



**TOWARDS A COSMOPOLITAN HISTORICAL MEMORY?
TRANSNATIONALISATION AND EMOTIONS IN
CONTEMPORARY FEMALE GALICIAN AUTHORS**

**PARA UMA MEMÓRIA HISTÓRICA COSMOPOLITA? A TRANSNA-
CIONALIZAÇÃO E AS EMOÇÕES NAS AUTORAS GALEGAS
CONTEMPORÂNEAS**

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RESUMEN

El artículo analiza la contribución de las narradoras gallegas a la transnacionalización de la común memoria europea de los pasados incómodos y como utilizan para ello estrategias de índole fundamentalmente emocional. Después de una revisión panorámica del corpus, el artículo se centra en dos obras de Rosa Aneiros e Inma López Silva, respectivamente, a modo de estudio de casos. El objetivo último del estudio es poner en valor dicha contribución en la medida en que, por una parte, permite superar el riesgo de esclerotización del tema de la memoria de la guerra civil española, y por otra, mostrar el potencial moral y político de esas novelas que está aún por explotar en profundidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Memoria Histórica; Emociones; Narradoras Gallegas; Transnacionalización; Holocausto.

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the contribution of female Galician writers to the transnationalisation of the common European memory of uncomfortable pasts, and how their main approach to it is through the use of emotional strategies. Following an overview of the field, this study focuses on two works by Rosa Aneiros and Inma López Silva, respectively. The aim of this study is to valorise the contribution of women writers which has helped to avoid the risk of the

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overexploitation of the subject-matter of the Spanish Civil War while showing the moral and political potential of such novels, this yet to be fully explored.

KEYWORDS: Historical Memory; Emotions; Female Galician Writers; Transnationalization; Holocaust.

Towards a socialisation of uncomfortable pasts?

Introduction

The contribution of female Galician writers to the configuration of a cosmopolitan memory, far from being an isolated phenomenon, needs to be interpreted within the broader context of the debate on how the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation have influenced local, regional and national narratives. In the field of sociology, close attention has been paid to certain processes that cannot be explained today without taking into account the increasing importance of migratory phenomena, plus the spread of forms of communication that alter the traditional conceptions of space and time, as well as the foundations of individual and collective identities.

Undoubtedly, a key element in this cosmopolitanisation has been the transnationalisation² of the memory of the Holocaust, both through audiovisual media and also driven by still-recent institutional positions, especially the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations that, from 2005 onwards³, every 27th January would be designated as the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust. The 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops took place on that specific date, and since then institutional declarations in parliaments, and more broadly through various commemorative and educational activities, have been customary on that day. However, the celebration also marked a turning point in the process of recognising the need to de-territorialise and institutionalise not only the memory of the Holocaust, but also all collective memories of what we might call “uncomfortable pasts”.

On the other hand, the globalisation of justice (for example, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, created in 1994; that of the former Yugoslavia, created the previous

2 Many specialists who have reflected on this subject, from fields such as sociology, philosophy and political science, use terms like ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘postnationalism’ as synonymous. From this there arises a certain terminological confusion, itself only exacerbated by the widespread (and somewhat abusive) use of the concept of globalisation. We will not make *casus belli* of this question, and we will prefer the term ‘transnational’, in that it is the least marked for the subject that concerns us here; however, we will also use ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘global’ from time to time.

3 The process was in fact promoted through the 2000’s public declaration by the Stockholm International Forum, organised in the Swedish capital by the International Holocaust Remember Alliance. For the different stages through which the international management of Holocaust remembrance has passed, see Levy & Sznajder (2002).

year; the Chilean dictator Pinochet's arrest in London in 1998 following an international arrest warrant issued by Judge Garzón; the presentation in 2010 by the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory of a lawsuit in Argentina against Francist crimes committed during the Spanish Civil War, etc.) has helped to focus on victims and the need to address these uncomfortable pasts from increasingly transcendent perspectives (ethical; legal) and hence from less contingent and local ones. In my opinion, both of these phenomena (the transnationalisation of memory and the globalisation of justice) are closely related to the appearance of new formulas for the literary codification of the past and, in addition, both point to the emergence of new possibilities for the creation of collective identities that must be analysed in a context dominated by the dialectic tension between the global and the local.

In the case of Galician fiction, the process of the transnationalisation of memory has acquired specific characteristics that have also developed differently in novels written by men and by women. Thus, male writers have tended to adopt the classic model of the adventure novel, seasoned with touches of police fiction, which, it seems to me, has allowed them to avoid the emotional dimension that would necessarily have to be dealt with if they chose to treat their respective themes within a memory-based framework. Such is the case with *Os fillos do mar* (2012) by Pedro Feijoo, *Cabalos e lobos* (2015) by Fran P. Lorenzo, and *Izan o da saca* (2015) by Xabier Quiroga. These three novels avoid de-territorialisation by bringing the memory of other conflicts to Galicia. The theme thus loses its potential performative value for what might be the creation of a global, or at least an European, memory. The resulting decontextualisation of characters and plots deactivates the historical value of the text and favours the stereotyping of both, so that their presence in history (in the sense of *story*, not of *history*) seems to be due to mere casuistry or chance; devoid of breadth and depth in terms of time, these elements come to resemble (somewhat dangerously) mere archetypes, and end up being reduced to little more than backdrops on which the truly important part of the novel take place: the particular conflicts of the characters in the case of Lorenzo's novel, and the police-based plots in the case of Feijoo and Quiroga. On the other hand, by focusing only on the fate of the perpetrators, feelings of empathy, compassion or solidarity with their victims are not generated. These victims are blurred by geographical and, in several cases, temporal distance, as is the case with *Os fillos do mar*, in which we travel from the present day to the Battle of Rande in 1702, passing through the Second World War and the Spanish Civil War. It produces a kind of temporal levelling that turns historical events into the adornments of "an attractive cloth" with which the "plot is covered", as indeed Feijoo's novel is described on its back cover. Consequently, and in addition to being works of entertainment, these novels avoid the possibility of acquiring any kind of moral appeal, since they demand no form of affiliative response from the reading public, along the lines of the distinction that Faber establishes between filiative/affiliative acts (FABER, 2011).

