

WRITING AS A SETTLEMENT PLACE IN EXILE: TUNUNA MERCADO AND MARÍA NEGRONI

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Summary || This article calls for the possibility of determining a settlement place for the women who contribute to the writing process as exiles. The exile experience, whether interior or exterior, that was endured for political reasons by Argentinean intellectuals during the second half of the 20th century, was more intense for women who write. This experience is reliably reproduced in the writings of the two women studied in this paper: Tununa Mercado and María Negroni. Both of these women are able to make and make for themselves a place from that location; they provide a different way of making literature. This article will analyze that place using two of their novels: *Yo nunca te prometí la eternidad* [I never promised you eternity] (2005) and *La anunciación* [The Annunciation] (2007), respectively.

Key-words || Writings | Exile | Women | Intellectual.

Nadie creía que podía llegar a pasar lo que pasó. Para ella esos vaticinios eran visiones de locos [...] los que hablaban de irse les deben haber parecido unos orates. Eso estaba fuera de toda posible imaginación. No tenían por qué emigrar a ningún lado.

Tununa Mercado
Yo nunca te prometí la eternidad

¿Qué estoy diciendo? ¿A quién le hablo? ¿Hace cuánto que partí de un lugar que ya no existe? ¿Yo, lo que es peor, no existo, muchísimo menos mis ambiciones personales? [...] Me siento realmente exhausta. A decir verdad, muy sola.

María Negroni
La Anunciación

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1 | I identify this term with an 'other place' that has nothing to do with the land of birth or the legitimacy of any State but instead with an interior place essentially marked by the feminine.

0. Introduction

Knocked off center, out of focus, disconnected, marginalized, peripheral, exiled, migrants, travellers, wanderers, deported, stateless and dispossessed are the thousand and one ways of naming people without power. There is an intrinsic relationship between those without power and the displaced. To move, run or escape implies a lack of power and sometimes a lack of desire for power, denying or being indifferent to it. Power stabilizes, it stabilizes us. It may be that many men and women who have been expelled, thrown out or driven at some point towards wandering may not be able to return. Maybe they finally choose to wander the voyage's space and time even when they return to remain in their place of origin or when they are 'just visiting' what we call patria or the fatherland. In the case of women, one could say that from the point of view of language the challenge is now double because of the confrontational relationship that is posed between patria and matría.¹ This is even more so in the case of women who write, who bring writings and make a profession from writing, in other words a way of life.

With regards to in-between places, in the case of Latin American intellectuals there are situations where the idea copies itself then folds upon itself, creating very complicated situations. The condition of exile, either interior or exterior, that was endured throughout the second half of the 20th century for political reasons is one of those situations. I believe that it is more intense in the case of women who write fiction, essays, translations and even theater. The condition can be seen in their writing through production molds and specific rhetoric devices (Bocchino, 2008). The point is that in this double or triple condition of exile (as woman, intellectual, writer, etc. so as not to continue with sexual, religious or political specifications) the women studied in this article, Tununa Mercado and María Negroni, are able to make and make for themselves a place from those same

co-ordinates. This is done through their literature by offering another way of making literature or of engaging in other possibilities in the writing profession. In this article I will try to account for that place and that composition of place from two of their relatively recent novels: *Yo nunca te prometí la eternidad* [I never promised you eternity] (2005) by Tununa Mercado and *La Anunciación* [The Annunciation] (2007) by María Negroni. Chronologically speaking, these works are far from the original formation nucleus of the corpus of “exile writings” that was directly related to the political exiles provoked by the Argentinean dictatorship starting in 1976.²

Like other limiting experiences, the “exile experience” reveals identity as an image of itself, for itself and for others. The two statements that are located at the centre of research, identity and memory, are problematic due to the exceptional nature of this experience. In literature, and even more so in the literature of women who at some point suffered the exile situation, they become material for works beyond a possible physical or material surpassing and thus are turned into conditions for these writings.

As we know, identities are fragile constructions that are supported by a fine balance. They are in constant composition and repair, incapable of escaping to the pathologies of disintegration, especially in extreme situations, but capable of repairing themselves and restructuring themselves in the least desirable circumstances. In this research identity, memory and experience are categories that reappear again and again as analytical axis. They are represented through ambiguity, silence and oblivion/forgetfulness in the double role of cohesion and conflict. Their literature, this literature is offered as a place for observing their development since it allowed me to propose the theoretical-critical category of “exile writings”. I was thus able to determine the limits of a type of literary or essayist production that I defined by the repositioning of the subjects who produce it, especially regarding the reconstruction of subjectivity. Tackling the specific case of “exile writings” made by women, and more concretely by Mercado and Negroni, the questioning intensifies and becomes lost in a double demand: on the one hand, the exile experience transformed into an irreversible condition and a transitory experience; and on the other hand, the female condition of those who are writing. Essentially, there appears to be no other alternative here than to revive subjectivity in writing. I even conclude that it is the reason these writings exist. However, before discussing revival I prefer to speak here about the reconstruction of subjectivity.

