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Women in Exile:
A Comparative Analysis of Sebastian Barry's
***On Canaan's Side* and Rosa Aneiros'**
Sol de Inverno

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This work aims at offering a comparative analysis on the role of women in the exile of two nations whose history is heavily marked by migratory movements: Galicia and Ireland. The analysis will be based on the study of two novels: *On Canaan's Side* by Sebastian Barry, which will provide us with the Irish perspective, and *Sol de Inverno* by Rosa Aneiros that will allow us to analyse the Galician case. These two historical novels narrated retrospectively from a feminine perspective will allow us to comment on the commonalities of two fictional stories that could easily correspond to the real memories of thousands of Irish and Galician women that emigrated to the USA and Cuba respectively. The main purpose behind this work is to place the focus on the role of those who traditionally remained invisible to the study of international migrations; to examine women's exile by looking at the various causes behind it, at the different dynamics of integration in the host countries, at the process of creation of new transnational identities, at the transformation of family bonds and at the coping mechanisms in the face of an unrelieved exile. Methodologically, this work will consist in a thorough analysis of each novel separately that will lead up to a section where all the commonalities and main differences regarded in the Galician and Irish feminine exile will be considered together.

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Mulleres no Exilio: Unha Análise Comparativa de *On Canaan's Side* de Sebastian Barry e *Sol de Inverno* de Rosa Aneiros.

Mujeres en el Exilio: Un Análisis Comparativo de *On Canaan's Side* de Sebastian Barry y *Sol de Inverno* de Rosa Aneiros.

Women in Exile: A Comparative Analysis of Sebastian Barry's *On Canaan's Side* and Rosa Aneiros' *Sol de inverno*.

Resumo

Este traballo nace co obxectivo de ofrecer unha análise comparativa do papel da muller no exilio de dúas nacións cuxa historia está fortemente marcada pola migración: Galicia e Irlanda. A análise fundamentarase sobre o estudo de dúas novelas: *On Canaan's Side* de Sebastian Barry achegaranos á experiencia feminina no exilio irlandés e *Sol de Inverno* de Rosa Aneiros permitiranos analizar o caso galego. Estas dúas novelas históricas que son narradas de xeito retrospectivo dende unha perspectiva feminina permitirannos comentar os puntos comúns destas dúas historias ficticias, que ben poderían corresponderse con memorias reais dos milleiros de mulleres irlandesas e galegas que emigraron aos Estados Unidos e a Cuba respectivamente. O propósito principal deste traballo é poñer o foco no papel dos que tradicionalmente permaneceron invisibles ao estudo das migracións internacionais e analizar o exilio feminino prestando atención as súas causas, ás diferentes dinámicas de integración nos países receptores, ao proceso de creación de novas identidades transnacionais, aos mecanismos de xestión do trauma e á transformación das relacións familiares nun contexto de exilio. A nivel metodolóxico, este traballo consistirá primeiro nunha análise en profundidade de cada una das novelas por separado para despois facer un estudo comparativo onde se considerarán todas os puntos comúns e as diverxencias do exilio galego e irlandés dende unha perspectiva feminina.

Palabras chave: Irlanda, Galicia, Migración, Mulleres, Exilio.

Resumen

Este trabajo nace con el objetivo de ofrecer un análisis comparativo del papel de la mujer en el exilio de dos naciones cuya historia está fuertemente marcada por la migración: Galicia e Irlanda. El análisis se fundamentará sobre el estudio de dos novelas: *On Canaan's Side* de Sebastian Barry nos acercará a la experiencia femenina en el exilio irlandés y *Sol de Inverno* de Rosa Aneiros nos permitirá analizar el caso gallego. Estas dos novelas históricas son narradas de manera retrospectiva desde una perspectiva femenina y, a través de ellas, podremos comentar los puntos comunes de estas dos historias ficticias que bien podrían corresponderse con memorias reales de

las miles de mujeres gallegas e irlandesas que emigraron a Estados Unidos y Cuba respectivamente. El propósito principal de este trabajo es poner el foco en el papel de los que tradicionalmente permanecieron invisibles al estudio de las migraciones internacionales y analizar el exilio femenino prestando atención a sus causas, a las diferentes dinámicas de integración en los países receptores, al proceso de creación de nuevas identidades transnacionales, a los mecanismos de gestión del trauma y a la transformación de las relaciones familiares en un contexto de exilio. A nivel metodológico, este trabajo consistirá primero en un análisis en profundidad de cada una de las novelas por separado para después hacer un estudio comparativo donde se considerarán todos los puntos comunes y las divergencias del exilio gallego e irlandés desde una perspectiva femenina.

Palabras clave: Irlanda, Galicia, Migración, Mujeres, Exilio.

Abstract

This work aims at offering a comparative analysis on the role of women in the exile of two nations whose history is heavily marked by migratory movements: Galicia and Ireland. The analysis will be based on the study of two novels: *On Canaan's Side* by Sebastian Barry, which will provide us with the Irish perspective, and *Sol de Inverno* by Rosa Aneiros that will allow us to analyse the Galician case. These two historical novels narrated retrospectively from a feminine perspective will allow us to comment on the commonalities of two fictional stories that could easily correspond to the real memories of thousands of Irish and Galician women that emigrated to the USA and Cuba respectively. The main purpose behind this work is to place the focus on the role of those who traditionally remained invisible to the study of international migrations; to examine women's exile by looking at the various causes behind it, at the different dynamics of integration in the host countries, at the process of creation of new transnational identities, at the transformation of family bonds and at the coping mechanisms in the face of an unrelieved exile. Methodologically, this work will consist in a thorough analysis of each novel separately that will lead up to a section where all the commonalities and main differences regarded in the Galician and Irish feminine exile will be considered together.

Keywords: Ireland, Galicia, Migration, Women, Exile.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noa Villar Gallego', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Noa Villar Gallego

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to offer a comparative analysis of the role of women in the Irish and Galician exile and, in doing so, delve into the shared history of these two nations united by some cultural and social characteristics as well as by having experienced parallel narratives of significant migrations. The purpose is to examine how women lived and participated in the Irish and Galician diasporas of the twentieth century, considering aspects such as ideology and politics, traditional patriarchal roles defining women, motherhood, sense of belonging, loss of personal identity and creation of transnational identities, assimilation and adaptation in the receiving countries, childhood memories and the treatment of trauma.

The comparative analysis will focus on two novels: *On Canaan's Side* by the Irish author Sebastian Barry and *Sol de Inverno* by the Galician writer Rosa Aneiros. While these authors have distinct national and cultural roots, the shared history of emigration in Galicia and Ireland enables us to propose that their literary insight into exile will be interconnected. Additionally, these two novels were selected because they not only feature exiled women as protagonists but also place womanhood at the center of their narratives.

This study falls within the discipline of literary studies and incorporates concepts from other academic fields such as sociology, history and anthropology that are closely related to the feminine experience in the Galician and Irish exile. The research will adopt a relational and interdisciplinary approach beginning in a detailed reading of the two selected novels. Initially, each novel will be discussed separately, starting with a brief contextualization attaining the historical events of the period in which the novels are set, a migratory overview of the country and the role of women Irish and Galician societies. Following this, the literary work of both authors will be contextualized along with the literary landscape in which they write and a general overview of the two novels will be provided. The analysis will converge in a final comparative chapter that links the previously analyzed aspects of the two novels.

I. MAPPING THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN IRISH AND GALICIAN DIASPORA

In the first chapter of this study of the novels by Rosa Aneiros and Sebastian Barry we will delve into the theoretical framework that will serve as groundwork for the examination of these two narratives. Diaspora, a word that comes from the Greek preposition *δια-* –over– added to the verb *σπορά* –sowing– serves as the theoretical cornerstone for this comparative analysis. This term was used to refer to “the action of dispersing or scattering abroad” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) but, with time, it acquired a more harrowing meaning when it began to be used by Jews, Africans, Armenians and Palestinians –among others– to refer to the collective trauma of dreaming of home while leaving in exile for a completely different part of the world due to some specific political, social, economic or religious circumstances (Cohen ix).

The concept of diaspora suffers great fluctuations in present-day due to the fact that there are different types of diasporas and also different consequences and motives behind them. In recent times, some groups living away from their home-countries have also taken the word to define their situation of being far from home while maintaining a strong collective identity even when their situation has nothing to do with colonization, persecutions or violence. Still, despite the existing debate on the exact significance of this term, the acknowledgement that the “old country” always has some claim on the loyalty and emotions of the diasporic subjects is a common feature shared by all diasporic communities established away from their natal (or imagined natal) territories (Cohen ix).

The razing of the walls of the Temple of Jerusalem, the destruction of the city in 586 BC and the captivity in Babylon of the key Jewish leaders led to the creation of the main folk memory of the victim diaspora tradition, an experience of enslavement, exile and displacement that is now key to understand the notion of diaspora (Cohen 3). But apart from the Jewish case, there were others that led to the diffusion of the term: the brutality of African slave trade –beginning during the Islamic hegemony of the seventh and eighth centuries and continuing with the transatlantic trade that deposited Africans in the Caribbean, Mexico and Brazil (Cohen 34)– or the Armenian diaspora, the major example of an “ethnic cleansing” in the twentieth century, when more than one million of Armenians were forcefully displaced by the Turks between 1915 and 1916 (Cohen 27). These three cases –the Jewish, the African and the Armenian– along with others such as the Palestinian or the Irish are examples of victim diasporas, the classic diaspora

in which a huge portion of the population of a country is forced into exile. However, according to the classification that Cohen sustains, diasporas can be also classified in labour diasporas that consist of massive relocations in search for better jobs and better financial opportunities such as the Indian and Turkish diasporas” (Cohen 57); trade diasporas that seek to exploit new trade routes and relationships such as the Chinese and Lebanese migration ” (Cohen 83); imperial diasporas “caused by the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions” (Cohen 57) such as the British or French migration and cultural diasporas such as the Caribbean diaspora, an example of a transnational community that can be thought of as a part of other diasporas such as the Indian labour diaspora, the African victim diaspora or the European imperial diaspora (Cohen 137).

The ongoing debate on which migratory groups should or should not be included in diaspora studies is caused by the difficulties behind finding a widely accepted definition and conceptualization of diaspora. Diasporas are now understood to include not only those groups that were persecuted and forced to disperse but also those populations that were voluntarily dispersed for economic, political or business reasons. For this, many were the scholars who wrote down a list of a few elements –from six to nine criteria– that were supposed to serve to identify diasporic subjects (Tsuda 190). Among these scholars we find William Safran’s definition of diaspora, where he delineates the concept into a specific form of mass migration that involves forced exile, long and tedious resettlement and the establishment of new roots in regions far from home. Diasporas, according to the criteria Safran proposes, are characterized by the dispersion of original communities from their homeland, the maintenance of strong ties –memories, myths and a common vision– to this homeland, the development of a sense of cultural and social autonomy as a counterpart of their feeling of never going to be accepted by the host society, the aspiration to one day return to the homeland under more favourable circumstances and the communal consciousness and motivation to maintain support for their homeland (Ancien et al. 12).

In recent times, as an attempt to give a more strict and limited definition to the concept, some scholars tried to reduce to three the definitional list of elements that constitute diaspora. Beyond population dispersal and homeland, other criteria that are usually mentioned are: “(1) transnational social relationships between the geographically dispersed ethnic population across national borders, (2) a collective diasporic consciousness and identity; and (3) marginalization and lack of assimilation to

the host society” (Tsuda 190). Moreover, despite the fact that displacement is never a homogeneous experience, there is one common feature to all types of diasporas and that is the impact that it has on social personhood and relationships not only culturally but also in terms of migrant’s emotions, sensations, bodies and imaginations. The diversity of migrants, their perception of change, their vulnerability and adaptability are the reasons behind some migrants suffering an utterly painful experience when narrating pre-exile experiences while, on the opposite side, others make continuous “attempts to sustain some material, bodily and/or emotional sense of continuity with the pre-exile past” (Dudley 278). For this, analysing which material forms and which sensory experiences are given a special value among displaced subjects can be useful to understand the effects of diaspora: the relationship that displaced people bear with their past lives, the difficulties of making home far from home, the conflict between adapting to a new culture while maintaining one’s own and between the present and the memory and nostalgia of the pre-exile.

