

The abandonment of the garden or the delimitation of a new narrative space in the novels of Antonio Gala: The journey to the body

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Abstract. The aim of this work is to study the female body as a narrative space in the novels by Antonio Gala. In his novels the human body is the only setting in which the characters see themselves capable of creating and developing their own identity.

Keywords: *Antonio Gala, Garden, Body, Trip, Meaning space, Identity.*

A. INTRODUCTION

In the late seventies and during the eighties, narratologists of the time co-mienzan to pay special attention to the relationship established between character and narrative space. In history and speech, Seymour Chatman includes his perspective on the narrative setting in his reflection on the character. The author distinguishes between "space" and "setting", defining the latter as "the place and collection of objects" in front of which "her actions and passions are adequately appearing" (Chatman, 1990). If the "setting" provides the fictional individual's confrontation with his environment, for Mieke Bal, who calls the space that houses the character a "frame", the location of the character not only represents his emotions, but "at a certain moment he can influence their moods" (Mieke, 1990). But surely it is Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan who gives the narrative space a determining functionality in the construction of fictional beings. In the chapter devoted to the "characterization" of the character, space appears as one of the main indicators of it, either through the "physical surrounding", eg the city, or through the "human environment", Eg family (Rimmon-Kenan, 2003). Later, Rimmon - Kenan insists on the potential of narrative space as a reinforcement of the understanding of the states of the character in the development of the story. The author demands in her analysis the evaluation of the potential analogical relationships that can occur between the two existing ones. In any case, these reflections on the "space-character" correspondence cannot be dissociated from another very significant link in the theory of narrative, the one that concerns time and space. These ties are indebted to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin carried out at the end of the thirties of the last century.

As regards its use in the theory of relativity, the Russian applies the concept of "chronotope" to his area of knowledge and, focusing on the novelistic genre, explains that in the literary chronotope "the union of the spatial and temporal elements takes place in an intelligible and concrete whole. (...) The elements of time are revealed in space, and space is understood and measured through time" (Emilia, 1992). The notion of chronotope frames in the first instance the "space-character" relationship that we will discuss throughout these pages; since the body, as the space par excellence of the human being, condenses its intimate dependence on a temporal dimension like no other.

These observations take on special relevance in the analysis of the protagonists of the Spanish narrative of recent decades, whose plots are characterized by the foundation of the protagonists' own identity and, in these cases, the geographical and socioeconomic

environment is decisive for this purpose. Bal argued in the eighties that the most plausible space-character relationship was found in the naturalistic novel because it underlined the impact of the environment on fictional beings (Mieke, 1990). But when the character is "lost" - as in the case of the postmodern novel - how does space influence his own search? According to M^a del Pilar Lozano Mijares, in the current narrative, "it is no longer a question of how I can know the world, penetrate it, reorganize it, but how, once I assume the impossibility of any explanation, I confront it, I live in it" (Bello, 2010). Blas Sánchez Dueñas also reminds us of this common interest in the crisis of the subject that motivates the plot lines of Almudena Grandes, Esther Tusquets, Maruja Torres, Álvaro Pombo or Antonio Gala, among others (Gala, 2002).

Twenty-five years after the Planeta Prize was awarded to Antonio Gala for *The Crimson Manuscript*, a novel that inaugurated his career in this genre, and having been named "Author of the Year 2016" by the Andalusian Center for Letters (CAL), we join to these celebrations traveling again to his novels hand in hand with his characters. The narrative scaffolding of Gala's novels always obeys the progressive construction of the subjectivity of its protagonists. All the strategies underlying the story and narrative discourse in these texts pursue this end. The subjectivation of space formulates a very significant stage in this fulfillment. These individuals, who do not know who they are or what their place in the world is, need a space of their own so that self-realization can take place.

We will study how in the novels of Antonio Gala the conquest of the identity of the characters passes through the self-consciousness of the body as the only space that they consider "their own". But before developing these questions, we must clarify that, sometimes, it is not the body of oneself but that of another, the one we want to inhabit.

B. METHODS

Research was conducted using qualitative methods. Data was collected through several techniques, including observation techniques, focus group discussions, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out through three analysis processes, namely coding, merging codes that emerged into themes, verification of themes through theory and follow-up interviews, and drawing conclusions (Creswell, 2010; Boeji, 2009).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. THE SPACE GARDEN

The configuration of space in Gala's novels has unquestionable value for the integration of her narrative strategies. In some of his novels, spatiality is formulated even in the first paratext prior to the corpus of the story. Thus, in *The Outskirts of God*, the first noun in the title indicates the existence of two spaces. And in *Beyond the Garden*, the adverb of place also indicates a certain comparison between two distant spaces. On the other hand, the Turkish Passion emphasizes a more connotative geographical point. Following Natalia Álvarez Méndez, in the first place, we must take into account the occurrence of the two levels, referential and symbolic, -both already present in these paratexts- that structure the narrative functions of space in a novel. In keeping with its multiple functions, Álvarez Méndez defends the formulation of a multifunctional hyperspace:

"(...) The space of fiction is exposed not as a mere geographical point or area of support for the action, but as a space with a life of its own and, in turn, lived. This is what makes up the true meaning of the narrative. (...) It will always be necessary to bear in mind that the fictional space develops a function both syntactic and semantic, referential, symbolic and, to a great extent, compositional and structuring" (Álvarez Méndez, 2002).

