

**“THE PROBLEMS OF EXISTENCE: ONTOLOGICAL
FRAGMENTATION, SPLITTING AND ‘OTHERNESS’ IN THE
POETRY OF ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK”**

**“PROBLEMÁTICA DE LA EXISTENCIA: FRAGMENTACIÓN
ONTOLÓGICA, DESDOBLAMIENTO Y “OTREDAD” EN LA POESÍA
DE ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK”**



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Abstract

This work tackles the analysis of the ontological fragmentation and its ways of manifestation in the poetry of the Argentinean author Alejandra Pizarnik (1936 - 1972). Concepts such as the splitting of the self and the polyphonic condition of the poetic voice are to be studied and discussed on the basis of the Surrealist theory, since the influence of this movement is the key point when analyzing Pizarnik's dialectic. Nevertheless, this work is not only limited to the identification of influences, it also analyzes some symbolic entities as the emblems of the mirror and the shadow, as well as the different linguistic and structural methodologies that favour the notion of polyphony.

At the same time, due to the splitting phenomena, the existence of a specific reality understood as the only and undetachable referent will be questioned. Consequently, there will be place for questioning the inefficiency of language when it is meant to be the vehicle to reach the nucleus of the self and the self-identity.

Introduction

The significant relationship between the works of Pizarnik and French literature is, *ab initio*, the main line followed by contemporary critics. Subsequently, her writing shows a high stylistic influence in her works coming from authors she used to read constantly, such as Rimbaud or Baudelaire. There is also a narrow link, especially in terms of stylistics, with French Surrealism. The poet translated and read works from French Surrealism, and produced her own works burdened with the features of the movement –as well as of Romanticism occasionally-. Besides, it is worthy to mention the close relation she was in with French intellectual spheres during her stay in Paris.

All the same, this surrealist aura that surrounds the poetry of Alejandra Pizarnik is not only built in a French style. Yet, it is framed in a period in which avant-garde strongly irrupted in the Argentinean artistic production although it would never become an established movement.

Immersed in the avant-garde intellectual society by the hand of representatives such as Juan Jacobo Bajarlía, and the main precursor of the Surrealism in Argentina, Aldo Pellegrini, Pizarnik got in contact with the editorial world. She initiated a close friendship with the icons of contemporary avant-gardes, some of them founders of literary journals of a great importance such as *Qué* (1928), *Ciclo* (1948), *A Partir de Cero* (1952) y *Boa* (1958,), the latter one being influenced by French neo-surrealist tendencies.

Although Depetris confirmed that the poet did not participate actively in any of them (2001), it is true that she used to read them regularly, as well as frequenting the environment of their creators and collaborators thanks to Bajarlía. This fact favoured her formal features and poetics to be influenced by these concrete literary methodologies. This way she got in close contact with the French surrealist waves, as in these journals, articles and translations coming from representative figures such as André Breton, author of the *Surrealist Manifest*. As a matter of fact, the *Surrealist Manifest* would establish the basis of this artistic and ideological movement that would so directly affect the contemporary avant-garde literature in Latin America. Pellegrini already highlighted the relevance of translation for the exchange of thought, art and new ideas as the best connection in between South America and the French Surrealism.

In spite of their great significance, these facts were not the ultimate ones that defined the shapes of Pizarnik's poetry. It would be of great value to know a precise definition of what Surrealism really is when identifying writing style and patterns. Breton provided this satisfactory definition in his manifests:

SURREALISM: noun, masculine. Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations. (Breton: 1980, 44)

The term Creationism¹ is also a key point because of the influence it had on Argentinean Surrealism, as well as their coexistence. This fusion of tendencies was to become tangible in the definitive journal *Poesía Buenos Aires*, directed by Raúl Gustavo Aguirre. It is in this journal that Pizarnik would start publishing some poems, and then finally some complete works such as *La última inocencia* and *Las aventuras perdidas*, getting some editorial profit from this journal.

If this literary and ideological agglutination is to be mentioned here, it is because the final aesthetic and formal result happens to be the platform in which Pizarnik poetics settle down. These tendencies that frequently intertwine and rise against the stylistic formalism, the lyrical subjectivism and the use of a Petrarchist lexical repertory² advocated for a new creative behavior: a proper mould breakdown. Leaving aside a noticeable preference for the free verse, which implies the centralization of sound aesthetics in literary sources such as alliteration and anaphora, abrupt cuts of the verse, or words apparently isolated. Such practice moves towards a new aesthetic creative system of the poem.

As a consequence, the result was an exhaustive action of wringing out the language to the last drop, giving the lightest discourse the heaviest semantic: complete (re)creation of poetic language. This new form of creation occasionally provides a sense of indetermination and ambiguity, considering the grade of reality of the referents they talk about which is, after all, the main objective of this creationist hybrid. It rises up an evocation of alternative realities within the poem, which was locked in the past behind traditionalist formal procedures of celebratory tones and elevated language, typical of movements such as Romanticism. These are the procedures that the precursors of this new movement wanted to get rid of.

This use of language allows the construction of a placebo-like shelter through the images it presents. This would provide a sort of referential support: in front of the arbitrary reality, the poem and its images are the most similar idea of a fixed referent. The poem would reflect the concerns of mental, social and ideological states which are mostly subjective, a fact that would indeed force the reader to synthesize consciously.

¹ Term introduced by Huidobro. "Creationism tried to produce a sort of "algebra of language", so the linguistic signs could acquire an esteem that reflected beauty through their substantial meaning" (Baldão and Castiglioni 1999; 27). This translation is mine.

² See *El Surrealismo en Argentina y Pizarnik* (Depetris)

Having a contextual frame that brings us closer to Pizarnik, as well as to her influences and her production, the axis of this investigation will be introduced. Pizarnik's psychological anxieties about her ontology and the way they are manifested in her writing are the central issue in this work. Psychological and ontological conflicts such as identity and the sense of the bipolarity of the self constitute the basis of her dialectics. As a great enthusiast for Surrealist readings, Pizarnik would make use of the most arbitrary feature of language, to become its owner, and to make her anxieties become its owner as well. This way, she would outline some kind of lineal linguistic behavior in her works.

Each formal aspect would be dissected in order to decipher the behavior in the different structures, which are premeditatedly thought to fix in each gap in spite of the apparent feeling of a stream of thought which is unlinked to the formal patterns. A proper Surrealist technique, as Breton stated.

Symbolism, allegory, and some literary sources would be analyzed in pursuit of the elucidation of her writing. Being an inaccessible poet, chiefly due to the difficulty of her texts, the aim of this work is to explain her dialectics to understand the *how* and *why* in her texts. Going in depth into Pizarnik is, at some points, exasperating, as not only her writing, but also her thought, conform the image of a vast hieroglyph that appears and disappears. The reader gets lost in a labyrinth made of words that are repeated periodically in the different moments of her writing, producing different meanings every time.

