for millions of years in the evolution of this specie of whales. The female whale was having a calf in

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<sup>7</sup> The pronoun “He” refers to Umilak, who is a North American Indian in *Orca*'s narrative.

its traditional journey to Arctic, when suddenly it was caught and killed by Captain Campbell. Afterwards, the captain's crew dropped the dead whale carcasses (female whale and calf) into the sea. According to Bisther & Vongraven (2022), the animal behavior of an orca that has lost its calf is to swim pushing the dead carcass to the beach. Afterwards, this kind of whale species keeps swimming along with the pod in the traditional migratory route.

On the other hand, the male whale in Herzog's narrative exhibited behavior that defies the animal nature of orcas. Although the male whale pushed the dead mate toward shore in the "bloody mist", it started to attack whatever and whoever was around the captain instead of continuing to swim with the pod. For example, it swims into the harbor channel and bites the fuel pipes provoking a fire and explosions, which resulted in damaged some boats. Moreover, the bull whale had been swum around the marine dock for many days, which provoked financial losses to village fishermen; it attacked the captain's sister and chewed off her leg. To sum up, bull whale is an unusual nonhuman, because it aims revenge.

Revenge is a way of justice based on the "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" axiom. In Ecohorror perspective, the literal meaning of Herzog's narrative through revenge highlights the loss of human civility when dealing with environmental issues. For example, Captain Campbell confronts the orca with "harpoons", "grenades", "dynamite" and "rifle", whose behavior demonstrates the cruelty and contempt in dealing with nature, as his hunting aims to destroy the male whale. Therefore, the Ecohorror is related to the monstrosity of Captain Campbell who consciously chooses to go beyond the limits of civility. The literal meaning of Ecohorror in *Orca* is based on the panic due to ethical transgression issues of whaling followed by captivity and, sometimes, death of the "Other" as a product of consumerism.

The literal reading of *Orca* is full of Gothic elements, e.g., the places of gory attacks happen suddenly. The Gothic atmosphere of narrative derives from the certainty that the attack will be merciless and at any moment as announced by onomatopoeic sounds (e.g., "ping, ping"). Literally, the struggle between human and nonhuman involves monstrosities of both, such as a mordicant orca bites Annie's leg and fisherman caught and killed a pregnant orca. In addition, a killer whale is a Gothic character that stands out in the narrative, because it is a rational nonhuman

character with sharp teeth which bites weakened humans (female and elderly) in gory attacks at night.

On the other hand, *Orca* is completely different from many other Ecohorror stories in the 1970's, because Herzog showed that environmental anxieties are manageable, as long as humanity understands that the evil is not in Other, but it is in what humans do with nonhumans. The main difference between Herzog's *Orca* and the Ecohorror narratives of the same decade (e.g., *Jaws*<sup>8</sup>) lies in the fact that in the final struggle both humans and nonhumans give up revenge and both survive. The environmental issues in *Orca* highlight the importance of ethics in interactions between human and nonhuman worlds, otherwise the disasters are inevitable.

As noted by Bourke, "Environmentalists in the 1960's and 1970's rallied behind the concept of a balanced ecosystem, and it played a large part in their ideal views of how humanity would approach the natural world" (2019, p.147). In short, the outcome of Herzog's narrative was in agreement with the environmentalist movements of the seventies in favor of protection of seas.

## 2.2 WOUNDED MASCULINITY

The mystical meaning of the narrative considers the **narrated events as parallel to another** (Fredriksen, 2019, p.2). In *Orca*'s narrative, a whale couple swims in the open ocean until the pregnant whale is killed by Captain Campbell and his crew. The male whale saw the fisherman and his crew took his mate from him and, consequently, became alone, as "a solitary fin" in the immensity of the ocean. This is an allegory of the truest story of Captain Campbell, because he has been alone since his divorce and the death of his father. The meeting between Campbell and the orca is a battle that forces him to confront his past memories, for example:

"although he tried to forget his former wife, she sometimes floated into his thoughts, like debris riding on the sea surface" (HERZOG, 2003, p 19).

