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Abstract:

This article examines the act of naming in *The Crying of Lot 49* and its relevance to the gendering of Oedipa's pursuit of knowledge. By examining the grand narratives implied by Oedipa's name, the paper explores the potential for this novel to be a feminist narrative which makes statements about the female religious role and the position of women in relation to psychoanalysis. The novel is considered against its contemporaneous cultural climate in terms of the second wave of feminism, the discovery of previously suppressed religious texts and the emerging emphasis on psychoanlytic discourse in everyday speech.

The Naming of Oedipa Maas: Feminizing the Divine Pursuit of Knowledge in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*

Emma V. Miller

The provocative use of names in *The Crying of Lot 49* has received a large amount of critical attention and the heroine's name has proved to be a particular point of contention. Terry P. Caesar claimed in 1981, that "Maas" can be construed as "my ass," which he took as evidence that Pynchon is not simply playing with words but with the critics as well.[1] The debate has continued over the decades and in 2009, Dana Medoro asserted that the shortening of the heroine's first name to "Oed" may reference the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and "announce the possibility that she is a source of limitless significance."[2] The sheer number of seemingly contradictory readings suggests that there is not, and is not likely to be, one dominant interpretation. It is improbable though, that Pynchon only intended to mislead the reader, when we may consider that the multiplicity of associations the names imply arguably enriches the reading of this novella, rather than simply distracting from its plot. Such a conclusion indicates that the very flexibility of definition and understanding in the text is in itself important, rendering *every* reading relevant.[3] Pynchon can be seen to play with Jacques Lacan's[4] development of Ferdinand Saussure's structuralist theory of language and his consideration of the complicated relationship between the signifier, (the physical manifestation of the symbol, in this case the word) and the signified (meaning). Lacanian theory attempts to explain how the unconscious operates through and via language, where language is representative of the symbolic order, of social expectation, and ultimately therefore of the phallus; and Desire exists in the spaces between, in the endless connections between a lexical item and its possible meanings.

When these theoretical propositions are taken into consideration, meaning becomes important both in relation to the particular and specific reading of the text, and in the context of one reading in the vast web of every other possible interpretation. It is not then, just what Oedipa's name signifies here that is important, but the friction between the word "Oedipa" and everything it *might* become, or indeed, what it *has been* historically.[5] Pynchon considers the indeterminable space between, where desire operates and social obligation does not. Language and the rules it dictates, according to Lacan and Derrida (and in accordance with the male-dominated history of the English language prior to the publication of *The Crying of Lot 49*) are essentially and unavoidably patriarchal. The gaps between language and meaning, in the field

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of interpretation, as numerous feminist critics from Luce Irigaray to Hélène Cixous have argued, may offer room for feminine linguistic play and a locale to undermine the existing gender bias in the means of communication. This article will consider the dominant arguments surrounding meaning and Oedipa's name, the emphasis on the act of naming and its relationship to gender, religion, and knowledge. It will assert that the competing meanings of Oedipa's name are as important to interpreting her character and her quest, as what she is not named, and who she is named by, in the course of the narrative.

Jacques Lacan and the Post-Structuralist Postal System

Pynchon's decision to have a woman as the main character in a novel where the pursuit of knowledge is central to the plot can be seen as significant in relation to the timeframe of the book's creation and publication. Oedipa has been read as influenced by numerous women, both fictional and actual, including but by no means limited to: the artist Remedios Varo, Rapunzel, the nuns or schoolgirls in the Varo painting entitled *Bordando el Manto Terrestre*, the Virgin Mary, Marilyn Monroe and even Botticelli's Venus.[6] It is not surprising that she has attracted these comparisons as Pynchon continuously draws attention to Oedipa's femaleness, if not always her femininity, but he does not depict her as just *one* "type" of woman. When the novella opens she is an apparently stereotypical post-war wife, (shopping, making her husband supper and attending Tupperware parties); but she quickly mutates from this understanding of her to other interpretations of being a woman, until neither Oedipa nor the reader eventually know which category of womanhood to allot to her, if indeed, any of the categories fit at all. The nature of being a woman was defined by Pynchon's contemporary, Simone de Beauvoir, as just such a complex and fluid scenario; she describes the understanding of what it is to be female as a myth, with the majority of the understandings of womanhood, in her opinion, being inflicted on women externally:

> It is always difficult to describe a myth; it cannot be grasped or encompassed; it haunts the human consciousness without ever appearing before it in a fixed form. The myth is so various, so contradictory that at first its unity is not discerned: Delilah and Judith, Aspasia and Lucretia, Pandora and Athena – woman is at once Eve and the Virgin Mary. She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, the power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress; she is man's prey, his downfall, she is everything he is not and that he longs for, his negation and his *raison d'être*.[7]

For Beauvoir, woman is understood by her otherness, and the same can be said of Pynchon's depiction of Oedipa's femininity in the introductory section of the novella; she is defined in relation to others, initially through the significance of her name and the act of naming in general. He introduces his heroine simply as "Mrs Oedipa Maas," using her full name and offering no preliminary description of her person or her associations. It is important that she is given her married title, as this is the first indication that this

character is female, however, it also serves to give her a role, and to associate her with a husband.

If Oedipa is depicted as Latin-American (through her husband's nick-name "Mucho" Maas), within this culture she would traditionally retain both of her parents' family names and then add her husband's surname to the end of the list, but she would more frequently be referred to as her married title + her husband's surname.[8] By editing her full list of surnames, Pynchon places the emphasis on her relationship to her husband specifically, and this makes a cultural connection to the contemporaneous discussion surrounding female identity. Betty Friedan suggests in the *Feminine Mystique* that a woman does not have an understanding of herself except through the other people in her life: her father, her husband or her children. Oedipa here then is simply "wife," not "daughter," but crucially not "person" either. What Friedan describes as "the problem that has no name"[9] is just this, that women were deprived of the right to an individual identity by society prior to the second wave of feminism, expected to be daughters, wives and mothers as prescribed by a social culture dominated by men. As Friedan argues:

> The feminine mystique permits, even encourages, women to ignore 'the question of their identity.' The mystique says they can answer the question 'Who am I?' by saying 'Tom's wife... Mary's mother'. The truth is – and how long it has been true, I'm not sure, but it was true in my generation and it is true of girls growing up today – an American woman no longer has a private image to tell her who she is, or can be, or wants to be.[10]