The approach taken by female authors tends to be more complex. The major difference here derives from the fact that they have de-territorialised our memory of the Civil War or, rather, have re-territorialised it by placing it within a global or at least a cross-border framework: the

memory of the War is integrated into that of Latin American exile and emigration, and within the European memory of the Second World War, thus coming to operate on a new supranational and diasporic scale. And this has happened in a context in which globalisation has provided the means of overcoming the idea that memory is the prerogative of nation states, so that it can operate on two other scales, the supra and sub-national ones. My analysis does not seek to evaluate globalisation in ethical-political terms, but simply to recognise it as an operative space, and in terms of the management of memory/memories. Thus, the need naturally arises to articulate, in literature, a new concept of memory that ignores the vision of the public sphere as a well-defined area in which group memories compete, and that articulates a mestizo and multidirectional memory to be built on the basis of “dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance” (ROTHBERG, 2009: 11). This multidirectional model of memory allows us to explain how female Galician writers are addressing the memory of Civil War in a completely different way, among other reasons because this new paradigm allows them to pay special attention to the emotional dimension of the topic by means of a series of strategies that I have analysed before (VILAVEDRA, 2016 a and b, in press) and that might be called “false distancing”. We will return to this later on. I will now explore briefly how two of these writers, Rosa Aneiros and Inma López Silva, articulate this multidirectional memory in some of their works.

Firstly, and as I have already noted, Aneiros and López Silva are committed to a cross-border and diasporic form of memory that naturally integrates not only that of other conflicts, such as the Second World War, but also that of two key experiences in the construction of Galician collective identity: exile and emigration. These are hybridised with elements of otherness/alterity (concentration camps in France, the entry of the Nazis into Paris) with which the novelists establish a metonymic relationship, deconstructing these elements while concurrently deconstructing the canonical versions of this process of identity.

The novels thus succeed in creating scenarios that are more cosmopolitan than post-national, in that the latter would, in my opinion, be excessively Eurocentric for a memory such as the Galician one, which is fundamentally transatlantic. The development of this sense of the cosmopolitan, as far as the questioning of conventional frontiers is concerned, contributes to a deactivation of national(ist) valence (traditionally operative in a large part of Galician fiction written by men) and hence endowing this multi-directional memory with an added value of systemic renewal in the Galician sphere. Rosendahl has already drawn attention to the innovative potential of what he calls *traumatic literature*:

Precisely because traumatic literature deals with complex and incomprehensible events, there is in this literature, more than any other, a need for those qualities that literary innovation can bring. This is accomplished while finding a balance, not between truth and fiction, because veracity is a given, but between the simple narrative of the eyewitness, and the complexity of history and discursive paradigms that colour history (ROSENDAHL, 2008: 137).

This potential for renewal can operate from a gender perspective, as a characterising element of one corpus versus the other (female/male fiction) but, above all, from the point of view of those new discursive models proposed for the literary development of historical memory and that can be especially useful for rescuing it from endogamic limitations and commercial conformism, thus guaranteeing its continuity.

Female galician writers and the multidirectional model

Let us consider some of the possibilities offered by the multidirectional model of memory, and how female Galician authors are taking advantage of them to renew the literary treatment of the Civil War. In the first place, multidirectional memory, without ceasing to be collective and historical, is also individual and biographical, which allows Aneiros and López Silva to take advantage of the testimonial autobiographical model. Certainly, this is also the most common approach in Europe in the texts comprising that body of work which has come to be known as “Holocaust literature”, given that the phenomenological, referential and ethical problems that are posed in this type of text are also, to a greater or lesser extent, associated with the memorial testimonies of other European historical events which, if we follow Tony Judt’s suggestion (JUDT, 2005: 1145), would form a contemporary European memory understood as a multi-directional and transnational memory of a recent and traumatic past. Helena C. Buescu sums up this seemingly paradoxical question well:

Without the testimony, as well as a reflection on both its necessity and its paradoxical condition, no passage from memory to postmemory may be performed. Testimony literature prevents the closure of such events within a partial or limited set of people, thereby highlighting the impossibility of looking at national borders as defining the limits of ethical interest and responsibility (Buescu, in DOMÍNGUEZ, 2015: 20).