In this sense, the rule of whale in the narrative brings the past to settle scores with Captain Campbell. Their meeting is a metaphoric image of contrast between fisherman feeling about his real life as "a waste of time or worse" and the Other's life,

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<sup>8</sup> Steven Spielberg directed *Jaws* in 1975 based on a novel the same name by Peter Benchley.

such as “orcas have a highly developed family and pack instinct”. At the same time, Captain Campbell is constrained to face his memories of everything he suffered and desired in life, as exemplified by excerpt below:

He found himself wondering what it was like to feel as strongly as the animal evidently did, to be so charged with emotion. The whale must have had a deep attachment – if that was the word – for its dead mate. Jack had never had such sensations. He'd never been that involved with a woman. His experiences seemed dreary and meaningless: an infinite assortment of beds and in them a variety of nameless, faceless women, satisfying an urge but providing no real passion. He had serviced women, and they had served him, but that was the extent of it. The idea saddened him. What was it like to make love instead of have sex?” (HERZOG, 2003, p. 156-157)

From the point of view of mystical meaning, Campbell's misfortune is marked in the scars on the “sanitized skin” of the whale, as exemplified by the following excerpt: “Mass of scars and abrasions covered the head, as though all the abuses and insults of time had collected there” (HERZOG, 2003, p. 274). It is interesting to note that a specific scar is highlighted along the *Orca's* narrative: “notched fin”. In symbolic terms, the connection of fin-penis pairs is that their shape and both contradict the gravity law: the fin stands over the seawater and the penis by erection. In 1960's and 1970's decades, sexuality issues were considered taboo subjects (DAVIS, 1982). The counterculture movement represented an opposition to bourgeois standards in American society with unresolved issues about gender, race, environment and consumerism in the 1960's and 1970's (GAIR, 2007). As a result of the pressure of counterculture movements, the masculinity issues of Americans became target of public discussion; therefore, it is plausible to consider a “fin” as a euphemism of male organ in Herzog's narrative; however, the fin is “notched” signaling that vulnerability of male sexuality issues in American society in 1970's decade.

Thus, the notches on the orca's dorsal fin are related to old scars printed in Captain Campbell's past memories as exemplified by the trembling of his masculine honor related to his wife's infidelity. In addition, the discovery of his wife's infidelity was a surprise for him as indicated by the adverb of time (“one night”), which symbolizes his surprise of the adultery in the following excerpt.

But **one night** he had come aboard well before midnight. It happened to a lot of men, he guessed, but not in his **wildest** dreams to him. As he walked into the cabin, she whimpered in fright, pulling sheets and blankets around

her, to expose a man. Jack hadn't made a sound; he went to the marina and drank himself into a stupor (HERZOG, 2003, p. 21).

According to Durand (1999), *Orcus* is a god from the underground related to the night in Celtic Folklore. The mention of "night" also associates infidelity with the notion of something obscure or hidden (Durand, 1999) and, therefore, a moral violation to values of the American family in the context of the 1970s. In fact, the association of infidelity and night has a potential to increase the magnitude of the violation of a fidelity promise in marital life. Herzog presents the captain's wife as "a totally ordinary girl", who committed adultery in the same cabin of the vessel where she shared with her husband. After that, Captain Campbell had been solitary, apathetic, and turned into a womanizer: "Campbell knew his sister worried about him – about his drinking and womanizing, about his apathy, pessimism and bitterness, about the way he was running (or not running) their marina, the Gold Sands" (HERZOG, 2003, p. 6).