This type of writing is not the mechanical effect from a determined moment but rather from “what comes after” that moment, in other words what reinforces the trauma, and not always from one day to the next. During the moment that the trauma was created, a tension

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2 | In which the authors participated with other works. For example, *En Estado de memoria* [In a State of Memory] (1990) by Tununa Mercado or *El sueño de Úrsula* [Ursula's Dream] (1998) by María Negroni.

is assumed between the preservation of physical integrity and the preservation of moral integrity. When they return, the world is different from when they left it and that is when the remembering begins that tries to reinforce a plot of pure loose ends. Testimonial literature escapes the restrictive definition since in every case it deals with the statement of a subjectivity that testifies, remembers and reinforces its memory. The author knows she remembers and knows why she writes, reinforcing her memory, and that it has nothing to do with a spontaneous display or with talking for the sake of talking. As these authors write, they reconstruct themselves as subjectivity and at the same time they recover their identity. The writing is framed between the context of what happened and the talk about what happened as an instance of flexing before reflecting. Once it is started it does not appear to have an end. Therefore, though far from the material event that gave origin to this type of writing, these authors remain in that very strange in-between place specifically making themselves a place from there: telling, narrating, poetizing, translating it, etc. While they write, they record this place in movement, they try to tie ends, to put some kind of limit on the events that respond just to life, the trip itself, personal and literal, a subjectivity in the process of returning to reinvent itself, each time and at every step of the way. The exile situation becomes a condition of their displacement, it makes them subjects. In that situation, one can understand the persistence of the biographical and autobiographical gesture: those who write and the men and women who are written about, define themselves, settle down and resist with writing. It makes it possible to link bodies with names and surnames. An author's signature, dedications and epigraphs stiffen the bridge that the writing stretches across in order to begin the reconstruction of subjectivity in the permanence of errancy. These authors, who are now in the condition of exile, reinvent a subjectivity by writing but they also reinforce a place in their writing: a *matria*.³

These novels, for lack of a better expression, contain and develop stories that could be told briefly. In *Yo nunca...* a woman in exile reconstructs the story of other women in exile. In *La Anunciación*, a woman reconstructs the story of her own exile. In both cases the women survive by telling their stories or in actual fact writing them. Sometimes they say that they do them, others go without saying. The main characters of the two stories go beyond anecdotes to explain themselves by telling a story of writing, their own, the one that develops before our eyes, and in this telling there is reconstruction but also awareness of reconstruction. What is told could be told in a different way but, and this is really important, the way in which each one tells her story is the only way possible that they find for survival. Writing is actually the destiny of those who reinforce themselves in order to continue living. It is not about writing about a topic, it is writing the topic in order to make oneself heard, to make oneself seen. They

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3 | To exile or to exile oneself could be defined as a never-ending slipping along in the identity of sliding and writing and, on the other hand, as the attempt to fix some limit that, nevertheless, returns to cross itself but its mere presence. Thus, the writing becomes a border in continuous movement where one reinvents oneself, as well, subjectivity next to the invention of a rhetoric of sliding. The uncertainty appears there as a fundamental structure and calms down only regarding the emergency of the gesture of writing. In any event, writing is a moment of stopping in the continuous sliding that, in turn, is paradoxically sliding. At the inverse of the voyage of adventures, where everything including the unknown has meaning, this other voyage shows the "as if" of what seemed the meaning. The exile situation puts on display the impossibility of definitions, the nonsense of sense, and from there the dramatic character that it has: to know, to realize and that it may be, perhaps and in the better, the only sense of exile that in turn allows to begin to reconstruct a subjectivity "in pieces". In this case, as founders of another discursiveness/reflectiveness with its own rules, male and female authors of writings in exile make themselves a place in their writings, they make themselves known, they call themselves by name and surnames. Only there do they encounter space to recognize themselves and name themselves, make a place for the flesh and bones subject, empyrean that is traceable in the name itself that signed the book (Bocchino, 2008: 19-20).

write for themselves and for whoever can or wants to listen.

The problem of representation in art has been discussed, especially since the avant-garde to today. When this theme is mixed with an exile situation, it becomes a concrete problem that gives substance, is suffered in the body, shows itself in speech and is told in writing. It stops being a purely theoretical problem. In this type of writing, faced with the impossibility of representing what is suffered in their own flesh, the authors in their name or in that of their characters steady themselves in writing which is the only place for survival. There they can also state for those who may be able to or may want to read them.

Thus, these (literary) exile writings challenge borders that are national, linguistic, social, political, ethnic, gender, etc. They make the possibility of a clear and precise definition problematic, inventing a new place: they write about themselves travelling, they transcend the imaginary, confront cultures and fight for the appropriation of some language. They discuss in them the reference point of what was left behind, what is to come, the voyage. They do not really know what they are writing or for whom they write. For these reasons, the only concrete constant is that of the mark, the track, the remains of their own writing, and it is there where a rhetoric matrix reconverts the challenge of borders that definitively is there alone, before the previously known impossibility of representation, to reaffirm the subject who writes.

1. Tununa Mercado: surviving the passage of time

La escritura es trabajo de análisis en la medida en que regenera lo que está dañado. La operación, de microcirugía, como cabe para la letra de lo mínimo, consiste en reparar zonas necrosadas, bloqueos del decir, parálisis y depresión. Y si es análisis también es trabajo político que elabora, en el acto de producirse, la insatisfacción por el statu quo, el mal gusto en la boca que producen las nuevas configuraciones sociales y, al mismo tiempo en ese breve pero dramático acto que es su práctica cotidiana, formula su política: subvertir, no dejarse ganar, escribir.