Indeed, both in the case of *Sol de Inverno* (2009) by Rosa Aneiros and in that of *Memoria de cidades sen luz* (2008) by Inma López Silva, it is the narrative discourse itself, in its factuality, that allows the conversion of the biographical memory of the characters into post-memory for subsequent generations. At the same time, both novels deactivate national borders by projecting this memory in multiple directions that take us not only to Europe, hybridising it with that of the Second World War, but also to America, in an inseparable link with the memory of emigration and exile.

Secondly, in both novels, multi-directional memory juxtaposes two or more problematic memories in a dynamic interaction that becomes productive. I do not refer only to the memory of different historical events, which have taken place in different places and/or times, as I have already pointed out. Rather, I also refer – and this is the key in the work of Aneiros and López Silva – to the different phenomenological levels at which these confluent memories operate, be they metaphysical or contextual, and which end up showing points of convergence. In the case

of Aneiros, it is the threat of Alzheimer that activates, paradoxically, the mechanism of memory and hence the very existence of narrative discourse; in the case of López Silva, Marcel's memory offers a different version from the official one found in canonical figures of the Galician literary and cultural movement such as Ánxel Casal or his wife, María Miramontes, a version that is impossible to prove and which therefore questions (and hence demystifies) as far as it is possible the official account of the relationship between the two.

In this sense, the collection of stories *Un animal chamado néboa* (2015) by Leticia Costas represents a step forward in taking advantage of the multi-directional paradigm as a means of contributing, from the position of Galician narrative, to what we might call the articulation of a cosmopolitan memory. Costas makes use of the “fashion of memory” to deal with a subject as difficult as the Second World War, and does so specifically by deconstructing its canonical nucleus, dominated by the Holocaust, to remind us of other equally terrible episodes of that conflict which tended to be made invisible by the long moral shadow of the Holocaust (although we should not ignore the distorting effects of historiographic Eurocentrism): Leningrad, the naval battles in the Pacific, and the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This multi-directional approach allows not so much for a rewriting of the narrative memory of the conflict as for its re-construction, hybridising it with two types of material, these of a very disparate nature. On the one hand, the photographic and cinematographic memories of several generations, which have configured almost exclusively our imaginary of the war in the Pacific, and of the atomic bombs and their consequences, and with which Costas interacts dialogically; on the other hand, documentation of various kinds: in the author's own words in her prologue “Nota”, “diaries, declarations, reports, etc⁴.”, in addition to the original transcripts of Göring's interrogations at Nuremberg, and of Höss and Eichmann in their respective trials. All these materials appear “*inseridos na propia ficción, coma se formasen parte da ficción literaria*”, as we have noted. In both cases, with visual and textual sources, Costas carries out processes of transference and hybridisation that level the materials, concealing their origins and their phenomenological states, and thus renouncing their legitimating value, because what interests Costas is not, as she herself acknowledges, writing a “*crónica de guerra*” (“chronicle of war”) but rather “*una crónica sobre a condición humana en situación límite*” (“a chronicle of the human condition in extreme situations”). Therefore, the territories she is interested in exploring are not so much those of History as those of emotions. This is something very similar to what had already been seen in *Ácaros verdes* (2003) by Pilar Buela, when she chose to focus her gaze on the women of the Nazi hierarchies (Eva Braun and Magda Göbbels) during the final days that they spent locked up in the Berlin bunker before the final immolation.

4 Unless stated otherwise, all translations my own.

The systemic value and transnationalisation of memory

The contribution of female Galician writers to the transnationalisation of memory develops in parallel with their capturing of greater visibility in the public sphere. In this sense, it is quite curious that the novels cited here have not been received (that is, read, interpreted, canonised...) as part of the corpus that we usually label 'narrative of historical memory', and this has been, in my opinion, because they lack the appropriate context for this, they lack a network in which to share dialectical interaction. In the first place, there is no obvious authorial context, in that there are hardly any previous female authors, even less so any who have dealt with the subject of the Civil War⁵, and indeed none who have done so within a multi-directional and transnational framework. But they also lack a thematic context, in the sense that exile or the Second World War does not form part of the vectors that endow this corpus with identity as such. Rather, the literary system has read these novels in terms of female authorship, a reading that was a perfect fit for the emotional focus of memory that these writers sought, but which radically ignored a transnational memory-based model that was completely original, not only in the fiction of female Galician writers but also in all Galician novels dealing with historical memory. In Bourdian terms, we could say that the narrative pattern on which these texts were built was not integrated into our reader habits and, therefore, to the extent that it was highly original, the system itself was not able to identify it and recognise it as significant.

On these lines, what happened with the aforementioned *Ácaros verdes* by Pilar Buela is a good example of the systemic deficits suffered by these female Galician writers, and how they have affected the interpretation and canonisation of their texts. The novel went largely unnoticed after its publication, perhaps due to the low visibility of the author, despite the work having won the Manuel Lueiro Rey Prize in 2003, the year of its publication. Born in 1966, Buela not only opted for a low public profile, more typical of the generation of female narrators of the 1980s ((see VILAVEDRA, 2007 and 2011, in which these issues are dealt with in a more detail), and neither did she publish any literary work subsequently. Curiously, although the film *Der Untergang* (translated into Spanish as *El hundimiento*) was released in 2004, a film which, despite the distances involved, deals with the same subject, *Ácaros verdes* did not benefit from this coincidence, perhaps because in the novel the figure of Hitler is seen very much as a secondary role, with the plot focusing instead on the characters of Magda Göbbels and Eva Braun. However, Buela's work was the first step in the multidirectional opening up of the literary treatment of historical memory, which for the first time in Galician narrative would be approached from a European perspective, and as such must be recognised.