As has been glimpsed with the titles, in Gala's novels the plot is presented divided into two symbolic spaces that bring together those referential that frame the action. The first space represents a misconception of home, while the second is a regeneration space. Therefore, compared to the space of discourse, the space of the referent and the space of reading, the object of analysis will be the space of meaning:

“(…) It is not only a physical or geographical space, but also a social space in which the existence of the various fictional figures develops and a psychological space that highlights the consciousness of the characters; in addition to observing an architectural spatiality as an antropomorphic spatiality”

In Gala's novels there is a separation of two geographical spaces, whose distance –the journey- also separates the identity of others and the identity of these individuals: Granada (Alhambra) / Fez [*The crimson manuscript*]; Huesca / Istanbul [*The Turkish passion*]; Seville (garden) / Gihara [*Beyond the garden*]; Madrid / Isla de La Palma [*The rule of three*]; Córdoba (convent) / Madrid [*The outskirts of God*]; Málaga / Granada [*The impossible oblivion*]; Castilla / England-France [*The pedestal of the statues*] and Madrid- Alhaurín el Grande / Venice [*The water papers*]. Starting from the first geographical points, certain social spaces are established that represent a comfort zone for these characters. In some way, their socio-economic stability further demonstrates their emotional instability. All the protagonists are mourning and disoriented at the "loss", either of recognition or power, of youth or love. Therefore, taking into account the symbolic dimension, these geographic spaces that in turn agglutinate social hyospaces are also shaped as psychological spaces, subjectivized by the person who inhabits them.

Álvarez Méndez follows José R. Valles Calatrava, (Gala, 2008) who argues that space can be the object of a symbolic transformation through which it can "embody." In this way, "the spheres of action can thus become circumstantially and from certain events into oppressive, threatening, happy atmospheres, etc., that surround and determine the performance and psychology of the character." (Sánchez Dueñas, 2013). In Gala's narrative, the garden is the paradigm of psychological hyospace that shows the ambivalence between emotional failure and the good social situation of the protagonists. Although the most obvious example appears in *Beyond the Garden*, this symbolic element appears explicitly or implicitly in all these narrative texts regardless of the geographical points chosen in each novel (Flecha, 1999). Not surprisingly, the first chapter of *The Crimson Manuscript* is entitled "Safe in the Garden." Álvarez Méndez points out the garden as one of the common symbolic places in literature.

The author refers to this space as "a constituent part of Nature but shaped by the hand of man who reduces it (Alvarez, 2005)" (Following M^a Amor Martín Fernández, "for Gala, the choice of this locus as the fictional universe of the work, supposes the reception of the literary heritage of the garden topic and a commitment to conservation and care" (Benso Calvo & González Pérez, 2007). The researcher considers that Gala's garden represents the locus amoenus, the hortus conclusus and the locus agrestis. (If the locus amoenus it characterizes as a pleasant place, the Hortus Conclusus refers to the psychic wall that delimits prison representing the garden. The third, called locus agrestis, represents the jungle nuance of this: the seizure of nature to the detriment of the artificiality of the garden. The irruption of the locus agrestis is the previous step to the establishment of the last category with which Martín refers to external reality. Taking the example of Palmira Gadea in Rwanda, for Martín Fernández, the potager garden represents a metaphorical rebirth of the character identifying him with the germinated earth. However, "external reality is nothing more than the sum of many gardens", so events do not depend on the character's spirit of renewal, but rather, according to Palmira's reflection:

“There is a hidden order, which I had not discovered, underneath even what looks atrocious: wars, massacres, earthquakes, catastrophes. (...) An unknowable order because it is higher and because it ignores the individual: it goes far beyond all gardens ... Now I understand that the garden was disorderly, so strict, on which I based my life. Because the opposite of a river are not the avenues, nor the great floods, nor the drastic low water. The opposite of a river are dams and swamps: the works of man who, for their own benefit, stop it, transfer it, mutilate it ... the true, invisible order is above all” (Meadows, 1996).