Tununa Mercado (1995)

Continuity is clearly established between *Estado de Memoria* (1990) y *Yo nunca...*, two of Mercado's texts that are separated by about ten years. The first novel existentially and spatially takes root during the author's geographic exile.

The second novel expands upon a small grounded scene at the location of the different exiles that are given in exemplary sequence until it becomes a dense text. Through crossing discourse, the text again places us before the problem of the discourse genre. The

question that now concerns me is written continuity that goes beyond the proposed biography or autobiography because that is where the place is constructed for its development.

Pedro, the character in one of the scenes from *En estado...*, is described as a “Spanish refugee but with a fuzzy nationality, between French and central European” linked to the Argentinians in exile in Mexico, as he could be linked to other exiles as long as it is an exercise in awareness, “testing the old traumas that marked their existence” in order to put in motion “a system of reflections on solidarity and fusion with the marginalized that [...] he had been educated in since childhood” (1990:106). It is the same Pedro in *Yo nunca...* who at seven years of age flees Paris next to his mother and at some point in the trip watches as she leaves to search for water. At that point, a German plane spits out bursts of gunfire across the road and the bus driver, who is terrified by the attack, abandons whoever went for water. The story then follows Pedro on a route of loss and pain, and also of disobedience. This saves him from remaining in the line up with the orphans to be reunited with his mother, “mute, pale, disconnected”, “when the outcomes of the disappearances were irreparable.” This is the education that Pedro received that was alluded to in the first text.

I will now try to show the written continuity involved in taking the step from entering the situation to Mercado’s condition of exile, a place from which one cannot re-escape, even when the anecdote is relied on for the staging of other characters. To do so, I focus on the particular time and space coordinates of her writing, whose rhetoric device has found its clarity in the allegory based on the formula that Walter Benjamin gave it (1987, 1990).⁴ This is allegory as a social rather than artistic or literary object where one can better read the nature of a society captured in the image of ruin. To clarify the notions of time and space registered in the rhetoric figure in this specific case, allows for the observation that “exile writing” is not defined by a reference question but by a particular type of writing. It deals with a text that does not answer to “being written elsewhere” but to the “exile experience”, the “experience of being elsewhere” that becomes a condition of that writing. Time and space are reinforced through ellipsis, synecdoche and metonymy in order to reconfigure themselves in a final allegorical reading. The final meaning must be reconstructed through an allegorical reading since the detail will always be fragmented, inconclusive, open, porous and uncertain. What happens to Pedro, what he feels and what he goes through in *En estado de memoria* is the allegorical figure in detail that will have to unfold in *Yo nunca ...* by means of the different stories that are told there.⁵

As in the baroque vision of the Trauerspiel, here is a montage of visual

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4 | In *El origen del drama barroco alemán* [The origin of German Baroque drama] and in *Calle de dirección única* [One-way street], both published in 1928 in order to remain named as “modern allegory” in the analysis of Baudelaire’s poetry (“*El París de Segundo Imperio en Baudelaire*” [The Paris of the Second Empire in the Works of Baudelaire], “Sobre algunos temas en Baudelaire” [On some motifs in Baudelaire], and “París, capital del siglo XIX” [Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century]) from *Poesía y Capitalismo. Iluminaciones II* [Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism].

image and linguistic sign from which a possibility begins to emerge for solving the puzzle. “Pedro spent his life waiting for his mother who had gone for water and she spent her life searching for her son who she followed south” becomes an allegorical emblem of what can be called an exile story, in its last expression: exasperated waiting and searching. The catastrophe installs itself here as a “process of untiring disintegration”.

En *estado de memoria* narrates the exiles of an I woman in a biographical record. First France, then Mexico. Other exiles as well, colleagues and friends. “The Dying Place” is the exile where “to live was to survive” (1990:18). Fifteen years later, *Yo nunca ...* takes up the thread and allows us to see that both texts are derived from each other and implicate one another. While the first is anchored in a first-person narrative, the second meticulously unfurls that small scene with Pedro as protagonist transforming it into a long novel. It means that once the expansion is started, it could continue or replicate itself infinitely. The movement in *En un estado...* and in *Yo nunca...* is that of waiting, a rhythm of waiting, at the same time as the desperate running towards meaning and the desperate search for one. The sad glow that the characterization of the events acquires as a catastrophe comes from there. Literally speaking, the entrance into the exile situation becomes a catastrophe, going downwards on a destructive and irreparable slope. Allegory links together images and processes (ellipsis, synecdoche and metonymy) that find meaning in the final re-interpretation, tying threads from the reader’s location.⁶ From there comes the question about space-time dimensions in which allegory and ruin are re-ordered in exile writings since they always define themselves by ambiguity, uncertainty and misfortune. Therefore, the time and space categories that are explicit and precise keys in a traditional narrative are relaxed and dislocated here, losing all predetermined sense to become true emblems of their decrepitude and disappearance, of their disintegration before our very eyes. Literally all reference and fixation is taken apart in these writings. They decompose in order to reinforce themselves over and over. Nevertheless, beyond each recomposition the female subject in exile feels enraptured in a dream that can be condensed into one sentence: “Nothing around me belongs to me” (1990: 118). Paradoxically, it is reaffirmed in the emotional pounding of “mine did not feel like mine either”. The permanent chaos in identity marks does not permit the consolidation of subjectivity into harmony. Insanity sticks out as true nature and the only reason facing the irrational outside. The normal state from there is of painful banishment facing the hopeless vision of ruin.