However, it is such the richness of her production, that once her psychology is decoded, submerging into it turns into an exquisite experience. The quality of her poetry and the hard exercise of synthesis it requires were definitive when selecting this line of investigation.

Objectives

The core of this research project is based on studying the line of production followed by the author, focusing on the ontological dialectics. The objectives lie on analyzing the sense of otherness and the splitting in their reflection in the different emblems such as the mirror and the shadow, as well as in the idea of the alter ego.

At the same time, the different uses of language will be studied as well as compared with some of the Surrealist practices that so far influenced the work of this writer. All the same, philosophical questions mainly related to the ontology would be tackled under the perspective of the author's use of them, analyzing the concept of the single and the multiple, as well as the self split into the other and the same. These are delicate questions, so to properly deal with them, the language involved must also be exhaustively decoded. The language being necessarily twisted, the problem of its inability to explain the self would be discussed as well.

Methodology

The methodology for the elaboration of this project initiates itself principally on learning about the life of Pizarnik, this topic not being the axis of the project, but helpful to understand the psychological and ontological concerns reflected on her works. Therefore, the video documentary about her life, called *Memoria Iluminada: Alejandra Pizarnik*, provided a great amount of relevant information. After that, some research in databases such as *Dialnet* were carried out, and several libraries in the city of Huelva were consulted in order to compile some specific information about the poetics of the author. Articles from academics as Bagué Quílez among others, and doctoral theses such as Depetris' one have been researched consciously. Linguistic documentation about the use of language and words has been studied as well, coming to find authors such as Barthes and Valéry. Besides that, the works of Pizarnik have been read and analyzed meticulously before and during the research. We also used classic works as an essential source, as for example *Surrealist Manifesto* in order to draw a relationship between Pizarnik and the movement in question.

It is not only a researching work, since the project provides a poetry corpus compiled in Appendix I, which is the collection of the analyzed poems that give evidence of the proposed theories. The structure of the work is reflected in the index, and it conforms to an analytical trajectory that goes from the inner aspect of the poet – talking about the fragmented ontology when manifested in different poetic voices- to the arbitrary reality of the outside – dealing with the symbols and the linguistic features that the poet uses to explain an ineffable reality.

Otherness is to be represented through symbols that, although occasionally come from the figure of the poet, as the mirror and the shadow, are mostly external entities.

Theoretical Frame

At the present time, a great deal of research has been carried out about Alejandra Pizarnik. Firstly, symbology and similarities with Surrealist practices has been tackled by Depetris in *Aporética de la muerte: estudio critic sobre Alejandra Pizarnik* (2004) and her thesis *Sistema poético y tradición estética en la obra de Alejandra Pizarnik* (2001). These aspects that Depetris analyzes in her work are the basis of this project, which provide new possibilities of interpretation for the senses of otherness and splitting treated in these works. Depetris talks about mirrors and shadows, providing the first frame of the theory that is to be a little bit more enriched through this project.

Cristina Piña also provided much of the information about the psychological condition of the author, relevant when analyzing the connections with psychoanalysis and ontological aspects. This work –*Alejandra Pizarnik: una biografía* (2006) - is mostly the background to the whole psychological behavior that came to be represented in Pizarnik's poetry.

Some other academic articles about the poetics and use of language provided many of the theories mentioned in this project, in order to develop them and provide new interpretations of the same theoretical frame. These articles and authors are, among others, Bagué Quílez, with *Alejandra Pizarnik: una identidad entre dos orillas* (2012), analyzing symbology and use of language according to the polyphonic condition of the author. Another relevant work would be *Los discursos poéticos en la obra de Alejandra Pizarnik*, by Luaces, in 2002, analyzing the use of the poetic discourse, approaching it to Surrealist styles and ideas.

The advances of this project are mostly a step beyond these theories: new focuses on the Surrealist language in Pizarnik such as the treatment of silence and pronouns, symbolism of mirrors and shadows in relation with previous practices such as Gothic or Romantic ones, etc. All of it, basing the theories on the analyzed poems.

1. Poetics of Otherness

1.1 “Me, the one I am, the one I am not”

The ontology of the poet is characterized firstly by its inaccessible and overflowing condition. Pizarnik is made of fragments that respond to different periods of her writing. These different periods are sometimes arbitrary and diffused. Therefore, fixing the eye on her poetics of splitting and questioning the consistence of her identity, always brings subjectivity. This dynamism and changeable conditions of the poetic voice complicate the identification of the “I” who talks in each specific moment.

The vagueness of the poetic self enforces the feeling of Pizarnik becoming many Pizarniks, addressing to many, and frequently doing it through many as well. We can see this effect in the following extract from *El hermoso delirio*³; “[...] si vieras a la que sin ti duerme en un jardín en ruinas en la memoria. Allí yo, ebria de mil muertes, hablo de mí conmigo [...]” (Pizarnik: 2007, 51).

Pizarnik makes use of her voices and metamorphosing them according to her necessities of conception about the external world. This variability defines the image of the multiple Alejandra as “mannequins of a self that needs to weigh up its autobiographic propensity through masks and counter-masks” (Bagué Quílez: 2012, 2). In other words; the divided writing of the poet reflects her constant inner ambiguity that, eventually, would be reflected when conceiving the world that surrounds her.

Thus, there is a linguistic strategy to build this changeability of the self which comes from the avant-garde poetry. This changeable poetic subject is born from the aim of poetic language which tries to be unlimited in order to explain the ineffable: “The limit, rather than a separation, originates a space that warrants the lack of identity of the subject, as [identity] impedes the *semiotización* of the subject [...] [so therefore the lack of identity] warrants the semantic circulation.” (Le Corre: 2001, 69). Not reaching

³ See this poem in Appendix II

this limitlessness, poetic language needs to twist the use of the subject: “Language is a skyline of possibilities, a presence of otherness that uproots the subject from motionlessness.” (2001, 69).

Splitting becomes a product of perceiving reality “in particles”. This fact brings into question which one is the referent reality for a voice that is prone to polyphony. Reality itself begins to look like the pieces of a broken mirror whose aim of joining together is frustrated under the shape of the poetics of fragmentation. See *La Palabra del Deseo*, when Pizarnik is aware of the unstable conception of reality, and the untruthfulness of polyphonic discourse when referring to it; “[...] el lenguaje roto a palabras, poco a poco reconstruir el diafragma de la irrealidad [...] (Pizarnik: 2007, 74)”⁴

Now Pizarnik talks about the anxiety of what is broken, about reconstruction and fragmentation as much of the language as of her multi-identity. It can be seen in *En esta noche, en este mundo*: “[...] mi persona está herida [...]” pero, ¿cuál? “[...] mi primera persona del singular.” (Pizarnik: 2007, 82)⁵

There is thus some kind of refusal towards the idea of a predominant reality, as the only linguistic reference to the ontological self affirms to be wounded, broken. There is a lack of integrity - an incomplete self that talks about reconstructing unrealities. Given that, it is viable to associate the confluence of several realities perceived by multiple identities, to the total absence of reality at all. This fact inevitably takes us to a constant state of arbitrary reality. As Eduardo García says, “The poem or short story is manifested on an independent level to the empiric reality [...] the identification of the reader with the voice that speaks [can] be threatened by arbitrariness” (2005, 64).