This "problem" came to a climax with the second coming of feminism in the 1970s which saw the publication of the seminal works of Germaine Greer and Kate Millet, but in Pynchon's America of the 1960s this impulse of revolution amongst the female population was already increasing in impetus. Friedan explains that: "[i]n 1960, the problem that has no name burst like a boil through the image of the happy American housewife."[11] It is interesting that although the current social attitude to women enabled a degree of fluidity about their identity, as both Beauvoir and Friedan indicate, this was flexibility visited on them from outside of themselves, it did not give them choice, but presented them as essentially malleable and subject to the dictates of others. By inviting the reader to enter into the game of defining Oedipa, Pynchon is emulating this experience through the text. Who Oedipa is, designated neither by her name or her roles throughout the narrative, remains essentially and necessarily mysterious. Oedipa cannot be autonomous in the world she exists in; in order to be independent she must circumnavigate the dominant ideology and see outside of it, and herself. Her struggle to do this is illustrated by her later torment: the toothaches, the nausea and the menstrual pains, her depression and hope for mental illness, "you are a nut, Oedipa, out of your skull." (118) The statement echoes the concerns of Lewis Carroll's Alice character, who, on entering the alien space down the rabbit hole, ceases to be able to recognise herself and therefore fears for her sanity, so inextricable is her relationship to her external environment.[12] This also draws an association between Oedipa in the 1960s

and the Victorian female child, another link in Lacan's chain of meaning that makes this question all the more provocative as it gives it a historical definition separate but connected to Oedipa's concerns. When Oedipa loses sight of the familiar social setting and enters Pynchon's Wonderland, she too falls into a black hole of confusion where nothing is as it seems, and, like Alice, she no longer even recognises her reflection in the mirror, stating: "For this, oh God, was the void." (118) At this point she has left the female sphere of sexual passivity, lasagne construction and Tupperware parties, and by acting as Pierce's executrix entered the active male locale. Her attempt to explain her experience of this as "pregnancy" depicts her inability to think outside of the femaleness she knows, constructed by a language which does not seem to offer her the chance to be a subject. Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman* published just over a decade later, neatly encapsulates this dichotomy in the symbolism of men and women:

> In the stylisation of graffiti, the prick is always presented erect, in an alert attitude of enquiry or curiosity or affirmation; it points upwards, it asserts. The hole is open, an inert space, like a mouth waiting to be filled. From this elementary iconography may be derived the whole metaphysic of sexual differences – man aspires; woman has no other function but to exist, waiting. The male is positive, an exclamation mark. Woman is negative. Between her legs lies nothing but zero, the sign for nothing, that only becomes something when the male principle fills it with meaning.
>
> Anatomy is destiny, said Freud, which is true enough as far as it goes, but ambiguous. My anatomy is only part of an infinitely complex organisation, my self.[13]

Oedipa too waits to be given something to fill the void. Pierce (a name that is also a phallic reference and to which I will return later in this article) first does this explicitly in Carter's terminology when they have their affair; and then with his "will" he appears to do this in terms of her life, offering an alternative to the "big deck full of nothing." Significantly, news of Oedipa's task arrives in the post, the letter box being another manifestation of this open mouth penetrated by Pierce. Yet Pynchon appears to be attempting to subvert the dichotomy that Oedipa recognises, as her attempt to describe herself in these terms is unsuccessful. She is not pregnant in the bodily sense that she seeks to clarify. The gap then is in meaning, the Lacanian site of the unconscious desire is between her experience and the terms she uses to describe it, her reaction to the situation goes beyond her understood female passive role, and so she is incapable of communicating it. As such she must either attempt to depict herself in male terms and thereby "be the phallus"[14] and thus according to Lacan "reject an essential part of her femininity," or as post-structuralist feminist critics such as Hélène Cixous would argue in response to Lacan, she must seek a new mode of expression.[15] Her inability to make sense of what is happening to her makes her unable to even recognise her surroundings and she consequently asks, "*where* am I?" This question and her corresponding death-wish also feeds into Lacanian theory, as Minsky asserts: "where meaning and signification end there is nothing except the intractable, unsymbolic quality of the materiality of the world, trauma, psychosis and death."[16] Oedipa is in

Lacanian terms, on "the seam where the imaginary meets the real."[17] "[T]he revelation of something which properly speaking is unnameable, the back of this throat, the complex, the unlocatable form, which also makes it into the primitive organ *par excellence*, the abyss of the feminine organ from which all life emerges, this gulf of the mouth, in which everything is swallowed up, and no less the image of death in which everything comes to an end."[18] For Oedipa the discovery of this "raw"[19] state is a result of her journey from the familiar domestic structure to the alien environment of the Trystero, a concept not merely incomprehensible, but also unimaginable, and which does not adhere to the Symbolic. As such it necessarily impacts on the Oedipal crisis, an unavoidable and no doubt intentional pun.

Within the opening sentence Oedipa's gender is also overtly pressed upon the reader with the explanation of her new role, "she, Oedipa, had been named executor or she supposed executrix, of the will of one Pierce Inverarity." (1) It is significant that this time her married title is omitted implying that one position is traded for the other, she cannot be both "Mrs" and an "executor." To repeat her title is arguably unnecessary to the development of the plot and therefore could be deemed insignificant, but nothing in this text serves just one function. The addition of "she" before "Oedipa" may also be considered extraneous to the narrative; and Oedipa's correction of the term "executor" to "executrix," for the same reasons also could appear superfluous. However, such additions here serve to highlight the relationship between her gender and the task she has been assigned, as well as the person who has occasioned it. The emphasis on the female pronoun coupled with her first name presses upon the reader that she has been given a feminized version of the traditionally masculine Oedipus . Pynchon could have called her "Electra," referring to the now-little-used term coined by Carl Jung for a variation of Freud's Oedipus complex when perceived in girls, but he deliberately chose a perversion of the male name, once again associating her femaleness with a male counterpart. The history of the Electra complex supports this reading as it was initially refuted by Freud, who claimed that the Oedipus complex was a specifically male phenomenon but he went on to describe his own "Feminine Oedipus Complex,"[20] thus subsuming the female understanding of development into the established male theory. To further complicate the situation, the myth of Electra differs substantially from that of Oedipus. In the psychoanalytic description of the Electra complex, the girl changes her attachment from mother to father as a result of penis envy, suggesting that in a reversal of the Oedipus complex she will want to marry her father and kill her mother. Yet, unlike the myth of Oedipus where he does unknowingly marry his mother and kill his father, the mythological Electra does not desire her father, Agamemnon, but seeks instead to avenge him. He returns from battle to be murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover, and Electra then works with her brother to exact her revenge by slaughtering her mother and reinstating her father's reputation.[21] Her actions then, are very different to Oedipus' and so is, crucially, her motivation, she is aware of committing matricide. For

Pynchon to associate his heroine with Electra would be to suggest a *knowing* aggression toward her own sex and a deliberate preference for the opposite sex. However, to align her with the mythical Oedipus suggests only a subconscious difficulty in her understanding of her gender and sexuality in relation to her "parents" (which can be read in terms of forefathers and foremothers, and ultimately the Symbolic).