The stories in *Yo nunca...* take place in France, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Buenos Aires and Jerusalem since 1940 but with looks back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, passing through Berlin and

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5 | “El aparente final feliz, la reunión familiar, no logró de todos modos y contra cualquier previsión, mitigar los daños en el niño, ni en el padre, ni, sobre todo, en la madre. Pedro se pasó la vida esperando a su madre que había ido a por el agua y ella buscando a su hijo que siguió al sur” (Mercado, 1990:108-109).

6 | “Allegory is in the realm of thought what ruins are in the realm of things” says Benjamin (1989: 353).

other smaller German towns. They clearly follow the history, events and comings and goings of other characters a part from Pedro in *En estado...* The stories include that of his mother, Sonia/Charlotte through her trip journal and her partner Ro. It also follows the stories of Sonia's mother and brother and their different related families, of companions in flight and occasional friends as well as enemies. Fundamental in the framing of the reconstruction of the escape is "WB", an enigmatic "teacher" who continues on towards Lourdes –"shame" says Sonia/Charlotte. Nevertheless, in reality Mercado's writing itinerary follows them⁷. The experience of comparison with Sonia's journal continues until the end because the novel fills in the blank spaces left by her journal's hyphens. There, Sonia loses Pedro who at that moment is Pierrot though he may have been born Peter. She finds him again, almost by chance, sometime later. Sonia also finds "WB" but hopelessly loses him later. That woman, that journal, the first loss – the son, the first one found – WB, the second one found – the son, and the second loss – WB, all reinforce the canvas of the exile voyage though no one knows when it started and it continues indefinitely.

The novels *En estado...* and *Yo nunca...* deal with a collection of notes for a specific writing that seem to be prepared for a future text, possibly fiction. They are two archives that are lightly differentiated by the referred to characters. Here the question again turns to time and space in relation to the exile. We may ask where and when is the voyage of exile as well as where and when are these writings that are being written. With representation annulled beforehand, these writings know that they tell us the story, they know that they cannot do anything else. Therefore, they refer to times and places that are not concrete but are seen through a certain subjectivity that is interlaced, woven and reinforced with other writings⁸. Both texts gather a file or report with a minimum of personal commentary that usually refers to writing, either personal or by others, and only offer a general hint for organizing the fragments. Above all, they deal with a hermeneutic method of reading text, whether oral or written, that tries to decipher a latent meaning: the emotional reconstruction of intensity as a way of feeling the flight, the exile, the being outside. The narrative is stripped of any history of its role as a source of information. What it brings with it is a culture (of exile) in the political sense of a memory that nurtures a will for change if, and only if, that memory is conserved. The significance that is embraced and implicated in the referred to times and places decisively includes its history in order to give meaning to the present. Mercado assumes the figure of a collector in archaeological terms, in the sense that each piece that she collects is weighed down, suffers and simultaneously supports all of the history that it brings to the present and also justifies its presence by bringing up-to-date all of its history. Mercado evokes the times and places of exile, both hers and of others, with the goal of assembling

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7 | "Sonia no podía saber que ella no solo escribía apuntes para un relato propio en el que desembocarían los datos para allí permanecer, satisfechas sus necesidades de futuro, sino también para alguien que entraría en él como a un terreno lleno de escombros con la intención de apartarlos para ver qué hay debajo" (Mercado, 2005: 37).

8 | «Con caracteres pequeños, caligrafía desgarbada y desde el ángulo superior izquierdo empecé a escribir [...] La pluma rasgó la superficie y se adelantó, desde entonces, con un trazado incierto, produciendo pequeños cúmulos de textos [...] como si el terror a la superficie ilimitada la condicionara, fue creando zonas de reserva, señuelos de referencia a los que podría volver si se perdía. El protocolo se fue llenando en varios sentidos, con textos y sobretextos en líneas y entre líneas, dejando áreas vacías y configurando representaciones más allá de su propia pertinencia» (Mercado, 1990: 196).

a sense for the present, to make and make for oneself a place to show backwards and forwards, East and West, the unmistakable textile worked on intermittently by exiles and writings: on one side, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Mexico, Buenos Aires, Jerusalem, the roads, voyages, flights and displacements; on the other side are the travellers' journals, maps, philosophical essays, poems, novels, family books, testimonials and letters. This procedure that is used in *En estado...* is repeated in *Yo nunca...* Once the exile experience begins, it does not allow one to return which paradoxically results in displacement. The writing is based on a constructing principle of uncertainty and paradoxically resolves the narrative's space and time protocol with the rhetoric devices of the ellipsis, metonymy and synecdoche. The final figure that the reader finds meaning in is none other than allegory, as described by Benjamin: the allegory of the catastrophe and, simultaneously, the only remaining possibility from the catastrophe which is the writing. This writing is an effort to recuperate a precise, clear and impossible memory in the structure of the uncertainty that organizes it.⁹

On the one hand is the irreversibility of time and the consequent relentless decay that it brings with it; on the other is the construction of memory made from time that reinforces an impermeable representation of the impermanent by creating scenes. The images that are gathered by the exiled woman (is she Sonia/Charlotte or Tununa Mercado?) are exposed to interpretation. They are not subjective interpretations but clearly objective linguistic expressions and syntagms. The phenomena, events, places and gestures are given in language, they are spoken and they speak. They tell a historically impermanent truth that physically expresses the impermanence of history, a time and place that are given as scenes take place in order to tell the truth of the pure passing of time¹⁰.