Then, it catches our eye that within this confluence there is still room for the source of auto-nomination. To conveniently illustrate this usage, we would quote *Sólo un Nombre*;

alejandra alejandra

⁴ See the complete poem in Appendix II

⁵ Completely quoted in Appendix II, epigraph 1.4

Debajo estoy yo

Alejandra

(Pizarnik: 2007, 7)

On it, we find three “Alejandra”, almost hierarchically organized, with a linguistic manifestation of auto-nomination in the middle of the poem: “debajo estoy yo / alejandra”. In this case, the formal structure suggests that the ontological self seems to be identified with the name below, above which the superior names support themselves. The image is a sort of funnel shape hologram, with its center in the Alejandra below. This Alejandra contemplates the other two from the bottom. In the middle of the whole structure, we find a literal confirmation of identity, an ontological self situated in the base of the poem.

These phenomena are always linked to subjectivity, and we cannot avoid questioning who Alejandra really is. Despite that, the identification “author-poetic self” is likely to happen due to the use of a first person pronoun. Nonetheless, the only mention of the other two Alejandra encourages the sense of ambiguity, in which level is the predominant self of the poet? Are she, and what she considers as “herself”, confined inside the proper name? There is clearly a splitting in between an ontological self and two other inner identities, under the reiteration of the same name. For this, we must understand the proper name as some sort of institution, even tritely as a bureaucratic referent in someone else’s daily life. This inner Alejandra who talks about herself with herself is unavoidably eclipsed by this other self that walks around the streets, signs documents and has an Insurance Number.

Dividing name and identity takes us straight away to the title of the poem *Sólo un nombre* (*Only a name*). Pizarnik developed the idea that “the essential things are unspeakable”, so the usage of a proper name to talk about herself becomes a weak source. Recalling the *Diaries*: “Hablar de sí en un libro es transformarse en palabras, en lenguaje. Decir yo es anonadarse, volverse un pronombre, algo que está fuera de mí.” (Pizarnik: 2013, 629)⁶.

⁶ See the whole essay in Appendix II

This idea of the self being enclosed in a pronoun or a proper name can be understood as alternative identities coming from language. Pizarnik splits her essence when she tries to pronounce it or to talk about it. As if placing the linguistic manifestation of the other self just in front of her, language becomes a sort of mirror in which she can observe the different Alejandra she is. In other words; through language, she takes her self out of her in a contemplative ceremony of ontological essence. Bachelard talks about this necessity of expelling the self: “Being enclosed inside the being, we must always get out of it. Barely getting out of the self, we must always come back to it. This way, about the self, everything is circuit, drifting, returning, discourse [...] The self is unfixed. Every expression unfixes it [...] as soon as it has an expression, it needs a new one, the self must be the self of another expression.” (1965: 270, 271).

We find then that Pizarnik not only develops an alternative concept of a proper name that symbolizes the extraction of the self into a linguistic field. She also discredits, and brings into doubt its utility. Pizarnik conceives the name as dead, as a nonsense, since it is meaningless and merely appellative. It seems to her like a confirmation of her lack of existence in a tangible and objective way. A sort of metaphoric death that happens when the essence of the self is to be pronounced: “Creí que me había muerto y que la muerte era decir un nombre sin cesar”

(Pizarnik: 2007, 71)⁷

1.2. The splitting: regarding mirrors.

Focusing now on the emblem of the mirror, a leitmotiv in the texts of Pizarnik, the idea of the other in front of us is to be analyzed according to the symbolism the author develops.

The symbol of the mirror becomes the best tool for the visual and external expression of ontological fragmentation. Therefore, this practice implies the idea of the “other” who is in front of oneself inside the mirror - now the splitting of the self is perceptible through the eyes. Besides, this sense of “otherness” becomes more evident with the constant coexistence of the multiple voices coming from the multiplicity of the same self. Inside Pizarnik, several voices talk to each other. Outside her, they

⁷ Completely quoted in Appendix II epigraph 1.4.

materialize inside the mirror and become visible. The real ontological referent dissolves in a game of pronouns attributed either to the voices or to the image in the mirror, giving rise to the problem of the self, as “[...] in the immanence, a counterpoint is generated, which is the reflection through which the self enters in a suffocating circle, given by the absence of a real ontological option.” (Depetris: 2001, 107).

This fact fosters the rising of this inner existential anxiety, as the lack of a real referent not only produces arbitrary instabilities about the conception of environment, it also creates unavoidable multiplicity which confers in some way the idea of “parasitism”. Occasionally, one of the selves would predominate over the others, favouring a reciprocal relationship of domination among the different identities. It is about a unique body in which diverse identities converge, acting as a parasite with each other, in order to possess the body. The poet is in an endless conflict with the one she is, and the one she is not. Some identities that sometimes dominate the body, and feed themselves from the existence of it, would be at some point dominated as well by these coexistences. See the extract below from *Árbol de Diana*, in which Pizarnik manifests, not only awareness of the psychological, existential and emotional danger produced by splitting, but also the certainty about the living condition of this amalgam of Alejandra(s), which is in constant movement, consuming her body in order to be:

El poema que no digo,
el que no merezco.
Miedo de ser dos
camino del espejo: alguien en mí dormido
me come y me bebe.
(Pizarnik: 2007, 23)

We must now come back to the previous idea of “the other” inside the mirror in order to deal with the idea of “the same”. As we said above, this coexistence of multiplicities and the sense of “parasitism” brings up the idea that this same self who is also “the other” through the mirror, generates a fight of domination that does not admit this desired reconciliation, among her convergent selves: “[...] The same does not admit a difference in its identity because, otherwise, it would lose its ontological property,

which is to reside completely in its selfness, and as the one who fights to defend his bastion [...], the same always tries to protect its unique and natural particularity [...] the same is exclusive and selfish.” (Depetris: 2001, 122). It is a “parasitism” of identities at a hegemonic level, since these confluences struggle with two problems: the awareness of being several identities coexisting in the same physical container, and the fight for predomination over the others at a psychological level. All the same, in order to form a real and unique ontological referent. Pizarnik oscillates among these two anxieties that, in spite of being contradictory, are born from the same self that cannot stop being “the other”, and vice versa.

