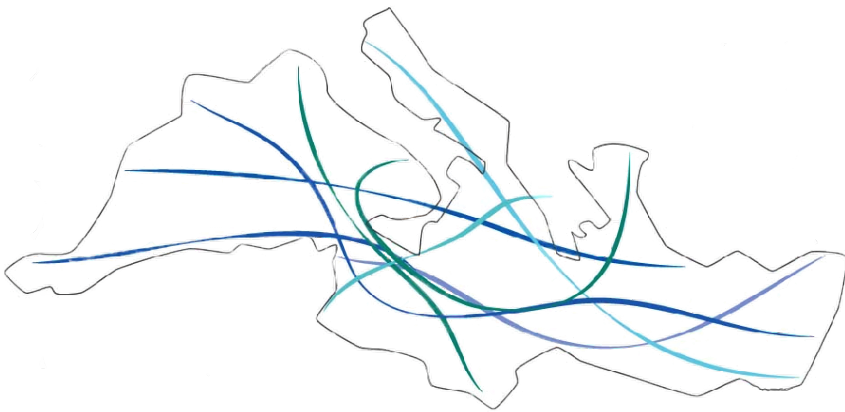


JOURNAL OF MEDITERRANEAN KNOWLEDGE

Editor in Chief, Giuseppe D'Angelo

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*Historiographical exclusions:
female Spanish writers in exile
within the literary Mexican field*



ISSN: 2499-930X



MEDITERRANEAN KNOWLEDGE
International Centre for Studies & Research
www.mediterraneanknowledge.org

Olmedo, I. (2021). "Historiographical exclusions: female Spanish Writers in exile within the Mexican literary field". *Journal of Mediterranean Knowledge*, 6(2), 219-238.

DOI: 10.26409/2021JMK6.2.04

Retrieved from

<http://www.mediterraneanknowledge.org/publications/index.php/journal/issue/archive>

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Article received: 8 September 2021

Accepted: 30 October 2021

On the cover: *Routes* by ISIA Roma Design

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Via Giovanni Paolo II n. 132, 84084 Fisciano, Italy



 - Peer Reviewed Journal

INDEXED IN
DOAJ

Historiographical exclusions: female Spanish writers in exile within the Mexican literary Field

Abstract

The history of Mexican literature has excluded the authors who were marginal, such as exiled writers of 1939, but mainly women authors who were considered even more peripheral. When these two categories are conjugated, suppression is greater. This text analyses the mechanisms of exclusion that are used by historiography in order to make women invisible; we unveiled this by using the studies of configuration of taste and interaction in the fields of cultural production by Pierre Bourdieu, Harold Bloom's canon proposal and Feminist Theory by Lillian Robinson, Susan Gubar and Toril Moi. With these tools, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: Who draws up the canon and by what means? What are the criteria that the critic and the literature scholar use to select authors? Who determines the authority and who legitimizes this authority in Mexico? Is literary quality a historiographic criterion, how and by whom is it established? What interests does it respond to? Furthermore, I will present and briefly analyse the literary creation of Mercedes Pinto, who at their time were influential in the Mexican cultural field and whose works have been unknown and ignored for many years.

Keywords: Female Spanish Writers, Spanish Exile, History of Literature, Mercedes Pinto

Exclusiones historiográficas. Escritoras españolas en exilio en el ámbito literario mexicano

Resumen

La historia de la literatura mexicana ha excluido a autores que se encontraban en sus márgenes en su elaboración, entre ellos, a los exiliados de 1939, pero principalmente a las autoras, pues las consideraba aún más marginales. Cuando estas categorías se conjugan, la supresión es mayor. A partir del estudio de la interacción en los campos de producción cultural de Pierre Bourdieu, la propuesta del canon de Harold Bloom y la teoría feminista para la recuperación de autoras de Lillian Robinson, Sandra Gilbert y Susan Gubar, este texto analiza los mecanismos de exclusión empleados por la historiografía para invisibilizar y prescindir de las mujeres. Con estas herramientas busca responder las siguientes cuestiones: ¿quién elabora el canon y con qué herramientas? ¿Cuáles son los criterios que el crítico y el estudioso de literatura usa para seleccionar autores? ¿Quién determina la autoridad y quién legitima esta autoridad en México? ¿Es la calidad literaria un criterio historiográfico, cómo y quiénes la establecen? ¿A qué intereses responde? Al mismo tiempo, presentaré y analizaré brevemente la creación literaria de Mercedes Pinto,

que fue influyente en el campo cultural mexicano y cuyas obras ha sido desconocidas e ignoradas durante años.

