

José Ramón Ruisánchez

Two Lives

April 19, 2023 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Octavio Paz: a very good occasion to reflect on his inheritance, to reconsider which works in his considerable *oeuvre* have lost prestige and which works have become more interesting with time. In a nutshell, a good moment to decide if what Paz wrote has emerged yet, to follow the coinage of José Emilio Pacheco, from “the Purgatory which every author destined to become a classic undergoes, or if [his texts] will finally condemn him to the hell of celebrated writers that die with their own time” (I: 526).

I believe that *El mono gramático* (*The Monkey Grammarian*, 1970), to name but one major work, deserves to be reexamined in the context of contemporary literature, especially given the growing practice of “impure” genres, which are no longer considered rarities but rather place themselves very centrally in the field of Mexican literature.¹

But what is perhaps more important is to profit from the vantage point provided by the anniversary to reflect upon the changes effected in the field of Mexican literature, and particularly Mexican poetry, by Paz’s death.

The Subtleties of World Exhaustion

What I am saying here can effectively be dwelled upon by the suggestive concept coined by Gesine Müller: *Welt(er)schöpfung*, where the extraordinary powers of accretion of the German language permit the coexistence of a *Welt-Erschöpfung*, world exhaustion, and of a *Welt-Schöpfung*, the creation of a world. The genius of the concept is that it conveys the necessary link of one to the other, how exhaustion *entails* creation. It further implies that exhaustion does not mean complete annihilation, leading to a blank slate, but is closer to a productive erosion, a seep-

¹ See my “La victoria de lo impuro: hacia una teoría traviesa” for a reactivation of *El mono gramático* as part of the genealogy of some of the more interesting examples of current Mexican literature.

Nota: I owe a debt of gratitude to María Manrique of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut for all her kindness and help in the research of this chapter and throughout the months of my stay in Berlin.

José Ramón Ruisánchez, University of Houston, Texas

age, a crossfade. Again, the exhaustion is always implicitly creative, and creation is never a *fiat*, but much more a reutilization of the cultural landscape that past *habitus* have shaped.

In the particular case of Paz, it is necessary to stress that the intricate system of closely knit power structures, which defines a good part of the material conditions of production and circulation of culture that make Mexico unique, is largely the product of Paz and his circle, as Ángel M. Díaz shows in his recent text. Yet, after Paz's passing, no new *arbiter elegantiarum* was able to claim the center and the acme of this intricate system. The very absence of a Poet-King shapes the cultural field in such a way that it makes a further flexion of the Müller's term tempting: *Weltenschöpfung* – the creation of simultaneous worlds, in the plural. More on that later.

The death of Paz, then, brought about the possibility of writing poetry otherwise. Part of this creation is the “make it new” formerly impossible under the set of rules that have become exhausted.² But another part derives from the different *past*, that the *Welterschöpfung* poses retrospectively.

The Return of the Political Poem

In the case of the Mexican field, a salient trait amongst the previously excluded ones is the possibility of the political in the poem. Paz had gradually excluded this from his own practice, and had chosen to purify his compilations of youthful militant verse, albeit not completely, for certain compositions such as “Entre la piedra y la flor”, which he rewrote decades later and which remained part of the works he selected. Yet the mandate that Paz himself only partially obeyed in his own *oeuvre* became much more categorical in his influential epigones, so after a brief flare in the late 1960s, the place of politics was prose, leaving political poetry in obscurity.

In terms of the return of the political, the work of Malpaís Ediciones has been momentous. The small publishing house has rescued several important books in their *Archivo negro de la poesía mexicana*. The *Archivo* comprises two ten-book sets, each volume with a foreword by a contemporary critic who is usually a member of the *Seminario de Poesía Mexicana Contemporánea*, which was the brainchild of Alejandro Higashi and Israel Ramírez. The titles published in the first series are: *Sangre roja: versos libertarios* (1924) by Carlos Gutiérrez Cruz

² As perceptive readers will undoubtedly note, many of the inflections I use when speaking of worlds, are tinted by my reading of the work of Alain Badiou.