The second great innovation of female Galician authors in terms of the literary treatment of historical memory (the first would being their transnationalisation) is that of the emotional

⁵ On María Xosé Queizán as the predecessor of the current female Galician authors, see Vilavedra, 2016a.

approach to the subject. Faced with topical visions that identify sentimentalisation as alienation, this type of approach can open the way to processes of deliberation, reflection and action, if we understand emotions from a cognitive perspective (see SOLOMON, 2004). These are indeed essential processes when it comes to developing an open, hybrid and under-construction identity paradigm that cannot be disregarded as a reference when we seek to analyse how young writers of the 21st century develop their literary projects. In my opinion, the awareness of the global interaction of emotions, although drawing on such presuppositions, is not in fact anything new. Thus, for example, Ulrich Beck speaks of a “cosmopolitan empathy” and of the “globalization of emotions”, arguing that “the spaces of our emotional imagination have expanded in a transnational sense” (BECK, 2006: 6, something that, as we will see, is evident in the novels we are analysing here).

We have art so as not to die from (so much) truth

The innovation of this emotional approach is that it is, on the one hand, resistant to gender stereotypes and, at the same time, an alternative to what would be the canonical model of “novels of memory” configured by male writers; on the other hand, it takes the form of a series of narrative strategies that, in the cases of Aneiros and López Silva, coincide to a striking extent in terms of both plot and discursive articulation, and which allow us to re-imagine the historical past from original perspectives that avoid the sclerotisation and exhaustion of the so-called “literature of memory”.

In the resilient nature of this approach we can recognise the feminist program proposed by Françoise Collin, a program that addresses what she calls “the indominable⁶”, which opens a space to the totality of experience and does not identify with the dominant, with that ideology that equates living “with doing [as if] there were no other time than that of history. As if ‘history’ should serve as a memory” (COLLIN, 1995: 170). Within the framework of her analysis of the specificity of what would be a feminist history or a women’s history, Collin analyses memory – in contrast to history – as a singular form of access to temporality, a form that allows us to access that which is considered unrepresentable insofar as it is not represented (that is to say, is not considered representable because it has not yet been represented) and, consequently, unknown to the extent that it is ignored by patriarchal canonical historical knowledge (a knowledge that Collin qualifies as “hard” and “monumental” and that, in my opinion, is predominantly factual). Therefore, “*Si la memoria excede a lo representable, si el tiempo excede a su versión histórica o susceptible de serlo, ¿no hay huellas que son irreductibles a las marcas, a lo que se capitaliza y recupera?*” (COLLIN, 1995: 163-4). *Si las hay, y el arte se nos revela como una herramienta especialmente útil para detectarlas. Collin lo explica así: If there are, then art reveals itself to us as a particularly useful tool for detecting them. Collin explains it*

6 This is a sphere in which we might situate, from a neurobiological perspective such as that of A. Damásio, emotions.

thus: “Quizá toda obra de arte es depositaria de una memoria ajena a la reconstrucción o a la construcción de la historia, una memoria que recoge el olvido de lo inmemorial: en la obra de arte lo que no depende de la **marca deja huella** en un tiempo que no es ajeno, sino irreductible, a lo histórico, donde quedan abolidas las fronteras de lo privado y lo público, de lo singular y lo colectivo” (COLLIN, 1995: 165, bold mine).

History would therefore not be the only depository of that experiential and emotional memory, not even the primary or prioritised one. If, as Collin affirms, “*la fidelidad a la memoria no se agota en su traducción histórica, ni en la esfera de lo representable*” (COLLIN, 1995: 170), then, I argue, artistic expression, free of the limitations imposed by denotation and referentiality, is constituted in the privileged environment as a means of giving form to that memory of the unnameable and the indomitable. For that reason, as we will see, Inverno and Marcel, characters in *Sol de inverno* (2009) and *Memoria de cidades sen luz* (2008) respectively, engage in the act of writing. I will now focus on the analysis of these two novels that, as I have already noted, present striking similarities in the literary development of this emotional memory. The aim of such an analysis is to show the extent to which these texts concretise the innovative potential of this narrative model for dealing with memory established by female Galician authors.

The cases of *sol de inverno* and *memoria de cidades sen luz*

In addition to having been published at practically at the same time and being almost contemporaneous authors (Aneiros was born in 1976, López Silva in 1978), both novels begin in the same way: with a violent death, witnessed in one work by a five-year-old boy and in the other by a thirteen-year-old girl; in both cases, then, they are individuals who had not yet had contact with death, nor, above all, with gratuitous violence. Inverno, the main character in *Sol de inverno* (hereafter SDI) experiences these for the first time when her friend Fiz dies in her arms because “ninguén lle advertira aínda que a vida remataba así, de súpeto, sen máis, aos dezasete anos. Que non se precisa accidente nin enfermidade. Que o odio e a envexa son suficientes para morrer. Iso aos dezasete anos non se sabe ou non se quere saber” (24). The main character in *Memoria de cidades sin luz* (hereafter, MDCSL) is, at the beginning of the book, a five-year-old boy who watches from under his bed as his family is murdered and “nese momento, creo, comenezou a miña vida”. Yet his life began not because he managed to survive, but because “aquel día é o meu primeiro rcoro” since “no lembro nada anterior ás cousas que vin dende debaixo da cama” (13); paradoxically, life and memory are synonymous for Marcel, although Lucia, the woman who rescued him and became his adoptive mother, had, since then, dedicated “*todos os seus esforzos a que esquecese o que viña de ver*” (15).