The literary landscapes crafted by Aneiros and Barry in their narratives will allow us to explore the journey of some diasporic subjects in their process of remembering what has been lost while simultaneously holding onto what they still have, and trying not to lose connection to past times, places, people and selves while having to adapt to a completely new reality in fugitive life. More specifically, through the narratives of these two authors the aim of this TFG is to examine the diasporic experience but from the point of view of Galician and Irish migrant women.

Traditionally, female experiences in migration had remained invisible for researchers who study international migrations from “an uncritical, masculine perspective” (Di Liberto 75), but studies of migration from a gender perspective, especially those conducted from an anthropological standpoint, have been gaining importance in their field since the 1970s, with particular emphasis following the publication of Mirjana Morokvasic’s work in 1984. Her investigation challenged those migration studies made exclusively from an economic approach, overlooking social aspects such as gender dynamics. Up until this moment, migrant women used to be regarded as passive participants in migration, primarily accompanying men in their journey and, therefore, men were located in the public sphere while women were relegated to the private sphere (García-Rodeja and Pérez 426).

In line with feminist ideology, geographers have tried to bridge the division between the public and private domains by acknowledging the political dimension of

the private sphere to reveal the “power relations that underpin the migration flows and experience of specific groups” (Di Liberto 73). This includes scrutinizing the motives driving certain groups to migrate for specific purposes and the vested interests involved.

Scholars such as Kenneth Little and Henrietta L. Moore, when discussing the root source for migration in men and women, suggested that men are typically driven to migrate for economic reasons whereas women tend to do it for social reasons. Nevertheless, other studies indicate that behind these social motivations that commonly propel women, economic motivations tend to play a significant role. From a historical-structuralist approach, scholars such as Alejandro Portes or Immanuel Wallerstein signal that migration movements should not be studied focusing on individuals and that, instead, the target of analysis should be the population groups that migrate from peripheral regions to capitalist hubs. This approach locates migration as a component of the global capitalist system where unequal exchanges take place between the central and peripheral economies and, as a consequence, in the study of migrations, gender studies are subordinated to class studies (García-Rodeja and Pérez 426).

In the 1980s, the study of migration movements focused on the analysis of the position of women regarding the international division of labour and the functioning of the patriarchal system both in the receiving and in the emitting societies. In the 1990s, new investigations appeared on women’s role in migration carried out by academics such as Carmen Gregorio Gil, Dolores Juliano and Laura Oso in the study of Galician and Spanish migratory movements and Patrick O’Sullivan and Hasia Dinner in the Irish case (García-Rodeja and Pérez 426).

Among these scholars, it is worth highlighting Dolores Juliano’s study because she makes an accurate statement on the specific causes behind women’s migration. Juliano outlines three main factors: displacement for marital reasons –women as dependent or as adjuncts of male migrants–, migrations for economic reasons stemming from the gender division of labour –domestic services, etc.– and the preference of companies for hiring women in order to reduce costs due to lower wages; finally, the displacement of single mothers, victims of unwanted marriages, survivors of sexual assaults and other women with no prestige in the eyes of society (Juliano 31-34).

Regarding the female dimension of Galician migration, it was only in recent years when attention from sociologists was placed on the matter. Apart from Aneiros’ accurate portrayal of the role of women in exile, research has emerged examining feminine migration with works by Isidro Dubert analysing displacements of women

from the countryside to the city, also by Pilar Cagiao Vila, M^a Xosé Rodríguez Galdo, M^a Luz González Parente and Marta Lombán Pazos, as well other studies on women's role in migration from a demographic perspective or that of oral history (Dubert; Cagiao; Rodríguez; González Parente and Lombán).

As for Irish migration, it is known that, over the majority of migratory periods in the country since the nineteenth century, women have outnumbered men. One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is explained in Walter's structuralist interpretation of the situation in Ireland (33) where she sustains that the marginalization of women is a result of the intertwining of the impact of patriarchy and colonialism and that, for this, Irish females were either condemned to the domestic role prescribed by the teaching on motherhood by the Church or encouraged to emigrate (King and O'Connor 312).

Despite the female majority in Irish migration, until the mid-1970, women were unseen for social scientists analysing migrations from a patriarchal perspective. Russell King and Henrietta O'Connor (1996), in an attempt to counterbalance the gender-bias in migration studies with an article reporting the results of some thorough interviews with Irish migrant women, mention only "two major academic studies produced on the female dimension of Irish migration". The first of these two is that of Hasia Diner (1983) *Erin's Daughters in America* where she reports on the migration of women from Ireland to the United States, highlighting how the economic circumstances in the aftermath of the Irish Famine transformed social dynamics and social relations spurring an episode of mass female migration in the country. The other study that King and O'Connor refer to is an edited collection by Patrick O'Sullivan (1995) that delves into various aspects of the history of Irish migrant women but that lacks a cohesive treatment of the matter. Other studies by Kelly and Nic Giolla Choille (1990) and Lennon et al. (1988) offer more direct and less academic insights into the experiences of Irish women in migration (King and O'Connor 312-13).

For all the above mentioned, we can say that the significance attributed to gender dynamics in defining migration patterns hinges on the level of scrutiny directed towards the importance of the gender system within a particular society. According to Gregorio Gil (260-61), migratory flows bring together the gender, class and ethnic inequality systems of two different societies and, therefore, as part of a collective journey to put women's names on the map of mobility, the analysis of processes where these two differenced societies are involved should be made from a transnational perspective. Moreover, the construction or alteration of gender inequality cannot be

examined in isolation from the global context, as Wolf (15) suggests that "the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes" and, because of the connections in all areas, we need to stop representing dynamic, interrelated phenomena as static and disconnected.

II. SOL DE INVERNO

II.1. Social, Political and Historical Context of Galicia

II.1.1. Spanish Civil War and White Terror

1936, a growing bellicose and confrontational atmosphere spreads throughout the Spanish territory, the Spanish Republic is threatened by right-wing sectors in both Parliament and garrisons. On 17 July, a military uprising in Melilla commanded by General Mola and supported by some conservative sectors of society. After this *coup d'état* failed to gain control of the entire country, a ferocious civil war broke out, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), a conflict that confronted Republicans –who remained loyal to the democratically elected government of the Popular Front– and Nationalists, a right-leaning alliance formed by Falangists, Catholics and conservatives led by General Francisco Franco (De Juana 27-31).

In Galicia, the victory of the rebel faction was almost immediate to the *coup d'état*. There was no war front as such and the remaining resistance against the uprising acquired the form of guerrilla warfare. However, Galicia was not a reliable territory for the Nationalists and even less a safe rear for them: the Popular Front had won the February 1936 elections and anarchist unions, communist agrarian associations and Galician nationalism were rapidly growing in influence in this territory.¹ For this all, the repression of the Nationalists would show in Galicia its cruelest face and all Galician supporters of the Popular Front would become subjects to one of the most atrocious repressions of the Nationalist rear (Núñez and Farías 113).

The Francoist repression in Galicia, also referred to as White Terror, began with the holding of the first drumhead court-martials. These courts often led to the execution wall (Fernández 103) and, with them, the systematic extermination of all Galician people loyal to the Spanish Republic began. Simultaneously to these executions, long lists of dismissed civil servants were published in newspapers and various civil workers

¹ Notice the difference between “Nationalists” and “Galician Nationalists”. The former refers to the supporters of Franco’s Regime while the latter refers to those who advocated for Galicia as an independent nation.

were obliged to sign the “Retraction Act” (*acta de retractación*) in order to protect themselves from being expelled from their jobs. In order to cover the new vacant slots, priority was always given to supporters of the uprising (Fernández 104-9).

While these military courts and executions were announced and justified in newspapers, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings –referred to as *paseos*– where kept as a secret by the Spanish Nationalists. These *paseos* turned into an exercise of political cleansing and, with them, many prominent figures of the high cultural and intellectual Galician spheres met their demise (Fernández 104). Moreover, Franco’s Regime placed great effort in encouraging the civil population to denunciate Republican people by setting up special denunciation centers in newly occupied towns (Anderson 16). This is the perfect example of how the Spanish Civil War was, as every other civil war, a fratricidal conflict where the recruitment of each army depended much more on geography than on political ideology and where both sides involved more people than just their political supporters.

II.1 2. Galician Diaspora

Migration is an intrinsic element to Galician history. Narrating the history of Galicia involves navigating through the history of Galician migration, of all those “Galicias” that exist beyond our political borders. Ramón Villares (2019) explains that “Galicia foi e volveu en barco con moitas maletas” and defines this territory as an example of a portable and extraterritorial nation that is built over the memories and actions of millions of emigrants.

With this all, it is undeniable that the “historical wound” (Núñez, “History and Collective Memories of Migration” 231) of the diaspora remains unhealed in Galicia and that migratory movements are still very much present in everyday life, not only by dint of those who tell and retell their personal experiences with migration, but also through the names of bars, shoe shops, hair salons and even through the toponymy of streets that are named after receiving countries (González Fernández 79). The significance of the Galician diaspora can also be noticed in the strength of the network of associations of Galician migrants abroad –“more than four hundred recreational, social, cultural, and mutual aid associations exist today outside Galicia” (Núñez, “History and Collective Memories of Migration” 231)–.

According to historian Carlos Sixirei (33-36), Galician migratory movements can be documented since the Early Modern Ages. Initially, these where seasonal or

short-term migrations heading to Castile and León and medium-term migrations to Lusitanian regions near the South of Galicia that, with time, expanded to the South of the Iberian Peninsula. Among the underlying factors of Galician migrations from the thirteenth century onwards, we find the fact that the feudal social structure and the subsistence agriculture system entailed a limited economic capacity in Galicia and this, along with a demographic growth of the population, resulted in a large number of peasants leaving for other lands. Therefore, Galician migration in this period turned into the solution that would contribute to compensate the deficiencies of the productive system and to moderate the growth of the population (Eiras 67).

Bearing in mind that the Galician migratory phenomena goes back to the thirteenth century, it must be remarked that it was in the second half of the nineteenth century when the exodus to America began. This period of mass migration was triggered by the heavy rains that fell in 1853, which led to the loss of practically the entire crop. Having nothing to eat nor to sow, Galician peasants remained with no other option but to leave their land. During this period, the exodus to America turned into a continuous departure of Galicians to various destinations across the ocean.

The magnitude of this mass migration led to the creation of a robust bond between Galicia and the transoceanic communities that affected substantially the social imaginary and the notion of spatial distance. As demonstrated by the Galician writer Manolo Rivas: “Oí a un campesino describir así el destino de dos de sus hijos, emigrantes: «Uno anda cerca, por Buenos Aires; el otro, lejos, en un sitio muy raro, Frankfurt o algo así»”, the idea of distance in a diasporic context depends more on the density of social relationships than on physical distance (González Fernández 80). Therefore, the network of Galician mutual aid associations in America –especially those in Havana, Buenos Aires and Montevideo– caused a notable repercussion on the sociopolitical dynamics of the original territory while becoming a model of social organization in the diaspora (“Galician Immigrant Societies in Cuba” 706).

On the eve of the Spanish Civil War, Havana was the second largest community of Galicians in the world, only behind Buenos Aires. By the end of the colonial period, the Galician community in Cuba was already organized through associations, choral societies and several weekly newspapers run by regionalist intellectuals. Galician immigrants there worked primarily on the tobacco industry, alcohol distilleries or small-scale commerce and, with the turn of century, Galician presence in Cuba continued to

thrive and, for this, the isle turned into a center of Galician politics and culture (“Galician Immigrant Societies in Cuba” 707-10).

II.1. 3. Galician Exile in 1936

As was previously mentioned, the trauma and the severe impact of the war is quite noticeable in the number of Galicians that were forced to leave in order to escape from physical punishments, imprisonments, persecutions and even executions (Fernández 171-79).

Since it had been a welcoming place for Galicians for centuries, the continent across the Atlantic Ocean quickly turned into the natural end of Galician exile, into a sort of “promised land” (Núñez, “Cuban Itineraries” 129). Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Uruguay or the United States were some of the preferred countries. However, these places were not direct destinations of this exile: those who felt threatened by the Francoist Regime usually began their escape by hiding in the mountains or in small towns in Portugal, moving to other Spanish regions or crossing the border to France. The journey to America usually came later and, from there, many people could never return (Fernández 171-84).