Palabras clave: Escritoras españolas, Exilio español, Historia de la literatura, Mercedes Pinto

Esclusioni storiografiche. Scrittrici spagnole in esilio nell'ambito della letteratura messicana.

Sinossi

La storia della letteratura messicana ha escluso gli autori che si trovavano ai margini, come gli scrittori esiliati nel 1939, e, soprattutto, le autrici, considerate ancora più periferiche. Quando queste due categorie sono unite, l'esclusione è più evidente. L'articolo analizza i meccanismi di esclusione usati dalla storiografia per rendere le donne invisibili. Per svelarli, ci siamo serviti degli studi sulla configurazione del gusto e dell'interazione nei campi della produzione culturale di Pierre Bourdieu, del canone di Harold Bloom e della teoria femminista di Lillian Robinson, Susan Gubar e Toril Moi. Con questi strumenti, l'articolo cerca di rispondere alle seguenti domande: chi stabilisce il canone e in che modo? Quali criteri usano i critici e i letterati per scegliere gli autori? Chi stabilisce l'autorità e chi legittima tale autorità in Messico? La qualità letteraria è un criterio storiografico e da chi è stabilito? A quali interessi risponde? Inoltre, presenteremo e analizzeremo brevemente l'opera letteraria di Mercedes Pinto, che al suo tempo aveva molta influenza nella letteratura messicana ed è stata poi dimenticata per anni.

Parole chiave: Scrittrici spagnole, Esilio spagnolo, Storia della letteratura, Mercedes Pinto

Historiographical exclusions: female Spanish writers in exile within the literary Mexican field

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Introduction

Many different factors of the present time give shape and influence the organization of past events and the writing of literary history (Bürger, 1997, p. 184). There are values that are external to those intrinsically literary or of quality, and they are used to legitimize a tradition, uphold a cultural image or support a group in power. If we consider literature as a system that is composed by a complex net of people and activities, history of literature would be a construction of sense made on the basis of different discursive manifestations (Pozuelo, 2000, p. 123). Following the discussions that took place since the nineties that questioned past practices which gave history specific sense, the criteria that construct literary history have begun to be reexamined. To valorize the place of women intellectuals in Mexican cultural field has a double purpose, on the one hand, to discuss historiographical and pedagogic institutionalization and, secondly, to rank the role of the canon formation, because in the case of these women writers, with their writings they put in crisis solid paradigms that had shaped literary histories. Birthplace, as a national category, is used to organize literary histories that cause exclusion of female authors. Besides, female authors' proposals fight for access to cultural space, and to gain literary prestige.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1995, p. 202), within the field of cultural production, different creative projects compete for legitimacy to achieve a better place in literary hierarchy, and that

includes female writers' proposals. Each group promotes names through anthologies and doing reviews to its members, because all these groups are "struggling for recognition and fulfilling the function of recognition signs" (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 238). Hence, the creation of terms or names that delimit proposals are made by members of a particular group or by certain critics. Analysis about configuration of literary history and canon are very current, in fact, many initiatives have arisen in order to present and analyze the work of women writers with a purpose to expanding canon (or, in the words of Lillian Robinson, elaborate a feminine counter-canon). Regarding particular cases of literature made in Latin America, it is evident that in addition to all aforementioned factors, there are still groups and authors whose site has not been located for lack of critical evaluation.