2. María Negroni. Making a life for herself ... out of paper

«Nosé cómo se cuenta una muerte [...] Y, menos, una muerte como la mía, que terminó volviéndose vida. [...] Ya no recuerdo qué pasó después. Tal vez no pasó nada. Yo empecé a vivir, al mismo tiempo, en dos ciudades distintas».

«Cuando uno escribe, decora el dolor, le pone plantitas, fotos, manteles y se queda a vivir allí muy tranquilo, confiando en que nada puede ser peor porque, en realidad, si dolió tanto, ¿cómo podría doler más?».

La Anunciación

As I have said before (Bocchino, 2008), it is difficult to return from an exile situation. In addition to involving displacement, it also signifies

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9 | I read at the end of *Yo nunca...*: "Quiere recordar algo que sistemáticamente se le niega a la conciencia cada vez que su necesidad o deseo de recordarlo se le presenta. ¿Dónde estaba el 26 y el 27 de septiembre de 1940? Cree saberlo, o está a punto de saberlo [...] No tiene explicación para ese reiterado interrogante que se le superpone al acontecimiento real, como si establecer dónde estaba, en uno u otro de esos dos días, no sabe estrictamente cuál, la situara en el espacio, en la historia, en la realidad, y así pudiera emerger la plena noción de lo que sucedió, la atormentó, la desquició y puso una venda en su razón, que no otra cosa era esa obsesión por saber dónde estaba ella entonces, que la obnubilaba y no la dejaba asir los hechos o los ocultaba en un segundo plano impenetrable." (Mercado, 2005: 356-7).

10 | If it is true that Mercado did not know Benjamin's text before starting to write *Yo nunca...* as written in the dedication at the beginning of the text, one would have to say that her notion of writing, in material both interwoven from and with history, only clarifies itself in the direct relationship established between the idea of history and archive that Benjamin proposes, also interwoven.

a place of settlement though it may be floating. *La Anunciación* recovers this place and develops it in the design of a writing that retakes the voice of a woman who undoes herself, remakes herself and puts herself back together in a detailed outline. Memory and subjectivity but also the invention of memory and subjectivity through writing. The text begins with a thought-provoking dedication: “A Humboldt, /que tal vez fue o pudo haber sido, /y vive todavía en las palabras no escritas” [To Humboldt, /who perhaps was or may have been, /and still lives in the words not written],¹¹ which shows the framework facing memory and recollection in the construction of a subjectivity beyond the story that is being told.¹²

Those who survive a catastrophe suffer from intermittent memory reconstruction that is fragmentarily reinforced and structures itself upon the imprecise. Telling the catastrophe is the survivor’s attempt at constructing a version that allows for an explanation of what was suffered and also justifies survival. Here is where memory and recollection appear to face each other since memory is constructed from recollections: it is an attempt at organizing in order to offer a more or less complete picture of what happened. To say it more graphically: memory reinforces the event while recollections, linked to images, moments, smells, sensations and sounds, attest to an experience. In rhetoric terms, recollections always resolve themselves in the context of the fragmentary. Thus, memory would make history in the way that recollection is literature. The case of exile writings is paradigmatic in this sense and differentiation serves to mark the boundaries for writings in generic terms, for example fiction or non-fiction.

I think that *La Anunciación* shows, proposes and develops this differentiation as a theme as well as in the construction of the subjectivity of the character that speaks and is aware of weakness as exposed in a large interior monologue. She remembers. Tries to reinforce a memory. Fails. Tries again. Fails again. Tries to explain what happened. She searches to explain herself and the only material that she can count on is the word. But since it is impossible to represent what happened, failure persists given the magnitude of the event, the catastrophe, as well as the intrinsic inability of the word, a paradoxical element in the thread between recollection and memory. It is always an announcement that is always a copy of an announcement, as the text itself proposes. That is the reason for the fight at every step with and between the words: “house”, “anxiety”, “the unknown”, “private life”, “soul”, “emotion” and “Nobody”. The fight is also with objective representation that subjectivity is able to create with those emblem-words.¹³ The voice that speaks knows that it is inventing, that this invention is literature, and even though it wants to, it cannot reinforce a history or reconstruct a memory. In any case, making literature saves the recollection in individual terms. It enables a subjectivity in the contradiction of finding yourself where you have

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11 | To later say: “El otro día, sin ir más lejos, estuve a punto de arrodillarme en plena ciudad de Roma y decir no quiero vivir más. Te había imaginado, de pronto con otra mujer. Esa mujer cambiaba con la velocidad del rayo. Primero era yo misma, después una desconocida, después una rubia que movía el pelo y hacía ji jí ja já como las chicas que a veces trae la Providencia. Todo era vertiginoso y no pude controlarme. Nunca mis fantasías me habían llevado tan lejos: hurgaba en tus bolsillos, revisaba papeles, escuchaba tus conversaciones telefónicas como una ansiosa cualquiera” (Negroni, 2007: 59). And, later: “Una de mis versiones favoritas es ésta: Humboldt y yo tuvimos una familia ...” (Negroni, 2007: 73). Then: “¿Y si el Humboldt que estoy inventando no hubiera existido nunca? En efecto, nunca existió. ¿Qué quieres decir? Eso, que a tu Humboldt le faltan muchos rostros. ¿Como cuáles? ¿Quieres una lista? Emma no me dio tiempo a contestar” (Negroni, 2007: 99).