Despite the “relative invisibility” of the Galician exile due to the unclear boundaries between the Galician exile and the Galician participation in the Spanish Republican exile, Núñez and Farías (114-20) manage to establish some distinctive characteristics of the Galician journey. They highlight that Galician exiles lacked combat experience and tended to flee to America showing a lesser tendency to remain in Europe. Also that these exiles relied heavily on migrant associations for resources and support and that, while their distinct institutional presence was notable through the 1940s, it practically disappeared by the 1970s.

Focusing now on the Galician exile to Cuba, as has already been introduced, in contrast with the large number of Spanish and Galician exiles that sought refuge in Mexico or Argentina, only a small number went to the Caribbean isle (“Galician Immigrant Societies in Cuba” 707-10). According to Cagiao and Pérez (132), the number of Galician exiles in Cuba represents around a 14% of the total of those who headed to Latin American countries.

II.1. 4. Galician Migrant and Exiled Women

As a general rule, when studying migrations, women have been treated by traditional historiography as passive subjects with no direct implication in the historical processes and it has been only since the 1970s when studies of migration from a gender perspective have been gaining importance. Although it is true that until the nineteenth century Galician diaspora was predominantly undertaken by men, the period of transatlantic mass migrations that began in the last decades of the century led to an increase in the number of migrant women that by 1930s was 40% of the total of Galician migrants (García-Rodeja and Pérez 427). Galician women during this period chose the same American destinations as male migrants. In the case of Cuba, the incorporation of women to the migratory process came later than in other recipient countries and it was only after the end of the colonial situation that a growing presence of Galician women appeared in the registers.

Once they decided to migrate, Galician women that arrived in Cuba –or in any other American destination– underwent an arduous process that often turned even more delicate as a consequence of their womanhood. This troublesome experience included encountering sexual harassment on numerous occasions, starting from the moment of the departure to America, as well as the usual difficulties in adapting to a new country and finding employment. Among the jobs that Galician women typically performed, we find irregular jobs that were part of the informal economy. Furthermore, prostitution and indigence are also two aspects that must not be forgotten when asserting the destinies of Galician migrant women since these situations have been closely associated with female migration (Cagiao, “A muller galega na emigración” 78-86). With the aim of protecting women from the difficulties that came with migration, numerous migrant women created a network of associations in the receiving countries such as *Hijas de Galicia*, based in Cuba (Núñez, “Galician Immigrant Societies in Cuba” 712).

The years leading up to the uprising, from 1931 until 1936, were years of significant and relevant achievements in the field of women’s rights. However, after the success of the uprising, the tables turned and a new moral was imposed on the Spanish society. All the rights gained in previous years were eliminated and, with the new legal order, traditional roles returned. This new ideal of woman imposed by the insurgents is perfectly depicted in a compilation of rules for the women of the Falange published in 1937. These guidelines emphasized aspects such as selflessness, sacrifice, devotion to the husband or the care of body and soul for God and the Falange (Marco 46-47).

Nevertheless, women did not simply suffer from having to adapt to this new morality imposed after the triumph of the uprising. All those women who had been committed or involved in some way with the values represented by the Republic were surveilled, murdered, tortured, raped, or, among many other things, exiled. For years, these women were silenced and suffered of double repression: for their opposition to the Regime and for their womanhood. Besides, this double condition also extended to the experience of exile since women suffered what Avila (2) refers to as “an exile within the exile”: apart from suffering political displacement, exiled women were also displaced in a male-dominated world where they were silenced and only allowed to occupy a marginal position. Moreover, besides not having the same guarantees, rights or opportunities as men, exiled women rarely had the necessary means to survive in exile on their own.

Thus, we can say that gender played a very important role in the female experience of exile even from the moment of reaching the French border because, as Martínez mentions (372), the reception policy implemented by the government there implied that men and women were separated at border controls and did not receive the same treatment. Furthermore, despite the fact that all exiled women suffered of this double exile, the majority of women that reached exile did not do it for their own political responsibilities but for those of their fathers, husbands or sons (Martínez Martínez 372). However, those militant women who needed to exile for their own political activities were considered by the insurgents doubly subversive. These women challenged both the social order that the insurgents sought to establish and the gender roles the Francoists so firmly defended. Additionally, it is interesting to mention that, on numerous occasions, these militant women performed tasks that traditionally are considered masculine –such as espionage, participation in the war and political activism–, therefore requiring them to renounce to their womanhood (Avila 5-9).

II.2. Rosa Aneiros and the Memory Novel

Rosa Aneiros, since the publication of her first novel –*Eu de maior quero ser*– in 1999, has become a writer with a solid position within the Galician literary scene. She has garnered significant awards that serve to attest her successful career as novelist, including the Xerais Prize for *Sol de Inverno*, published in 2009 (Xerais).

This author shows a special inclination to create fictional worlds within a historical reality with precise temporal and spatial locations that shape together some

imaginative narratives where the boundaries between fiction, history, and autobiography blur away. Rosa Aneiros' novelistic production explores issues like the repression and oppression of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal (*Resistencia*), the ecological disaster of the Prestige in Costa da Morte (*Veú visitarme o mar*) or, in *Sol de Inverno*, the Republican and Galician exile that began with the military uprising of 1936 and the subsequent Civil War. This type of novels, where authors take on the responsibility of revising their country's recent past through literature, are known as memory novels and they have progressively gained importance in Galician literature, especially since the 1990s (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 204).

According to Rivadulla Costa ("Gallegas en La Habana" 204-06), Rosa Aneiros belongs to a corpus referred to as Galician narrative by female authors, closely related to the boom of the memory novel in Galician narrative fiction. The event of recovering the historical memory of Galicia through literature set in the Second Republic, the Civil War, exile or Franco's dictatorship was anticipated by some writers that belonged to the generation of the "children of the war" but finally emerged with the generation known as the "grandchildren of the war" –writers born from the 1950s onwards. Nonetheless, despite the popularity of memory novels, among the list of Galician writers ascribed to this type of narrative, we find a very limited presence of women until the turn of the century.

Ledicia Costas, Inma López Silva, Eva Mejuto and Rosa Aneiros are among the names that emerge in this period and they distinguish themselves from their predecessors by integrating social responsibility into their literary practice, not only through the recovery of historical memory but also by incorporating a gender perspective into their novels (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 206). These contemporary authors, born around the mid-1970s, were not present at the time of the events they write about and, therefore, they approach historical reality as mere mediators: by drawing from indirect memories transmitted intergenerationally as well as from complex documentation processes, this is what Gómez López-Quñones denominated "borrowed memory" (114).

As a matter of fact, with the proliferation of memory narratives by female authors in the early 2000s we witness a change in the general paradigm of Galician fiction on emigration. Until this point, male characters predominated in the novels, and female characters were uncommon and usually appeared as eccentric characters stereotyped within the roles of prostitutes, lovers or wives (Vilavedra 2-4). However,

the emergence of this generation of female Galician narrative authors has coincided with an increase in the number of female characters and women protagonists in novels, as well as the adoption of a female perspective in the narratives.

II.3. *Sol de Inverno* as a Feminine, Galician and Transnational Memory Novel

In 2009, Rosa Aneiros published *Sol de Inverno* and, as Rivadulla accurately states (“Gallegas en La Habana” 210), *Sol de Inverno* is the perfect blend of reality and fiction, a combination so plausible that it raises in the reader the question of whether the former serves the latter or vice versa.

Sol de Inverno tells the story of Inverno, a young girl from a Republican family that lives in a small coastal town in Galicia called Antes. Her father is the mayor of the town and, with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936, the whole family is forced to flee Galicia. Throughout the eight major sections of this novel, we accompany our protagonist to various places around the world starting with Barcelona, where the family arrives after escaping by sea from Antes. The journey continues through France and then to Cuba via the boat Ipanema, where the protagonist will experience an exile that seems to never end before being able to return to Antes. Each of these sections features not only a different temporal and spatial setting, but also its own cast of characters – both fictional and real– that accompany the main characters. Consequently, this structure makes each section almost independent from the others (Rivadulla, “Gallegas en La Habana” 214).

For Inverno, leaving the small coastal town of Antes signifies a farewell to her childhood and, from the very moment of the departure, Inverno begins to idealize the village, yearning for it and maintaining a desire to return all throughout her long exile. For her, this village remains always in the past, it is the place where she comes from but not a place to be. Forced into exile for most of her life, she finally returns only to find herself lost to Alzheimer's.

An aspect that provides this narrative with some originality is the fact that the narrator is Inverno addressing her own self in a long monologue that shapes this narrative and that is part of a process of the protagonist of recollecting her own memories. In the first chapter, which serves as a prologue to Inverno's narrative journey, she urges herself to remember, to recall everything she has lived as she believes that this is the only way she can live "unha vida que é túa e morre no río do esquecemento que te leva" (Aneiros 504). Thus, from the enunciative standpoint, Aneiros presents a second

person narrator with scarce direct dialogues that, only on rare occasions, gives the floor to other characters: her great-grandmother Luzdivina and the Republican Carmen Muñoz.

As was previously mentioned, if we were to classify this novel, we should first identify it within the subgenre of historical fiction and as a memory novel. The narration of events in the past, the plausibility of the characters and the narration and the novel's loyalty to the real history of Galicia allows us to categorize this literary work as historical (Rivadulla, "O 'real histórico' ao servizo da ficción" 130). Moreover, it is a memory novel, as it is a committed literary piece that seeks to give voice to some specific characters in a specific moment thereby recovering Galicia's historical memory.

Of course, for this type of novel, establishing the documentary framework for creating historical fiction is crucial. In the case of *Sol de Inverno*, we know from the novel's dedication that Aneiros drew information from Silvia Mistral's diary –*Exodo. Diario de una refugiada española* (Exodus. Diary of a Spanish Refugee)– and from the memories of the exile of people such as María Teresa León and Elixio Rodríguez but also from "the stories of Cuba" of her godfather, the memory of emigration transmitted to her orally when she was a child.

Continuing with the classification of the novel, we can describe *Sol de Inverno* as a feminine novel, as novel of women where, from the very beginning, the author consciously places the focus on female characters. Throughout the five hundred pages of this novel, "a genealogy of singular women" (Vilavedra 3) develops in order to reconstruct Galician history from a feminine perspective. Venturing into the realm of the memory of the Civil War, Francoist repression and exile is a complex task due to the fact that reality consists of many stories rather than a single, universal one. For this, all the women that appear throughout this novel are like pieces of a puzzle that fit together allowing the author to bring to the present small glimpses of what happened in the past. Therefore, Inverno's personal story in *Sol de Inverno* serves to reconstruct the collective history through all the women who accompany her in her life and, for this, on numerous occasions throughout the narrative, we see the protagonist move to a secondary position, taking on a testimonial role that makes way for the stories of other characters (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 210).

Sol de Inverno apart from being a deeply feminine memory novel, encompasses historical episodes and experiences in various countries on both sides of the Atlantic and, therefore, it might also be classified as a transnational novel. However, it is

essential to emphasize that despite the transnational nature of this narrative, *Sol de Inverno* remains intrinsically Galician. Beyond the protagonist's origins in a small village in Galicia, Galicians are depicted throughout all stages of Inverno's exile, whether through real characters—such as Castelao or Rafael Dieste—or through fictional ones (Rivadulla, “Gallegas en La Habana” 213-14).

II.4. Women in *Sol de Inverno*

Sol de Inverno is a novel in which women undeniably hold a central position. This is not only because the entire narrative is presented from the female perspective of the protagonist Inverno, but also because of all the women that appear in the narrative accompanying her on her journey and integrating their stories into Inverno's story.

The centrality of women in *Sol de Inverno* stems from the author's attempt to place women as the agents of memory in this novel. With this Aneiros aims to provide an alternative to the mythologized version of the Spanish Republican exile as a hegemonic memory of militancy, conflict, pain and masculine heroism. In doing so, she seeks to put an end to the oblivion that has long shrouded the female version of history.

The massive exile following the Spanish Civil War in 1936 caused a deep rupture in established norms, profoundly affecting gender roles, ideals of femininity and masculinity and conceptions of sexuality. While the three pivotal patriarchal roles defining women in relation to men –wife, mother, and daughter (Boguszewicz 6)– continued to govern Spanish society during Franco's Regime, it is intriguing to analyze how, in the face of exile, these roles either persisted or diversified when viewed from the historical female perspective provided in *Sol de Inverno*.