Memory is, from the very beginning, the catalyst of everything that is recounted to us in both novels, which indeed comes into existence exactly because their protagonists perform

an exercise of memory. In the case of Marcel, at the end of his life, now blind, when all that remains is his voice, he will be left with that memory which constitutes the seminal nucleus of his identity:

Por iso souben que tiña que morrer en París, neste París no que a luz artificial resolve as ausencias e resolve a memoria toda que hoxe conto con nostalgia, porque me sei transitando na fronteira.

(...)

Seguramente relato este capítulo despois de morto. A miña voz sobrevíveme (...) E cando eu desapareza, irá comigo a miña voz e, con ela, a memoria (MDCSL: 338-9).

Also in the case of Inverno it is her voice, the custodian of memory that allows her to stay alive:

namentras esta voz siga a vibrar nas cordas vocais, seguirás a existir.

(...)

Pero antes, antes diralo todo, unha e outra vez. Repetiralo ata que non che queden folgos. Cada día. Esa é a única evidencia de teres existido (...) Namentres un recordo, Inverno, un maldito recordo alumee desde algún furado negro do cerebro, permanecerás viva (SDI: 505).

As for Inverno, who fights Alzheimer's disease to her final days, life is quite literally a matter of remembering, consciousness of how it is still "só agarda lembrar. É o único facho que queda aceso para continuar vivindo" (SDI: 5).

In both cases, the incomprehensible and abrupt encounter with death metaphorises the shock that such an event always constitutes during war, making it much more sudden and incomprehensible. But in the novels of Aneiros and Lopez Silva death is individualised and from it derives, inevitably, a certain dehistoricisation that allows us to resize it and interpret it in a subjective and emotional way.

Those traumatic encounters, then, exert for Marcel and for Inverno a foundational value: in the case of the former, erasing the memory of all that had happened until then; in the latter, making her into an adult before her time, as her father perceived: "*Inverno, xa es unha adulta. Xa coñeces o peso das mentiras e dos silencios de Antes. Miñaxoia, que cedo che chegou...*" (SDI: 38). From that point onwards, the life of both characters will be an emotional carousel, one dominated by arbitrary and contradictory feelings. Their living states mark for them their emotions: Joy ("*a Rue de la Felicité⁷ foi unha sorte de cidadela fortificada (...) que me condenou, irremediabilmente, á alegría máis fonda*" (MDCSL: 117) but above all fear, a permanent fear ("*eu vivín con medo toda a miña vida*", MDCSL: 317) which has even physiological consequences: "*Cando o medo chegaba, simplemente, volvíame parvo, paralizábaseme o*

⁷ Obviously, the choice of the name of the street is no coincidence.

cerebro, nin memorizaba nin me concentraba absolutamente en nada” (MDCSL: 119); “*Cando xa case non me lembraba do que era, o medo volveu. Unha tarde do 42 (...) comprobei por enésima vez que non había maneira de librarse del, que fixese o que fixese, fose onde fose, o medo ía irromper inesperadamente para esfarrapar dunha labazada a felicidade. Xa se sabe: o medo volve sempre*” (MDCSL: 127).

For Inverno, after the death of Fiz, the feeling that is imposed is not pain or aching, “*era máis a sorpresa, o medo, a carraxe*” (SDI: 26); she felt such fear that she was not “*capaz de articular palabra*” (SDI: 30). In fact, in both cases the deepening of the fear until it is chronic seems to be due to the development of a pathology caused by shock: all symptoms fit with what may be an undiagnosed and untreated case of post-traumatic stress disorder (TEP), according to the criteria of the DSM-V diagnostic (American Psychiatric Association) or that of the ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Health-related Problems developed by the WHO).

The consequences, at the level of the consciousness, of traumatic events such as those lived by Marcel and Inverno in their early years have been studied widely (for example, Harkin 2009, following Fogelson), as also have the effects of certain absolutely anomalous emotional experiences, such as seeing one’s own parents and siblings being killed when one is five years old: “certain emotional experiences may not find expression since they lack an appropriate cognitive structuration in the culture that would allow them to become the subject of discourse. In such cases, their unarticulated, un-nameable and chaotic qualities make them disturbing and dangerous and potentially creative forces” (HARKIN: 84). Of course, the society in which both Marcel and Inverno lived lacked this explanatory framework (the “appropriate cognitive structuration” that Harkin talks about) that would allow them to integrate and assimilate their trauma: it will in fact be the creative force of writing that helps them to live with the grief, a grief they will never overcome (“*O horror da visión de Fiz abatido na silveira non escapou nunca*”, SDI): 39).