12 | “Es terrible vivir haciéndose la muerta” (Negroni, 2007: 131). “He conseguido una simulación perfecta del naufragio” (Negroni, 2007: 131). “He perdido mi nombre. He perdido mis nombres. De la desesperación, de la masacre, me quedó el círculo de ciertas letras, una maravilla inconsolable. Ninguna sabiduría. Ninguna salvación. Apenas un desierto sin historia donde nada representa nada. Algo así” (Negroni, 2007: 132).

13 | “Qué confusión”, suspiró el ansia, “comparar escribir con jugar a las bolitas”./“Además», agregó insidiosa la palabra casa, “a las bolitas, juegan los varones”./“Silencio, chicas”, dijo lo desconocido, “¿por qué

landed. Since you cannot return, it seems that in an exile situation it is impossible to make history without making literature. The time of exile and the catastrophe are always present and impede their recording as history.

The character in *La Anunciación* undoes, remakes and reconstructs herself from the impossibility of being able to make history, to make it (for herself) in a constant return trip of life itself. She does not have a name, she is an inexhaustible voice that advances towards nowhere, always towards her own center, in first person, in second, towards herself. That talking is writing. A voice that becomes writing mediated by other voices in order to reinforce a new cartography in Rome, a type of hologram or anagram in colour with sound and sensations, in order to survive in exile.¹⁴

Subjectivity is created in the cross between social and historic dimensions that do not allow themselves to be grasped as historized stories or elements as much as disciplinary objects. It cannot be visualized unless it is in the obverse, in other words, the objectivity in which subjectivity is condemned to reflex itself. The essential is that objectivity could not exist if it did not rest on the humus of subjectivity. The outward appearance of materiality, where objectivity seems to establish itself in literature as what is representable as opposed to what is not through the cohesion of a representative, is a paradox in the written word between subjectivity and material objectivity, which is the same. What is truly important is that a recuperation of feeling is produced. It is very difficult to understand that subjectivity and the feeling that is recorded in it always make a trip incognito, clandestinely trafficking their wares. Without knowing it, they complicate and sustain a “reality” that, despite everything, cannot be fixed. The material composition of objects is transfigured by something extra that escapes them. And that extra something takes root in every one of the subjectivities in perpetual movement: the origins, for lack of a better word, and the arrivals, though we know it is impossible to speak here of origin, linear voyage or point of destiny. In the concert of what is called postmodernity, objects have been enthroned in the deterioration of a subjectivity that is either floating or liquid.¹⁵ But there is a place where it continues to appear, clamours for it rights and shows itself in all its drama: in art and then in literature like one of its most complicated manifestations. *La Anunciación* talks about all of this. It tries to tell of an undone subjectivity that can only be redone in the paradoxical frontier of the written object, fighting with it, making it say what can barely be said to knowingly repair itself in the construction of an invented memory.¹⁶ Awareness of the *inventio* is what makes survival possible given that the subjectivity that is made to talk also knows that it is talking through deceiving objects that have occupied the explanation area with caution. Subjectivity does not have a place to tell(to be said) unless it is in

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mejor no se concentran en la historia? Recuerden que nada ha sido dicho todavía, nada que verdaderamente pueda considerarse real, y no mera imaginación”./El ansia y la palabra casa se miraron.”¿Qué pesado!” susurró el ansia, “parece Nadie”./A la palabra casa le brillaron los ojitos.”¿Y si no le llevamos el apunte? Te propongo que seamos muuuuyyyyy malas...” (Negroni, 2007: 75). Or later: “Tragáme tierra, mirá quién viene”./Lo desconocido trató de disimular./ “¿Por qué no me convocaron antes?”, rugió Nadie.”Esto es un quilombo y yo hubiera podido aportar. A mí la realidad me consta”./“Mon Diu”, dijo la palabra casa, “como éramos pocos...”./“De qué habla?” preguntó el ansia.”No sé, es un delirante”./Nadie traía un maletín. Tenía aspecto de apóstol laico.”¿Podrías ser un poco más explícito?”, rogó lo desconocido.”Cómo no”, dijo Nadie, poniendo a un lado la ferretería, “pero antes tenemos que acordar el temario. Propongo que analicemos la burguesía agroexportadora, el latifundio, el neocolonialismo, la oligarquía, la dependencia, la Ciudad-Puerto, el Instituto Di Tella, la CIA y Ceferino Namuncurá, que es la versión vernácula del opio de los pueblos”./“Ufa”, rezongó la palabra casa para sus adentros, “más plomo no puede ser” (Negroni, 2007: 100). The discussion continues.