II.4.1. Women in Antes

During the opening chapters of our journey with Inverno, we learn about her childhood and early teenage years in Antes. As we delve into her life in Galicia, we encounter three women who deserve to be paid some attention, the three of them are victims of the society in which they live and in them, the intersection between gender and social class is particularly notable.

Beginning with Carla, a young woman who works as a teacher in the school of Antes and who comes from a family of very low resources. She suffers heavily due to Mr. Anselmo, a very influential old man that shares a lot power over Carla's family

since he is the owner of the wolframite mine where her brothers work. This man becomes infatuated with her and, since Carla's family lacks the necessary resources to protect her from the clutches of this local leader, he eventually takes her as a servant into his household and, from this moment on, sexual abuse and rape will become the routine for this woman. Ultimately, Mr. Anselmo's wife manages to release Carla from the household, yet the brutality and trauma of the experience will forever remain in the young woman's memory.

Another woman that leaves a profound impression on Inverno's memory is Carmela, the mother of the protagonist's first love Fiz. Aneiros portrays this woman with a passive or defeatist attitude, describing her as someone who couldn't look at people directly but instead gazed out to sea as if waiting for someone. In the eyes of the community, she is a single mother who suffers greatly the death of her son specially knowing that she cannot seek vengeance due to the power that those who are covering up the murder hold in the community. When the narrative progresses, we learn that Carmela looks out to sea hoping for the father of her son to return and rescue her from Antes. However, before being able to taste freedom, she dies from a gunshot.

Finally, Laura is the other female character that contributes in some way to shape Inverno's identity. Inverno understands that this innocent-looking girl with a fearful expression and her leg filled with metal will never be able to leave Antes, which perhaps is the reason that leads her to send Laura letters even when it has been years since the last response. Laura is for Inverno an invisible thread that connects her to the distant homeland.

Even before the outbreak of the war, these three women suffered the consequences of living in a village where control and surveillance, the limited job opportunities, the continuous abuse of power by the dominant classes and the sharply defined gender roles made daily life exceedingly challenging.

II. 4. 2. Resistance in Barcelona: Mercé and Silvia

The experience of Inverno and her family in Barcelona is marked by the interesting bond they establish with Mercé and Silvia, a grandmother and her granddaughter who live in the same building in which the Inverno's family settles.

Silvia is an eleven-year-old girl who falls victim to the Italian bombings. Before dying, she reveals her great secret: her parents are on the side of the insurgents and they are at the front fighting against the Republic. We also learn that throughout Inverno's

stay in Barcelona, Silvia has been acting as a spy, sending information to the Francoists using a carrier pigeon.

Mercé is an elderly woman, a convinced socialist who endures in a Barcelona ravaged by bombings. Through this character, Aneiros demonstrates the contradictions that tend to accompany human nature, in such a way, she presents this woman as a socialist who prays –“Mercé e mamá imploraban a Deus e papá aos británicos” (Aneiros 129)–, thus preferring to rely on God to silence the air raid sirens rather than on human capability. This woman, who at first seems to perfectly fulfill the role self-sacrificed and altruistic woman that is always at the service of others, ends up taking her personal revenge against the Francoists when, after the death of her granddaughter, she cooks the pigeons that Silvia used to communicate with the front.

Through these two women, *Sol de Inverno* perfectly exemplifies the complexity of a civil war and its enormous consequences on personal relationships. We see in this grandmother and her granddaughter how the polarization of society can affect even those who share blood.

II. 4. 3. The Escape to France: Isabel and Elvira

In early 1939, when Inverno turns sixteen, her family decides to leave Barcelona and to cross the border into France. As previously mentioned, the arrival in France was always marked by a reception policy determined by gender: men and women were separated at border controls and taken to different concentration camps and shelters where they were treated differently and assigned different tasks. Furthermore, according to Martínez Martínez (372), most women who went into French exile did so not due to their own political responsibilities but because of their traditional roles as wives, daughters, and mothers. This is also the case for Inverno, her mother and her sister, the three of them must exile due to their father and husband's involvement with the Republic.

Considering the significant influence of gender in the French female experience of exile, Inverno's personal account of this period serves to fill the historical gap regarding women's experiences in this exile. In late 1930s France, many women of different ages, social status, backgrounds, origins, cultures and political ideologies shared this complex experience in which they had to overcome numerous challenges far from their homes and families.

This time in which Inverno remembers that “case todas erades mulleres. Solteiras, viúvas, casadas sen home, nais, nenas” (Aneiros 208) favoured an empathy

and a collective sensitivity that made the connections and solidarity networks created between these women very special.

Through Inverno's experience in France, we see how the ways in which these women faced the loss of the war, the beginning of exile and the great suffering that this all implied varied greatly. On the one hand, we encounter Isabel, a communist from Andalusia who crosses the border with her five-year-old twins. "A valente e turrona Isabel" (Aneiros 225) becomes a sort of spokesperson for this group of Spanish women, she is willing to do whatever it takes to provide to her children. Conversely, in stark contrast to Isabel, we find Elvira, a woman who, after being notified of the death of her husband and children, is unable to overcome the loss and cannot move past the memory of the war. Elvira ultimately commits suicide by jumping from a Protestant church, her final act of defiance, as she is unwilling to give the Catholic Church the satisfaction of taking her life.

II. 4. 4. The Ipanema and Carmen

The following chapter of Inverno's life unfolds aboard the Ipanema, the ship where her sister, her mother and herself finally cross the Atlantic Ocean heading to Cuba and leaving behind some troublesome months in France. Among the hundreds of passengers on the ship the figure of Carmen emerges. She is a Republican activist woman who awakes great admiration in Inverno, not only for her "fortaleza inexpugnable que facía que o paso naqueles tacóns fose tan firme coma o chan que pisaba" (Aneiros 281), but also for the emotional support and the complicity that this relationship provided the protagonist with.

During their long conversations aboard the Ipanema, Inverno transfers the role of the narrator to Carmen, who embarks on some prolonged monologues. Through these monologues, Carmen revisits the moment when these two women first met years before in Galicia, when Carmen traveled to Antes as part of the "Misiones Pedagógicas" (Pedagogical Missions) aimed at improving literacy and education among the most underprivileged sectors of the Spanish population (Gimeno Perelló 166). Thus, in opposition to the uncertainty awaiting them on the shore and while they are entrapped in an almost exclusively male-dominated context (Martínez Martínez 381), Carmen and Inverno forge a strong bond while nostalgically recalling the ambitious cultural and educational project of the unavailing Spanish Republic.

Through the presence of Carmen Muñoz Manzano in *Sol de Inverno*, the author constructs a counter-hegemonic narrative that overturns the historical injustice that many women faced by having their roles relegated to the background due to the prominence of their husbands, in this case the Galician writer Rafael Dieste. Muñoz Manzano, besides being a teacher and participating in the Pedagogical Missions, stood out for her defense of the Second Republic during the war and in the exile. As noted by Rivadulla (“Gallegas en La Habana” 222-23), Aneiros' vindication through Carmen involves giving a secondary role to her husband by referring to him with a pseudonym that he occasionally used, while using Carmen's real name, and also by giving her the narrative voice so she can recount the exile experience from her own perspective.

II. 4. 5. Women in Havana

With the arrival of our protagonist in Latin America, we witness a warm welcome where the disdain of the French authorities is replaced by the open arms of the American people. The arrival in Havana marks the beginning of *Sol de Inverno's* Cuban chapter, a phase in which Inverno grows into adulthood and where Aneiros meticulously recovers the collective memory of Galician emigration in Cuba (“Gallegas en La Habana” 218-19). Inverno's experience in Cuba is intertwined with the discovery of her family's fascinating history.

Concerning the women who accompany Inverno during her Cuban phase, the female members of her family hold significant importance: her sister Rebeca, her mother Felicia, her grandmothers Lola and Mercedes, and Luzdivina.

The arrival in Cuba marks a significant transformation for Inverno's mother, as Felicia had fled Cuba in the 1920s, leaving her family behind and driven solely by her love for Alfredo, Inverno's father. From the moment she left the island in search of a future with Alfredo, Felicia assumed the patriarchal role of a traditional wife and, during the Civil War and the subsequent exile, this role evolved into that of the “widow of the living” (Rivadulla, “Gallegas en La Habana” 224). This term describes those women whose identity is based on the prolonged absence of their husbands, who are away for so many years that their return becomes uncertain.

Throughout the novel, we witness how Felicia endures the lifelong consequences of her husband's strong moral and political convictions responding with pure sacrifice and resignation, despite often feeling fear, desolation, or even danger due to Alfredo's beliefs. As readers, we observe how “mamá esmorecía pouco a pouco” (Aneiros 210) in

Alfredo's absence, constantly wondering if her love would ever return. During the time of the exile in Barcelona and in Francia Felicia lost her purpose in life, she neither wanted to hear about the past nor had the desire to settle anywhere, but everything changed upon the arrival of the family in Cuba. "Mamá sentiu que facía algo pola familia. Que era ela quen nos salvaba" (Aneiros 289), as her citizenship status allowed the family to disembark and enter the country without further complications. While it is common for traditional roles to be reversed in situations where the father is absent, with mothers assuming the role of head of the family (Martínez Martínez 387), the arrival in Havana represented a rebirth for Felicia.

Rebeca, Inverno's sister, is another female character who undergoes a significant transformation in Cuba. She arrives on the island as a child and there she grows up into an adult. She can be defined as a "child of the war" because, although she manages to live a relaxed life in the Cuban exile, the horrors of the Spanish Civil War never leave her memory just as she never manages to rid her feet of the sands of the beaches of the French exile. Rebeca enters the conservative model of womanhood by marrying Rafael, thereby aligning herself with the societal norms of the time.

Continuing with the Cuban experience in *Sol de Inverno*, two important female figures in this part of the novel are Inverno's grandmothers Lola and Mercedes. These two characters are complete opposites and they serve Aneiros to reflect a significant aspect of the reality of female migration in Cuba. We learn from Luzdivina's monologues, that Lola –Felicia's mother– was a woman of humble origin who, like many other young women, migrated to Cuba in search of a better life and that, instead, ended up being forced into prostitution. Eventually, Lola managed to catch the interest of one of her clients, a gentleman who wanted to marry her, providing her with a way out from that terrible world. This man was Ezequielito, Luzdivina's son. Once married, Lola began to cut all ties with her place of origin, not only forgetting all about her origins but also renouncing them and adopting an arrogant attitude. In contrast, Mercedes, Alfredo's mother, is a woman originally from Antes who settled in Havana, where she now works as a journalist. Mercedes is committed to women's rights and strives daily to denounce and to help with the harsh circumstances that women like Lola lived when arriving in the isle (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 218-24).

Therefore, through these two women, Aneiros elaborates a parallelism on a duality that can be observed throughout the novel through the figures of Felicia and Alfredo. This duality contrasts those who renounce political activism and adopt a

completely passive attitude towards it with those who represent a strong and unwavering commitment to democratic ideals (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 224).

To put an end to this Cuban experience, we have to pay attention to Luzdivina. She is Inverno's great-grandmother and the woman that Inverno spends hours listening to as they visit together the grave of Luzdivina's late husband.

Inverno's great-grandmother, a black woman descended from African slaves who married a Galician emigrant in Cuba, is the second and last person that is granted the role of the narrator in *Sol de Inverno*. Through this woman's monologues, the reader is introduced to numerous episodes from Cuba's history, as well as to important information about Inverno's own family. Inverno turns to Luzdivina out of the discontent she feels while living in Villa Estrella, a place where she feels she does not belong at all. Luzdivina is special to her because, through her monologues, Inverno is able to deeply connect with the history of her family.

Luzdivina's importance in *Sol de Inverno* relies on the fact that she is a transatlantic woman who carries within her the cognitive burden of being a descendant of African slaves while also bearing the collective memory of centuries of history. Luzdivina's death, as she suffers from Alzheimer's, greatly contributes to the construction of Inverno's identity since it transforms our protagonist into the heiress and bearer of Luzdivina's ancestral memory. Thus, we can say that Luzdivina's death symbolizes the importance of memory keepers and the need to transmit our legacy so that death does not wipe out everything (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 219).