1. History of Literature

First histories of literature that represented important attempts to systematize literary panorama in Latin America are dated from the 19th century. In the twentieth century, some proposals were published that started from previous ones, however, around 1989, Beatriz de la Garza concluded that "there are very few ensemble histories" (1989, p. 551). In 1996, David Foster kept the same perspective, "Despite enormous production of interpretative criticism in Latin America since the midcentury, lack of adequate historical and bibliographical control is really quite surprising [...] This is true not only of what is available in English, but also, and more significantly what is available in specific languages of Latin American Literary Production" (1996, p. VII). At the same, in 1996 Jorge Ruedas de la Serna confirmed the previous premise, "It is a commonplace, nowadays, to say that we do not have a true history of literature in Mexico. Perhaps, for this reason, in recent years various projects have arisen to write this history, projects that until now have remained just that" (1996, p. 7). Moreover, Aralia López have discussed in 2001: "Why did we arrive at the end of the century without updated literary histories, without correlation of ideas and projects, without stabilized conceptual categories to

elaborate historiographies and theoretical assumptions in and of our countries, when throughout two centuries and mainly in the last quarter of the 20th has so much critical literary work been done in Latin America and the Caribbean?" (2002, p. 71). Thus, the first obstacle to locating the work of exiles in Mexico is lack of an up-to-date history of literature. This problem is transferred to school manuals that start from these investigations, and from there to school institutions that by repetition canonizes. With the passing of time, they merely popularize certain incomplete critical authors and discourses.

Therefore, through the description of the trajectory of exiled intellectuals in Mexican literature, this work shows that external (ideological, political, social, geographical) or subjective elements (a critic's perspective or fashions) intervene in the exclusion of an author. Those works based on development of literary history marginalize or ignore the value of the work. As scholar Mari Paz Balibrea affirms in the introduction to the book, *Lines of flight. Towards other cultural historiography of republican exile*, "Exile is a historiographic anomaly" (2017, p. 19). When the work of exiled authors began to be studied, they were discovered *rare* and were considered to come from a parallel (secondary) sphere to a main one, this creates a displacement that has to be corrected through active recovery policies. The case of female exiled intellectuals is determined by two categories: gender and geographic distance, factors that multiplied their condition of absence. Histories of literature are based on criteria of territorial belonging and link between awakening of national consciousness. In the formation of Mexican literature histories is undeniably strong the presence of a nationalist discourse.

Towards the eighties and nineties, when active recovery of texts written by women started, difficulty of outlining the trajectory of authors who had been historiographically erased was discovered. Previous critical studies had built groups made up mostly of male authors, a proposal that was transferred to the readers. Although each author interpreted the idea of creation in her own way and carried it out in different productions, among them there are common patterns that link them together and allow them to be grouped. They share methods, techniques and points of view,

thematic concerns and relationships with the public. In addition, absence of exiles in the history of literature must be analyzed from historiographic coordinates that originated it. Consequently, the importance that this work attaches to the cultural context and to examination of reception of readers and critics to reveal and discuss validity of parameters followed in construction of the history of literature. In other words, when reviewing omissions of historiography, understanding of a period is broadened. Since around a creative work other similar or different one arises, there is a conjunction or a divergence of interests within a specific environment. Therefore, why not look at the history of literature as a multiple process, rather than as a series of personalities that transfer the baton of tradition? Incorporating authors from exile into the history of Mexican literature constitutes a first approach to this transformation.

Another difficulty are the geographical coordinates that define the context of action of exiled writers. In the first decades of the 20th century, entrance of women into the public arena was not completely accepted, however, women had to adapt and to adopt dominant rules so as to achieve what Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert call: a “truly feminine literary authority” (1998, p. 87). In this context, there is still an underlying conflict regarding initiatives that sought to expand the feminine space beyond the domestic. The female author, as a modern woman, demonstrates the importance of female writers in order to understand this period, since her narrative represents an important edge of a time full of edges. It was a time of freedom and its end also caused closing of hopes that the Second Republic had awakened for women. Modern Spanish women remain unknown because war and exile interrupted their careers that were beginning or were on the rise. If, as Mari Paz Balibrea suggests, war truncated a project of modernity, emerging feminine modernity was also annulled (2007, p. 18). In this way, the case of female exiles allows us to identify particular conditions of a group of female writers active in the 1930s in Spain and to observe how they achieved (or not) continuity in Mexican exile. Therefore, the importance of revaluating proposals that were excluded from hegemonic discourse because of the exile:

And of all those that have not been recovered from historiographic discourses of the dictatorship or democracy, they constitute 'broken' and adrift expressions of Spanish modernity, insofar as they are neither discursively nor politically reconnected to the Spanish nation. For this reason, recovery of the culture and thought of exile understood as manifestations of those 'inconsequential' modernities for Spain during a good part of 20th century, first, it is very useful to enrich the understanding of Spanish modernity of 20th century, and second, it is very useful to think about the hegemonic modernity of the country (Balibrea, 2007, p. 19).