Pynchon's use of 'Oedipa' rather than Electra also serves to associate his heroine with Lacan and his positioning of the awareness of language at the point of development associated with the Oedipus complex (the Electra complex is not a phrase utilised by Lacan). Pynchon's use of "she" "had been named" in the first lines of the novella emphasises the powerful role of a giver of names, as such a signifier becomes a part of an individual's external identity. The gravitas in the act of bestowing names is also pressed upon the reader in *Gravity's Rainbow*,[22] which indicates that the reader should pay attention to how Inverarity's will affects Oedipa from this point. Pynchon's choice of phrase refers once again to both psychoanalysis and Christianity. It echoes Lacan's "name-of-the-father," a theory encapsulating and developed from Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex[23] which refers back to the heroine's first name, "Oedipa." The title of Lacan's theory refers to religion, specifically playing on "in the name of the Father" (*in nomine patris*), part of the Trinitarian formula which derives from Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father**, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Writing in French however, means that Lacan also plays on the sound of the word for 'name' in the French language, where "*nom-du-père*" sounds like "*non-du-père*," making a connection with the "no" to incest between parent and child which the sharing of a family name suggests.[24] Lacan first made this link between the name of the father as both a means to give the child an identity and to deter them from incest in his 1955-6 seminar on psychoses, just a decade before the publication of *The Crying of Lot 49*.[25] In Lacanian theory the point of Oedipal development, the recognition of the 'no' to incest, and the lack or ownership of the phallus, is associated inextricably with language. Indeed, for Lacan, frequently the phallus is simultaneously language and its physical manifestation as the biological location of gendered difference.

In an earlier incarnation of this narrative, a section of the text was published under the title "The World (This One), the Flesh (Mrs Oedipa Maas), and the Testament of Pierce Inverarity."[26] Here Oedipa is foregrounded by "the world", a lexical item only separated from "the word" by a letter. Indeed for Lacan the world was constituted by the word - language and social structure being inextricably related. As Rosalind Minsky asserts, this is also bound to his interpretation of the Oedipus Complex, "for Lacan, our entry into language becomes the site of the Oedipal crisis rather than the actual father. Language becomes the Other, the symbolic 'place of the father' which insinuates itself between us

and the objects of our Desire and makes Desire insatiable by continually de-stabilising and moving these objects so they always elude us." She continues:

> In recognising the father for what he is – an insurmountable obstacle to the fulfilment of its passionate wishes – the child is brought into contact with the wider external world of culture and language. [...] Lacan, elaborating on Freud's concept of the father, distinguishes between the actual, what Lacan sees as the Imaginary father, and what he calls the 'paternal metaphor' or 'the place of the father'. These last two terms refer to what the father represents to the child symbolically rather than the Imaginary, idealised father with whom Lacan thinks the Symbolic father is easily confused (Mitchell and Rose, eds, 1982: 39). Lacan argues that even in the absence of the father, the child experiences the place of the father and the Oedipal crisis through cultural substitutions, that is primarily language and other systems of representation. [...] The law of 'the name of the father', of what meanings are permitted in language, takes up the space left empty by the loss of the mother. The rational categories of language represent the cutting off (castration) of the child from its phantasies but they also represent the conversion of the child's need (to be the phallus for the mother) into Desire (which can never be satisfied) but which subsequently provides the searching, dynamic energy for knowledge and 'truth' which categorise language and reason. For Lacan, the only truth is that lack and Desire, the 'want to be,' underlie and undermine all identity and knowledge.[27]

It is indicated that Oedipa is every-person, or indeed, every man, as "*the* Flesh" which references both Adam as the first human flesh and Christ as the divine made flesh. However, her position, between the world and the Testament of Pierce Inverarity, suggests that she is also somewhere between God's decree (the word), the earthly (the flesh and the world) and the divine (the flesh, referencing transubstantiation in the mass, only a letter away from Maas,[28] and the Testament which refers to the Bible). Her identification as "the Flesh" also suggests that her identity is predominantly bodily rather than mental, a reading that is both indicative of attitudes towards women of the period as sexual and domestic objects rather than thinking beings, but also may identify her conversely, with the phallus. Pierce also lies between earthly man and divine decree, being at once the phallus (pierce), and another name for Peter (one of Christ's apostles and the recipient of the Great Commission). By placing Oedipa as an island in this sea of meaning, she becomes more significant, not less so, because she is associated with everything else that surrounds her, but nothing autonomously. This is a timely interpretation of femaleness, which had, in the words of Betty Friedan, lost its individuality and its name.

Exposed Narratives, Imposed Identities: From Oedi(pus) to Mass

Oedipa tries, as Pynchon's narrative indicates, to define herself in terms of the traditional female heroine, as a Rapunzel, "looking for someone to say hey, let down your hair" and she cries at the, as she perceives them, "frail girls" and "prisoners" in Remedios Varo's *Bordando el Manto Terrestre* (*Embroidering the Earth's Mantle*) (13), but she does not live in a society where a woman can be "saved" by a "man", and she herself realises that she has to find her own solutions.

> What did she so desire to escape from? Such a captive maiden, having plenty of time to think, soon realizes that her tower, its height and architecture, are like her ego only incidental: and what really keeps her where she is, is magic, anonymous and malignant, visited on her from outside and for no reason at all. Having no apparatus except gut fear and female cunning to examine this formless magic, to understand how it works, how to measure its field strength, count its lines of force, she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disk jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else? (13)

Pynchon's heroine has a first name that is a corrupted version of a male name and her surname betokens the "lineage" of her husband. Tracy Sherard, however, remarks that, "her scrupulous modification of 'executor' to accommodate her sex suggests some small suspicion on her part that she is defined by something outside herself."[29] Sherard's view, however, does not recognise that although she corrects "executor" for "executrix" in a seemingly casual fashion, the power to alter the identity of the role for herself has not been recognised by her at this point, and she is not fully aware of its implications. Oedipa fails to make explicit the extent to which she is trapped in the Wittgensteinian "net of language"[31] particularly because she is female. She does not examine the Varo painting fully, but interprets it in terms of the dominant ideology, women equal frail maidens, trapped by "outside" forces and either "take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry." She does not see, as David Cowart asserts, that the women in Varo's portrait do not fit this stereotype. Unlike Tennyson's Lady of Shalott who *copies* the world with her loom because she cannot enter it and see it for herself, the girls in Varo's portrait create the world. Everything that exists is there because they have, in their godlike capacity, made it. Oedipa does not identify this subtle but essential difference. She also therefore misses that "the knight" cannot deliver her unless she creates her own rescuer.[31] Ironically it is the item on her list, "embroidery" - the item that most suggests acceptance of her femaleness - that may inspire her to escape.[32] The person apparently in charge of Varo's weavers may be a woman, just as the enchantress who held Rapunzel in her tower was a woman. The magic therefore, which can be read as power, can be viewed as female. Oedipa is oppressed by everything everywhere because she encloses herself. The language, defined and created by a patriarchy, appears to ensnare her, but it is the dominant ideology which really constitutes Oedipa's tower, she cannot see outside of the definitions and interpretations of her culture, to do this would be to break the magic she imagines keeps her held in captivity.