II. 4. 5. Inverno's Return

After Luzdivina's death, the first phase of Inverno's Cuban experience comes to an end. Our protagonist leaves Latin America and travels to Paris to fulfill her father's last wish: to witness the student uprisings of 1968. After a whole life with an enduring inner flame that kept him engaged in political action, Inverno's father finally dies during this journey. Following her father's death, the protagonist wanders the streets of Paris. It is in this moment when she realizes that she is beginning to lose her memory; she has Alzheimer's. Faced with the fear of completely losing her memory, and thus losing herself, Inverno decides to return to the beginning: to Antes.

The return to her place of origin is a return to the past. At a certain point in the exile, Inverno thought that maybe she could never go back to this town –“Aí, cando

fuches consciente de que talvez nunca poderías volver a Antes” (Aneiros 186)– but, in the end, it is in this exact place where the protagonist begins to recall her entire history. According to Rivadulla, the conception of a character returning to their place of origin and beginning to remember is a recurring motif in various works that serves as an intradiegetic narrative mechanism (Rivadulla, "Gallegas en La Habana" 208).

Certainly, the greatest challenge faced by our protagonist has nothing to do with the Civil War, the exile, or her family. Inverno’s main struggle is one shared by many women: the problem of not belonging. Inverno was stripped of all she was in Antes when she was just beginning to become something, in the early stages of adolescence. Therefore, her greatest challenge in the novel is defining her own identity and self. This is where the importance of all the women who accompany her on her journey comes into play: each one of them leaves a fragment of their story with the protagonist participating in the construction of her identity.

Moreover, located in the liminal space that prevents her from fitting into any of the traditional categories of womanhood, Inverno manages to redefine the concept of romantic love. After the death of her first love, Fiz, and with the immense suffering of this loss, Inverno embarks on a relationship with Tomás, a young man that lives in Havana. Inverno’s perception of this new relationship strongly breaks with social norms and with the notion of romantic love. The relationship between Tomás and Inverno is one of security, ease and tranquility; a love that supports and accompanies and a love that not for being less passionate, is less real.

Ultimately, Inverno discovers the purpose of her existence through Luzdivina, who passes onto her the mantle of being the bearer of the secular memory of Cuba and of her own family. These memories, combined with those of the different women who have left an imprint on Inverno’s life, lead the protagonist to her ultimate goal of preserving the collective memory. Thus, the novel’s circular structure, beginning and ending in the same place and with the same words, underscores the importance of remembering not only the stories of those we encounter throughout our lives, but also our own process of construction of our identity.

III. *ON CANAAN'S SIDE*

III.1. Social, Political and Historical Context of Ireland

III.1.1. Irish War of Independence and Civil War

Ireland's history is marked by a series of tumultuous political, cultural, social and religious events; many of them related to famines, migrations and, of course, to political issues stemming from the English colonial rule.

The association between Ireland and England began in 1172 when the Pope appointed King Henry II of England feudal lord of Ireland and English rule was solidified in 1542 when Henry VIII became king of Ireland, integrating it into the United Kingdom. However, with the English Reformation, Protestantism quickly established in England, but it did not spread as rapidly in Ireland, leaving a largely Catholic majority in Ireland under English Protestant rule. In the light of this events Irish people developed a complex identity, blending English and Gaelic influences, with a strong Catholic conviction and a deep connection to the land. Despite a failed rebellion in 1789 and the devastating Great Famine of 1845, which significantly heightened tensions between Catholics and Protestant landowners, the Irish Catholic majority's desire for independence and Home Rule intensified, while Ulster's Protestants remained loyal to the UK (Tanriöveri 10)

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the debate on this matter was prevalent and both sides had begun to form groups of armed fighters to protect their interests. In Ulster an illegal paramilitary army, the Ulster Volunteers Force (UVF), was formed in 1912 with the aim of blocking the implementation of an Irish Home Rule parliament and, as a response to the rapid growth of the UVF, a militia group of Catholic nationalists was formed in the south, the Irish Volunteer Force (IVF). The escalation of the conflict between these two groups seemed unstoppable but the outburst of the First World War postponed the Irish conflict (Grob-Fitzgibbon 2).

Easter Monday of April 1916, amidst the chaos in Europe caused by the War, some members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood –an Irish Nationalist society that existed since 1858–, supported by armed members of the Irish Volunteers, seized several public buildings in Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic. The British government responded with a large deployment of forces and the rising ended six days later, as Grob-Fitzgibbon describes (2), “with Dublin in flames and under martial law, 450 people dead and 1836 interned”.

Although the Easter Rising can be regarded as a complete failure, the heavy-handed British response contributed to a growing feeling of resentment in many Irish people. This resentment was materialized in the Sinn Féin, a political party that unified and whose members, instead of taking their seats in the British Parliament proclaimed the Irish “Free State”. This action was not recognized by the British government but, it served to assure that despite England's opposition, Ireland was moving towards independence and self-governance (Grob-Fitzgibbon 3).

With the First World War coming to an end, protests and riots were happening in Ireland against British power and, in 1919, a violent guerilla war began, this war is now known as the Irish War of Independence. By early 1920, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) –a reconstruction of the Irish Volunteers– had control over the south and west of Ireland but the British government responded firmly with the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), the armed police that was in charge of keeping order across Ireland, and by sending the RIC Special Branch, a unit formed mainly of British World War veterans sent to support the RIC. For the colors of their uniforms, the RIC and the Special Branch began to be referred to as “Black and Tans”. This group gained a reputation for the use of extreme violence, in occasions even with civilian population, and it turned into one of the most feared and hated organizations in Ireland (Grob-Fitzgibbon 7-8). For this, the IRA intensified its campaign against the Black and Tans not only through attacks and ambushes but also stealing their properties, threatening their families and encouraging IRA supporters to boycott them (Leeson 9-10).

The war lasted until 1921, when it became apparent for the British government that, despite Irish guerillas would never be able to defeat British forces, the conflict within Irish society would not cease until autonomy was granted. Therefore, in December 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed and, with it, Ireland was divided between the six counties of Ulster that continued to be part of the United Kingdom and the remaining 26 counties that became part of the Republic of Ireland (Grob-Fitzgibbon 3). However, this agreement did not put an end to violence since a dispute over the terms of the negotiation gave way to a more violent and bloody stage of Irish history.

Following the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, members and supporters of the IRA were divided in Pro-Treaty or Anti-Treaty. At this point, war in Ireland was once again inevitable. In April 1922, a group of Anti-Treaty IRA men occupied the Four Courts as part of a strategy to provoke both the British and the provisional

government (Gaucher 330-32). This event led to the beginning of the Irish Civil War, a fratricidal conflict that would only further divide and devastate the country.

Unfolding from the events in the Four Courts of Dublin, according to Clark (79), the Irish Civil War can be divided into two key phases: “conventional-military encounters, June-September 1922, and guerrilla violence, September 1922-May 1923”. In the face of the Anti-Treaty IRA escalating guerrilla warfare, the provisional government of the Irish Free State decided to strengthen measures to curb Republicans and, for this, many members of the IRA were imprisoned and executed in reprisal for the previous killings of Pro-Treaty members. The executions continued into 1923 until May 24 when, with no formal surrender nor peace treaty, the Anti-Treaty IRA units unloaded their arms putting an end to the War (Irish Civil War).

The Irish Civil War left in Ireland a legacy of bitterness which was to pervade for decades in the country and that led to some sporadic violence since the Anti-Treaty people continued to see the Irish Free State as a British weapon to maintain power over Ireland. The IRA only officially renounced attacks in 1948 with the creation of the Republic of Ireland but, the issue of the six counties of Ulster remained a problem for Ireland and the United Kingdom (Irish Civil War).

III.1.2. Irish Diaspora and Exile

Undeniably, migration is a defining feature of Irish identity. Evidence of this can be found in the abundance of stories about emigrants, refugees, and expatriates that exist in Irish literature, as O’Brien notes: “It seems only a slight exaggeration to say that without exile there would be no contemporary Irish Fiction” (35).

Irish migratory movements began around 1800 when approximately one million Irish people migrated to North America, Britain or Australia. However, it was with the advent of the Great Famine (1845-1850) that Irish emigration rates drastically increased turning these migratory movements into a massive exodus (Delaney 209). Between the Great Famine and the 1950s, more than six million people migrated from Ireland, making this a unique diaspora in the world (Carregal 129), especially considering how elevated these numbers were if compared to Ireland's total population.

According to Díaz Morillo (95), various historians such as Cormac Ó’Grada and Jeremy S. Donnelly acknowledge that this great crisis in Ireland was a result of Ireland's colonial status since British institutions did nothing to mitigate the crisis or to assist the population, leaving Ireland to its own destiny. Consequently, the Great Famine not only

completely transformed the social structure of Ireland and of those countries that received Irish emigrants, but also triggered a chain reaction that affected both Irish character and population and the global economic system.

Apart from the Great Irish Famine, other causes behind Irish migratory movements included the unstable and predominantly rural economy, the political and religious conflicts that divided the country, the strict religious moral imposed on society and the traditional family structure that could result suffocating (Featherson 140). Therefore, when analyzing the causes of Irish migratory flows, we must consider the cultural, religious and political complexity of the country but, we should not forget that the key to understanding migratory waves lies on chain migration. This type of migration used remittances to fund new waves of migration and facilitated greatly the arrival and adaptation of new migrants in the receiving countries (Díaz Morillo 96).

Continuing with the profile of the Irish migrant, Delaney states that "for the most part the Irish migrant, male or female, was young, single and unskilled and probably from the west, south-west or north-west of Ireland" (219-20). Díaz Morillo adds that most emigrants were Catholic, although Protestants also emigrated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and notes that Irish migrants, in comparison to other European migrants, were less likely to return to their homeland. Additionally, Díaz Morillo highlights that Irish migration is characterized by the fact that there were significantly more Irish migrant women than men (109).

Given the complex political and social situation of Ireland in the twentieth century, the line that separates exile and migration can become opaque and challenging to define. Therefore, we distinguish between those who voluntarily leave aiming at creating a life elsewhere (migrants) and those who are forced to leave their homeland due to some specific circumstances that also affect their prospects of returning (exiles).

Bearing in mind the migratory trends since the early nineteenth century, the USA turned into the favorite destination for Irish migrants. After the War of Independence, the Irish Free State began to cultivate a protectionist national policy based on pointing the population, and specially women, towards a self-sacrificing attitude and, therefore, in contrast to this oppressive Irish context, the USA began to be regarded by Irish people as a land of opportunities and freedom. However, this conception of America as a liberatory land contrasted with the real experience overseas since, due to the presence of a network of family and friends in the diaspora, the strict

morals and social codes of Ireland were transferred to America (Barros-Del Río and Gómez Cuesta 85).

Clearly, the political and social instability characteristic of Ireland throughout the twentieth century also had a significant impact on migratory flows. During the War of Independence, the hostility resulting from the land reform and the nationalist struggle increased, leading the IRA to adopt a counter-offensive strategy against the British forces' burning of Republican houses (Bielenberg 206). Both sides began targeting each other and this period turned particularly challenging for minorities. The IRA started issuing expulsion orders to anyone suspected of passing information to the opposition forces, initiating an exodus of Protestants from the south, which coincided with the beginning of an exodus of Catholics from the north (210-11).

III.1.3. Irish Migrant and Exiled Women

As previously mentioned, one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Irish diaspora is the high rate of female migrants, which surpasses that of other European countries. In the early nineteenth century, men constituted the majority of Irish migrants but this trend shifted in the years following the Great Famine. Around 1850, data show that there was a gender balance in the Irish diaspora, resulting from an increase in female emigration due to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in rural Ireland. This upward trend continued, and by the end of the century, the rate of female migrants exceeded that of males: in 1900 women accounted for 53.8% of Irish migrants (Díaz Morillo 97-98). Consequently, some scholars speak of a defeminization of rural Ireland and, conversely, of a feminization of the Irish diaspora.

Among the preferred destinations of Irish women, we find similarities with those favored by their male counterparts: the USA and Britain (Barros-Del Río 83). Additionally, regarding the type of employment that Irish female migrants engaged in, they were generally employed as housemaids –in 1900, about 60% of Irish women in the United States worked in this sector. Migrant women were the ones who contributed the most to chain migration, particularly in the case of siblings and aunts. Once in the receiving countries, they typically had to share rooms with other female migrants (Díaz Morillo 104) and, once they were married, they continued to work. Additionally, we must not overlook the unfortunate reality that many women faced in the diaspora since many Irish women ended up being forced into prostitution (Díaz Morillo 104).