Although Captain Campbell mentioned that marital infidelity "happened to a lot of men", it introduced the chaos in his life. From Ecohorror's point of view, the mystical meaning is related to the negative impact of wounded masculinity, expressed by Captain Campbell, who believes that just his wife was responsible for his misfortune (divorce, drunkenness, misogynistic, indebted). For him it was easier to believe in a lie than to admit that he also was responsible for the marital transgressions. Consequently, Captain Campbell and the bull orca had their family destroyed and, in this sense, they have some in common, as explained by the Rachel Bedford character: "You and the big whale are perfectly matched. You want revenge on life; the whale wants revenge on you. Same thing." (HERZOG, 2003, p. 117).

In the seventies, the scenario of changes moral and ethical was also associated with economical insecurities that haunted Americans. For example, Captain Campbell is a misogynist man with financial debts and seeks worldly pleasures (drinks, sex, etc.) to heal his wounded masculinity. He tries "to rehabilitate himself by capturing and selling a great white shark to an aquarium" (BERNS; MARINO, 2016, p. 125). During shark hunting, he changes his mind and replaces the target for an orca. In this stage of the narrative, the motif of the interaction human/nonhuman world is the greed for profit..

Therefore, the fisherman character is the stereotype of those who prioritizes profit and pleasure to heal his wounded masculinity regardless of ethical consequences. Based on the assumption that after the Second World War everything becomes liquid (e.g., love, fear, time, life, loyalty, etc.) in Bauman's terms (2004, 2008), the character Captain Campbell symbolizes the human need to fulfill his low self-esteem value through the obsessive consumption; even if it costs the freedom of the captive orcas (e.g., Hugo and Helga orcas) or life of wild orcas in open sea.

Moreover, the captive orcas also had their welfare sacrificed so that their sponsors could receive the entrance fee in Seaquarium and the profit from consuming goods. For example, Captain Campbell purchased a souvenir from a vending machine after Hugo and Helga's show, as exemplified below:

By the exit stood a row of machines that carved plastic souvenir models of various Seaquarium attractions. One machine sculpted plastic Flippers; another, great white sharks; and a third, killer whales. Campbell inserted some coins and watched the knife cut. A six-inch whale dropped from a slot, and he put it in his pocket. For some silly reason, he hoped the whale would bring him luck. He needed some (HERZOG, 2003, p. 14).

The consumerism is a kind of escapism of Campbell's day-by-day problems, as also exemplified by the "a glass of gin" and "drink, sex or both. Moreover, the human relationships have also become consumables as well as a visit to the Seaquarium, marine animals show and a plastic souvenir in the 1970's. In this way, Captain Campbell's interpersonal relationships are at the level of something to be consumed and then discarded in a repetitive cycle, as exemplified below:

He had broken a date with a lackluster blonde he'd acquired somewhere, another in a line of **plastic women** with lovely shapes, flat faces, and no passion. They might have been carved by a machine (HERZOG, Orca, p. 18).

Therefore, plastic whales and plastic women are symbols of a general consumerism in Herzog's narrative, which suggest the amusement provokes the pleasure of "individual acquisition and use of mass-produced goods" (CROSS, 2000, p.1). Attributing to the nonhumans the hierarchical level of Others is possible to justify the material consuming and also naturalize it. The mystical meaning, i.e. the parallel story in Orca, is related to the Capitan Campbell's divorce and its consequences through consumerism as a kind of escapism from damage in masculine honor due to adultery in the seventies.

### 2.3 ORCA-VAMPIRE

The reading based on “moral meaning” of a narrative concerns the **changes** promoted in **values and behavior** (FREDRIKSEN, 2019, p.2). In short, Herzog's narrative clearly distinguishes two possible real groups of whales: humanized whales (Hugo and Helga) and non-humanized whales (orcas in the open sea). However, there is also a third group which is neither human nor nonhuman, which are positioned between these two worlds. This third group comprises just the male orca, which saw Captain Campbell to kill his female mate and calf.

What makes Herzog's male orca different from other orcas in the ocean? It has a row of teeth in its jaw, gory red eyes, defiant look and nocturnal habits. In addition, this bull orca is different, because it is “as smart as any human” according to the character Rachel Bedford, who had warned Captain Campbell. Therefore, the male orca has a physical shape of a killer whale, and it is rational, although animals are irrational.