In MDCSL, practically all the characters write as therapy; Marcel, because “*só así un é quen de volver ver no maxín a morte dun fillo ou de escribir o medo co que sempre viviu, para que quede aí*” (321); René dedicates his novel to “*oito horas diarias*” because “*tiña tanto medo a ser criticado que botaba máis horas corrixindo ca escribindo*” (161) and would never come to publish this work “*que escribía unha e outra vez*” (215); even Armelle will compulsively write letters from prison in search of redemption. As for Lucia, “*despois das longas tempadas que pasaba escribindo naquela casa da Toscana, volvía a París moito máis tranquila e normal, quizais porque vertía todos os seus fantasmas nunhas novelas estrañas que publicaba co nome de Marie Royal-Benhamou*”; thanks to these novels, Lucia can rid herself of her memories, transferring them to a world of fiction in which there is more truth than in her own life: “*Nas novelas que escribiu na Toscana estaba todo aquel mundo de saudade e nostalxia que Lucía trataba de disfrazar coa enerxía dun día a día conducido a cen por hora. Era coma estar nunha vida de mentira e verter na ficción da literatura a súa propia realidade*” (122). The use of

the pseudonym Marie Royal-Benhamou is nothing other than the final link in this process of transfer and ontological unfolding in which Lucia lives.

Inverno will also turn to writing as a bulwark against nostalgia and oblivion. In order not to forget her origins, her father encourages her to write letters to her friend Laura (SDI: 136) but also chooses her to be a typist for the newsletter *Galiza Nova*, which was edited by anti-fascist Galician writers who had fled to Barcelona during the Civil War. And thus “*as letras ditadas por aqueles que papá chamaba irmáns e as cartas de Laura impedíronche esquecer. E aferrácheste ás palabras para sobrevivir á desmemoria*” (SDI: 138). The same will happen years later, in Cuba, when she is working for the island’s press, at the official journal *Diario de La Marina* and also the underground magazine *Loita*. Inverno wrote in order not to feel “*tan endiañada, maldita e agonicamente soa*” (SDI: 411); she read and wrote “*compulsivamente para matar as horas*” (SDI: 411) because “*non quería esquecer, aferrábaste a calquera palabra para non te anular, para lembrar que eras Inverno*” (SDI: 412). At the typewriter “*afogabas todos os lamentos que xa ninguén quería escoitar*” (SDI: 412) while “*tecleabas saudades*” (SDI: 412).

If memory and life are, as we have seen, inextricably united, nostalgia is the vertex at which the two converge, in that it is the engine that drives their lives and, hence, that which makes the mechanism of memory work. We have already seen that Lucia suffers from chronic homesickness, and Marcel suffers an attack of this same sentiment on a trip to Buenos Aires (MDCSL: 232, 236) only to discover that, indeed, memory and nostalgia are inseparably united and feed on one another: “*Quizais a inmersión no pasado e nas emocións me tivera ata entón demasiado distraído como para pensar que, a fin de contas, eu non era máis ca un exiliado que volvera, e os motivos do exilio empezaron a virme á memoria na conversa con aquela muller*” (MDCSL: 298).

But the area in which I consider these female authors to be most radically innovative is in the love stories of their protagonists. If we accept that everything related to feelings of love is usually codified in an emotional framework, we will better understand the importance of subverting gender stereotypes in this area. In the case of Inverno, the history of her love contravenes what is expected of a woman of her social and cultural profile: what is striking is not only that she does not marry or have children but, above all, her deaf resistance to the realisation of a loving relationship that, ultimately, could deactivate the resistant memory-based practice that she has chosen as a *modus vivendi* and which will prevent her from achieving her main objective in life: to return to Antes, alongside Fiz, to die there. Neither Raphael, nor Ian, nor Tomás will be sufficiently interesting to divert her from that goal.

More complex is the case of Marcel, a character who perfectly embodies Foessel’s theses (2010: 98) as to how links are established between individuals in modern societies, these no longer being predetermined by the family but knotted arbitrarily. Marcel was orphaned at an early age, and from that time he develops an unusual affiliation with Lucía, who in turn first

maintains a sentimental relationship with a married man before ending up in a relationship with a woman; Marcel will go on to live in a *ménage à trois* with Armelle and René in total normality, and with such intensity that he will relegate the question of Artur's paternity to a secondary level, and will maintain throughout his life a relationship with María that we will not know whether to label as friendly or loving. Only in the end, already blind, will he rediscover love with Nélia, a far younger woman.

A first and important element in the rupture of our conventional expectations of love is the fact that the emotional component does not necessarily make these novels "soft". That is to say, their characters do not experience an ascending emotional progression in a positive sense: love neither generates happiness, nor does it appear as a horizon to be reached in life, nor is "the happy ending" an operative vector in the development of the plots, elements which could all be understood, even expected, as a sort of poetic justice to compensate Marcel and Inverno for so much suffering.

It is only during childhood that the characters believe the myth of the promise of happiness: from then on, the more experiences they have, the more evidence they accumulate that the promise of the future was false and that happiness does not exist. That is why the novels of Aneiros and López Silva are nostalgic novels, which are constantly projected towards the past rather than the future, and it is also for this reason that both characters spend their lives yearning for their respective unfulfilled childhood loves which, because impossible, were perfect. So much so that Marcel, at the end of his life, when he reconstructs it through memory in order to narrate it, still sighs for that past: "*ainda hoxe desexo recuperar aqueles momentos, esa primeira tarde de falar con María e que aí parase o tempo*" (MDCSL: 55), a past in which everything fits together, in which the subject finds its reason for being ("*eu comecei a estar seguro de que María e eu eramos mozos, nós os dous, sós, un do outro. Era unha especie de mundo perfecto que, como non, xiraba arredor de min: eu, a miña moza e o meu mellor amigo, despois de ver as películas fantásticas no cine Savoy na Coruña, co olor a mar*", MDCSL: 58) and in which it was still possible to make any fantasy come true: "*me atrevían a darlle aquel bico que nunca máis olvidei, o bico de Hollywood que ela me deixou darlle coma se fose o máis normal do mundo e coma se ela tamén pensase nese bico tanto coma min, que nas noites imaxinaba e fantaseaba o bico no meu cuarto*" (MDCSL: 58).