Unstable presence of female authors in histories of literature questions the concepts on which they base their elaboration. Social practices, discourses and policies implied in the incorporation of authors into history of literature sustain male domination of literary space. For example, a writer such as Mercedes Pinto (1883-1976) from the Canary Islands has not yet found a place, despite various rescue actions. Due to intense journalistic work she carried out, her name tends to be more familiar in some spaces, but her work is not fully part of the literary historical diagram. Her inscription in the cultural panorama has been a gradual process, accentuated in the last decades of 20th century and first decades of the present, with the proliferation of various active actions to build her memory: studies, monuments, laws, associations, films, documentaries and novels that discuss the past. By studying its location in literary history, policies and metatexts contained in processes of construction and systematization of the past are revealed, since "images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order" (Connerton, 1989, p. 3).

After tracing her predecessors, Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), discovered the absence of female writers in various literary accounts. This lack of a visible inheritance leads to search for feminine figures which derives in biographical writing and in stories of literature written by women about women, such as Margarita Nelken's *The Spanish Writers* (1930). In fact, María Teresa León explains in *Memoria de la melancolía* (1970) that she wrote her biography, *Doña Jimena Díaz de Vivar. Great Lady of All Duties* (1960), with the purpose to familiarize herself with female historical figures, "I thought of Doña Jimena, that archetype of my childhood, that I had seen in San Pedro de Cardeña, Burgos, lying next to Mister of Vivar as his equal and I wove my memories of readings, of

landscapes, of hours lived to support in Doña Jimena the women who were passing before my eyes” (1999, p. 432). Other exiles made similar explorations in biographical texts, Isabel Oyarzábal wrote *The Life of Alexandra Kollontay* (1947); Cecilia G. Guilarte, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Claro en la selva* (1958) and Clara Campoamor, *The Living Thought of Concepción Arenal* (1943), about the criminal lawyer who had been one of her forerunners. In the same way, feminist criticism discovered that there was an ignored or belittled female tradition (or traditions) in histories of literature that needed to be recovered and/ or revalued.

Starting in the 1960s, several reading proposals analyzed the position of women in the history of literature. In the first line, stereotypes of women were traced in literature and the way they were represented in texts written by men (Kate Millet: *Sexual Politics* (1970) and, in a later, their writing was analyzed. The reading of texts written by women led to search for precursors that resulted in discovery of a tradition that had been excluded and relegated. Based on Harold Bloom’s proposal on “influence anxiety” (*The Anxiety of Influence*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973 and *The Western Canon: the Books and School of the Ages*, Harcourt Braces, San Diego, 1994), Sara Gilbert and Susan Gubar wrote *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Imagination* (1979) and *No Man’s Land* (1988), they reviewed twentieth-century feminine writing and showed that it was possible to speak of a strong feminine tradition, instead of being motivated by anxiety of influence, it was motivated by anxiety of authority. Also Elaine Showalter (in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), *Toward a Feminist Poetics* (1979), *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture (1830-1980)* (1985), *Sexual Anarchy: Gender at Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (1990), *Inventing Herself: Claiming a Feminist Intellectual Heritage* (2001)) showed that women have a strong creative history, but have had greater difficulty validating it than their male peers. In this way:

Feminist criticism showed that a masculine canon generates androcentric readings that, in turn, serve canonization of androcentric texts and the marginalization of gynocentric texts. To break this closed circuit, feminists have been fighting on two different fronts: on the one hand, that of the rewriting of literary history, and on the other, in that of readings and contexts of reception

empathic with experiences, interests and traits forms of these texts (Suárez Briones, 2000, p. 42).