Continuing with the causes that led Irish women to leave their homeland, we must focus on the situation of women in Ireland. Nineteenth-century Irish society was a Catholic, patriarchal and predominantly rural society, where women could not own land due to the fact that it was inherited solely by the eldest son. Faced with this situation, young Irish women had limited options: stay and work without pay for their families or their husbands' families, join a religious order, or cross the Atlantic in search of a job that could offer them a different future (Díaz Morillo 98).

Taking into account that “nations construct their identity around fixed concepts of gender” (Ingman 3), we can assert that the newly independent Irish Free State had a huge impact on shaping Irish womanhood. State's policy regarding women promoted that woman's proper place was at home and, therefore, even after gaining independence from the colonial rule, Irish women continued to be silenced and pushed aside in social, economic and political spheres (Tanriöveri 18). Clearly, the ethos of the new Irish Free State contrasted with the new ordering of Irish women's priorities after the Independence War. In the eyes of the government, women's migration was considered to be a threat to women's purity as well as to their national and religious identities (Carregal-Romero 130).

Of course, we cannot overlook the fact that women, regardless of the side of the conflict they belong to, are especially vulnerable in times of violent confrontation since men often benefit from a climate of impunity that allows them to cross moral boundaries. Moreover, despite Revolutionary Ireland not being a safe place for Irish women, the domestic environment resulted to be closely associated with personal safety, even more than direct participation in the conflict (Clark 75-76).

III.2. Sebastian Barry's Post-Colonial and Feminist Writing

By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a notable pattern appeared in Irish literature: a growing number of writers were publishing novels addressing exile and diaspora. Contemporary authors began to look back into the experiences of Irish migrants in order to present this part of Irish history through fiction. Moreover, there was a particular interest in the twentieth century diaspora of Irish women, and these authors aimed at delving into the personal stories of these women as well as into the role of migratory chains and the varying degrees of agency they may have exercised outside Ireland (Barros-Del Río 84-85).

By the late twentieth century, novels focused on women, migration, and exile were already emerging, such as Ita Daly's *Dangerous Fictions* (1989), Leland Bardwell's *That London and Winter* (1981) or Dolores Walsh's *Mad Moon* (1993). More recent works include Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn* (2009), Anne Enright's *The Green Road* (2015) and, of course, Sebastian Barry's *On Canaan's Side* (2011). These novels, set in various periods ranging from the tumultuous years of the early twentieth century nationalist cause to the prosperous years of the Celtic Tiger in the twenty-first century, unveil the migratory experiences of Irish women while rebuilding Irish history from a distance. Often employing letters and emphasizing the role of memory, these works explore gender constructions in Irish society, their fundamental role in the building of the new Irish Free state, the oppressive social context of the country and the importance of migratory chains for Irish emigration (Barros-Del Río 84-85).

Sebastian Barry began with *The Steward of Christendom* (1995) a series of novels inspired by his Irish ancestors that continued with *Annie Dunne* (2002), *A Long Long Way* (2005) and ended with *On Canaan's Side* (2011). In these novels, Barry adopts a post-colonial and feminist approach to address the anticolonial nationalist context of Ireland, thereby offering an alternative reading to the hegemonic narrative of Irish nationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Barry focuses on the living conditions in post-colonial Ireland with the aim of displaying the physical, geographical and psychological consequences of the decolonization process (Tanriöveri 29-32).

According to Tanriöveri (2-7), Barry's works of fiction are studied mostly in relation to the treatment of trauma, the notion of Irishness and regarding his interest in petit narratives and in foregrounding individuality over collectivity.

Trauma narratives, as defined by Vigari (219), explore the traumatic experiences of characters and highlight the relationship between memory and narrative. These narratives are central to Barry's literature since his novels delve into traumatic incidents—such as the brutal violence of the nationalist Irish conflict or mass migrations—and examine how these events impact the lives of his characters. Another key theme in Barry's work is the notion of Irishness and his commitment to recovering parts of Irish history that have been suppressed, silenced and forgotten by dominant ideologies. He challenges traditional concepts of Irishness by focusing on the untold stories of marginalized social groups oppressed due to ethnic, religious, or social class criteria, depicting Irish history through characters who are sidelined by the dominant Catholic and Republican ideology (Tanriöveri 28).

III.3. *On Canaan's Side*: “Petit Narrative”, Irishness and Treatment of Trauma

On Canaan's Side, published in 2011, provides a realistic approach to the feminine experience of the Irish diaspora in America covering a period of crucial political and social changes in Ireland that goes from the First World War up to the last decades of the twentieth century (Abdulaziz 94).

Lilly Dunne is the protagonist and narrator of *On Canaan's Side* and, throughout the novel, we accompany this 89-year-old woman in her journal entries. In these pages, she recounts the story of her life in the first person, summarizing all the events that have led her to her current situation: she is preparing to end her own life. This novel is divided into three major sections comprising 17 chapters, each of these chapters corresponding to a day in the life of our protagonist. The narrative begins on the day Lilly's grandson, Bill, is found dead and we soon understand that this event is the catalyst for Lilly to start her journal.

Lilly is a woman born in Ireland to a Catholic family that sided with the Unionists during the Irish Civil War. Her father was the chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, her brother Willie fought with Britain in the Great War and her husband, Tadg Bere, was one of the feared and hated Black and Tans. Amidst the struggles for Irish independence and the political chaos and upheaval in Ireland, a death sentence was placed on Lilly and Tadg leaving the couple no choice but to flee to America. However, even across the ocean, Tadg could not escape death and was killed by an IRA member in Chicago.

Alone in a completely unknown place, Lilly flees the city and eventually arrives in Cleveland. There, she manages to start a new life thanks to her friend Cassie Black and to Mrs. Wolohan, a woman who hires Lilly as a housemaid. In Cleveland, she meets Joe, a mysterious police officer to whom she eventually marries, together they have a son named Ed. One day, Joe disappears without a trace, leaving Lilly alone with her child, Mr. Nolan becomes then a lifelong supporter of Lilly, helping her with raising Ed. As a young man, Ed joins the American army to fight in Vietnam, from where he returns shattered and ultimately confused. For this, when Lily turns eighty-seven, she finds herself having no other option than raising her grandson Bill. Through Lilly's journal, we see how her decision to end her life is closely linked to war, which has brought her immense pain and suffering. It claimed Willie, Ed and, finally Bill –who enlisted in the army to fight in the Gulf War. Although all three of them returned physically, their souls never did.

On Canaan's Side is a novel narrated in the first-person with an autobiographical style where the protagonist narrates her personal story in a retrospective. The narrative is quite chaotic, with frequent juxtapositions between past and present, reflecting the mental effort that requires for the protagonist to recall her story. According to Abdulaziz (95) the author in this novel expresses the protagonist's memories in a stream-of-consciousness style, thus resulting in many lengthy run-on sentences.

Since Bill's death is the reason behind Lilly's decision, all chapters are entitled according to the days that have passed without him, therefore, ensuring that his absence in the novel remains palpable. Furthermore, this unique structure of the novel allows the flow of time in to deviate from the linear, scientific concept of time; instead, the measuring of time in *On Canaan's Side* is based on Lilly's individual flow (Tanriöveri 33). Through this, we see how the protagonist places her traumas in the center of the narrative.

Lilly begins what she calls her "confession" from its endpoint –the moment when she contemplates ending her life– because she believes that although remembering causes "great sorrow," "when the remembering has been done, there comes afterwards a very curious peacefulness" (Barry 217). Thus, we must interpret this novel and Lilly's recollection of the memories of her life as a preparation for her own death.

However, this novel should not be regarded solely as a personal account of the protagonist's past experiences since throughout its pages, Lilly's personal story intertwines with Ireland's history. With her 89 years of experiences as an outcast woman, Lilly witnessed numerous historical events both in her homeland and in America and, for this, while Barry does not delve deeply into the historical details of the story (Vigari 220), many significant events are mentioned in the novel: the Chicago Fire of 1871, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima or the decade of assassinations in the 1960s.

In *On Canaan's Side*, the author presents an alternative historiography of Ireland and its people from a perspective that is both feminine and postcolonial. For this, Barry shifts the focus from grand historical narratives to the "petit narrative" of Lily's journal and, by doing so, he seeks to recreate a part of Irish history that is not captured within the hegemonic narratives: the stories of those that despite being forgotten and marginalized in their own homeland, also deserve to be included within the notion of Irishness (Tanriöveri 1). Through the character of Lily, marginalized for being a woman

growing up in the south of Ireland within a Catholic family supportive of the Union, Barry emphasizes the impossibility of writing an objective national history without considering individual traumas and experiences.

III.4. Lilly Dunne in *On Canaan's Side*

Throughout her childhood, like any other child, Lilly's worldview was shaped under the influence of her family and of the nation she lived in. Despite being situated in a liminal space due to her status as a woman, Catholic and Unionist, she ascribed the patriarchal roles that defined women in relation to men, a division that governed Irish society of the time and that continued to do so even after independence. Initially, she fulfilled the role of a daughter and, with the arrival of Tadg Bere, she assumed the role of a wife, eventually having to exile as a consequence. Since Tadg Bere is a Black and Tan –an enemy to the Irish nationalist cause– by marrying him out of love Lilly rejects collectivity and dismisses the role that nationalism has assigned to her as a woman (Tanriöveri 41). Moreover, in this regard, exile allows Lilly to leave behind the static traditional roles, as across the ocean she first becomes a widow and later embraces motherhood as a single mother.

Broadly speaking, we can assert that Lilly is marked by political wars that drastically altered the course of her life. Her profound trauma originates from the various wars that unfold throughout her life, both in Ireland and America and, in the aftermath of these wars, Lilly represents all women: all those wives, mothers and sisters that saw the men in their lives go off to war to come back months later being completely different people.

The unrelieved exile Lilly experiences due to the political involvement of the men around her becomes a significant trauma characterized by separation from her homeland. This separation, apart from the distress caused by seeing one's life is at risk, leads to a profound sense of permanent loss of homeland and belonging in our protagonist (Abdulaziz 101). The sense of loss is one of the most direct consequences of exile but, apart from that, having to create a new life in America having nothing but herself also leaves numerous scars on our protagonist. The abrupt departure from her homeland is psychologically difficult to process, as is the challenging adjustment to a new country. As for Lilly, after Tadg's death she finds herself alone in America with no other option but to wander the streets of Cleveland without money and nothing more

than her youth, which she knows could earn her some dollars despite not being "at that point yet." (Barry 99)

Lilly also experiences a constant feeling of being pursued, even with an ocean between her and those who seek her: "I thought I heard the murderer's step behind me, every step I made. If I stopped, he would stop" (Barry 97). This feeling makes Lilly's adaptation to America much more complex. Besides facing the typical challenges any exile would encounter, she struggles between trying to fit into this new society and simultaneously trying to not get discovered and killed. This situation leads her to feel obliged to always "keep back" from her neighbors (Barry 140) and causes her to fear she is putting herself at risk when she sends a letter back home (163). In exile, the constant fear of being caught for expressing one's true identity is profoundly destabilizing (Abdulaziz 97).

III.4.1. Lilly's Treatment of Trauma and Memory

In *On Canaan's Side*, it does not take the reader long to realize that the journal entries that Lilly writes over seventeen days serve the singular purpose of helping her with her pain and trauma. The trauma of deportation, leaving her homeland, the loss of her brother, son and grandson, the constant feeling of being at risk, the loss of identity in exile and the challenges of raising her son and grandson alone are among the traumatic events that Lilly experiences throughout her life and that leave deep scars in her body and soul.

At the beginning of the novel, Lilly admits to be deceiving herself by saying that she did not like writing when, in truth, what happened was that she was afraid of writing down her memories (Barry 9). Transcribing her past memories is a painful process, but at times, it also brings her moments of happiness – "I am so happy writing these down" (116)– and she sees it as necessary because she believes that the reward for remembering is "a very curious peacefulness" (217). Therefore, amid an unrelieved exile and having suffered the loss of many loved ones, remembering helps Lilly recover parts of her identity, reminding her of who she is: "I remember it, but that is partly because as I write I see it again, I am that girl again, Lilly Dunne herself." (20)

In that event, the novel revolves around a central experience of trauma and around Lilly's post-traumatic testimony which, as previously mentioned, affects the diegetic chronology of the narrated events (Vigari 220). We can say that Lilly treats her

journal as a confession that helps us gain a better understanding of the difficulties and oppression faced by those who lived in the liminal spaces of history.