14 | “¿Cuántos libros leí sobre la locura?/Son casi las 10 en Roma. 26° grados. Verano. Grillos que cantan. Nadie sabrá jamás lo que me cuesta el presente. En el presente, la que respira soy yo, también es yo la que se muere a cada bocanada. Avanzo con muletas, como si estuviera aprendiendo a caminar, estoy aprendiendo a caminar. Es estupendo caminar en Roma. De pronto las calles inmundas son un silencio blanco, como un

a disadvantageous fight against the materiality of what she says.¹⁷ Thus, María Negroni's text exposes this fight which is none other than that of representation. The exile writings put their finger on the sore spot because they are created from chaos and disintegration, and they structure themselves from the *in-certo* in order to verbalize this state, which is really displacement. Subjectivity tries to remake itself in writing, which is the only thing that has remained more or less on a footing in the world of objects. Without it, it cannot be absolutely trusting and fights it (fights itself) at every step of the way with the meaning of what they tell as written objects, and what they want to tell as subjectivity.¹⁸

The figures of the new space are the ellipsis, the parabola and the hyperbole, though they lose the properties that they had marked out in Euclidean space in order to participate together, since they become equal figures and you can move from one to the other with intended transformations where one is the view of the other. Finally, the idea of distance disappears. What geometry, physics, philosophy and psychoanalysis are winding little by little with the impossibility of measuring space and time, exile writings are putting into the small rug that they are made up of in order to take a step in the constitution of a subjectivity that is expressed there. Given that history would still move in Euclidean space-time, the history of subjectivities in exile grasp, pass through the experience, through this (new?) Einsteinian dream that can be seen in the types of representation that are used in order to tell it. It is not by chance, therefore, that the figures of this (new?) space-time coincide with the name of rhetoric figures that characterize the writings in exile. Metaphor and metonymy must also be included in order to arrive at the place of *La interpretación de los sueños* [The Interpretation of Dreams]. Topological relatives permit transformations and voyages based on deformations in continuity: Rome, but also Buenos Aires, but also love, but also fear ... A subjectivity exposing itself in the passing of time: an allegory within an allegory within an allegory.¹⁹ Within one form or another of this space-time the representation device endures resting on both without the possibility of any clarification. Those who believe in him do not see the problem and those who suffer know beforehand that they cannot say so. *La Anunciación* weakens the challenge that the body remain run aground to see if subjectivity can repair itself²⁰ in the measure of its possibilities.

It is certain that without the Euclidean time-space one cannot recall, reproduce or attempt a representation. It is also certain that little can be done against it, especially in order to speak of a subjectivity in an exile situation that alludes to the written word as a trace of a representation and not as a sign. The materiality of the writing takes root here in the notion of the mnemonic footprint trapped in a linguistic chain. But while the footprint can only be in flight, the

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jardín de mármol donde florece una estatua y esa estatua sos vos, o mejor dicho tu ausencia, iluminada. Es estupendo el verano escrito. Es estupendo porque nada cambia, ahora mismo escribo "es verano" y será verano para siempre: grillos que cantan. Y después, vendrán generaciones futuras, y tocarán este dolor y alguien dirá, con palabras insulsas, hubo alguien, alguien hubo que escucha cantar a los grillos en una noche en Roma. Palabras como prueba de aquello que perdimos. Un universo enlutado, donde camina lo inencontrable, sobre ruinas." (Negroni, 2007: 37-38)

15 | In this regard, read some of the proposals by Zygmunt Bauman (2008).

16 | "Cuantas menos palabras, mejor. Después de todo, con ellas, nada se gana, ni siquiera se recupera". [...] "Roma, estoy en Roma, Humboldt, debo repetírmelo. Si logro estar en Roma, la realidad, o cualquier cosa que eso signifique, volverá a instalarse" (Negroni, 2007: 44-45).

17 | This dialogue is an example: "¿Qué te pasa", preguntó la palabra casa."/Nada, ¿viste el último comunicado de la CGT?"/No, ¿qué dice?"/Te leo", dijo el ansia. [...] "¿Y qué tiene?"/No sé, hoy es domingo, puede ser que esté un poco deprimida"/"Te conté que el otro día vi a un poema desnudo" [...] "Estaba hablando solo" [...] "/Nada. El poema se justificó diciendo que los poemas no tienen trama. Después me mostró un canasto de palabras rojas y vi que la Muerte, que estaba a su lado, tenía una aureola alrededor de su sombra"/"Ah"/"¿Sabés qué quiere decir exum?"/"No"/"Andar desorientado, según Pavese". [...] "/¿Y si organizamos otro Operativo Retorno?", propuso."/Pero no hay nadie que quiera regresar"/"Definitivamente, el

sign settles into a static meaning. Thus, the word-footprint shows the course of memory, something that passes through the heart, while the word-sign tries to reproduce a level of reason by organizing itself under systematic criteria of successive, linear and more or less univocal order. There is in the sign an orthopedic eagerness that the footprint ruins and makes fun of, more out of desperation than from revolutionary conviction. The word-footprint in *La Anunciación* results in a paradoxical phenomenon: it refers to the representation of the unrepresentable.²¹

As I said, exile writing clearly distrusts the idea of the author's death in post-structural terms given that she finds in the writing, again the paradox is worth it, the only place in the condition of exile where the male or female subject can affirm themselves or at least reconstruct themselves as the subject. It does not mean that it can repair itself but that it has created a new reality subsequent to the loss. To undo, remake and repair oneself are impossible to represent unless it is done in a discussion that challenges structures, and produces failures and fugitive remains that by nature are not connected with speculation.²² It can be and it cannot be exactly where it is. It risks singular points of view, emphasizing a different angle, demanding certain rules so that the play of thoughts and emotional contributions can start to produce themselves according to a blurred, paradoxical and inconsistent logic. Previously failed attempts at representing a subjectivity placed in an exile situation, reconstructing a memory that we know is invented or returning to a place that never existed, the writing tries to learn the lack of apprehension for what can only be an escape forward with the secret intention of returning, forced into it as a type of safe-conduct permit for the person writing.