As can be seen, the creator was naturally identified as masculine. As Sara Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1998, p. 21) note, “the author of the text is the father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch”. In the Spain of the 1920s, we have the much-cited review by Ortega on Ana de Noailles that appeared in the first issue of *Revista de Occidente* in 1923, where he considered the existence of poetry written by women incapable. Without forgetting the difficulties encountered by the creator – Shakespeare’s sister, who was pointed out by Virginia Wolf in 1928. The female creative faculty was denied, and in fact “in the most prestigious intellectual circles the tonic was skepticism about the ability of women for poetry” (Quance: 1998, p. 106). Male opinion denied the possibility of a female creation, Shirley Mangini (1997, p. 111) notes: “misogynistic discourse was held by most of liberals of those years”. Art made by women was considered a hobby, not a true profession. In this way, female exiled intellectuals intend to “redefine gender boundaries, on one hand, and implement women’s social and legal equality, on the other” (Bieder, 1992, p. 320). In this way, they express modernity in content, mainly in issues about the female situation, rather than in form. Rosa Chacel (1983, p. 80) recalled, “we were not looking for novelty but for renewal”.

Although in Spain women’s movements and their work had begun to be studied since seventies, it was not until the nineties, within the drive of canon’s discussion and the actions of historical revision, attention was focused on female intellectuals (Mangini, 1997 y 2001). Alda Blanco focused on locating a tradition of women in Spanish literature (2001) and showed that in the Spanish 19th century, contrary to what is normally appreciated in literary manuals and histories, most of the published books were written by women. Even though women personalities recovery has been gradual and steady, their works remain unknown and have been marginalized. Their historiographical inclusion has been carried out within groups of little literary prestige: exiles and women, both marginal elements. If it is true that some of women authors’ contemporaries were “published in minority collections, and therefore their texts were not republished”

(López, 1998, p. 173), their forgetfulness is also due to the displacement of a feminine culture that was considered minor (Sullivan, 2000, p. 181). Phenomena that Lillian Robinson (1998, p. 124) explains with the example of *Moby Dick*, whose estimation is determined by whaler's preference for sewing workshops "as a symbol of human community". To this gender marginalization must be added other factors that contributed to accentuate exclusion: exile, which involved publications with reduced circulation in minority publishing houses as Rex, Atlante or Finisterre. The partial gaze of the critics that used to associate the authors with an extemporaneous and alien reality and the limited circulation of their work.

Many of these authors were forced to use male pseudonyms to publish, because in this way they embraced an accepted tradition and they were easily accepted for authorized voices. Pseudonyms become a means of authority in order to enter into the literary game with equality. Also, María Teresa León takes advantage of pseudonyms for fear of being criticized when expressing an opinion that could be controversial.

2. *Women Exiles and Historiography*

Three directions channel discussion of history of literature regarding the position of excluded authors is made an inclusive proposal in which additions are made to an already established history of literature, by creating a parallel and autonomous canon and a complete reformulation of the canon. The realization of any of those objectives requires first knowing and studying the place of the creators, questioning how they have been read and also analyzing causes of their absence. And then, when weighing the result that external initiatives to literary text exert on entry of an author into history of literature, it is evident in the way in which tributes, reissues and awards participate in increasing the symbolic value of a work and, at the same time promotes an effect of gradual progress in his canonization. Accordingly, more profuse number of works that an author has and more accurate is her estimate, and greater will be its incidence in histories of literature, whose task consists of gathering and systematizing a list of authors within a more extensive

context, based on different resources provided by critics that, through a series of evaluative acts, consolidate work within a particular culture.

In recent years, actions to enhance authors have multiplied. General and ensemble studies have formed the basis for later works, but their entry into literary histories is still in a primary state, their inclusion has been carried out within groups parallel to literary history.

Moreover, the cultural circuit relegates authors located outside large groups, who have less media presence (associated with the prestige of a publishing house) and arouse little interest in readers (often ignorant of the appearance of their works). Reissue, however, supposes a certain validity: facilities to access the author multiply and the texts leave library to circulate through the bookstore. In addition to the fact that critics, tired of following the game of the big publishers, search among the catalogs of new and small publishers, finds and rescues. Likewise, it shows that perception of authors depends more on the cultural fluctuations related to publishing than on the intrinsic quality of the text. Observing the case of these authors confirms that writing of literary history and selection of authors that comprise it not only result from a process of differentiation between artistic literature or not.