According to Murga Aroca (2003), rationality is the element that distinguishes humans from nonhumans. So, the male orca is not nonhuman, because it is rational; otherwise it is not human, because it has the physical appearance of a whale. Consequently, the male orca is neither nonhuman nor human, although it mixes nonhuman and human characteristics at the same time. Therefore, it is a hybrid creature (a hybrid orca), which is related to the moral meaning to the narrative.

Furthermore, the combination of some physical characteristics (sharp teeth, red eyes and black dorsal skin, unvoiced in the narrative) with uncommon behaviors (nocturnal appearance, rational strategy of hunting, vindictive desire) indicates that the hybrid orca is also a monster. Its bloody eyes and chasing a specific target (the Captain Campbell) suggest a “bloody thing” like a vampire.

The vampiric heritage of bull orca is suggested by its rational desire of provoking harm in Captain Campbell combined with animal nature, which is symbolized by its jaws (Durand, 1999). For example, “teeth a foot long, pointed like tusks, beckoned, which are ready to crush and bite” (Herzog, 2003, p.149) in order to drain the human virtues. The disparity in strength in the struggle between fragile humans (Captain Campbell and his crew) and the orca-vampire creates the

atmosphere of Ecohorror in Herzog's narrative, because it is a battle against the unknown powers of a nonhuman creature (a monstrous orca-vampire).

From an Ecohorror perspective, although the orca-vampire was unseen during the night, the sound onomatopoeia (“ping-ping”) reveals that it was somewhere near the vessel and it was ready to attack the humans. The antitheses seen-unseen and presence-absence of the whale in the immensity of the cold ocean is equally terrifying. So, in the emptiness of the immensity of the ocean, although the killer whale without being seen, provokes constant fear and apprehension, which increase the sense of horror in the story.

Considering the moral meaning in an Ecohorror perspective, the fear of death arises during the attempt to capture the whale alive, when a human member of crew also died. Until then, the deaths of the pregnant orca and her calf were bearable by the crew; sad, but they were just like a work accident for Campbell and his crew.

The orca-vampire and Captain Campbell are the main characters of Herzog's narrative, but they are the distorted mirror image of each other (Turkington, 2018), as explained by Rachel Bedford to Captain Campbell: “You see the whale as the evil in yourself. By killing the whale, you conquer the evil” (Herzog, 2003, p.249). Therefore, the fisherman Campbell is vampirized by the orca-vampire through chasing him, who tries to survive and realizes of his past transgressions against himself and the environment.

According to Keohane (2017), orca is a Latin word which means “bringer of dead” related to Roman mythology of Orcus, demon of the underworld. This demon is in charge to punish broken oaths, such as the fisherman's environmental and social transgressions including the death of whales and his divorce (broken of promise of marital life), respectively. The *Orcus* demon requires a punishment (“only thing that'll satisfy the goddamn thing is me”), and he takes the fisherman-monster to his realm in the underworld, as exemplified in the final struggle by the thoughts of Captain Campbell: “Too late! a voice within him wailed. Too late! It's always been too late for me!” (Herzog, 2003, p.274).

According to Durand (1999), the fish is a symbol of rehabilitation in hybrid figures, which mixes fish and humans, such as the orca-vampire in Herzog's narrative. Therefore, the survival of Captain Campbell requires the redemption of this inner orca-vampire, which feeds itself with debts and regrets of Campbell's past. The moral sense is redemption, when the fisherman resolves his inner monster (“I killed it.