(1897–1930); *Radio: poema inalámbrico en trece mensajes* (1924) by Kyn Taniya (1900–1980); *Poema nuevo* (1955) by Alfredo Cardona Peña (1917–1995); *El retorno y otros poemas* (1956) by Miguel Guardia (1924–1982); *Maquinaciones* (1975) by Carlos Isla (1945–1986); *Patología del ser* (1981) by Ramón Martínez Ocaranza (1915–1982); *Los danzantes: espacios estatuarios* (1982) by Raúl Garduño (1945–1980); *La oración del ogro* (1984) by Jaime Reyes (1947–1999); *Híkuri* (1987) by José Vicente Anaya (1947); *Morada del colibrí: poemurales* (2004) by Roberto López Moreno (1942).

To say the least, unfamiliar names. These titles combine a vanguardist vocation with a decidedly open political stance: exactly what the Contemporáneos and later Paz excluded from the Mexican canon. Despite the proclaimed *tradición de ruptura* (tradition of rupture) the oxymoron coined by Paz that defined the selection of the enormously influential 1966 anthology *Poesía en movimiento* (see Higa-shi 2024), the rupture itself must remain in touch with the tradition it breaks away from, in order to be deemed appropriate as part of the carefully plotted genealogy – crowned by Paz himself.

In contrast to the all-male first set, the second set has achieved gender balance: it includes the anthologies *El corazón preso* by Concha Urquiza (1910–1945) and *Las palabras y el tiempo* by Alaíde Foppa (1914–1980) as well as *El pentagrama eléctrico* (1929) by Salvador Gallardo (1893–1981); *El canto del gallo: poelectedrones* (1972) by Jesús Arellano (1923–1979); *Variaciones de invierno* (1977) by Juan Bautista Villaseca (1932–1969); *La libertad tiene otro nombre* (1979) by Carlos Eduardo Turón (1935–1992); *Espiral en retorno* (1981) by Aurora Reyes (1908–1985); *Memoria de hospital* (1983) by Margarita Paz Paredes (1922–1980); *En el valle sagrado* (1986) by Juan Martínez (1933–2007), and *Na'an jie'e tii-ni —huellas del nagual* by Kalu Tatyisavi (1960), printed for the first time.

The Rise of Women Poets

Beyond the mandate for gender parity, this lineup is indicative of a splendor that demands new genealogies. My years as the Mexican poetry editor for the Library of Congress's *Handbook of Latin American Studies* have afforded me the opportunity to witness the fruition of poetry written by women.

This importance can be exemplified by Coral Bracho, the 2023 winner of the coveted Premio FIL. This is not the space to exhaust the subject, but I think Bracho is a crucial example (and my personal favorite). The arc of inexhaustible innovation and rigor that can be traced in her collected poetry – from the young erotic poet who immediately understood the energy that awaited in the neo-

baroque, to the surprising joy that she achieves in *Debe ser un malentendido*, the collection of poems about her mother's Alzheimer's disease – also constitutes the creation of *another* Mexican poetry.

Of course, we must add the number of women that have won the Aguascalientes (National Poetry Prize) in the last few years, such as Elisa Díaz Castelo; and the publication of other volumes of collected works of women poets such as Pura López Colomé or Elsa Cross.

This must, of course, be read as an effect (and a cause) of intense archival activity. The Taller Diana Morán devotes its efforts to studying women authors from Mexico (and the rest of the Americas), and although it privileges the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, its members have also delved into the nineteenth century. Further, the publication of *Cinco siglos de poesía femenina en México* edited by Maricruz Patiño and Leticia Luna is another important instance of the effort to reshape the available genealogies. This labor has brought back into conference panels, academic books, and syllabi many formerly out-of-print books and their *autoras*.

Finally, many women have profited from the new openness of the field of poetry to write narrative poems (Tedi Lopez Mills), poems in dialogue with the natural sciences (Isabel Zapata and Maricela Guerrero), or to attempt a renewed return to the dramatic poem (the aforementioned Díaz Castelo and Sara Uribe).