Such an idyllic state, though, came to an end with the *coup d'état* of 18 July 1936 and the violence it unleashed, so perceptible that even some pre-adolescents were able to grasp the significance of its effects. Thus Marcel suddenly learned the great lesson of his life, the only promise that will be fulfilled repeatedly, and which he will thus never forget: "*din os budistas que mesmo estar feliz é sufrimento pois, cando un é feliz, sabe que a felicidade rematará antes ou despois. Diso empezamos a decatarnos ese día...*" (MDCSL: 59).

Something similar happens to Inverno. Her discovery of the impossibility of happiness

also comes after the sudden disappearance of her beloved Fiz, snatched away by the primary and gratuitous violence unleashed in the weeks before the Civil War. As I have already noted, it is the character's father who is first to notice:

Inverno, xa es unha adulta. Xa coñeces o peso das mentiras e dos silencios de Antes. Miñaxoia, que cedo che chegou... Daquela non entendiches pero só unhas semanas despois soubeches de que falaba. Para ti a guerra comezou aquel serán do San Xoán (...) só tiñas trece anos (...) Esa tarde, Inverno, non o esquezas, comezou a guerra, unha guerra na que Fiz xa non podería acompañarte. O horror da visión de Fiz abatido na silveira non escapou nunca. Segues tendo o cheiro a cereixas e murmurio das candeas do castiñeiro envoltos nos miolos. Foi imposible calalos malia tanto tempo como pasou (...) turraches por fuxir do cadáver de Fiz e nunca o conseguiches. Tentáchelo en Antes, en París, na Habana, en Pinar del Río, en Bos Aires, en Barcelona, sen saber que da infancia non se foxe. Nin do paraíso nin do inferno (SDI: 38-39)

In both cases, the impact of childhood trauma is sustained until the end of their lives in such a way that what Marcel and Inverno are is self-explained by what they have lived through. The past, the remote past, is the axis around which they articulate themselves as subjects, which is why in these novels the identity of the main characters is constructed within their interior selves, in intimacy that they rarely need to externalise and that they even prefer to remove from the social sphere. This space for the intimate is a stronghold of freedom, of resistance and even of criticism of the conventions and negotiations imposed on them – as is imposed on all of us – by the public sphere (on this question, see Foessel 2010). And hence also the scant activity or appearance of bodies as vehicles of being and, perhaps by way of compensation, the obsessive presence of writing (I have dealt with these questions in more detail in Vilavedra 2016a).

On the traumatic past and (im)possible happiness

We have seen how Marcel and Inverno build their identities by exercising a stubborn resistance to forgetting the past, a resistance that LaCapra has described as a kind of “fidelity to the trauma” that can come from:

un sentimiento melancólico de que, elaborando el pasado para poder sobrevivir o participar nuevamente en la vida, uno traiciona a los que quedaron aniquilados o destruidos por el pasado traumático. El lazo que nos une a los muertos, especialmente a los muertos entrañables, puede conferirle valor al trauma y hacer que el volver a vivirlo sea una conmemoración dolorosa pero necesaria a la cual nos consagramos o al menos quedamos apegados (LACAPRA, 2005: 46-47)

This foundational trauma can even be a key element in the construction of one's own identity, as indeed happens in these cases. Thus, the troubled journey through life for both characters is configured around loss and the permanent desire to compensate for it, to restore the original, destroyed order. This is why neither Marcel nor Inverno want to elaborate on and overcome their respective losses, despite the fact that they are historical and thus the

consequence of a series of concrete events that explain them, and which thus might help Marcel and Inverno to embrace and overcome them. In this sense, the subjective and contradictory versions that both characters construct from History and from their own biographies, this from a very *sui generis* combination of individual and collective experience, coincide fully with the autobiographical behaviour that Bou (2005) has described as characteristic of the exiled condition, in which the role granted to individual experience underpins frustration at the scant historical certainty and the consequent confirmation of the impossibility of achieving “*el sueño imposible de una memoria total que integrara la individual, la colectiva y la histórica*” (Bou, 2005: 31). For both, their losses are irremediable and constitutive and it is for this reason that “any reconstruction or renovation appears as something unacceptable by totalizing, repairing, optimist or naive” (LACAPRA, 2005: 4). The abrupt rupture of both with what would have been a conventional environment in which to develop a normal childhood, and their successive integration into traumatised environments, also marked by loss, renders the setting out or realisation of their original losses even more impossible and takes them to a permanent state of melancholy in which mourning is confused with “an endless quasi transcendental suffering” (LACAPRA, 2005: 95) that makes any attempt to achieve happiness in vain.