3. Modern and Avant-Garde Women

First modern women of the beginning of the 20th century participated in the formation of a conscience and built foundations of an emerging feminism, which was consolidated in the next generation, towards the 1930s. Although not as configured as in other countries. Susan Kirkpatrick (2003) analyzes the differences in the feminist discourse of María Martínez Sierra and Carmen de Burgos as opposed to that of Rosa Chacel and Maruja Mallo and concludes that the main difference lies in the conception of women.

As a result, the modern ones show the contradiction of being in a space that pursues change but reacts with the same intensity to it, while creators set out to overcome a system that they abide by, but in which they feel uncomfortable.

If changes in situation of women are earlier, greater would be objectives achieved by feminist current. Karen Offen (2007, p. 33) explains feminine situation is transformed by hand of suffragism. During these years the image of a new woman, flapper, garçonne and modern one, developed. Despite the fact that women did not achieve a massive income for education and work, a change in mentality and perception of their role began to take place, prompting requests for new social and legal reforms.

Social feminism is a common point of modern women in Spain. The measures in favor of women, carried out during the first decades of the 20th century, are located within this category until they begin to request legal changes. Thus, the importance of women's suffrage, which signified passage from characteristic social feminism of the early twentieth century to one of a political nature that began to develop from the twenties.

4. Mercedes Pinto

Mercedes Pinto, born in 1883, belatedly found the possibility of disagreeing with her family beliefs and the possibility of making her own beliefs heard as a writer, even if it was contrary to what was considered the truth by powerful groups. Her solidarity and defense of the anarchist Mateo Morral, after his failed attack against the king or his support for the Cuban independentists: José Martí and Antonio Maceo, clearly disagreed with traditional ideology of women in his family. This right to express her opinion causes her exile.

Mercedes Pinto married young, had three children and lived the consequences of a marriage with a paranoid. Her history reveals contradictions of the legislation in force in Spain, which only allowed divorce in exceptional cases. To discuss this law, Carmen de Burgos drew up the controversial and no less famous survey published in *El Diario Universal* on divorce in 1904 and invited Mercedes Pinto to the Central University of Madrid to demand it in a talk. As Carmen de Burgos was ill, she proposed to Pinto that she replace her at the conference that would close a cycle of health rallies at the Central University. Pinto took advantage of the occasion to “express and demand modern legislation capable of protecting women” (Llarena,

2001, p. 26). This conference aroused so much suspicion among the monarchical attendees that her deportation was suggested, and the writer had to hasten her departure from Spain. In the novel *Ella*, Pinto (1969, p. 246) recalled her gradual awareness, “Three months passed, without being able to really convince myself that I was marrying a man whom I hardly knew, and who, naturally, did not love either”.

Pinto began to write out of strict necessity. In the novel, *He* (1926), she explains that when she was very young and in the manner of the time, her parents decided to marry her off to “a good match”, that is, someone wealthy who would make her move up in social class. As she had a quarrelsome and strong character they could not “place her”. But finally, one of the wealthiest and also rarest characters of the Canarian nobility proposed to her. After the marriage, Pinto discovers that the man was crazy. The psychiatric diagnosis would be that he was schizophrenic with paranoid tendencies.

When Mercedes Pinto realizes that she cannot be divorced, she begins to write. The novel *He* was published for the first time in Montevideo in 1926. The place where she ran away from her husband. This novel presents an explanation of why she left her own country and denounces what she had experienced. *He* has been reissued several times, once in Mexico by the Costa-Amic publishing house in 1956 and, recently, in 2011, by the Spanish publishing house Escaletra. In addition to that Luis Buñuel made a film adaptation that is titled the same as the novel, starred by Arturo de Córdoba in 1957.

The novel begins with a few prologues written by various specialists. Pinto justifies the presence of these annexes in an initial passage entitled “Clarification”, where she states: “In my novel, diverse opinions and diversity of tendencies are gathered together, as proof of my spiritual breadth, since they are asked, Catholics, atheists, freethinkers. Learned hands that clarify many points of view” (1956, p. 23). First text, “A kind of prologue”, was written by a lawyer and secular theologian named Jaime Torrubiano Ripoll, who in several of his books discussed relationship between civil law and Catholic regulations, mainly in the book *The binding divorce and the Catholic dogma* (1936), of which a quote was included: “And the

ruggedness of the subject [divorce], already extremely rugged, rises to a point, if you take into account my condition as a Catholic without qualification of no species, the seriousness and novelty of the conclusions, which I have reached in my research, and the marital situation of our country "(1956, p. 25). Torrubiano clarifies that he does not accept the divorce legislation, nor does he approve civil marriages, he only proposes the possibility of dissolving or canceling the Catholic bond in some extreme cases, such as bigamy or insanity.