This is why creating a consecration with herself and joining together what is separated becomes a necessary practice for her ontological stability, as in any moment, the poet seems to look for any breakdown with her poly-ontological condition. Pizarnik accepts it, recognizes it, and reflects about it evoking the stability of coexistence by situating this “other” Alejandra at the same level than her another ontological self:

ahora
en esta hora inocente
yo y la que fui nos sentamos
en el umbral de mi mirada.⁸

Nevertheless, it is *Invocaciones* the best example of this search for reconciliation:

Insiste en tu abrazo,
Redobla tu furia,
Crea un espacio de injurias

⁸ This quote is a fragment from *Arbol de Diana*. The source has been researched on the internet, as the edition we are working with does not contain this extract. Source: https://sites.google.com/site/escritoresmalditos/alejandrapizarnik/arbol_de_diana

Entre yo y el espejo,
Crea un canto de leprosa
Entre yo y la que me creo.

(Pizarnik: 2007, 30)

In the first moment, she would address to a “you” (tú) that resides inside the mirror. Using the second person denotes “the one who is not me, but another one”. However, the use of the mirror itself provides the idea that “this other is the reflection of myself in front of me”. Making use of pronouns in order to divide oneself suggests that “[...] the text becomes a mirror in which the splitting happens, where “the other” is created, the place where not only the encounter with a recognizable image takes place, but on the contrary, the place for estrangement.” (Luaces: 2002, 2).

Facing this place of the estrangement provided by the mirror, the invocation of Pizarnik is about the communion with herself. Through the metaphor of an embrace, the dichotomy between both identities becomes softer, giving cause for the sense of integrity.

There can be outlined a close relation between the notion of “parasitism” of the body, the mirror that shows the physical appearance, and the metaphor of leprosy. This irreconcilable fragmentation creates in the poet the disassociation of the self at a physical level, which is manifested through leprosy. As it is known, one of the symptoms of leprosy is the detachment of the skin. This is, then, a grotesque way to symbolize the separation, the breakdown and fragmentation of the self. Now Pizarnik is situated in front of the mirror, and she not only sees herself out of her body, but also the havoc caused by the fragmentation of the identities, which consumes her body. The splitting at an ontological and a physical level materializes in the text. Through writing, the author tracks and interprets her identities: “Pizarnik seems to outline the poetic conclusion that the only way to reach any coherence, any articulation in the sense in which a body, identity, or subjectivity could call itself “articulated”, is by transforming the body, through metonymy, in a poetic body and vice versa” (Luaces: 2002, 4). This fact comes to relate again with the sense of “parasitism” previously mentioned, and it is the tension between “the same” and “the other” trying to feed themselves from the body, the reason of the breakdown of the body, achieved by the image of leprosy.

If we observe another effect of the symbol of the mirror, it would not only be an issue of “the same” in front of “the other”, but the mirror, which also encloses this parallel identity, like a cage or a jail. Metaphorically, the fight for reconciliation is symbolized through the enclosure of “the other” in front of the self provoking some sense of frustration. Since, independently the author aims to scrutinize the center of herself, she cannot find “the other” Alejandra, nor can she join together with her through the embrace. As Depetris said about this meeting of the identities, this “[...] game of tensions in between “the self” and “the other” formed a first person of the singular defined not in the convergence, but in the diffraction of being “the other self [...]” This diffraction embodies in the emblem of the mirror, as an opaque, separatist object, between both identities, who at the same time, “[...] ask themselves about the real self.” (2001, 108). It can be established then, that the most approximate creation of a real ontological referent must happen in the joining of “the other” and “the same”.

In other words –although not limiting the poetic of the author only to it- it is in the necessity of reconciliation among her fragments that the key of her poetics and her existence hides. In fact this effect would be achieved through anagnorisis⁹.

When talking about the key of her existence, we mean her poetic self, as well as her ontological one. Representing fragmentation by means of mirrors and shadows is merely the little set of pieces that build the whole poetic structure. Through writing, Pizarnik constructs an inner world in which she can express all of her ontological anxieties with the aim of reaching the center of herself through poetry. It becomes then, a source for the transcendental ontology, as the relationship between Pizarnik and the language is intense and creative to the point that for some authors, she develops an intense *narcissism of the language* in the attempt to inspect herself.” (Garcia Oramas: 2009, 86).

Escribir es buscar en el tumulto de los quemados el hueso del brazo que corresponda al hueso de la pierna. (Pizarnik: 2007, 53)¹⁰

Recalling Borges about this use of literature and poetry -which can be reduced to the use of words- : “[...] poetry brings language back to the origins [...] for each perception

⁹ From the Spanish “agnición”; in the dramatic poem, recognition of a person which one is unaware of.

¹⁰ See the complete poem in Appendix II

of the senses, each judgement, each abstract idea, we can find an equivalent, an exact symbol [...] I figure that a nation develops the words it needs.” (Borges: 2001, 100, 101). Observing Pizarnik as a nation of identities, she managed to find the words that, in her “nationalist” language, express the different ideas and identities of her ontology, getting to redefine the ideas of the shadow and the mirror. Pizarnik found the key of her poetic language, she “[...] used usual words, and turned them unusual in some way: extracting magic from them.” (2001, 110).

1.3. The speaking shadows

Up to this point, we are aware of the importance of ontological fragmentation to understand the author’s identity in terms of writing. We are also aware of the task her poetry performs, which consists of recognition and reconciliation, and ontological materialization through the poem.

However, the projection of “the other” which is “the same” –or “the self”- is not limited to voices and mirrors. This chapter is meant to analyze the emblem of the shadow that, according to the referential behavior it receives on behalf of the author, is represented as a counterweight to the positive aspects. A negative self in front of a positive one who hides inside the mirrors.

We find in the poetics of Pizarnik as well as in some previous literary traditions such as Gothic or Romantic literature (especially Dark Romanticism, developed in North America with representatives such as Edgar Allan Poe), a narrow relationship between monstrosity and night time. Strange creatures, sinister-ontological splitting of the self in a negative referent, such as *Doppelgänger* phenomena, and the apparition of shadows are more likely to happen, moreover at midnight.

It is, indeed, the proper context for the ontological anxieties, as well as for the negative mental states that produce insecurities when conceiving the real world around the individual: “Attention to external and internal scenes extends further, mental space becomes a site of Gothic disturbances, the genre’s outward forms providing images of deranged, unhinged states in which distinctions of fantasy and reality become blurred.” (Botting: 2014, 111)

Pizarnik experiences it in *Historia Antigua*:

En la medianoche [...] / [...] vienen las sombras que ya tienen nombre / y vienen los
perdonadores / de lo que cometieron mil rostros míos / en la ínfima desgarradura de
cada jornada. (Pizarnik: 2007, 31)¹¹

In the poem is not only established the time zone when the emblem of the shadow appears; “en la media noche / vienen las sombras”, there is also a sense of recognition towards these shadows, as well as an attribution of identity, although it is not a defined one. We can see it through the use of nomination: “[...] que ya tienen nombre [...]”. As we saw in previous chapters, the use of auto-nomination is a symbolic source which is quite helpful when dealing with questions about the splitting of the self in “the other”: “[...] mil rostros míos [...]” keeping, this way, the constant presence of the fragmentation.