There is also an overt correlation between the sound of Oedipa's surname and the Christian "mass," another male-dominated ideology which Pynchon's heroine is both connected to and separated from, as her name is not identical to it. Oedipa is therefore placed very carefully between two of the most powerful and well-known "grand narratives"[33] of Western thought: psychoanalysis and Christianity. As David Seed has commented, her name "suggests at once a pathology and the confronting of enigmas."[34] Such a "pathology" implicates Freud and Lacan, but also alludes to the corruption

of both concepts when referred to in her name, as both are changed. Psychoanalysis and Christianity are defined as grand narratives, as both aim to explain the great mysteries of human existence on earth: the Christian religion through an external body of metaphysics, which although it affects the personal is not physically part of it; and modern psychology through the investigation of the internal yet apparently universal self. Both these defining bodies of theory were founded and subsequently led by men, yet they sought to explain the world which both sexes inhabit. *Lot 49* repeatedly reminds the reader of the Christian religion, and seemingly innocent lexical choices and turns of phrase echo familiar language from the Bible and church services. As has been frequently stated, one of the ways to interpret the title is as referential of the 49 days between Pentecost and Easter;[35] Oedipa and Mucho's surname is a homophone of the "mass", and Pierce Inverarity is described as a "founding father." The text abounds with such examples[36] and Oedipa's quest is continually on a divine precipice, threatening or promising to enlighten her at any given moment with an awareness that is outside of the comfortable familiarity of the world she knows. Oedipa has also been associated with Biblical characters, most frequently, Mary, the mother of Christ. Dana Medoro suggests that Oedipa's feared pregnancy as she reaches the climax of her investigation aligns her with the Madonna, particularly as she renames herself to visit the doctor as *Grace* Bortz, indicating she is pregnant with divine grace. Medoro points out in support of her argument that the text states "Your gynaecologist has no test for what she was pregnant with." (121) This line may allude to an unusual pregnancy, but it also may more obviously indicate no biological conception at all, but rather Oedipa's mental capacity for creativity, the possibility of giving birth to an idea as yet unseen and still formulating. It is at this time also that Oedipa experiences "menstrual pains," further enforcing the idea that her pregnancy is metaphorical, although potentially still divine. Oedipa is also not virginal, but she is associated with enlightenment and the pursuit of revelation, so although her association with the Virgin Mary may be part of Pynchon's religious characterisation of her, it is not the only way she can be read. In Simone de Beauvoir's words, woman is "at once Eve and the Virgin Mary,"[37] and Oedipa can be interpreted as Eve, but she also resembles another female Biblical character who was not tempted to blindly transgress in pursuit of knowledge as Eve was, but instead chose to be educated. Her name is Mary Magdalene.

In Christianity, as in psychoanalysis, the presentation of the role of women has been both undermined and arguably manipulated. David Tresemer and Laura-Lea Cannon describe in the preface to *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, how in 325 AD, Constantine, Emperor of Rome, presided over a council which chose the "texts that would become the standards of the Church – now known as the canonical Gospels."[38] In 1896 the Gnostic Gospel of Mary Magdalene was discovered,[39] but it was not until 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt, when a number of other non-canonical biblical texts were discovered that the Gospel of Mary gained the attention of the general public. These books had a

strange history, and it is likely that the Early Church had attempted to suppress them as heretical.[40] When discovered in 1945 by Muhammad Ali al Samman, his mother destroyed several of the texts perhaps fearing the result of revealing their contents. There is no knowing what they contained; others were sold on the black market.[41] As the Gospel of Mary was first translated from the Coptic to French in 1955, it is sufficiently likely that not only could Thomas Pynchon have heard of the furore surrounding these texts, but that he may have actually read the Gospel of Mary himself and been affected by the different picture this creates of Mary Magdalene. He may also have been aware of the potential effect this could have on the patriarchal structure of the Church and of society. Tresemer and Cannon go on to say:

> Some of the Gnostic texts feature Magdalene prominently and convey a very different picture from the Gospels we're familiar with, including the presentation of Mary Magdalene as the intimate companion of Jesus.[42]

This assertion is supported by Susan Haskins in *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* who asserts that:

> [I]n an extraordinary contrast with the presentation of the community around Christ in the synoptics, and in subsequent interpretations, these groups incorporated women – such as Salome and Martha and especially, Mary Magdalene - and do not appear to have differentiated between their roles. In the Gnostic writings the women's importance is also stated, rather than merely hinted at as in the New Testament: they are disciples. It is a woman, Mary Magdalene, who has a major role in several of these writings, and is the only female figure from the New Testament to have one of the apocryphal texts, the Gospel of Mary, named for her. The Gnostic Mary Magdalene contrasts, strongly, therefore, with the figure that emerges from conventional interpretations of the New Testament.[43]

Oedipa's pursuit of knowledge, and ultimately a final revelation or epiphany, can be compared to Mary Magdalene's own passage towards very similar goals. Magdalene is particularly interesting from a feminist perspective because she is reputedly the first witness of the Resurrection, although she is not given the status of Christ's male followers either within the New Testament or historically. She follows Christ, presumably to learn from Him, as he is reputed as a teacher throughout the New Testament - and repeatedly called "teacher" in some translations[44] - and she pursues the knowledge he can impart in a predominantly male environment. This mirrors Oedipa's journey through *Lot 49* where the information she desires is nearly always to be sought from men, although the men in Oedipa's world are shown to be considerably less capable than she is:

> My shrink, pursued by Israelis, has gone mad; my husband, on LSD, gropes like a child further and further into the rooms and endless rooms of the elaborate candy house of himself and away, hopelessly away from what has passed, I was hoping forever, for love; my one extra marital fella has eloped with a depraved fifteen-year-old; my best guide back to the Trystero has taken a Brody. Where am I? (105)