I really killed it” (Herzog, 2003, p.272). The redemption is marked by the replacement of color of orca-vampire’s eyes, which changes from red to amber. The new color of orca’s eyes is a metaphorical image of rescuing the guilt of his grievances (e.g., divorce, greed, drunkenness, and consumerism). The symbolic redeem appears through the new way to see the life, which is allegorically represented through of the change of color and transparency of eyes of the whale:

He regarded the monster’s eyes with fascination. What did he see there? **Up close, the eyes were amber, not red. Amber pools, deep and clear.** The ice was tilting and he began to slide. In the pools before him something lured, something not malevolent at all but wild, free, beautiful. A high voice called to him in a strange tongue which, miraculously, he could understand. Come near, it said. Lose yourself. Return. Merge with me. Come (HERZOG, 2003, p. 273-274).

Thus, he sees in front of him a promise of a new future with “something not malevolent at all but wild, free, beautiful” (Herzog, 2003, p.274). However, a new life demands the healing of previous wounds, such as the death of a female whale and an unborn calf. Allegorically, these two deaths are related to the bitterness of adultery and divorce that prevented him from having a family (wife and children). In fact, he had lost his human virtues and faith in people due to the misfortunes he had accumulated during his lifetime. Therefore, he was vampirized by his inner orca-vampire, which grew fat on guilt and resentment he contained. In that sense, the whale-vampire was the container that mirrored Captain Campbell's wounded and spiteful image.

A new fisherman emerges from deep inside of Captain Campbell. Afterwards, the orca-vampire swims away in the direction of the icebergs and disappears as if the Orcus demon returned to its underground realm. This is a euphemistic way to say that the whaling journey is a quest to Captain Campbell’s redemption (“To set yourself free” (Herzog, 2003, p.249) from his inner beast. The climax of connection between the fisherman and the beast during the final whaling hunting (or “quest”) suggests that man becomes conscious by changing the color of the whale’s eyes.

Furthermore, from the perspective of a moral meaning of the narrative, the character who intended to save the whale, that is, the scientist Rachel Bedford, points to someone who intended to save the monster; in fact, the monster is Captain Jack Campbell. Consequently, the moral meaning is related to redemption or the possibility of rescuing human virtues and building a new life from facing their negative

subjective feelings, such as anguish, bitterness and fears related to wounded masculinity. From Ecohorror's perspective there is a rehabilitation of his masculinity because he realizes his own male transgressions and this allows him to let him free.

### 3 COLLECTIVE ANXIETIES

#### 3.1 MONSTERS UNDER SEAWATER IN THE 1970s

Anagogical reading consists of finding out a **hidden meaning** (FREDRIKSEN, 2019, p.2). From a collective perspective, the transgressions of Captain Campbell (e.g., killing pregnant whale, hunting with grenades, missiles, wounded honor, lack of ethic, consumerism, etc) are related to disruptions that terrify the Americans due to the numerous human interventions in the oceans in the 1970's; for example, nuclear bomb tests during Cold War and Vietnam War, radioactive waste, spillage oil, etc (BUSCH, MEARS, 1970; SUTER, 1983). The fears that haunt crowds are proportional to those faced individually and produce a feeling of impotence due to the uncertainty of the unknown (BAUMAN, 2006). The perpetual condemnation of the captive orcas (e.g., Hugo and Helga) to live in the Seaquarium was echoed in the fear of the possibility of captivity of American soldiers in Vietnam. Consequently, the captive orcas can be seen as an allegory of captivating soldiers in Vietnam.

In short, the 1970's witnessed protests related to the internal demands (nationalism issues, financial crisis, wounded masculinity, environmental concerns) have provoked the collective dread of unknown and/or unseen, especially those related to chemical weapons (e.g., orange agent in Vietnam War) and nuclear power (weapons, accidents, tests, and stocking, for instance). In Herzog's narrative, the collective concerns about the US involvement in wars in the seventies, e.g. the Vietnam War and the Cold War, which is hidden in a subtext through the casual comparisons, e.g., "Suddenly a burst of *bright orange light* from the harbor filled the night and was reflected on their faces" (Herzog, 2003, p.162) and "shipping atomic bombs" (Herzog, 2003, p.192) or ironic explanations, such as in the following conversation between Captain Campbell and the mayor Smith of Newfoundland:

\_ The naval supply store can think of only one reason why you've bought and loaded quantities of nets, lines, blocks, and tackles. You obviously want to capture something big. Well –

\_ A Russian submarine, Campbell interrupted. We work for the CIA. At once he was sorry for his sharp tongue (HERZOG, 2003, p. 75).