The difference between exile writings and other types of writing is that, since they are specifically produced in exile situations, they know the chain of representational impossibilities that they are condemned to. That is what they write. That knowing marks the point of demarcation and links itself in an inversely proportional relationship with the means of power. The displaced and exiled s/he finally knows the impossibility of representing the escape from where they never were. Power cannot be held unlawfully. It may be that they are indifferent to power. Many women appear to share this position, especially writers. By writing, these authors who are now in the condition of exile reinvent subjectivity but they also construct a new space through their writing.

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ansia estaba deprimida". "A ver si la cortan con tanto paja, compañeras", tronó un flaco al que llamaban Nadie, haciendo su primera aparición" [...] (Negroni, 2007: 52-53).

18 | To represent is the verb that indicates the action through which one thing is replaced by another that comes to indicate the first action that was replaced: an elaborate presentation process that in another way would remain absent, paradoxically corroborating the absence of the represented that does not need to show her letter of existence because she is its representation. Substitution and arrangement before an 'I' are the basic forms of composing a principle of representation: thus the representation will always be the double, the echo, the re-double of a lost presence, it constitutes a weakened presence, hidden and hiding that which it duplicated and guarded under a second existence. But said existence accepts playing the role of the stain facing what is shown, making as though the thing were in the place indicated in order to search for it and find it again. Nevertheless, she does nothing more than represent her own self by means of her veils/fogs and crossing-outs/obliterations. She represents the evident, she doubles it without subduing it, she eclipses it by doubling its being absent (from the thing) in order to show her expanded empire of shadows (the continued and displaced representation of the thing) celebrating herself. Like a type of abyss/hell without bottom, the representation fascinates because of the vacuum that it is able to show, for the trap that it makes known, she restores/sets up an agreement between object and subjectivity: the re-memorizing and re-knowing are the roads of encounter for

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finding a certain agreement/harmony and thus impose and appropriateness between what is represented and its referent. It is this unraveling between a certain agreement and simply agreement (her truth and the truth) where representation shows its power and its impotency at the same time. She captures, judges and submits any deviation but at the same time tells her impotency for thinking any difference that is not breaking continuities, analogies, making holes in similar ones or disarming in order to deny the principle of identity. Obviously, Derrida is present here (1986, 1989). A Catalogue appears in *La Anunciación*: the "Catalogue of my Museum", that of Athanasius, a "sealed document" which reads: *"Museo. Templo de las Musas. Catálogo. Los objetos están arreglados por categorías, con obvia lógica interna. Cada pieza figura, en su sala correspondiente, con nota explicativa, glosada en un texto que es docto, ponderado y curioso. El visitante debe entender que todas las cosas provienen de Dios y regresan a él"* (Negroni, 2007: 49-50). Later a list of objects (arbitrary?) is reversed and to end this list with a series (infinite?) of mirrors with their own names ... up to this "Museo" within the Catalogue that contains a Catalogue ..., and thus successively.

19 | «No hay músicos en esta escena. Pero la música sigue sonando, como en una fotografía o en un sueño, y es una música triste, muy generosa y muy triste, como una escritura avanzando, con los ojos cerrados, en dirección a Nunca» (Negroni, 2007: 51).

20 | «Mi idea, pensó Emma, sería pintar el cuadro de un cuadro, una Anunciación que no estuviera dentro de la realidad, sino de la realidad

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de otra Anunciación». [...] «lo único que cuenta es lo que no puedo ver, atenerme al peso de este afán por hacer del azul un espejo, una visión muy pura». [...] «A las 7, al borde del agotamiento: El arte es como la muerte. Irremediamente, uno se pierde en ellos» (Negroni, 2007: 54-55). «Esto de ahora es increíble. Me paso el día, las horas, tratando de recordar y nada. Pongo fechas sobre la mesa, acontecimientos, nombres y no logro determinar cuándo ni dónde ocurrió cada cosa. [...] Imposible la reconstrucción del hecho. Pero ¿qué hecho? me pregunto. Se me ha borrado todo [...] Entonces me dedico a profanar palabras. Lo hago de noche, cuando nadie me ve, encerrada en mi habitación en Roma. Qué tiene de malo, me digo, las palabras nos pertenecían, nosotros las inventamos, hacíamos la guerra con ellas, hacíamos también los recuerdos. [...]» (: 62-63).

21 | ¿Y por qué pintás siempre lo mismo?», le pregunté./«No pinto siempre lo mismo», dijo Emma. «En realidad, no pinto en absoluto, lo que hago es buscar cosas que no tienen nombre» (91). «¿Sabés qué? Siempre pensé que el arte no es contemporáneo de nadie. Es como si estuviera parado, por definición, en la vereda de enfrente, desorientado, produciendo un cortocircuito en eso calcificado que está siempre en la base de toda dominación. [...] No necesito agregar que el arte es su propia realidad y que la medida de la verdad es la profundidad, no la exactitud. Una obra cubre con imágenes lo que carece de razón. [...]» (Negroni, 2007: 92). Véanse también las páginas 96-97.

22 | To explain myself a bit better, I should appeal here to Lacan's "*objet petit a*" [the little object a] (1989), etc., also knowing that we don't always talk about the same thing: an essential dislocation.

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