Although Oedipa has one occasion where she contemplates suicide, she remains sane, as much as it is possible for the reader to judge, until the close of the novel. She may doubt

her own mind but she manages to remain in control of herself and her behaviour, and she does not become either an addict or a sexual "deviant," despite the pressure she is placed under, with noone for the most part of the narrative that she can trust or turn to for help. Magdalene is similarly self-possessed while her male counterparts flounder in the same situation as herself.[45] Where the sight of the risen Christ confuses the disciples, and they then refuse to believe that they have beheld Him, Mary Magdalene appears to remain essentially composed and accepts that the scripture has been fulfilled once Jesus declares Himself to her. However, the disciples do not believe her when she says He has risen in the Gospel of Luke which states: "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."[46] Even in the Gospel of John where the majority of the disciples accept the miracle as a truth because they have seen the risen Christ, Thomas still refuses to believe until he has tested the evidence of the spirit's wounds from the crucifixion.[47] Oedipa is searching for an epiphany connected to the "testament" of a man who was her lover, and Magdalene is also given a "testament" by the man she loves after he has died.

> Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to the Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.[48]

It is, however, Adam in Genesis that is given the task of naming the other creatures on earth, not Eve[49] and it is the all-male group of twelve disciples that Christ commands to spread His teachings in His name to the rest of the world. Mary Magdalene is not reported in the canonical gospels as being asked to do this despite the principal role that she has in the New Testament. It is particularly noteworthy here that Mary Magdalene is not named as a disciple, although, as Tresemer and Lea-Cannon assert, she "is the only woman besides Mother Mary who is mentioned by name in all four texts [...]. And, most essentially we know that Mary Magdalene is the first to see Jesus Christ resurrected from the tomb."[50] It is likely, considering the religious analogies used by Pynchon in *The Crying of Lot 49*, that Mary Magdalene was inspirational to his creation of Oedipa Maas, and that the historical figure of Magdalene and the Biblical presentation of her are an essential part of a religious and feminist interpretation of the text. She may not be asked to teach in His name as the disciples are, but she is charged with the task of informing those that Jesus chooses to entrust his legacy to, of the miracle of the Resurrection. Magdalene, like Oedipa, is a female heroine in a male-dominated environment, independently pursuing the information that will bring her to a point of revelation.

The theologian Jean-Yves Leloup asserts how rare it was for a woman in the time of Christ to behave as Magdalene did and how it may have been connected with the popular notion of her as a sinner:

> We have already noted that her transgression could be related to her thirst for knowledge, her desire to engage in studies reserved for men only in those days. This would certainly be enough

> to make her a dangerous woman, even an outlaw. Curiously enough, there is nothing in any of the four gospels to say she was ever a prostitute.[51]

Oedipa, as a woman in the mid 1960s, could be considered to suffer a similar fate. As Friedan points out, education for women was still considered by many to be a dangerous idea to encourage, as it left them dissatisfied with the role of housewife and procreator, which were supposedly socially preferable due to the limitations of the physical female make-up.[52] Any deviance from this role was generally perceived as abnormal.

> Some said it was the old problem – education: more and more women had education, which naturally made them unhappy in their role as housewives. [...]
>
> College educators suggested more discussion groups on home management and the family, to prepare women for domestic life. No month went by without a new book by a psychiatrist or sexologist offering technical advice on finding greater fulfilment through sex.[53]

Oedipa experiences a similar reaction when she deserts the confines of her life with Mucho and embarks upon her quest. Several of the men she approaches for help on her journey, including her lawyer Roseman, the Paranoids, Metzger and Nefastis, presume Oedipa will welcome their sexual advances. When Oedipa visits Nefastis he expects that she will passively accept him.

> Nefastis came to her and put his arm around her shoulders.
>
> 'It's OK,' he said. 'Please don't cry. Come on in on the couch. The news will be on any minute. We can do it there.'
>
> 'It?' said Oedipa. 'Do it? What?'
>
> 'Have sexual intercourse,' replied Nefastis. 'Maybe there'll be something about China tonight. [...] That profusion of life. It makes it sexier, right?'
>
> 'Gah,' Oedipa screamed and fled. (74)

It is inconceivable to them that she might want to pursue information for its own sake with no ulterior motive. To the men of *Lot 49*, as for a number of Pynchon's contemporaries, the role of a woman and more particularly the role's limitations had not altered in some respects since the time of Christ. Arguably, the similarity between these women indicates that Pynchon intended a comparison of this sort, to contribute to the other women Oedipa can be associated with, and to further reflect upon and illuminate the female situation in the 1960s.

Interpreting Other Names in *Lot 49*

Although the situations of Oedipa and Mary Magdalene are comparable, it is not until other aspects of *Lot 49* are considered that the significance of the connection becomes clear to the plot. Tresemer and Cannon assert that Magdalene "is considered the 'apostle of apostles,' and is so called even by Saint Augustine,"[54] and Leloup goes on to say that "because she was the first witness of the Resurrection, she was considered by the apostle John as the founder of Christianity, long before Paul and his vision on the road to

Damascus."[55] Pierce Inverarity, the writer of the will Oedipa executes and her former lover, has been interpreted by Thomas Hill Schaub to be closely connected to St Peter, who along with St Paul, is traditionally credited as being the founder of the Christian Church.[56] J. Kerry Grant writes of Schaub's interpretation of the text:

> [H]e associates Pierce, via Peter, with 'petrus' or rock (33). He is joined by Newman who describes Pierce as 'a type of profane Peter' whose 'perverse church is secular conglomerate' (75). For Schaub, Pierce is 'an inverse Peter, on whom is built the profane church of America' (33).[57]

Etymologically, "Pierce" does derive from "Peter"[58] and Christ is reported in Matthew as saying:

> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church [...]. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.[59]

This connection is enforced quite early in *Lot 49* with a reference to the business of Yoyodyne Inc:

> Pierce, she happened to know, had owned a large block of shares, had been somehow involved in negotiating an understanding with the county tax assessor to lure Yoyodyne there in the first place.
>
> It was part, he explained of being a **founding father**. (15-16, my emphasis)

That the Yoyodyne workers also have a "hymn" of their own further presses the religious association but as Schaub seems to indicate, Pierce is not attempting to create a spiritual foundation for America, or, indeed, the West in general, as much as a financial one. It is never made clear in the text whether the mystery of the Trystero is a part of Pierce's intended legacy to Oedipa, and if this is the case, whether it is an elaborate "hoax," a message he wishes to impart from beyond the grave, or, if he was in the throes of discovery himself when his investigation was stopped by death. If Pierce was also seeking the truth about the Trystero, it would seem that she is his rival as a founder of the true America: an America he tried to build in enterprise and then discovered in a network of people that had been in existence for centuries. This situation seems to mirror that of Magdalene and St Peter as historical rivals for the title of the "founder of Christianity".[60] In terms of the control of the situation and the linguistic implications, this is also relevant, as Magdalene's discourse was allegedly silenced in favour of a male-dominated church, Oedipa too struggles to be heard and to be active in gaining information. Pierce's "will" at first seems to liberate her and then to subsume her identity into another male-dominated environment.