Yolanda Segura

This meandering introduction allows me more fully to frame the author that I want to discuss here: Yolanda Segura (Querétaro 1989), whose books – centrally *Persona* (2019) and *Serie de circunstancias posibles en torno a una mujer mexicana de clase trabajadora* (2021) – are veritable essays in verse. Especially in the latter, history (herstory), politics (and particularly political economy) and the hard-won freedom of contemporary poetry by women come together to show the brave new field of poetry after Paz.

Serie de circunstancias bears a title that is at once tentative and deftly clunky, excessive and (almost) too sociological. It sounds like the insecure subtitle that usually serves as a crutch for our nervous academic productions. Here, the circumlocution serves to create an intimacy that, while summoning affections, avoids their explicit enunciation. Eloísa, the Mexican woman of the title, is Segura's grandmother, but as Segura says in an interview, "I wanted to avoid making her my *abuelita*, my grandma". This framework allows the exploration of the

grandmother, but at the same time invites her to be generalized. Thanks to this, it is possible to explore her as a plebeian body.

I will keep Paz's biography visible as part of my method, contrasting his rise with the fall of Eloísa, who exemplifies in the singular the extinction of the demos. These parallel lives can of course be theorized as examples of the masculine logic of the exceptional element, and the feminine logic of the *pas-tout*, where all elements are equally unexceptional, to which I shall later return. The masculine logic allows for the creation of a singular world, while the feminine can be said to lead, perhaps, to the plural *Weltschöpfung*.

Serie de circunstancias

Let us go then. Eloísa was born in 1942, the year in which Jorge Cuesta, the intellectual mentor of young Paz, after trying to emasculate himself, committed suicide. It was also during the six-year term of President Manuel Ávila Camacho, who began rolling back the leftist policies of Lázaro Cárdenas:

su historia podría reconstruirse pero
no existe nadie que
quiera contarla
no existe
nadie
para quien ella / es decir Eloísa / es decir la
mujer de clase trabajadora sea
una imagen relevante. (12)

Her body has been excluded by the previous poetic diction. Her body is one of the bodies that had no place in the corpus. This body has a name – Eloísa – but Segura writes it in lowercase. The proper name is incidental, a label, an element that must be multiplied, one part of those who are legion. The citizens who enjoyed the rise of a welfare state in their youth, and suffered its dismantling throughout their adult lives, only to reach an old age without any shelter.

Eloísa's first years are elided in the book. Her life only begins as a working life. This is a good moment to add that *Serie de circunstancias* had its origin in a dozen photographs of her grandmother that Yolanda Segura initially thought of including in the book, but later turned into an independent visual project with a similar title: *Colección circunstancial en torno a una mujer mexicana de clase trabajadora* (2018, see Figs. 1–6, all quoted from the author's blog). Eloísa's photographs, although not included in the final version of the book, do leave a trace as ekphrasis:

la serie de imágenes empieza con una fotografía de estudio. blanco y negro. nostálgica como las fotografías a blanco y negro donde [dice crg] lo que cuenta es, por cierto, el color gris. mira de frente. del pecho prende un dije. podría estar horas sin moverse. pagó el retrato con el salario de su primer trabajo porque le pidieron fotografía para la credencial. (14)



Fig. 1: Nos prometieron un futuro XV.

The opening photograph is part of a document. It shows that the young woman is, and was always destined to be, a menial office worker. Becoming what she has always been – responding to the mandates of class, gender, and educational level – is what the poem follows.

Against the flame of image of the self when it is the center of the world – the arc that spans from Romantic poetry to the peaks of Paz’s enunciation – this non-descript credential-sized photograph, paid for by the salary. In the place of the image, the description.