III. 4. 2. Lilly as a Diasporic Subject

According to Vigari (215-16), a diasporic subject typically emerges from traumatic events such as forced displacement, which cannot be resolved through external assimilation processes. These events, in turn, shape the essential elements that constitute the collective memory. In *On Canaan's Side*, Lilly Dunne navigates various cultural and social domains to create her new identity in exile and, for this, she is a clear example of a diasporic subject. Through a process of transculturation and transnationalisation, driven by the exile and her longing for the homeland, the protagonist of the novel acquires various symbolic dimensions that allow her to construct her own identity within multiple sociocultural backgrounds. Therefore, her individual story is enriched by the collective one and vice versa.

Bearing in mind that one of the most direct consequences of any diaspora is that they usually lead to an identity crisis caused by a change of environment. In the case of Lilly's exile, her identity crisis is further emphasized due to the protagonist's need to leave aside her personal identity so as to not get caught by the IRA, having to build a new one alone in an unknown place.

Although at some point in the novel Lilly claims that "Nowhere is a foreign place. Everywhere a home place for someone, and therefore for us all" (Barry 57-58); throughout *On Canaan's Side* we learn that she is never able to develop a sense of belonging in America because, albeit unconsciously, Ireland never leaves her. We know this from Lilly's comments about Tadg's adaptation to Chicago – "Tadg had begun not just to like Chicago. He had begun to use the word 'home' and he no longer meant Cork or Ireland" (72) –, where her husband's attitude contrasts with hers, as she cannot even imagine calling any place outside of Ireland *home*.

According to Vigari (216), Lilly's attitude towards Ireland is contradictory. On the one hand, since her displacement is a political one, she loses confidence and trust in everything related to her homeland. On the other hand, she comprehends while journaling that Ireland continues to be the place that represents her memory and identity as Lilly Dune. Ireland is for her the spiritual place that she loves in spite of everything: "Ireland nearly devoured me, but she has my devotion, at least in the foggy present, when the past is less distinct and threatening" (Barry 127).

In contrast, the USA –the Promised Land, the Glittering Canaan and the place that was supposed to be a safe haven for our protagonist– fails to live up to the ideal created by other immigrants. Of course, this land is very important to Lilly because it allows her to escape from a secure death in Ireland and it is the place where she spends most of her life but, for our protagonist, the USA is also a land of fear, murder, escape, racism, wars, and, of course, death.

In her adaptation process to the USA, it is notable how Lilly is a character that prioritizes “affiliation” over “filiation” (Tanriöveri 42). This means that, in the USA, instead of remaining tied to her blood ties and of prioritizing biological relations, she creates the place that she calls “home” around the friendships that she established during her time there and to whom she is very fond: Mrs. Wolohan, Mr. Nolan, Cassie Black and Mike Scopellos's sister Maria.

Regarding Lilly’s identity in exile, throughout the novel we see how she constructs a new identity for herself. From being an Irish woman in exile, she turns into a diasporic subject and many characteristics of transculturation become notable in her: “My ‘messages’ as Dublin people say, my packages had fallen from my arms” (107). Through this quote we see how Lilly is a transnational and transcultural person that recognizes the differences among the countries around which she forms her personal identity and how despite being Irish of origin, she ends up assimilating certain American attitudes or, in this specific case, certain words.

III.4. 3. Lilly’s Postcolonial Perspective

When writing her journal, Lilly explicitly positions herself in equal distance to both sides of the Irish conflict. She does not subscribe to Unionist Political views under the influence of her father but neither positions herself on the side of the nationalists: “I am sure there was evil and cruelty on both sides” (Barry 41).

Despite her blood ties, Lilly manages to display a critical distance in her narration to the conflict. At one point she wanders about how much “histories are weighted against the loser” (41), demonstrating that she does not support the nationalist and Catholic narratives while, later on, she displays how she does neither idealize the English rule or imperialism by sharing her awareness of the English soldiers not showing enough respect to her father during the ceremony held for him being the Chief Superintendent of Police forces in Dublin (Tanriöveri 38-39): “the soldiers passing respectfully enough but not entirely so” (Barry 20).

Regarding Lilly's postcolonial perspective, we must attribute this fact to Lilly narrating her memories when 89 years old and being in the final moments of her life. Naturally, during childhood, adolescence and even in the first stages of adulthood, we orient our lives following the influence of the narratives about the place, the people and the society we grew up in and, therefore, in the beginning we cannot orient our lives autonomously (Tanriöveri 34-35). In *On Canaan's Side* Lily is aware of her freedom as an old woman and that is how she expresses it:

Now I am laughing in my kitchen, but who is to hear that laughter? There are many forms of freedom, and this is one of them, to be so old I can lay claim to those I loved, without my own mind qualifying, erasing, hiding. My father was chief superintendent of police under the old dispensation. He was the enemy of the new Ireland, ... But all I had from him was kindness. (Barry 42)

With this reflection, Lilly demonstrates how her age provides her with the needed perspective to comprehend the circumstances of her life from a distant postcolonial point of view, but also how the passage of time and her proximity to death grant her enough confidence to challenge the nationalist narrative against those who are members of the Dublin police. Therefore, throughout *On Canaan's Side* Barry uses Lilly's journal to problematize and criticize the hegemonic traditional historical narratives from a postcolonial perspective.

Furthermore, Lilly's critical attitude towards traditional historiography often reveals the unreliability of these versions, as for example when Lilly reflects on the importance of which side writes the official history: "I do not know how much such histories are weighted against the losers, in this case men like my father, loyal to kings and the dead queen" (Barry 41). In addition, Lilly tells her story intending to demonstrate that grand narratives are insufficient to capture the history of an entire country and that "petit narratives" are essential when writing history. Thus, Lilly's journal offers us an alternative historiography in which grand victories are replaced by the small, everyday successes, traumas and emotions experienced by various characters.

Moreover, the characters Barry chooses to fulfill this purpose are special in the sense that, like Lilly, they are liminal figures who are driven out of their communities and marginalized for being caught on the "wrong" side of history and who remain victims of the process of Irish nation-building (Tanriöveri 34-35). Therefore, we can say that the author readdresses official historiography from a postcolonial perspective by sharing "petit narratives" centered on liminal characters.

III. 4. 4. Women in Lilly's life

On Canaan's Side is a truly feminine novel because, in addition to the protagonist's significance within the narrative and the history of Irish exile, the women who accompany Lilly on her journey are characters of great depth who should not be overlooked. Cassie Black, Maria, Mrs. Wolohan and her mother, are key for Lilly's recovery from being an outcast. Each of these women helps the protagonist in a different way but all the four of them do it selflessly, serving as proof of the importance of solidarity and sisterhood among women, especially in challenging situations such as the diaspora.

According to Tanriöveri (45), the solidarity and friendship that these women share with Lilly is another example of the emphasis that this novel places on the notion of affiliation over filiation, of created bonds over ties of blood. When Lilly moves to America, she loses her family and nation and she manages to survive in this foreign country and to build a new life only upon friendship.

Mrs. Wolohan is one of the women that helped our protagonist the most. According to Lilly, we might think of Mrs. Wolohan as a widow of immense kindness and patience that can be classified within the patriarchal traditional role of the wife since she "nursed her husband through his great illness, and buried him at last in the certitude that she had gone the last yar for him" (26). Apart from this, Mrs. Wolohan is also a woman who has gone through some important difficulties and that saved herself "not just [for] her courage, which is signal, and her faith, which is solid, but her enjoyment of all the minute pleasures of being alive, something that always gave me pleasure also, in cooking for her." (125)

Mrs. Wolohan's life energy and the support she gives to Lilly by caring for her, employing her and giving her a place to live and to retire in gave our protagonist the strength she needed to overcome the hardships she was encountering in life. Apart from this, Mrs. Wolohan's mother is the person that gives Lilly the job of her life in America, she is hired to cook for the family. Mrs. Wolohan's mother was an Irish-American that loved the idea of Irish freedom so, the friendship that emerges between Lilly and this woman is strong evidence for Lilly's preference for building affiliations rather than living on filiations.

Continuing with the women who influenced Lilly's experience in exile, we reach Cassie Black, who becomes our protagonist's closest friend. Cassie is a black woman who encounters Lilly wandering through the streets of Cleveland and helps her find her

first job in America. They feel an immediate bond due to the loneliness they both experience as marginalized single women. Cassie and Lilly exemplify the reality of enduring double discrimination (Tanriöveri 46); they suffer the consequences of being women in a patriarchal society and, additionally, Cassie suffers discrimination because of the color of her skin and Lilly because of her family's political background in Ireland. Cassie's life is a tragic one and, for this, she leaves a significant impact on our protagonist. After enduring years of abuse by her employer, Cassie becomes pregnant by him, and unable to bear it, she takes her own life by drowning in the lake.

Finally, the last woman that we will mention is Maria, Mike Scopello's sister, who in the novel is referred to as "the saint" (Barry 179). Maria takes Lilly into her home during one of the most difficult moments in her life: Lilly is pregnant with Ed and her husband Joe Kinderman has just disappeared. Maria welcomes Lilly into her home without hesitation and she goes to great lengths to help Lilly and her son, even being "already primed up to get napkins for Ed" (180). Maria's support is crucial for Lilly, as she helps her to adjust to a new life both economically and psychologically.

IV. GENDER ANALYSIS IN *SOL DE INVERNO* AND *ON CANAAN'S SIDE*

Galicia and Ireland are two Western European nations that, beyond their Atlantic influence, are united by a number of social and cultural characteristics, as well as by some parallel historical, religious and economic circumstances. One of the main commonalities they share is related to the fact that they both have diasporas spread across several parts of the world—resulting from mass migrations prompted by agricultural failures that impacted their agriculturally based economies (Lorenzo-Modia 1)—and also that the number of women participating in these diasporas is, in both cases, very high, often surpassing that of men.

Regarding the notion of womanhood in Ireland and Galicia, it is necessary to highlight how the political processes that each country underwent profoundly shaped this concept. Taking into account that, according to Ingman (3), all national identities are built around fixed roles of gender, we can assert that the circumstances of the newly independent Irish Free State and of the establishment and consolidation of the Francoist Regime in Spain had a profound impact on the notion of womanhood in that period of time. Both in Spain and in Ireland the state's new political framework was built around the Catholic tradition and, therefore, an ideal of women as passive homemakers was projected onto society.

In the traditional families of these predominantly rural nations, this notion of the "real woman" persisted relegating women exclusively to the roles of reproduction and caregiving with no independent income until the 1960s. However, this changed somewhat due to the diaspora as, in the Irish and Galician exiles, traditional female roles were replaced by a new construction of womanhood shaped by the circumstances of living away from their homeland, in a context of continuous flight and having to build a life from scratch. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the dense migrant networks of the Irish and Galician exiles also served to transmit the moral values of the homeland into the receiving countries: migrant and exiled women often did not integrate into public life in the receiving country and continued to uphold traditional customs for at least one generation (García-Rodeja and Pérez 434).

IV. 1. Rosa Aneiros and Sebastian Barry's Echoes and Divergences

As the innovative minds behind *Sol de Inverno* and *On Canaan's Side*, both Rosa Aneiros and Sebastian Barry are committed to offering a critical perspective, presenting the world with a discourse that seeks to transcend the boundaries of traditional historiography, of colonial and patriarchal systems and of all that is socially hegemonic. For this reason, a parallel reading of *Sol de Inverno* and *On Canaan's Side* reveals that both novels are works of memory aiming to rewrite the official histories of Galicia and Ireland around two fundamental axes: an unrelieved exile and a feminine perspective.

Being aware of the immense power of literature in the world and of the need to tell the stories of their countries from a perspective different from the traditional one, Aneiros and Barry choose to give voice to characters who are often silenced and marginalized in historical narratives –characters who represent otherness. Therefore, considering factors such as social class, age, race, sexuality and gender in this comparative analysis, we can conclude that the intersectional perspective is crucial, as it helps us deeply understand the complexity of the situations faced by diasporic subjects.