However, although Schaub's argument for Pierce's character being influenced by St Peter is convincing, the text also lends itself to an interpretation of Pierce as a distorted depiction of Christ. Instead of instigating the ritual of mass and partaking of the body and the blood of Christ, Pierce initiates a bizarre twist to communion by selling cigarettes

which utilise the bones of the dead. Oedipa unwittingly highlights this analogy herself when she drinks Genghis Cohen's wine made from graveyard dandelions:

> No, thought Oedipa, sad. As if their home cemetery in some way still did exist, in a land where you could somehow walk, and not need the East San Narcisco Freeway, and bones still could rest in peace, nourishing ghosts of dandelions, no one to plough them up. As if the dead really do persist, even in a bottle of wine. (68)

Oedipa's thoughts over Cohen's wine, referring to an actual presence of the dead in the drink, are reminiscent of the doctrine of the transubstantiation of the mass. This in itself indicates that Pierce is being compared to Christ, as it is just as likely that she is referring to the manifestation of her deceased lover in the wine as the unknown bodies in the graveyard. When Jesus is removed from the cross, His side is "pierced" by one of the soldiers. Pierre-Yves Petillon contemplates the potential for interpretation of Pierce's name, with this amongst other considerations:

> Just as, in the Old Testament, Eve was born from the 'pierced' side of Adam, so in the New Testament the Church is born from the pierced side of Christ on the cross, and thus, in the new – and perhaps last – dispensation heralded by Pynchon's apocryphal gospel, from Oedipa's 'pierced' bosom a new 'invisible Church' is to be born.[61]

This view does not render the "founding father" (16) remark irrelevant either, as Pierce is still connected with the creation of the Christian Church; it also need not necessarily dispel Schaub's argument, as Pynchon may have intended the resonances of both men to affect the reader's interpretation of Inverarity. However, if Pierce is seen as an analogy of Christ, then instead of a rival to Oedipa, he could be interpreted as selecting her as Christ arguably chose Mary, to complete his work on earth after his death. Although in the canonical gospels her role is not clarified as such, Jean-Yves Leloup indicates that in the Gnostic gospels, Jesus, whom he refers to as Yeshua, intended just such a role for Mary Magdalene:

> I noted in the introduction that in the Gospel of Philip, for example, she is presented as the literal consort of Yeshua - he often 'kissed her on the mouth' (*nashak*, in Hebrew). In Jewish tradition this can also mean a sharing of the same breath or spirit, and hence the word and gnosis.
>
> Philip's gospel also tells us that Miriam is Christ's sister and mother as well as his companion (*koinonos*).[62]

This interpretation of *Lot 49* which appears to favour the Gnostic presentation of Mary Magdalene is particularly apt to a novel which plays with notions of heresy and the corruption of literature, and the subsequent consequences of this.

To look at the title of the novel further enforces the connection between the crucifixion and Oedipa's involvement in Inverarity's will. Mendelson writes:

> But why the *forty-ninth* lot? Because Pentecost is the Sunday seven weeks after Easter – forty-nine days. But the word Pentecost derives from the Greek for 'fiftieth'. The crying – the auctioneer's calling – of the forty-ninth lot is the moment before the Pentecostal revelation, the end of the period in which the miracle is in a state of potential, not yet manifest. This is why

> the novel ends with Oedipa waiting, with the 'true' nature of the Trystero never established: a manifestation of the sacred can only be believed in; it can never be proved beyond doubt.[63]

Mendelson, however, does not fully explore the multitude of possibilities this suggests for the rest of the title. He might also ask why the work is entitled "The Crying of" and not just "Lot 49," indeed it is worth questioning why the word "lot" is chosen for the title at all. This is a particular point of interest considering Oedipa has referred to two different kinds of 'lots' in the text: Mucho's car lot and the auctioneer's lot, rendering this reference unstable when not contextualized, which as a precursor to the text it is not. If it is accepted that the text works on a sustained analogy to the life of Christ, and that Magdalene's role in His life is considered of prime import, something which Pynchon arguably seeks to exploit in an attempt to interrogate the attitude towards women in the America contemporary to his work, then the title can be considered to support this. In the Gospel of John which reports the "piercing" of Christ's side, it is also stated that while He hung on the cross the soldiers cast "lots" for his clothes.

> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.[64]

This raises another potential interpretation of "lot." However, this may not dispel Mendelson's argument but merely be a means to refer back to the Resurrection, so that both analogies are relevant. Pentecost is the descent of the Holy Spirit and the final part of Christ's history on earth in the New Testament; it is consequently fitting in line with this interpretation that the last scene of *Lot 49* should refer to Pentecost. This incident also agrees with that of Pentecost in the Biblical narrative in that the revelation is presented to a gathering predominantly made up of men. Magdalene is not named as present at Pentecost in the Book of Acts, and nor is Oedipa welcome at the auction.

> The men inside the auction room wore black mohair and had pale cruel faces. They watched her come in, trying each to conceal his thoughts. Loren Passerine, on his podium, hovered like a puppet-master, his eyes bright, his smile practised and relentless. He stared at her, smiling, as if saying. I'm surprised you actually came. Oedipa sat alone, towards the back of the room, looking at the napes of necks, trying to guess which one was her target, her enemy, perhaps her proof. (126-127)

However, an allusion back to the Resurrection could be to remind the reader of how it would be logical for Magdalene to have been present at the descent of the Holy Spirit, considering how she has had a key role in the life of Christ so far, and this echoes the importance of Oedipa's presence at the final epiphany in *Lot 49*. She has as much right to know what it is she has been searching for and whether it is a reality or a fallacy as any man in that room, perhaps more so.

The term "crying" also refers back to Magdalene, reputed to have been the woman who washed Christ's feet with her tears.[65] Her crying is also significant to the description of her discovery of the risen Christ.

> But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting [...]. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.[66]

Oedipa too, shows this traditionally feminine trait[67] when she cries over the Remedios Varo painting and wonders if she could take the tears away with her, trapped in the lenses of her glasses.