In the visual project – not unlike Liliana Porter’s early work³ – mass-produced commodities surround with their repetition the singular moment, acting as a frame, but at the same time, given their excess, nearly smother it. The book on the other hand, frames its stanzas with generous amounts of blank space. Yet, the desire for things as shaped by capitalism is insistent in the pages of *Serie de circunstancias*:

eloísa dice lo que quiere:
ahorrar para:
 comprar un auto
 viajar a acapulco (sola)

³ I have explored the relationship between Porter’s work and the representation of labor in Ruisánchez (2021, see esp. pp. 192–4).

ir a un restaurante de vez en cuando
(sola)
entrar al cine (sola)

la madre responde. todo lo que sabe es responder: para nosotras no es posible, hija, la realidad es esta, hija, dice, lo que te conviene es esto, es aquello, es ser eso que no has querido: flores, un vestido, algo de orden.

ella ha tenido varios novios
y este no es el favorito.
pero flores. un vestido. algo de orden.
un marido. (22)



Fig. 2: Nos prometieron un futuro XIV.

Very soon, the possibilities opened by Eloísa's job are put on track, become limited, and close off even those pleasures of what Christina Soto Vanderplas has called *estar femenino*. They are replaced by that "bit of order": the one that involves obeying the mandate of being a woman, becoming a wife.

In the same period, the Ciudad Universitaria was built, a utopian cathedral of educational inclusion and economic mobility. The new UNAM opened its doors, but Eloísa was not among its students: "piensa en la carrera que no ha estudiado" (34).

Those were crucial years for Mexican literature: Juan Rufo's two books appeared; *La región más transparente* (*Where the Air is Clear*) by Carlos Fuentes changed the panorama of Mexican fiction; and, finally, Paz published *Piedra de Sol* (*Sun Stone*). In the meantime, Eloísa's life was limited to the following:

: estima que puede comprar objetos
suntuarios o medianamente suntuarios?
cuántos y cuáles especifique: (23)



Fig. 3: Nos prometieron un futuro XII.

Segura's text does not shy away from quoting – or mimicking – sociological surveys to summon her exploration of purchasing power with great expressive economy. Two sons and two daughters come into Eloísa's life. They have no names; they remain the corroboration of a demographic trend. In the poem time flies by vertiginously. Numerical precisions appear, surrounded by the blanks of the ellipsis:

para 1976, con un salario mínimo (\$83.13)
—eloísa recibía dicen que dos o tres—
podría pagar (diariamente):
-1.5 kg de tortillas
-300 gr de frijol
-500 gr de carne de res
-250 gr de azúcar
-250 gr de huevo
-2 l de leche
-50 gr de café
-150 gr de manteca
y le sobraban \$34.44
es decir que invertía el 48.69% de su
salario en comprar alimentos (38).

Rereading Paz

A year prior, in 1975, Paz had published in *Excelsior* “Sobre la libertad del arte”, an article in which he outlined a system of scholarships for artists financed by the state, which would later prove to be a conservative element that nourished the members and artistic practices of his group, but also, perhaps unbeknownst to Paz, the possibility of other worlds in the field of poetry. The year 1975 also saw the publication of “Pasado en claro”, one of the great autobiographical poems of the twentieth century. His diction is sumptuous:

¿Dónde estuve?

Yo estoy en donde estuve:

entre los muros indecisos
del mismo patio de palabras.
Abderramán, Pompeyo, Xicoténcatl,
batallas en el Oxus o en la barda
con Ernesto y Guillermo. La mil hojas,
verdinegra escultura del murmullo,
jaula del sol y la centella
breve del chupamirto: la higuera primordial,
capilla vegetal de rituales
polimorfos, diversos y perversos. (428)

It is necessary to read Paz again as a means of contrast. Only with these lines in mind is it possible to appreciate justly the *renunciation* that constitutes the deepest foundation of Yolanda Segura’s poetics. Her vocabulary is much more limited, metaphor is nearly absent, and perhaps more importantly, the mythical overtones that in Paz always act as a counterpoint to history are nowhere to be found in Segura. Her manner of saying as much as *not saying* in the manner consecrated in the pages of the *Revista Vuelta*, whose first issue was released in December 1976.