The external shape of orcas and nuclear submarines in seventies has some similarities, such as both are cylindrical mid-body of its length, with a conical-shape head (in orcas) and bow (in submarines); a bridge fin on top of submarines above the waterline (CHAKRABORTY, 2019) is also similar to the dorsal fin of orcas (Annex 1). In short, the shape, aggressiveness and the habitat of the orca character contribute to create the atmosphere of horror in Herzog's narrative. Thus, the orca character is an allegory of nuclear submarines and it reminds the readers about the unseen nuclear threat from undersea.

Herzog wrote *Orca* in a historical context of debates about nuclear bombs and its consequences, including environmental and ethical issues. In the seventies, the environmental concerns highlighted the vulnerability of the planet through the divulgation of the mottos like "Only one planet" and "Save your planet. You can't get off". At the same time, environmental activism in favor of marine life was widely reported in the media through images of people protesting against captivity (Annex 2) as well as whaling on the open seas mainly divulged by Greenpeace. Meanwhile, the images of caged whales in a pool of Seaquarium as well as dead whales during the whaling procedures reminded the American families about their relatives in the battle front in the wars since Second World War (Annex 3).

The popular pressure contributed to putting environmental issues in the public agenda (Annex 3), which resulted in the creation of laws aiming to protect the environment (MONTRIE, 2011; WILSON, 2023). For example, Marine Mammal Protection Act became illegal the killing, hunting, injuring or harassing all species of marine in the US in 1971.

In addition, Herzog's option for calling the whale as "notched fin" points to sexuality issues, which is also related to the U.S. historical context in the seventies (VICENT, 2015). Herzog was "a prolific author who wrote about nuclear disarmament" (HEVESI, 2010), so his afflictions related to nuclear weapons are mentioned in allegories in *Orca*. For example, the "notched fin" refers to bull orca wounded in battle against Captain Campbell on the high seas, that represents the damages suffered by "self" in the war against "them". This can be seen as an allegory to masculinity of American marines wounded in international wars, such as the Vietnam War in the 1970s.

To sum up, the anagogical meaning is related to fear of nuclear weapons in the oceans due to transgressions related to the US involvement in international wars

in the 60's and 70's decades. The fear derived from thoughts of being bitten by monsters from the depth of seawater can be seen as an allegory to Herzog's beliefs about the threats of nuclear weapons (bombs and submarines) that came from and were in the depths of the sea in the seventies.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study tried to answer the questions presented in the introduction. The first of them aimed to identify Gothic elements that allowed to classifying *Orca* as Ecohorror narrative belonged to Ecogothic subgenre. The Gothic elements are disseminated in *Orca*, such as the interactions between humans and nonhumans happen in hostile and isolated places. For example, the immensity of sea, extreme isolation of Arctic Pole, the hostility of icebergs constitute a frightening environment, which is comparable to the emptiness and cold castles of Gothic narratives (Melani, 2009); therefore, the place of adventure is hostile and scary, which are characteristics of the Gothic genre. The hostile and grotesque environment of final struggle in the Arctic icy landscape is one element that produces the pessimist atmosphere of human disadvantage against a powerful monster in Gothic narrative. In addition to the adventure place, the nocturnal time of the struggles between human and nonhuman is also an element of Gothic narratives (MELANI, 2009).

The second question proposed in the introduction is related to non-human representations in *Orca*, which comprise captive orcas, free whales in the open sea, and an orca-vampire. The captive orcas are humanized, and they are tools for Herzog to criticize the exploration of nonhumans in aquariums shows. Comparing the life of orcas in captivity and those in the open sea, Herzog highlights human's cruelty against nonhuman due to consumption of entertainment shows as well as the whaling and nonhuman captivity.