Then it appears as a second prologue, a psychiatric assessment of paranoia made by the renowned psychiatrist Julio Camino. Examples of mental illness and ways to identify it are listed in this text. Dr. Camino (1956, p. 31) diagnoses: "we are facing a case of essential and progressive hallucinatory systematized insanity" and includes recommendations on the treatment of these patients.

The novel tells of different scenes in which his madness is discovered and the torture to which the protagonist is subjected. He locked her in his office, which was a kind of torture room, upholstered in legal books, where he writes and never finds the "word". Then delusions of grandeur are interspersed with attacks of jealousy, he is suspicious of everyone, or someone is envious of him and wants to kill him. The madness is gradual. In the first few pages, he only seems a little disturbed, but he is jealous of the children because she spends too much time and all her attention on them. The changing mood of the paranoid transitions from total self-assurance to states of mistrust and desolation, from aggressiveness and violence to vulnerability and the need for understanding. When he fails his first suicide attempt with sleeping pills and is discovered by her, who saves his life in an act of blindness, pity and Stockholm syndrome, he changes roles and pretends that she wanted to commit suicide. Then, the narrator becomes the disturbed one and her parents, they look at her as a crazy person who is using drugs; he, on the other hand, is considered by all as her savior. Furthermore, as Dr. Camino's annex explains clinically, his actions start from a basis of truth that the patient's mind distorts. For example, a man in the street who is strolling peacefully becomes a pursuer who watches over him. As time passes, the evolution of both characters is noticed. Above all, because he loses control of

himself simultaneously with the advance of his madness. There is a scene in which the character collects bills, hugs them and affirms that money is his God, that is why he wants to be richer. The character is so unhinged that in Buñuel's adaptation it is even a bit cartoonish.

At some point in the novel, the narrator decides to run away with her children and in the next paragraph, she resigns herself to maintaining a marriage of hardships. Narrator considers herself "confused, ignorant and innocent" (1956, p. 82). Her attachment to religion causes her to react to her circumstance by accepting suffering as if it were his natural destiny. Little by little the character suggests that she may have another life and formulates her "humble request to the compassion of readers to intern sick man who tortures me" (1956, p. 108). Ending is ambiguous, it seems that the narrator will try to flee, but she has many influences and important friends. We know that Mercedes Pinto went to Montevideo and there she got a divorce. She also lived in Cuba and other Latin American countries and died in Mexico. She remarried and had other children, the two actors known as Rubén and Gustavo Rojo.

At the end of the book there is one more text, the opinion on divorce of another lawyer. No surprise, his name is Rubén Rojo, who is the man she married. He defends divorce:

The problem is this: Can a woman united in a marital bond with a husband who makes her a victim of his follies and his cruelties, can she emancipate herself? Completely not, because our society does not admit dissolution of the bond. Should she emancipate herself anyway, against the law and against the Law of God? I, who am a rebel, faced with the absurd, stagnant and gothic spirit of our beliefs, I am going to answer without preamble: YES (1956, p. 114).

5. Community between Female Authors

These female authors, like Mercedes Pinto, in addition to being late writers, came across legislation that did not protect women. They were journalists and spent many years educating other women. They moved within limiting schemes and tried to transform them. They were known and had predominance in the field of cultural production, yet later they were forgotten. In the first place, because

her work was read and criticized based on codes considered *feminine*. Neus Real (2006, p. 25) explains: “[...] feminine adjective was obviously the key term. Defining a subclass in the literary-cultural system starting from an external element (sex), it was applicable, in consequence to any sphere and to area of the issue as well as one of destination or reception”. Work of women is qualified from a sexual category, external to their quality, which was associated with an idea of femininity understood as sentimental. These *female* characteristics were qualified with adjectives that designated negative qualities and that turned her creations into a literary subcategory. The standard of emotion approved the work of women, in the same way that, as Susan Kirkpatrick (1991, p. 23) points out, elevation of sentimentalism had authorized feminine creation in romanticism. Being a writer conditioned by the ways of reading and the critical approach to their work, so writers used the feminine term, aware of its implications.