However, Barry and Aneiros adopt slightly different approaches when revisiting aspects of the official historical narratives of their countries. *Sol de Inverno* is seen as a "story of stories" that emphasizes collectivity and where each character becomes part of a complex network representing the diverse range of individuals who comprise a nation's history. In contrast, *On Canaan's Side* focuses on crafting an individual narrative that, rather than completely depicting a nation's official history, seeks to

represent the marginalized and silenced individuals aiming for a portrayal of the significance of the other rather than a depiction of the whole picture.

IV. 2. The Feminine Experience: Lilly and Inverno

Sol de Inverno and *On Canaan's Side* are two novels linked, among many other attributes, by the fact that they both feature women from the middle class who recount their personal stories in retrospect from a point in their lives when they are elderly and close to death.

Undeniably, the stories presented by Lilly and Inverno are distinctly feminine: narratives of women, told by women that focus on capturing the experiences of liminal, silenced and marginalized characters and that also exhibit a critical stance towards the rise of nationalism in Spain and Ireland and towards the dominant historical narratives.

An additional aspect that connects the works of Barry and Aneiros is the central role that memory plays in their narratives. As Martínez Martínez (372) points out, we must analyze the role of memory in these two novels considering that diversity in the articulation of memories stems from the fact that perspectives always change based on aspects such as age, class, gender or the levels of politicization and activism of the narrators. Furthermore, we should not overlook the fact that memories are strongly influenced by gender socialization, which often determines which social and cultural aspects and activities are deemed as either important or irrelevant. Consequently, through the feminine perspectives of Inverno and Lilly, we are presented with a piece of history where the significance of various events is redefined based on what these two protagonists consider important in their lives, rather than what historiography dictates on the matter.

Therefore, gender perspective in *Sol de Inverno* and *On Canaan's Side* significantly influences how the protagonists remember their lives. But their status as diasporic subjects also affects this process, since even white women can be perceived as belonging to a different ethnic group due to their migrant status, making them more vulnerable when separated from their homeland, the otherness of Inverno and Lilly lies in the dual discrimination they face. However, it is more pronounced in Lilly's case because Inverno's family history in Cuba provides her with a privileged position in exile, easing her adaptation to the diaspora. In contrast, Lilly, lacking such connections in America, must confront American society alone, burdened by the dual challenges of being a woman, a migrant and a single mother.

Regarding the role of memory in these two novels, Lilly and Inverno choose to remember and write the stories of their lives as a way to cope with trauma and as a means of preparing for death, ensuring that their stories and those of the people in their lives are not lost to oblivion. Lilly and Inverno are united by their need to express and externalize their trauma and we find that writing serves them as a therapeutic process, helping the protagonists cope with trauma by transforming it into a narrative. Additionally, the fact that both undertake this exercise of remembering at an advanced age allows them to narrate their lives from a reflective position, enriched by many years of pondering the events they have experienced.

Examining the origins of Lilly and Inverno's trauma, we find that it stems from being in the wrong place, at the wrong time, supporting the wrong ideology and religion. Both protagonists had to go into exile at a young age, primarily due to the political involvement of the men in their lives: Inverno's father and, in Lilly's case, her husband and father. The difference between the two lies in the fact that, by the time Lilly was forced into exile, she was mature enough to understand the implications of marrying Tadg, she was an active participant in her circumstances. In contrast, Inverno was only a child when the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War forced her to flee from Antes. At that moment, she did not fully grasp what was happening. Although she had some understanding, she did not fully comprehend the circumstances:

Polo visto a culpa de todo tñaa a guerra. Ti non sabías que era iso da guerra. Imaxinabas lexións de soldados avanzando imparables cara a Antes con cabalos e fusís. Imaxinabas grandes canóns, navíos acoirazados e avións de combate por riba das vosas cabezas. Imaxinabas sangue e disparos. Mais a guerra non era así. A guerra en Antes era un silencio triste, olladas arrepiadas, desaparicións misteriosas e a fachenda de Roque. Se cadra a guerra era iso nada máis. (Aneiros 88)

Nevertheless, the perspectives of Lilly and Inverno evolve as they grow older and encounter new experiences. In this way, Inverno's initial ignorance transforms into an assertive posture and support for democracy and for the rights of Galician people in their fight against the Fascist Regime. This progression culminates in her involvement in the creation of *Loita*, a clandestine publication that aimed at giving voice to anti-fascist Galicians (Aneiros 408). In contrast, Lilly, who was already aware of Ireland's political, social and religious polarization at the time of her marriage to Tadg, develops a neutral posture, perceiving violence on both sides but not wanting to position herself (Barry 41).

Continuing with the convergences between the lives of our protagonists, we observe that both experience significant losses that leave deep scars on them. From the quote, “Tamén turraches por fuxir do cadáver de Fiz e nunca o conseguiches. Tentáchelo en Antes, en París, na Habana, en Pinar del Río, en Bos Aires, en Barcelona sen saber que da infancia non se foxe” (Aneiros 39), we learn that from the moment Inverno first encountered death –following Fiz's murder– it never ceased to pursue her. Maruxa, Carmela, Silvia, Elvia, her father, and, of course, Luzdivina were among the losses that left Inverno “tantas tantas veces atrapada nesa vertixe irresistible de bailar no gume da morte” (76).

Similarly, Lilly's situation is not markedly different. In addition to confronting the deaths of the three men in her life –her brother Willie, her son Ed and her grandson Bill–, she also endures the loss of her husband Tadg Bere, of her friend Mr. Nolan, and the suicide of her dear friend Cassie Black. The loss of their loved ones has shaped both protagonists at various stages of their lives and has been crucial for the construction of their identity as exiled women. Death, besides causing them profound grief, also brings a heavy responsibility to them. As they approach the end of their lives, they feel the responsibility of ensuring that the memories of those who accompanied them are preserved, memories that without the narrative of memory provided by these protagonists would be forgotten.

As previously mentioned, the unrelieved exile experienced by Inverno and Lilly carries a profound emotional and personal cost for these protagonists. They both experience a significant loss of identity and have to undergo a process that transforms them into transnational characters who “lost many characteristics of their former social and cultural backgrounds in order to adapt to their new environments” (Núñez, “Galician Immigrant Societies in Cuba” 724).

Adjusting to a new country, culture and society always involves a confrontation between assimilating the customs of this new place and maintaining loyalty or connection to a nation that, in Inverno's and Lilly's cases, is characterized by somewhat diffuse boundaries. In this regard, we have already noted how Lilly is a character who prioritizes building affiliations over living on filiations (Tanriöveri 45), meaning that she values constructed bonds over blood ties, partly because, upon moving to America, she had no option but to forge a new life based solely on friendship and affiliation. In contrast, Inverno's situation is different as she places greater emphasis on blood ties over any bonds formed in exile, partly because her exile largely unfolds within the

context of the family sphere. Therefore, considering this, if we were to classify Inverno and Lilly regarding their methods of forming relationships and defining their identities in exile, Inverno would align more with filiations, while Lilly would certainly be classified within affiliations.

Additionally, another shared dimension between Inverno and Lilly is how they both dedicate part of their narrative to deconstruct the image held by other immigrants of America as the ideal land of freedom and prosperity. For Lilly, the USA, the place that she once saw as the Promised Land, failed to live up to this ideal due to the negative experiences she endured there: fear, murder, escape, racism, wars and death. And, regarding Inverno, she reflects on the Galician experience in Cuba as follows:

Cuba non era só encher os petos rápido. Cuba era tamén un mundo de lotaría e perdición do que moitos tiveron que fuxir con menos do que arribaran. Porque moitos, Inverno, moitos chegaron con ilusión e mocidade e marcharon sen unha nin outra. E volveron aló para morrer nada máis. (Aneiros 291)

One more fundamental issue to highlight in this comparative analysis is the notion of return, an element of great importance in the study of exile that is closely tied with the emotional and personal cost of exile. As we have already mentioned, the loss of personal identity and the feeling of being an outcast are direct consequences of becoming a diasporic and transnational subject. Thus, one of the greatest challenges our protagonists face in exile is developing a sense of belonging in the receiving country to replace the feeling of incompleteness caused by the loss of their homeland.

In Inverno's case, her exile in Cuba offers her the chance to reclaim an unknown part of her history: she is the granddaughter of two Galician women who emigrated there in search of a better future. However, Inverno never stops considering Galicia as her true home and the place to which she must return: “Inverno, o regreso a Penélope ha ser o único que te salve da loucura” (Aneiros 81). Conversely, Lilly does manage to forge a new identity as an exiled woman in the USA and it is through the process of writing her memoirs that she realizes Ireland has always held a central role in her life. Despite this, she has no interest in returning there and never even considers it as a possibility.

The fact that these women have different attitudes towards returning greatly influences the final moments of their lives. In Inverno's case, she feels a great sense of liberation by remembering from the place that shaped her into who she is but, as for Lilly, it is through remembering that she realizes that the land she will never return to,

Ireland, will always be a part of her. Therefore, while for Inverno, returning is the only way that would allow her to rediscover a sense of belonging and wholeness, Lilly, who never considers this possibility, seeks this sense of belonging through affiliation to the people surrounding her during her time in America. This clearly exemplifies why Mr. Nolan's confession about his complicity in Tadg's murder, or Bill's death, affects her so deeply: it makes her feel an outcast again, alone and with no other solution but to hasten the end of her life.

Finally, it is essential for this comparative analysis of the feminine perspective in *Sol de Inverno* and *On Canaan's Side* to focus not only on Lilly and Inverno but also on all the women who accompanied them throughout their lives, leaving an indelible mark on our protagonists. The importance of solidarity and mutual aid among women in these two stories is indispensable since the entire exile experience of our protagonists is shaped by the diverse women who, despite being complete strangers at first, chose to lend each other a helping hand. Inverno and Lilly's identities are forever influenced by these women who accompanied them and, through the memoirs they wrote, the solidarity of these women will be eternally reflected in the collective imagination of everyone who reads these two marvelous novels.

V. CONCLUSION

The present work has analysed *On Canaan's Side* and *Sol de Inverno* with regard to the role of women in the Irish and Galician exiles. Throughout these pages, we have explored the memories of the two women protagonists of these stories seeking to understand the commonalities and differences between two experiences lived by different individuals in distinct countries but under very similar social, political and cultural circumstances –such as migrations, agrarian crises, strict Catholic morality and strong social control.

From the domain of literary criticism and with a relational and interdisciplinary perspective, we have studied these two novels where Rosa Aneiros and Sebastian Barry develop a fundamental role in readdressing traditional historiography. They achieve this mission by choosing to narrate events showing the perspectives of those who have been marginalized, silenced and forgotten by the conventional narrative. This allows us to demonstrate that contemporary literature and literary criticism are working in tandem, acknowledging and addressing the need to provide society with a historical perspective

that includes and gives prominence to those relegated to the background in official historiography.

Through the protagonists of these two novels, *Lilly* and *Inverno*, we are presented with three key ideas closely related to the experience of exile that are essential for understanding how exile, when viewed from a female perspective, differs significantly from the hegemonic and traditional narrative. The first of these three main ideas is the importance of memory, not only as a way to combat forgetfulness but also as a means of coping with suffering and of overcoming trauma. Furthermore, in relation to memory, we also highlight how it is greatly influenced by gender—in addition to aspects such as race, class, or age—since gender socialization significantly affects how we determine which aspects of our lives should be remembered.

Secondly, another key notion derived from this comparative analysis is the impact of the female condition on the exile experience. This refers to the double discrimination that exiled women endure due to both their gender and their status as exiles. As discussed, this dual discrimination becomes even more pronounced in the context of exile: while exile itself presents inherent challenges, this double discrimination exacerbates the impact of this experience on aspects such as identity, sense of belonging, adaptation or assimilation to the receiving country and nostalgia to the homeland.

Finally, the last major idea we can extract from this relational analysis of *On Canaan's Side* and *Sol de Inverno* relates to the immense significance of migratory networks in the context of exile. These networks not only facilitate the arrival and settlement of exiles but also play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of the double discrimination faced by women in exile. Likewise, the importance of affiliations built in exile is highlighted, evident in the vital role given to solidarity and mutual support among women in the two studied novels.

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