In addition, the mordicant orca-vampire character has two functions in the narrative. One of them is related to a literal Ecohorror point of view that comprises the vengeful bull orca character, as the nonhuman answer to human wickedness committed against the environment. The second function is related to the allegorical meaning of the orca-vampire character that mirrors the human's dilemmas based on past memories *versus* present. This kind of orca-vampire character mixes human rationality and the shape of nonhuman to compose a hybrid whale with red eyes and wrapped in a black skin like a cape of a terrifying vampire monster. The attacks of this orca-vampire are gory, grotesque and announced by an onomatopoeic ("ping ping"). This sound is a language figure that helps to increase the spooky and pessimist atmosphere of the narrative. The onomatopoeic sound indicates that orca-vampire is ready to attack from somewhere underwater, although it is unseen.

The reading of *Orca* guided by different levels of meanings allowed to recognize the different representations of whales in Herzog's narrative. Moreover, the reading guide is a helpful tool to identify three important symbols in *Orca*, such as the "notched fin", "red eyes - amber eyes", and "orca's shape body", which are related to different meaning levels. These symbols contribute to answer the third question proposed in the introduction of this final paper.

"Notched fin" is an allegorical symbol of wounded masculinity that provoked individual and collective anxieties in the seventies. From Ecohorror point of view, the aggressivity of human character against nonhuman is an escapism of wounded masculinity due to his wife's infidelity. It was more comfortable to escape through consumption of goods (e.g., drinks and entertainment shows) and Others (e.g., whales), as well as unfeeling interpersonal relationships (e.g., plastic women) than realize the truth of his own wounds. In pursuit of the binomial consumption and saving profit, humans are capable of practicing monstrosities such as sacrificing the freedom and nature of nonhumans.

In *Orca's* narrative, a wounded masculinity induced the use of "grenades", and "missile" weapons against nonhuman that indicates all human animality and loss of ethical virtues of human beings. Even though Herzog's *Orca* is full of meanings, this author gave an opportunity to the human character to face his past memories in an introspective journey and be reborn as suggested by the orca-vampire's amber eyes. From Ecohorror perspective, *Orca* highlights the human ("self") monstrosities against the nonhumans because nonhumans are represented as Other ("them"), which are consumed for human pleasure and escape valve of a wounded masculinity.

Moreover, the historical context of wars in the seventies (Vietnam and Cold War) combined with wounded masculinity outcropped a strong environmental anxiety. The orca's shape body is an allegorical symbol of nuclear submarines that answer the third question proposed in the introduction of this final paper. The fear of nuclear weapons in the seas (atomic bomb tests, radioactive waste disposal in the oceans, among others) had provoked intense anxieties and discussions in the seventies.

Although Herzog wrote *Orca* in 1974 and published it in 1976, in fact, his narrative keeps reflecting the fear of nuclear weapons in wars and the environmental disruptions due to human interventions in the seas. Certainly, *Orca's* narrative has multiple whale representations that are tools to build meanings in the interactions

between humans and nonhumans in literary devices. The title of this final monograph questioned the Ecohorror in *Orca* from a perspective of maritime stress in the 1970's and the answer is related to the combination of cultural transformations of American society that required environmental focus on sea-related issues, including protection for whales and policy review on the use of nuclear weapons and radioactive waste at sea.