When the narrative set out to represent new women, it found that love and the sentimental were associated with the feminine that, discredited as a literary category, it was tried to avoid. In the words of Susan Clark (1991, p. 4): “The sentimental does not look like the source of transgression, resistance or progressive cultural change”.

Mercedes Pinto discussed social institutions that meant restrictions on women in an attempt to define herself and her female identity. Women aspired to “kill aesthetic ideal of women” (Gilbert & Gubar, 1998, p. 32) that their male counterparts had created for them. Creative proposals of women authors as Mercedes Pinto falls within this group, which seeks firstly modification of the social role of women and secondly renewal of their image, by participating in the construction of a new feminine identity, since being modern implied seeking a change in the situation of women. Delimitation of the concept of feminism was in process and it was a term full of meanings, for this reason many women refused to call themselves feminists. Besides, the word was socially discredited.

For women, dissatisfaction with reality and social construction began with family, which limited its space to home and marriage. Ending the dual image of women was understood as a political project. Many active women in the 1930s went through gradual processes of self-awareness before discovering the right and value

of showing judgment. Several women of the time narrated in their memoirs and in their novels with female protagonists how they experienced disappointment with the idea of love through wrong unions. In addition to describing how they suffered a transformation in their religious ideas. In fact, the first doubts arise about norms of religion and the church.

Conclusions

In recent years, actions have multiplied to enhance female authors. General and ensemble studies have founded the basis for later works, but their entry into literary histories is still in a primary state, their inclusion has been carried out within groups parallel to literary history: exiles and women.

The cultural circuit relegates authors located outside the large groups, who have less media presence (associated with prestige of a publishing house) and arouse little interest in readers (often ignorant of the appearance of their works). Reissue, however, supposes a certain validity: facilities to access an author multiply and texts leave library to circulate through bookstore. In addition to the fact that critics, tired of following the game of big publishers, search among catalogs of new and small publishers, finds and rescues. In this way, reissue, as a means of presenting authors, imposed a value criterion based on editorial selection criterion; therefore, tracing republication trajectories by year and place describe advancement of their knowledge in the cultural field and their slow incorporation into literary circuit. Likewise, it shows that perception of these authors depends more on cultural fluctuations related to publishing than on intrinsic quality or importance of the text. Observing the case of Mercedes Pinto confirms that writing of literary history and selection of the authors that comprise it, not only result from a process of differentiation between artistic literature or not.

Critics and readers grouped these authors into independent and isolated groups, instead of including them in the same progressive line. When their work began to be studied, they were discovered *rare* and considered to come from a parallel sphere (secondary) to a main one, thus creating a displacement that will only be corrected slowly

and steadily through recovery policies. Perhaps, as a starting point, it is necessary to reformulate the well-known historicist models and the way of approaching female and exile authors, since they are characters who move in paradox: they are writers out of their time but very much in their time. And, above all, to quantify both their value and their role and what their image as a group represented and represents.

When trying to spot Mercedes Pinto within the history of literature, vulnerability of closed sets and difficulty (although not impossibility) of widening them is visible. The construction of women authors' memory, as has been exposed, has been a process marked by permeability of information; however, these new investigations and data have not made these figures part of "society's system of ideas" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 188). They were partially accepted by literary institutions, they are mentioned in dictionaries and encyclopedias, but the value that these spheres make of their works is still precarious. Its legitimation process has been marked by different cultural policies associated with specific historical situations. Thus, it is possible to conclude that they are recovered authors; that is to say, that they are part of a political project of historical memory.

If we intend to eliminate the ways in which, for example, social violence is constructed, perhaps we should start from the epistemic violence that is exercised from criticism and academic work. In turn, if the modes and codes of reading change over time, canon must also be considered mutable. Therefore, we agree with the idea that "history of literature is an articulation of meaning that must take form of an integrating horizon, rather than a linear narrative, and prefer to conform as a project in permanent renovation, rather than as the constitution of a stable canon" (Mainer, 2002, p. 51).

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