Even more, this negative aspect is embodied in the use of the noun “perdonadores” and the following subordinate “[...] de lo que cometieron mil rostros míos [...]”, as the act of forgiving implies the decrease of a negative, offensive action previously committed towards the one who realizes the action of forgiveness.

This way, we reinforce the idea previously developed by these elder traditions about monstrosity and harmful things happening at night. We can identify such tendencies through the use of the adjective “ínfima”, which implies, apart from the condition of vileness, the temporal feeling of “the last moment”: “[...] desgarradura de cada jornada”, meaning the end of the day, and the arrival of the night.

From an ontological point of view, this sense of the negative is, conceptually speaking, far from the usage other previous traditions made of it. In the voice of Pizarnik, it will take an autoreflexive nuance about the self and what she understands as negative in relation with it. Negativity is seen as the fear from the existential emptiness, installed and represented in “the other” that is “the same”, in the shape of the shadow. Quoting Depetris once again, we see that “[...] the shadow acquires a vampirizing capacity [...] because it extracts the vital strength of the one who projects it [...], the shadow extracts the self from itself.” (Depetris: 2001, 118).

¹¹ See the complete poem in Appendix II

This anxiety is clearly manifested in this extract from *Continuidad*:

Nombres que vienen, sombras con máscaras. Cúrame del vacío –dije. (La luz se amaba en mi oscuridad. Supe que no había cuando me encontré diciendo: soy yo). Cúrame – dije. (Pizarnik: 2007, 61)

We find again the use of names and shadows with masks, which implies images of different faces, as a way of representing this state of ontological splitting. Once again, we find this evocation of a second person through the use of imperative forms which –due to the positive semantic burden of the verb “curar”- can be associated to one of these fragmented facets that takes a positive meaning. It seems to be some kind of ally of the poet, probably enclosed inside the mirror.

This “emptiness” that the shadows bring resides in the inner darkness of the poet, her negative nature. The shadow that never stops being the representation of “the other” that is herself, inside which: “[...] la luz se amaba”. Her positive alter ego –an implicit quality from the verb to love- is hidden inside as a matrioshka doll. The identities of the poet appear one inside the other as the natural inner structure, as real as the Alejandra that everyone can see. All enclosed in the same frame, this duality translated into poetry “[...] where “the other” manifests, not only in a dilemmatic opposition, but in a complex constitutive interpretation [...]” suggests the idea of the “[...] two edges. The first one suggests that everything is nothing, alluding to centralized systems of social poetry. The second one [...] confirms the ecstasy of reencountering the presence [...]”. (Antelo, Muschietti: 2008, 727). In front of this social presence we talked about in the first chapter, attributed to names and social language, the ontological one takes place through the emblem and the search of “the other”. At the end of this extract, we find as well a twinkle of this necessary recognition and reconciliation in search of an entire and holistic conception of herself through the refusal of individuality. This can be seen in the forms of first person manifested in the verb and the pronoun (“soy yo”).

That way, the existential lack is confirmed when it is only limited to be contained in just one, “sólo uno”, since, as we saw above, the identity of Alejandra Pizarnik is made of multiplicity. See the complete quote to clarify this aspect: “Supe que no había cuando me encontré diciendo: soy yo”. (Pizarnik: 2007, 61). There was

nothing because the truth of her ontology resides in pluralism. She really is “nosotros”, so she cannot find anything using “yo”.

This fragmentation in different identities that complement each other in detriment of a plain, homogeneous ontology, can only be spoken through poetry. Poetry must explore poetic language, which implies a necessity to create signs and emblems to refer to fragmentation. That is why, the use of the shadow and the mirror: “The possibility of duplicity is an ontological premise about the conversion of the world into a world of signs”, this statement of Lotman (85, 86) helps us to infer that producing signs is the main task of the conscience to deal with the reality it has to face.” (as quoted in Vázquez: 2013, 65).

1.4. The silent word: surrealist influences

Apart from the use of contrary emblems to represent the condition of splitting, there is a relevant connection between the poetics of splitting and the use of language that must be studied in this chapter. This connection takes place specifically in between the effects of ontological fragmentation when conceiving reality, and the use of language when defining these alterations of reality. Language needs to be adapted due to its inefficacy when describing the world around us, which generates in Alejandra Pizarnik another form of anxiety.

As we saw in the last chapter, through the creation of the poem, the poet tries to find the center of the ontological self. Anxieties appear when the poet becomes aware of the insufficiency of language for this task. It becomes a sterile codification she has to provide with functional life and meaning. This frustration is materialized when the fact that “the poetic word <says even more, and another thing>, since it cannot find the center of the self [...]” (Zonana: 1997, 15). Yet the self, lacking a real ontological identity, has no center at all. Language revolves around the different forms of the self not reconciling and not defining them completely, so “[...] it is about an anxious knowledge that defines poetry as a dead-end-street [...]” (Zonana: 1997, 15). Such consolidation of the word as an empty entity induces the poet to install herself in a poetic of silence which transforms into different inner conflicts she tries to explain.

This explanatory defect of language results in an empiric emptiness that Surrealist credo fought against a long time ago. This credo supports the theory that the fundamentals of language disappear when subjugated by formal aspects, as it should be some sort of amusement for the poet. The clue of it is a trance like writing, in order to set poetic language free from formal and linguistic patterns that besmirch it. Referring to André Breton in *Surrealist Manifesto*, we can see how the author defends the surrealist dialectics in streams to avoid the message falsification: “Through Surrealism, [the orator] will take despair unawares in its poverty” (Breton: 1980, 49), despair as a result from the lack of sense of language when used in poetry writing. Thus Surrealism stands up for linguistic arbitrariness and simplicity, in a way that encourages the one who writes to “forget about your genius, your talents, and the talents of everyone else. Keep reminding yourself that literature is one of the saddest roads that leads to everything [...] not only does this unrestricted language, which I am trying to render forever valid, which seems to me to adapt itself to all of life’s circumstances, not only does this language not deprive me of any of my means [...] I shall even go so far as to maintain that it instructs me and, indeed, I have had occasion to use *surreally* words whose meaning I have forgotten. I was subsequently able to verify what the way in which I had used them corresponded perfectly with their definition. This would leave one to believe that we do not “learn”, that all we ever do is “relearn” [...] And I am not talking about the *poetic consciousness of objects* [...]”. (Breton: 1980, 54). It is in some way a transcendental practice making use of a limiting tool as language is.