It is not that intertextuality is altogether absent in her work, as in this fragment from *Persona*: “o museu das pessoas: este museu não é, no entanto uma entidade completa, concreta, mas encontra-se mais próximo do vazio, do deserto. Poque mi cuerpo el tuyo y chapultepec” (43).⁴ Here Segura seems to be quoting a text without identifying it (in several other pages of the book the Italian philosopher Antonio Esposito is cited, even parenthetically including page numbers, academic style) but the tract is written in Portuguese, and she uses italics to further

⁴ “the people’s museum: this museum is not, however, a complete, concrete entity, but is closer to the void, the desert. Because my body yours and Chapultepec park.” Except otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

separate it from her own diction of a seemingly intimate memory – which she does not care to delve into further, as Paz would.

Theoretical Detour

Allow me to cycle back to another 1970s text. In *Encore*, which I already alluded to in the initial pages of this chapter, Jacques Lacan uses the term “masculine position” to denote a series that ceases to proliferate thanks to an exceptional element. In the field of twentieth-century Mexican poetry, it seems almost inevitable to consider Octavio Paz this element that crowns the efforts of what Anthony Stanton calls the critical poets. In the logic created from the feminine position, on the other hand, this exceptional element does not exist and, therefore, the series is impossible to close – thus the denomination *pas-tout*. In other words: the logic of the feminine position is structurally inclusive.

What I am interested in showing, with the two parallel chronologies of Paz’s life and the lives exemplified by Eloísa, is how the elements excluded by the masculine position come together from a feminine position, not in the form of another canon or a counter-canon, but as virtualities that – once the world that produced a canon with Octavio Paz at its peak has been exhausted – crystallize in another world with different rules of diction, reading and criticism: a world where, at least momentarily, a canon is no longer needed.

It seems to me that the form of the world that emerges is conditioned by that which has reached its end. Better: by a dialogue between the better loved and the most reviled forms of the exhausted world. Forms of saying and subjects of discourse emerge simultaneously. I was tempted to say new, but Eloísa is not new. The new belongs to the world of “make it new”, as I said before, and the -isms (including nationalism) from which Paz comes. Eloísa, on the other hand, is excluded, and her granddaughter Yolanda Segura’s way of saying it is by circumventing, together with “la abuelita”, the style of Flaubert in *Un cœur simple* and Lispector in *A hora da estrela*. A diction that finds in the languages of bureaucracy the way to make her part of her series without becoming exceptional.

A good way to further this would be through this thesis, which Giorgio Agamben formulates in his valuable *Il fuoco e il racconto*:

Adynamia, “impotence” does not mean here the absence of all power, but the power of-not (accomplishing the passage to the act), *dynamis me energein*. That is, the thesis defines the specific ambivalence of all human power, which, in its original structure, holds itself in relation to its own deprivation and is always – and with respect to the same thing – power to be and not to be, to do and not to do. (44)

This power of impotence does not *belong* to Eloísa or to Yolanda Segura, but rather resides in between them; it is the power that is created by unflinchingly observing and reporting an impotence.

Lose It All

By way of example, I want to quote the following passage, which takes place in the crucial year of 1985:

aquí la mujer de clase trabajadora entrando
o saliendo del departamento que pudo comprar
con su crédito de secretaria
[un departamento de interés social
que malvendió después de
septiembre de 1985
porque quería huir y regresar por primera
vez a un sitio (47)



Fig. 4: Nos prometieron un futuro VI.

el dinero que le entreguen
no va a alcanzarle ni para
comprar otra propiedad en provincia:

desde ese momento eloísa siente que ha
perdido todo
y se dedica a perderlo en serio (48).