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## ANNEXES

## ANNEXE 1

a)



b)



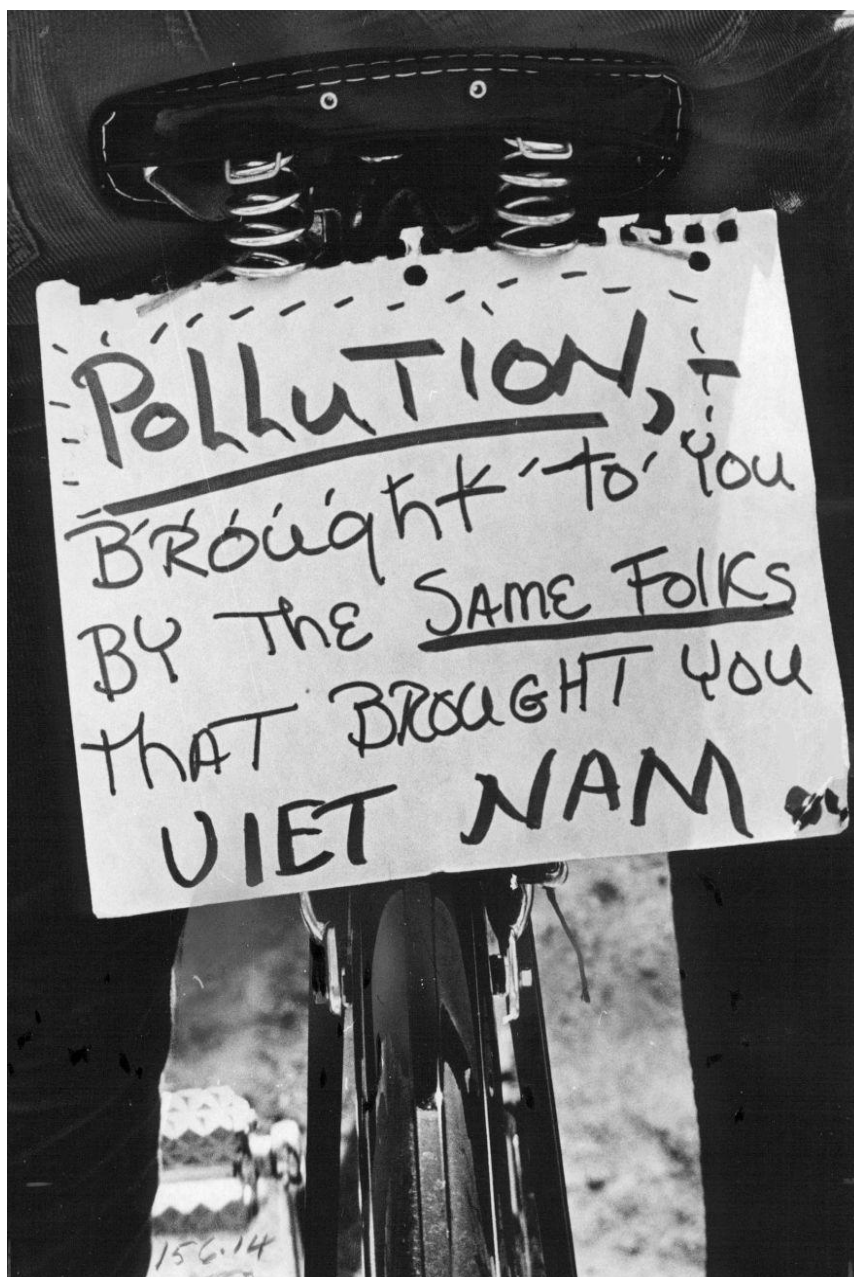
Annex 1 – (a) USS *Thresher* (SSN-593) bow-on view, taken at sea on 24 July 1961. Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command. Catalog#: NH 97545. <https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/navy-ships/a38506406/uss-thresher-timeline/> (b) Image of orca in open sea by Nancy Ilacuna. In: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/orca>

## ANNEXE 2



Annex 2 – Popular manifestation in May 1970 outside Ted Griffin's Seattle Marine Aquarium. (Richard S. Heyza / The Seattle Times). In: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/the-orca-and-the-orca-catcher-how-a-generation-of-killer-whales-was-taken-from-puget-sound/>

## ANNEXE 3



Annex 3 – This sign hung behind the bike on April 22, 1970. In: <https://www.history.com/news/first-earth-day-1960s-counterculture>