Nevertheless, once language flows in a stream like way, it turns into what is known as *free association*¹², which is a proper Latin American surrealist practice that follows Breton ideals of pure language, as it consists in an improved version of “stream of consciousness”. Although the term was initially introduced by Freud in his studies on psychoanalysis, when “[...] this method is applied in literature, it helps the writer to get rid of logical restrictions he may find when writing coherently. It allows him to describe [...] aberrations and traumas [...] through interior monologues and oneiric sequences.” (Langowski: 1982, 75, 76). Under this perspective, this *Bretonian* suggestion of

¹² “In the establishment of the psychoanalytic technique, we must recall one of the cases that Freud (1895) began to treat through the methodology of concentration, Emmy Von N., who refuted him at any given time not to ask her constantly where did this or that come from, but to let her speak in liberty: Freud did it, appearing this way what would be the basis of psychoanalysis, free association”. Antonio Sánchez-Barranco Ruiz, *El Psicoanálisis Freudiano. (La técnica freudiana)*. 1997

“relearning” can be understood as a free association of a word with different meanings rather than the conventional one. In other words, changing the real referent of the word in question in order to explain the ineffable. This change produces a multiple variety of realities, being the way in which language can slightly approach describing psychological or ontological states, as it is closer to their level of subjectivity and arbitrariness.

Arbitrariness becomes then, the axis of the ontological poetics, as do arbitrary surrealist practices such as *free association* and *portmanteau words*, a literary source resulting from free association. It consists in arbitrary combinations of words whose meaning might “[...] sometimes depend on sound instead of the sense of the word itself”.¹³ Pizarnik carries out this *arbitrary-cation* through the effect of *portmanteau words*, as we can see in *La verdad de esta vieja pared*: “[...] es muro es mero muro es mudo mira muere. (Pizarnik: 2007, 32)¹⁴

In addition, Pizarnik also attributes alternative meaning to words through the practice of twisting the language. This way, the word silence does not mean lack of sound, but it talks about the waste, about the emptiness of writing because writing is made of language. As we can see in an extract from *Piedra Fundamental*;

No puedo hablar para nada decir. Por eso nos perdemos, yo y el poema, en la tentativa inútil de transcribir relaciones ardientes. ¿A dónde la conduce esta escritura? A lo negro, a lo estéril, a lo fragmentado. (Pizarnik: 2007, 70)¹⁵

«Para nada decir», as words are full of metaphorical silence, empty of meaning, so their use when talking about the world produces the emptying of the latter as well. When language speaks, the whole and natural essence of the things it describes becomes false, it breaks and disappears. Therefore, it is expected that Pizarnik opts for silent dialectics, grazing occasionally the metalinguistic aspect in this constant utmost in order to understand the poem:

[...] la lengua es un órgano de conocimiento

¹³ This dependence on the sound also happens with *polisemantic verbalism*, another surrealist source. (See Chap. Iv, *Una pesadilla surrealista de la realidad* in *El surrealismo en la ficción hispanoamericana*, Gerald J. Langowski).

¹⁴ See the complete poem in Appendix II

¹⁵ See the complete poem in Appendix II

del fracaso de todo poema
castrado por su propia lengua [...].

(Pizarnik: 2007, 81)¹⁶

Therefore, the poetics of Pizarnik run over such a strength and painful beauty, her production is no more, no less than a pitched battle hand to hand between the poet and the problems of language itself. Quoting Barthes, it is true that this conflict importuned the figure of the writer so far in a reciprocal connection of pleasure and pain: “[...] writing takes as the locus of its reflexes the real speech of men [...] literature [...] begins to become a lucid act of giving information [...] literary language founded on social speech never gets rid of a descriptive virtue which limits it [...]”. (1970: 80, 81).

At the end of the day, this circumstance is simply another episode in the life of a poet trying to walk the line of the ineffable. This is not a reason for Pizarnik to stop writing “empty” words, it seems like a waiting position, a passive invocation of meaning, but using silence as a flag: “Pero el silencio es cierto. Por eso escribo” (Pizarnik; 2007:59). Being poetry some sort of feedback for the emotions, and the closest idea of their explication, even then Valéry, in one of his conferences in 1927 about the reflections on poetry, highlighted this sense of “restitution” or “reconstruction”. Alejandra fights with the language, but also tries to fuse emotions in a linguistic equivalent: restituting what moves inside towards an external side as a necessity to observe it from a second person point of view. After the negative aspect of words, she would appeal to the silence. Speaking on Valéry terms: “[...] Restituting the poetic emotion to will”. (Valéry; 1927). Sometimes, this ineffability is undermined by the poet in the way of contradictions: “[...] Deseaba un silencio perfecto. Por eso hablo”. (Pizarnik: 2007, 59).¹⁷

¹⁶ See the complete poem in Appendix II

¹⁷ See the complete poem in Appendix II

This way, we understand that this emotional carousel, once translated by means of the word, becomes a sort of poetic death that wreaks havoc in the poet, as the poem *Silencios* shows:

La muerte siempre al lado

Escucho su decir

Sólo me oigo.

(Pizarnik: 2007, 7)

From a holistic point of view, silence in Pizarnik is, as Depetris says: “[...] how to name absence from presence, how to name what does not exist [...] how to speak the unspeakable” (2004, 67). Altogether with the death of language, silence is the voice Pizarnik uses to say that “the essential is unspeakable”.

Conclusions

Up to this point, conclusions reached are defined by the conception of the poet as a glossary made of images. Her personality shows a *collage-like* creative behavior which is based on ontological fragmentation. Results seem to be an amalgam of contradictory feelings and uses of sources which are constructed in the form of the stream of consciousness. These alterations happening in her mind as a reflective individual, and in her poetry as a writer, seem to be expecting a fixing, a relief from the agony they suppurate. But far from that, the state of alteration is their natural one.

What is clear is that Pizarnik is reminiscent of a weaver that tries to knit an impossible drape, the idea of the kaleidoscope rising from the structure (or the lack of it) and the game of images she makes use of. Facing the lack of meaning that words are condemned to, Pizarnik writes invisible words in the middle of contradictions, symbols and images that do not mean anything at all for her, until she deforms them.

Poetic language is the axis of her dilemma: Pizarnik experiments an anxiety towards the question of what is really expressible regarding her own fragmentation as well as the conceptual variability of reality. Given that, emblems, symbols and a language which is in another dimension are her tools. The author is concerned about

what can be called *essential* within the identity of things: names containing identity, shadows or mirrors that show an essence that comes from their very essential being. But still, *their very essential being* is brought into question due to this division of the self. Names and words that define turn into emptiness, and step by step the world around her seems less reachable, less expressible, and less real.

It is in this constant questioning of the real and the essential, that Pizarnik poetry digs into, making use of elaborated symbolism with alternative attributions of meaning. The aim of becoming poetry herself is the only way she can speak truly, to speak about herself, and her essentials:

Rezo

Pequeño poema

No me huyas

No armes abismos

Entre mi alma y tú.