1985 is remembered in Mexico as the year of the earthquake. But it is, in fact, the year of a double earthquake, for with the rise to power of President Miguel de la Madrid, the neoliberal turn was firmly established.⁵ The joint consequences of the two shifts, the tectonic and the economic, are formidable:

para 1986. . .
. . .
invertía el 94.55% de su
salario en comprar alimentos. (50)

The next year, Paz published *Árbol adentro*, his last great book of poems, generously dedicated to his friends. More importantly in 1988, Paz asked the opposition to accept the results of the presidential election, favoring Carlos Salinas de Gortari, instead of their candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenas. Paz asked the left to exercise its power from the Chamber of Deputies. In addition, Paz explicitly supported the economic reform program that Salinas de Gortari announced upon taking office.

ya luego
vendrán
las nietas (3)
y los nietos (4) (52)

Segura curtly includes her own coming into the world. She was born, it bears repeating, in Querétaro in 1989, at a time when neoliberal logics had become firmly established in Mexico – and ratified in the world with the fall of the Berlin Wall. That year *Círculo de Lectores* in Spain begins the first edition of the *Obras completas* of Octavio Paz.

As Angel M. Flores points out in his chapter of our *History of Mexican Poetry*, Paz will prove crucial in his promotion of FONCA, the backbone of the system of subsidies and grants that guarantee a certain measure of exceptionality around culture, exempting it from the brutal dismantling experienced by other aspects of the Mexican state. The condition for this is that culture serves as an instrument of branding for the “new” Mexico of NAFTA: in 1990 Paz received the news of his

⁵ I have closely read the decisive political importance of the 1985 earthquake in Ruisánchez (2012).

Nobel Prize in Literature while visiting the exhibition *Mexico: Splendors of 30 Centuries* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Even in her growing squalor, Eloísa is still able to buy birthday gifts to her grandkids, “cada año, hasta el último sabrá ser todo lo buena abuela que no fue como madre” (54). However, Segura insists, “cualquier recuerdo de esta serie es genérico” (55). Despite that, there is a small portion of her book devoted to personal memory, to an embodied experience of Eloísa – as opposed to what Segura calls generic:

corre algo que parece una canción
no hay voz. sus manos: las manos de eloísa.
viejas desde antes de ser viejas.
alcanzan a entender alguna cosa y
con eso que entienden abrazan

manos de abuela:

una cosa viva que corre todo el tiempo
entre más cosas (57)

Note how touch is the dominant sense: even hearing, as announced in the first lines, rejects vocality – “there is no voice” – to become tactile, Eloísa’s understanding of the world is tactile. She can only afford the rough stuff, the cheaper things, but at the same time they offer their softness to protect the granddaughter, even if temporarily, from these degraded surroundings. In the passages where the book is closest to a lyric elegy, the prevailing senses are touch, smell, and taste: the non-dominant senses.

At the same time when the system of guarantees Eloísa’s generation grew up with – including the raw purchasing power of their wages – eroded irreversibly, a small group, admittedly elite, remained privileged. Thanks to the FONCA and other subsidies to literature and the arts, both young and old *creadores* were able to continue writing and painting and filming, relatively sheltered from the neoliberal onslaught.⁶

Alejandro Higashi has shown that precisely this system of protections and guarantees allows the existence of a complex and demanding poetry: the poetry that stems from the tradition of rupture, which is one of the central traits of Paz’s own genealogy. Yet, this permanent metamorphosis of poetry naturally allows appearance of poetic forms that challenge Paz’s hegemony. An excellent milestone was the publication, in 1996, of *Medusario*, a robust anthology of neo-baroque po-

⁶ In fact, just as I was closing this chapter, Yolanda Segura was listed as one of the winners of a “Jóvenes Creadores” grant.

etry from Spanish-speaking Latin America, that claims – instead of the usual López Velarde-Contemporáneos-Paz genealogy – José Lezama Lima as the forefather of a different tradition. Further, Mexico's presence in *Medusario*, despite the fact one of the editors of the anthology is Mexican scholar and writer Jacobo Se-famí, is both weak, in terms of the number of authors, and strong because the sole Mexican poets are none other than Coral Bracho and David Huerta, both winners of the very important FIL Prize in the post-Paz era.