> She could carry the sadness of that moment with her that way forever, see the world refracted through those tears, those specific tears, as if indices as yet unfound varied in important ways from cry to cry. (13)

This reference strengthens the connection to Magdalene as a feminist heroine made at this point in the narrative, when, as discussed earlier, Oedipa is feeling the limitations of her role to be particularly pertinent, and it is shortly after this incident is related that she abandons the role that has been prescribed for her by a patriarchal America, and determines to seek an alternative life. The tears can consequently be considered a sign of strength and renewal which is also the case with Magdalene, as it is her 'weeping' that has led to her being renowned. Her tears revealed her grief over the loss of Christ and this shows her love for Him. Love being integral to the philosophy of the New Testament and the basis of the eleventh commandment[68] this is an important quality to reveal and not, as has been popularly considered, one of weakness. Andrew Marvell's "Eyes and Tears" further reiterates this consideration in the literary conscious with a verse dedicated to Mary Magdalene.

> So Magdalen in tears more wise
>
> Dissolved those captivating eyes,
>
> Whose liquid chains could flowing meet
>
> To fetter her Redeemer's feet.[69]

Susan Haskins is joined by David Tresemer and Laura-Lea Cannon in their Preface to *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* in arguing that Mary Magdalene's reputation has been significantly altered throughout history for a variety of reasons but on a number of occasions to further promote the importance of men over women, and to impress upon women even further the identification of women with sexual sin. Tresemer and Cannon write that it was not until 1969 (three years after Pynchon's novel was published) that the Catholic Church officially stated that Mary Magdalene was not a "whore."[70] Both of these

books on Mary Magdalene explain that she was wrongly identified with other characters in the Bible. One of these is the unnamed "woman sinner" who cries at Christ's feet in Luke 7:36-50[71] which Marvell draws upon in "Eyes and Tears." Others include: the adulteress who is to be stoned in John 8:3;[72] and the 'woman of Samaria' who had "five husbands" John 4: 4-42.[73]

Marvell's conceit which describes her "tears" as "chains" highlights the strength of Mary as she is described in the Gospel of John, but also tacitly acknowledges that she has been popularly associated with the "woman sinner" of Luke, yet in Marvell's verse this does not weaken her, rather her tears increase her wisdom and power, and instead of losing Christ's attention she further binds Him to her. The allusions then to "crying" in Pynchon's novel, both in the title and throughout the text, further enforce the connections between Oedipa and Mary Magdalene, and their respective roles as strong and exceptional feminist heroines. In the last scene of *Lot 49* "crying" may also serve to refer once again to the Resurrection. The allusions to the Resurrection in a scene that can be interpreted as Pentecostal, highlight the injustice of the presentation of Mary Magdalene at both these incidents, and as a consequence, that of Oedipa in *The Crying of Lot 49*. Magdalene, like Oedipa, serves an important role but it is not thought she will meet the full capacity of that role because she is female. Neither of them is expected to pursue knowledge to its full conclusion, and neither is expected to maintain a place alongside the men involved in their situations, however incompetent many of these men prove to be. Yet by juxtaposing their respective situations, Pynchon arguably reveals the injustice of the attitude to female education and the situation of woman in general amongst his contemporaries and historically, adding yet another facet to the rich characterisation of Oedipa Maas.

A study of the names of the characters in *The Crying of Lot 49* serves to reveal additional depth and dimensions to a text that is kaleidoscopic in its possibilities. That the names have a large number of potential allusions connected to them does not make it any less likely that Pynchon intended their possibilities to be seriously considered by readers. As Debra A. Moddelmog has considered, the capricious and enigmatic nature of his work merely renders it a fitting tribute to a plot that is primarily concerned with the search for meaning in a chaotic world.[74] Pynchon's decision to have a woman as the central protagonist is evidently intentionally provocative considering the contemporary cultural changes that were occurring regarding the role of women in the USA in the 1960s. However, whether Pynchon intended to criticise or encourage Oedipa's independence and determination in her pursuit of knowledge is not clear. The psychoanalytic, and, more particularly, the religious arguments which the characters' names suggest, illuminate further possibilities regarding Pynchon's attitude to women in literature and society in general. Although it is possible to create a convincing case which renders *Lot 49* a feminist text and this is one significant aspect of the textual

experience, the broader objective of this novel remains purposefully elusive to great effect. Oedipa has overcome numerous obstacles to reach a point where it seems her final revelation is imminent, but she remains trapped in a novel written by a man and her ultimate goal is never reached. Her fate seems to be suspended but perhaps that is because Oedipa herself chooses to wait for someone else to call the "lot," maybe for the text to conclude, Oedipa must decide to seize knowledge, rather than passively accept its arrival. Her quest is assigned by a man, her desire for understanding, however, comes from her own Alice in Wonderland style curiosity. By jostling with the unfriendly male crowd at the auction house, Oedipa only (as her name suggests) defines her intellectual equality in terms of her – primarily male – competition. To be free, if she can be free, she is required to see in terms of herself. The reader is left with the impression that her fate hangs on the calling of lot 49 when it may conversely rely on walking away and shaping her own quest on her own terms. *Lot 49* then, although seemingly impregnated with meaning, may also be essentially meaningless, Pynchon both infuses and negates his lexis, every allusion is accurate and significant, every connotation adds something to the pursuit of the answer to the riddle of Pierce's estate, but the novel may actually be about something else. If Oedipa as everywoman is to define her own life, she must start by re-defining the words she lives in and learns by, and in Foucauldian terms she must seek a new discourse. In this sense then, it is not important that she has been written by a man, as the suggestion remains that all women have been written by a man, even those that are writers themselves; her fate then is suspended in line with that of her contemporaries, awaiting the redefinition of patriarchal culture.[75]

End notes

1. Caesar, p. 6.

2. Medoro, pp. 71-90.

3. In a different way, Celia Wallhead also argues in support of multiple readings of Oedipa Maas. See Wallhead, pp. 87-99.

4. For a discussion on paranoia and language in general in this novella see Olehla. For further discussion on Jacques Lacan and *The Crying of Lot 49* also see Cullum, Grant, Ranner and Tyson.

5. Caesar suggests this element of performance but does not develop the feminist argument in relation to his assertion: "[t]heir names are roles which they impersonate with varying degrees of success but never completely" (6). He also states that his characters "are products of more 'networks' than they can possibly know" (8). Here he is referring to Edward Mendelson's discussion of Pynchon's "networks" of meaning, and how he considers they are prioritised over characterisation, in his introduction to *Pynchon: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 5. This idea of networks in the novella is also pursued in David Seed's (2009) more recent article in relation to modern technology.