(Pizarnik: 2013, 192)

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Appendix I

Corpus

Caminos del Espejo de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

Como una voz de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

Contemplación de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

Continuidad de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

El Deseo de la Palabra de El Infierno Musical 1971

El Hermoso Delirio de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

En Esta Noche, En Este Mundo de Textos de sombra y Últimos poemas 1971

Estos Huesos de Árbol de Diana 1962

Fragmento de Árbol de Diana 1962

Historia Antigua de Los Trabajos y las Noches 1965

Invocaciones de Los Trabajos y las Noches 1965

La Consagración de la Inocencia de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

La Palabra del Deseo de El Infierno Musical 1971

Las Promesas de la Música de Extracción de la Piedra de Locura 1968

La Única Herida de Las Aventuras Perdidas 1958

L'Obscurité des Eaux de El Infierno Musical 1971

Piedra Fundamental de El Infierno Musical 1971

Silencios de Los Trabajos y las Noches 1965

Sólo un nombre de La Última Inocencia 1956

Appendix II

Complete texts quoted:

1.1 “Me, the one I am, the one I am not”

El hermoso delirio (Extracción de la piedra de locura 1968)

Si vieras a la que sin ti duerme en un jardín en ruinas en la memoria. Allí yo, ebria de mil muertes, hablo de mí conmigo sólo por saber si es verdad que estoy debajo de la hierba. No sé los nombres. ¿A quién le dirás que no sabes? Te deseas otra. La otra que eres se desea otra. ¿Qué pasa en la verde alameda? Pasa que no es verde y ni siquiera hay una alameda. Y ahora juega a ser esclava para ocultar tu corona ¿otorgada por quién? ¿quién te ha ungido? ¿quién te ha consagrado? El invisible pueblo de la memoria más vieja. Perdida por propio designio, has renunciado a tu reino por las cenizas. Quien te hace doler te recuerda antiguos homenajes. No obstante, lloras funestamente y evocas tu locura y hasta quisieras extraerla de ti como si fuese una piedra, a ella, tu solo privilegio. En un muro blanco dibujas las alegorías del reposo, y es siempre una reina loca que yace bajo la luna sobre la triste hierba del viejo jardín. Pero no hables de los jardines, no hables de la luna, no hables de la rosa, no hables del mar. Habla de lo que sabes. Habla de lo que vibra en tu médula y hace luces y sombras en tu mirada, habla del dolor incesante de tus huesos, habla del vértigo, habla de tu respiración, de tu desolación, de tu traición. Es tan oscuro, tan en silencio el proceso a que me obligo. Oh habla del silencio.

El deseo de la palabra (El infierno musical 1971)

Esta espectral textura de la oscuridad, esta melodía en los huesos, este soplo de silencios diversos, este ir abajo por abajo, esta galería oscura, oscura, este hundirse sin hundirse.

¿Qué estoy diciendo? Está oscuro y quiero entrar. No sé qué más decir. (Yo no quiero decir, yo quiero entrar.) El dolor en los huesos, el lenguaje roto a paladas, poco a poco reconstituir el diagrama de la irre realidad.

Posesiones no tengo (esto es seguro; al fin algo seguro). Luego una melodía. Es una melodía plañidera, una luz lila, una inminencia sin destinatario. Veo la melodía. Presencia de una luz anaranjada. Sin tu mirada no voy a saber vivir, también esto es seguro. Te suscito, te resucito. Y me dijo que saliera al viento y fuera de casa en casa preguntando si estaba.

Paso desnuda con un cirio en la mano, castillo frío, jardín de las delicias. La soledad no es estar parada en el muelle, a la madrugada, mirando el agua con avidez. La soledad es no poder decirla por no poder circundarla por no poder darle un rostro por no poder hacerla sinónimo de un paisaje. La soledad sería esta melodía rota de mis frases.

Domingo, 21 (Diarios)

Hablar de sí en un libro es transformarse en palabras, en lenguaje. Decir *yo* es anonadarse, volverse un pronombre, algo que está fuera de mí.

Diario de Baudelaire. Salvación por el trabajo. Trabajar es menos aburrido y menos doloroso que divertirse o que no trabajar. Pero trabajar por desesperación. El trabajo a la manera de un opio adormecedor. Esto me es imposible a causa de mi estatismo interno. Nada se mueve. O trabajar a modo de venganza. Como una forzada que condenaron a la soledad, al aislamiento. A propósito, esto de la soledad es lo único importante en mí. Actualmente. Pues recién ahora descubro (siento; me animo a confesarlo) que estoy muy sola y que sufro por ello. Haber llegado a decírmelo o haberme permitido sentirlo es un atentado a mi orgullo. La soledad, el abandono o el aislamiento me han parecido, siempre, motivos de vergüenza más que de dolor. Por eso, tal vez, conozco tanta gente. Sus nombres me sirven para engañarme por no tener amigos. Mejor dicho, por no poder tener amigos. Deseos de volver a Buenos Aires. De hacerme cargo, de alguna manera, de mi nacionalidad y de mi lengua. ¿Y de la soledad? Recordar que la de allí es mucho más cruel.

1.2. The splitting: regarding mirrors.

Como una voz (Extracción de la piedra de locura 1968)

...Como una voz no lejos de la noche arde el fuego más exacto. Sin piel ni huesos andan los animales por el bosque hecho cenizas. Una vez el canto de un solo pájaro te había aproximado al calor más agudo. Mares y diademas, mares y serpientes. Por favor, mira cómo la pequeña calavera de perro suspendida del cielo raso pintado de azul se balancea con hojas secas que tiemblan en torno de ella. Grietas y agujeros en mi persona escapada de un incendio. Escribir es buscar en el tumulto de los quemados el hueso del brazo que corresponda al hueso de la pierna. Miserable mixtura. Yo restauro, yo

reconstruyo, yo ando así de rodeada de muerte. Y es sin gracia, sin aureola, sin tregua. Y esa voz, esa elegía a una causa primera: un grito, un soplo, un respirar entre dioses. Yo relato mi víspera, ¿Y qué puedes tú? Sales de tu guarida y no entiendes. Vuelves a ella y ya no importa entender o no. Vuelves a salir y no entiendes. No hay por donde respirar y tú hablas del soplo de los dioses.

No me hables del sol porque me moriría. Llévame como a una princesita ciega, como cuando lenta y cuidadosamente se hace el otoño en un jardín.

Vendrás a mí con tu voz apenas coloreada por un acento que me hará evocar una puerta abierta, con la sombra de un pájaro de bello nombre, con lo que esa sombra deja en la memoria, con lo que permanece cuando avientan las cenizas de una joven muerta, con los trazos que duran en la hoja después de haber borrado un dibujo que representaba una casa, un árbol, el sol y un animal.

Si no vino es porque no vino. Es como hacer el otoño. Nada esperabas de su venida. Todo lo esperabas. Vida de tu sombra ¿qué quieres? Un transcurrir de fiesta delirante, un lenguaje sin límites, un naufragio en tus propias aguas, oh avara.