This of course marks the creation of a new world during the later years of Paz life. At the end of the same year that marked the rise of neo-baroque, on 21 December 1996, Octavio Paz's apartment burned down, and invaluable books were lost. A few months later Paz was diagnosed with bone cancer.

Not every trait diverges in the two lives explored here. There seems to be a common theme of treason or at least disappointment as to the fate of offspring, figuratively in the case of Paz, literal in the case of Eloísa:

- hijo 1. se fue a vivir al mar y vende paseos en lancha.
- hijo 2. le dio diabetes y se divorció.
- hija 3. se volvió loca.
- hija 4. se volvió loca.
- nuera 5. es una divorciada feliz.
- nieta 6. estudió una carrera universitaria.
- nieto 7. hace rótulos para negocios.
- nieta 8. vende hamburguesas en burger king.
- nieta 9. estudia una carrera universitaria.
- nieto 10. vende ensaladas en super salads.
- es el empleado del mes.
- nieto 11. se suicidó a los dieciséis.
- nieto 12. le dio una puñalada a hijo2. (62)

Note how Segura privileges repetition in the description of the destinies of Eloísa's family: of course, in the neutral nouns used to describe the members of the family, but also in the repetition of the verb "to sell", the women "[going] crazy", and so forth. Once again, this creates the effect of the "generic" discussed before. It is worth stressing that the phrase "le dio una puñalada" conjures many associations with daggers concealed under cloaks. Stabbing is more often than not *backstabbing*, as in the very Mexican phrase "puñalada trapera". But in the case of the poem, as in the case of the realm of Mexican poetry, treason must be read not as the consequence of the peculiarities of the traitor, but rather of a systemic change: the dismantling of the social safety net in the text quoted above alongside the very specific circumstances created by the cultural safety net that Octavio Paz managed to put in place in exchange for his support for the neoliberal turn in Mexico.



Fig. 5: Nos prometieron un futuro VIII.

última fotografía de eloísa
 nadie sabía que iba a ser la última
 eloísa existe cada vez menos
 en las caras de lxs que la sobreviven (61)



Fig. 6: Nos prometieron un futuro VII.

It is of course inevitable that, by the end of the book, the only course of action is the demise of its main character. Eloísa

... muere el 27 de septiembre
 183 años después de que se declarara
 la independencia de México
 32 años luego de que echeverría decretara la ley del
 instituto del fondo nacional de la vivienda
 para los trabajadores
 9 años después de que ernesto zedillo
 iniciara el proceso de privatización
 de los ferrocarriles
 44 años luego de la nacionalización de la industria
 eléctrica y la creación del organismo descentralizado
 denominado *luz y fuerza del centro*
 9 años antes de la más reciente reforma laboral (65)

Once again, instead of the pathos warranted by a death in the family, Segura creates a surprising crossroads of historical circumstances that affect this extremely minor occurrence, seemingly independent of the vectors that the poem attracts toward the body of Eloísa.

The two fragments that follow the page do create a sadness, but this is not tinted in the habitual elegiac style. Rather, it is a continuation in death of the decimated economy of the working-class Mexicana:

la quincena recién cobrada
 que no alcanzó
 para pagar
 el funeral. (66)

And aggravated by the fact that her life insurance policy has gone missing. This basic provision that makes it possible to plan for at least part of the future is also abolished.

Había un seguro de vida.
 La póliza está perdida. (67)

Conclusion

I hope to have shown – in a condensed manner and using this important essay in verse as a case in point – how a new world has been created in the field of Mexican poetry, by far the most dynamic area of literature in the last few years (espe-

cially when defined as including the hybrid subgenres mentioned earlier). But this example should also demonstrate how this new world forces us, whether we like or not, to reread the seemingly exhausted world as dominated by the critical poet, to grant it an afterlife. The very importance of the poem qua essay is deeply indebted to Paz as Anthony Stanton has persuasively argued in his *Río reflexivo*. The feminine position privileges *adynamia* as the choosing to *not* do what had been done before. But by not doing it, alas, it effectively evokes it. *Welt(er)schöpfung* then, in both senses of the word, simultaneously.

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