6. For more on the many ways that Oedipa can be related to other female characters and real life individuals see Wallhead and Day. Dana Medoro also asserts Oedipa's connection to the Virgin Mary and the Sphinx.

7. Beauvoir, p. 175.

8. Although it is usual for Mexican women to keep both of their parents' names and add their husband's name, passing both their pre-marital name and their married name to their children, a married woman is referred to most formally as her title + husband's name. Pynchon offers the anglicized version of this formal mode of address. This perhaps signals more than respect though, as it further highlights Oedipa's gender. See Stevens. See also Foster, p. 21.

9. Friedan, pp. 13-29.

10. Friedan, p. 63.

11. Friedan, p. 19.

12. On falling down the rabbit hole, and feeling "so desperate that she was ready to ask help of anyone," Alice wonders, "Who in the world am I?" She consequently connects her identity to the physical environment as if it depends entirely upon it. Carroll, p. 23.

13. Carter, p. 4.

14. Lacan (2001), p. 321.

15. Cixous, pp. 161-173. Medoro also considers Oedipa's bodily means of engaging with and expressing her experiences.

16. Minsky, p. 139.

17. Lacan (1991), p. 98.

18. Lacan (1991), p. 164.

19. Sheridan.

20. Mehta, pp. 174-175; Scott, p. 8.

21. Mehta, p. 174.

22. There are numerous references to "naming" in *Gravity's Rainbow* but the most pertinent to this argument are on pages 383, 384 and 435. Caesar also refers to the seriousness of the act of naming in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

23. Freud.

24. Macey, p. 174.

25. Lacan (1997), p. 96. Also see Macey.

26. See copyright page of edition of *Lot 49* referenced.

27. Minsky, p. 149.

28. This connection between "Maas" and the Christian "mass" has been drawn previously by Colvile, p. 26.

29. Sherard, p. 61.

30. Binkley, p. 143. Iris Murdoch has also written on "the net of language" in her essay "Art is the Imitation of Nature" and in the interview, "Literature and Philosophy: A Conversation with Brian Magee." In both instances she considers that language is not a transparent medium, but that it is tainted by the speaker and the listener with their own interpretations of what is said or written down. She suggests that if people interpret speech or texts slightly differently then language cannot convey the truth, rather it offers a version of reality. Language is therefore a system of signs which are generally but not necessarily specifically understood.

31. Cowart, pp. 27-28.

32. Cowart also describes how we can all be said to be "perpetually weaving and unweaving ourselves" making this a more ambiguous image than Oedipa supposes, pp. 27-28.

33. The phrase "grand narrative" derives from Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* (1979), where he defines such narratives as those that aim to reach a definitive explanation of existence. See: Lyotard.

34. Seed, p. 29.

35. Petillon, p. 137.

36. For other examples see: Mendelson, "The Sacred, the Profane and *The Crying of Lot 49*."

37. Beauvoir, p. 175.

38. Tresemer and Cannon, p. xi.

39. Needleman, p. v.

40. Haskins, pp. 33-38; Needleman, p. xi.

41. Haskins, p. 33; Tresemer and Cannon, p. xi.

42. Tresemer and Cannon, p. xiii.

43. Haskins, p. 34.

44. Youngblood, p. 375. Youngblood lists a number of the references to Christ which are translated as "Master" in the King James Version and as "Teacher" in the New King James Version. Leloup also considers this translation issue, p. 111.

45. Leloup, p. 162. Leloup considers the reaction of the disciples in comparison to that of Mary's in the canonical Gospels with direct reference to the Gospel of Mary. He quotes Mark 16:9-11 and Luke 24:10-11.

46. Luke 24:11. Unless stated otherwise all subsequent Biblical references are taken from: *Holy Bible, King James Version*, introd. and notes Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

47. John 21:24-19.

48. John 20:17.

49. Genesis 2:19.

50. Tresemer and Cannon, p. xv.

51. Leloup, p. 107.

52. Friedan, p. 91.

53. Friedan, p. 20.

54. Tresemer and Cannon, p. xv.

55. Leloup, p. 4.

56. Hanks and Hodges, pp. 262-263.

57. Grant, p. 7.

58. Hanks and Hodges, p. 268.

59. Matthew 16:18-19.

60. Leloup, p. 4.

61. Petillon, p. 146.

62. Leloup, p. 110.

63. Mendelson, "The Sacred, the Profane and *The Crying of Lot 49*," p. 135.

64. John 19:23-14.

65. Leloup, p. xiv. Leloup considers the ambiguity surrounding the recognition of Magdalene as this individual and he refers to the passage in Luke 7:36-50 which features the incident.

66. John 20:11-16.

67. Although Peter also cries in the Gospels when he denounces Christ on the evening before the crucifixion, the act of crying has been traditionally and predominantly viewed as a female trait rather than a male one, and therefore as a less desirable activity for men. Perhaps this

can be related to the particular incidences of tears associated with Peter and Mary Magdalene respectively. Peter cries because he has betrayed his faith and his God, the tears connected to Magdalene are tears of repentance, grief and joy which could be viewed in a more positive light. The Biblical issues aside, the timing of Pynchon's novel is particularly pertinent to the issue of gendering tears. As Judith Kay Nelson states in *Seeing Through Tears: Crying and Attachment*, in the 1960s tears were associated with the labels "weak" and "female," criteria that were challenged by "the women's movement's critique of male stoicism and by the general trend toward greater emotional openness, thus making the 1970s the heyday of male crying" (93). She also refers to the children's record *Free to Be You and Me* as being instrumental in changing attitudes amongst the youth of the 1970s to male tears.

Social responses to crying have altered over time but it remains an issue of interest. Articles of 2006 and 2009 in the *Scientific American* and the London *Telegraph* put forward a similar scientific argument that women cry more than men and that they are predetermined to do so by their biology. See: Nelson; Walter; "Women cry more than men, and for longer, study finds."

68. John 13:34-35.

69. Marvell, pp. 52-54.

70. Tresemer and Cannon, pp. xvi-xxii.

71. Tresemer and Cannon, p. xiv.

72. Haskins, pp. 28-29.

73. Haskins, pp. 27-28.

74. Moddelmog, p. 249.

75. Caesar states that Oedipa "never kills her father and never suffers the recognition" (6) but this may not be true; in terms of asserting herself as a woman in a male-dominated environment and even confronting the structures of the social environment and the unconscious, Oedipa at the very least challenges her "fathers," the recognition of the father as language and the symbolic order, as well as the numerous societal fathers that have laid the structures for our understanding of humanity; most pertinent to this reading are those of psychoanalysis and religion but the references to others abound. Her moment of recognition could be interpreted as the scene of the auction house and the long-awaited calling of lot 49.

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