Denying the promise of happiness and love as a formula to achieve it, contrary to what might be the expectations of certain communities of readers that seek in literature a confirmation of their stereotypes, these novels resist being what LaCapra defines as those “*narrativas fetichizadas y totalizadoras que niegan el trauma que les dio origen retornando prematuramente al principio del placer, armonizando los acontecimientos y recuperando a menudo el pasado con mensajes exaltados u optimistas*” (LACAPRA, 2005: 7). In the case of Inverno, love does not even seem to enter into the broader project of her life, after Fiz’s death and the failed adolescent attempts with Louis: neither Ian nor Tomás become much more than footnotes in her life, utterly secondary in the development of a life narrative centred around the management of a personal trauma that allows her, the main character, and us, the readers, to resize on a human scale the successive historical traumas in which she lives immersed. And the same will happen to Marcel: in the case of MDCSL, the author submits her character to what is perhaps the worst of fates, because after witnessing at five years of age the murder of his parents and siblings, he will have to see how his beloved Armelle kills his son Artur. López Silva radically alters the affective categories with which we usually operate: maternity, paternity, friendship, love... and absolutely all the characters in this novel force us to reconceptualise them because nothing turns out to be as we thought: mothers kill their children, children see their fathers killed, love and friendship are barely distinguishable... And Marcel ends his days by discovering, contrary to what he had always believed, that “*a vida e os dramas non tiñan por que estar tocados pola guerra*” (MDCSL: 333). After all, his past is revealed only as a past, just one more, surely neither more nor less traumatic than that of other characters such as René, Armelle or Nélia: for all of them, happiness would be nothing more than a chimera, a promise repeatedly refuted when the future becomes the present.

By way of conclusion

In analysing the novels by López Silva and Aneiros, it is surprising how many narrative formulas coincide, both at the level of plot and also in terms of discursive articulation. In my opinion, these coincidences occur because the authors resort to such formulas insofar as they are especially appropriate for a narrative turn that allows us to re-imagine the Civil War from novel perspectives, avoiding its sclerotisation and exhaustion within the canonical framework of the so-called “narrative of historical memory”, a model configured in Galicia almost exclusively by male narrators practically until the 21st century.

The singular, heterodox and renovating contribution of female Galician writers to the literary codification of historical memory is based, fundamentally, on their capacity to create, by means of certain discursive resources, a space for an emotional approach on the margins of expected gender stereotypes, these established from a cultural logic that associates emotion with the feminine and activism with the masculine. As we have seen, these resources have to do, above all, with the diffuse ontological condition of diegetic materials, with the capacity of these writers to hybridise different genre-discursive categories, and with the use of ambiguous modalizing formulas by means of which they carry out a symbiosis between the biographical and the fictional. This is even the case in those modalities most linked to intimacy (as is the case with autobiography) which provide their narratives with a singular tension between the public and private, the intimate and the historical, in which the topical readings draw on confessionalism and sentimentalism to make the characteristic vectors of female-authored narrative. On these lines, the emotional dimension within which these stories take place, with their resistance to *happy endings* and their tacit affirmation that all traumatic memory is a sufficient condition for unhappiness, invites us to question the naive conviction in the healing power of memory, but at the same time forces us to rethink the duty of memory, its limits, possibilities and consequences. Perhaps this is the most innovative proposal, however heterodox, of the readings that these novels invite us to make.

Towards a cosmopolitan-political reading

Let us return to where we began. The recovery of the Holocaust and its historical time as a thematic motif, far from being seen as an anachronism, must be interpreted as a consequence of “the need for a moral touchstone in an age of uncertainty and the absence of master ideological narratives” (LEVY & SZNAIDER, 2002: 93). This assertion could be applied, by extension, to the novels we have just analysed and to their radical contribution to the transnationalisation of Galician historical memory and, therefore, to the configuration of a cosmopolitan European memory and identity.

Undoubtedly, “there is a bitter irony, but perhaps also a portion of hope, in the fact that a nationalistic, racist movement sparked an international consciousness that has been given

expression in a range of works that deal with the denial of the right to life, caused by war, genocide and disaster, and that it has become a significant part of world literature” (ROSENDAHL, 2008: 103). There is ethical potential (and perhaps also political) in the so-called “literature of the Holocaust” that seems to me comparable to the one that can be developed through readings of the novels of Aneiros, López Silva, Buela and Costas, in that the relationship (implicit or explicit) that establishes the memory of the Civil War with that of other conflicts, in order to integrate it into a dynamic centrifuge, both multidirectional and transnational, can have a compensatory effect in face of endogamic inertia and the risk of depoliticisation that the fictionalisation of any historical event always entails (as we mentioned above in relation to the choice of the model of the adventure novel by male Galician writers in dealing with topics such as the Second World War). Far from having an alienating effect, these female authors have shown that emotions and deterritorialisation are useful tools for stimulating a moral reading and that, although it may seem paradoxical from the outset, the expropriation of the memory of conflict and pain, with the consequent recognition of the international identity of the victims, can contribute to the generation of a feeling of universal solidarity.

Ultimately, the question posed by these novels is whether “a cosmopolitan reading may be an effective tool for overcoming the distance between past-oriented national memories and the anxiety of a globally shared European future” (DOMÍNGUEZ, 2015: 41). Or, to put it in another way, its potential **cosmopolitan-political** scope (MOUFFE, 2007: 103). Time will tell.

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