1.3. The speaking shadows

Historia Antigua (Los trabajos y las noches 1965)

En la medianoche
vienen los vigías infantiles
y vienen las sombras que ya tienen nombre
y vienen los perdonadores
de lo que cometieron mil rostros míos
en la ínfima desgarradura de cada jornada

1.4. The silent word: surrealist influences

La verdad de esta pared (Los trabajos y las noches 1965)

Que es frío es verde que también se mueve

Llama jadea grazna es halo es hielo

Hilos vibran tiemblan

Hilos

Es verde estoy muriendo

Es muro es mero muro es mudo mira muere.

Piedra fundamental (El infierno musical 1971)

No puedo hablar con mi voz sino con mis voces.

Sus ojos eran la entrada del templo, para mí, que soy errante, que amo y muero. Y
hubiese cantado hasta hacerme una con la noche, hasta deshacerme desnuda en la
entrada del tiempo.

Un canto que atravieso como un túnel.

Presencias inquietantes,
gestos de figuras que se aparecen vivientes por obra de un lenguaje que las alude,
signos que insinúan terrores insolubles.

Una vibración de los cimientos, un trepidar de los fundamentos, drenan y barrenan,
y he sabido dónde se aposenta aquello tan otro que es yo, que espera que me calle para
tomar posesión de mí y drenar y barrenar los cimientos, los fundamentos,
aquello me es adverso desde mí, conspira, toma posesión de mi terreno baldío,

no, he de hacer algo,
no, no he de hacer nada,

algo en mí no se abandona a la cascada de cenizas que me arrasa dentro de mí con ella
que es yo, conmigo que soy ella y que soy yo, indeciblemente distinta de ella.

En el silencio mismo (no en el mismo silencio) tragar noche, una noche inmensa
inmersa en el sigilo de los pasos perdidos.

No puedo hablar para nada decir. Por eso nos perdemos, yo y el poema, en la tentativa inútil de transcribir relaciones ardientes.

¿A dónde la conduce esta escritura? A lo negro, a lo estéril, a lo fragmentado.

las muñecas desventradas por mis antiguas manos de muñeca, la desilusión al encontrar pura estopa (pura estepa tu memoria): el padre, que tuvo que ser Tiresias, flota en el río.

Pero tú, ¿por qué te dejaste asesinar escuchando cuentos de álamos nevados?

Yo quería que mis dedos de muñeca penetraran en las teclas. Yo no quería rozar, como una araña, el teclado. Yo quería entrar en el teclado para entrar adentro de la música para tener una patria. Pero la música se movía, se apresuraba. Solo cuando un refrán reincidía, alentaba en mí la esperanza de que se abasteciera algo parecido a una estación de trenes, quiero decir: un punto de partida firme y seguro; un lugar desde el cual partir,

desde el lugar, hacia el lugar, en unión y fusión con el lugar. pero el refrán era demasiado breve, de modo que yo no podía fundar una estación pues no contaba más que con un tren salido de los rieles que se contorsionaba y se distorsionaba. Entonces abandoné la música y sus traiciones porque la música estaba más arriba o más abajo, pero no en el centro, en el lugar de la fusión y del encuentro. (Tú que fuiste mi única patria ¿en dónde buscarte? Tal vez en este poema que voy escribiendo).

Una noche en el circo recobré un lenguaje perdido en el momento que los jinetes con antorchas en la mano galopaban en ronda feroz sobre corceles negros. Ni en mis sueños de dicha existirá un coro de ángeles que suministre algo semejante a los sonidos calientes para mi corazón de los cascos contra las arenas.

(Y me dijo: Escribe; porque estas palabras son fieles y verdaderas).

(Es un hombre o una piedra o un árbol el que va a comenzar e canto...)

Y era un estremecimiento suavemente trepidante (lo digo para aleccionar a la que extravió en mí su musicalidad y trepida con más disonancia que un caballo azuzado por una antorcha en las arenas de un país extranjero).

Estaba abrazada al suelo, diciendo un nombre. Creí que me había muerto y que la muerte era decir un nombre sin cesar.

No es esto, tal vez, lo que quiero decir. Este decir y decirse no es grato. No puedo hablar con mi voz sino con mis voces. También este poema es posible que sea una trampa, un escenario más.

Cuando el barco alternó su ritmo y vaciló en el agua violenta, me erguí como la amazona que domina solamente con sus ojos azules al caballo que se encabrita (¿o fue con sus ojos azules?). El agua verde en mi cara, he de beber de ti hasta que la noche se abra. Nadie puede salvarme pues soy invisible aún para mí que me llamo con tu voz.

¿En dónde estoy? Estoy en un jardín.

Hay un jardín.

En esta noche, en este mundo (Textos de sombra y Últimos poemas 1971-1972)

A Martha Isabel Moia

I

en esta noche en este mundo
las palabras del sueño de la infancia de la muerta
nunca es eso lo que uno quiere decir
la lengua natal castra
la lengua es un órgano de conocimiento
del fracaso de todo poema
castrado por su propia lengua
que es el órgano de la re-creación
del re-conocimiento
pero no el de la re-surrección
de algo a modo de negación
de mi horizonte de maldoror con su perro
y nada es promesa
entre lo decible
que equivale a mentir
(todo lo que se puede decir es mentira)
el resto es silencio
sólo que el silencio no existe.

Caminos del espejo (Extracción de la piedra de locura 1968)

Y sobre todo mirar con inocencia. Como si no pasara nada, lo cual es cierto.

Como una niña de tiza rosada en un muro muy viejo súbitamente borrada por la lluvia.

Cubre la memoria de tu cara con la máscara de la que serás y asusta a la niña que fuiste.

Y la sed, mi memoria es de la sed, yo abajo, en el fondo, en el pozo, yo bebía, recuerdo.

Como quien no quiere la cosa. Ninguna cosa. Boca cosida. Párpados cosidos. Me olvidé. Adentro el viento. Todo cerrado y el viento adentro.

Pero el silencio es cierto. Por eso escribo. Estoy sola y escribo. No, no estoy sola. Hay alguien aquí que tiembla.

Aun si digo sol y luna y estrellas me refiero a cosas que me suceden. ¿Y qué deseaba yo?

Deseaba un silencio perfecto.
Por eso hablo.

Delicia de perderse en la imagen presentida. Yo me levanté de mi cadáver, yo fui en busca de quien soy. Peregrina de mí, he ido hacia la que duerme en un país al viento.

Mi caída sin fin a mi caída sin fin en donde nadie me aguardó pues al mirar quién me aguardaba no vi otra cosa que a mí misma.

Algo caía en el silencio. Mi última palabra fue yo pero me refería al alba luminosa.

Deslumbramiento del día, pájaros amarillos en la mañana. Una mano desata tinieblas, una mano arrastra la cabellera de una ahogada que no cesa de pasar por el espejo. Volver a la memoria del cuerpo, he de volver a mis huesos en duelo, he de comprender lo que dice mi voz.