Therefore, the transfer of the garden implies a displacement that conditions a change in character and fictional space, but it is not always positive due to the provision of new ties or the reorganization of previous ones. This vital choice entails the break with all of the above and forgetting oneself to assume the new order without any conditions.

This fulfillment is only fully abided by the female protagonists of Gala's novels (*The Turkish Passion* , *Beyond the Garden* , *The Outskirts of God* and *The Water Papers*) (Gala, 1996). These women have in common their courage to enter "gently into the shadow" that will await them after crossing the garden: "Women are more capable of loving than men and of giving themselves totally. Man is more than watertight compartments. The woman is capable of risking everything so that love comes and satisfies her, enlightens her, and kills her, if necessary, with flames (Arce-Sainz, 2015). Thus, in *More Beyond the garden*, despite having defended their heritage, their social status and their exemplary family, aristocrat Palmira Gadea travel to Rwanda and will remain there living in horror of war. Deyanira Alarcón, the famous writer who has decided to forget herself in Venice, will not hesitate when it comes to taking on the Italian mafia in *Los Papers de agua*. Desideria Oliván will voluntarily submit to Yamam in *The Turkish Passion* , thus attempting against her own life. And, in *The Outskirts of God* , Sister Nazareth will serve her community even after leaving the convent and thus accepting her destiny. All these characters show that "their capacity for renunciation and generosity in love is much greater than that of man." For Gala, "women are better created for the garden." Thus, the author's female characters "incorporate" the symbolic categories of the garden, assuming in the first instance the nature / artifice dichotomy of this space. Therefore, the female body, as an anthropomorphic space, also emerges as a space of meaning, assuming the geographical, social functions and, above all, the psychological functionality that the garden represented. As Antonio Garrido Domínguez maintains, space is more than "the mere support or point of reference of the action, it is its true driving force" (de Antonio Domínguez, 1986).

2. THE BODY GARDEN

In the first place, the personal "dislocation" of these characters conditions that they do not fully develop a feeling of belonging to the exterior spaces. For example, Palmira Gadea, at the same time, "saw a disfigured and confused Seville", and her garden, "as an imitation, something not entirely tangible that stood between her and life." For her part, in *Las outskirts of God* , Sister Nazaret compares the city of Córdoba to an enemy who threatens to "jump over the moats of a fenced castle." (Gala, 1999) The danger that life in the city poses for her is opposed to the sensation reflected back pages, when Nazareth recognizes that through the walls of the convent she has felt the beat of a heart. Likewise, in *La passion turca* , three years after her connection with Ramiro, Desideria walks through unknown areas of Huesca admitting "feeling like a silkworm inside its cocoon." Finally, in *Los papers de agua* , Deyanira leaves Madrid after the death of her son to go to write the book that will open a gap in her successful literary career. The place chosen to write it, Alhaurín el Grande, her place of origin, will not be the place where she wishes to stay either (Schweickart, 1996).

This "dislocation" in the environment is underlined by the "ignorance" of his body, since the body also has a referential function according to Álvarez Méndez:

“Proxemic theories have studied the way in which the body projects our spatial values and affects social relationships, since it experiences and transmits space in a peculiar way. But it should not be forgotten, in addition, that the human body has been and is closely related to the spatial dimension, since since ancient times it has been exposed as a stylistic simile of space. A space that can be observed described and traveled, since man occupies a concrete place and dies through it, but, at the same time, he himself constitutes an analogical model of the universe” (Alvarez-Mendez, 2002).

In relation to this idea, Cándida E. Vivero maintains that the body exhibits an «identity load of ethnicity, religion, geopolitics, language, sex, gender and age. Therefore, the body, or rather the treatment that the body receives, determines its relationship with the world and conditions the way the world is seen. In the case of these protagonists, the lack of relationship with the environment is also evident in their own body, establishing in it a double deficiency: sexual inactivity and the impossibility of motherhood. In *The Turkish Passion*, the sexual relationship between Ramiro and Desideria has failed since their wedding night, despite how much she wants her husband. It is curious how much less Desideria's sexual awakening coincides with his honeymoon in Cartagena de Indias. The discovery of a new landscape coincides with that of her own body:

“We saw exotic birds, gray pelicans (I understood that they were called pelicans), waters to which the different kinds of corals tinged with prodigious shades; an aquarium with untold fish, with large turtles and small sharks. We saw plants that looked like vegetables, and plants that looked like animals. (...) Ramiro and I looked at each other with such intensity that the world was reduced to us. I felt his hand slide, with extreme softness, down my earlobe, down my neck, down my arm, and I also felt it in my heart. Until then I had not known what desire was” (Schweickart, 1996).

Despite the fact that they manage to consummate the marriage, she comes to yearn for the honeymoon to end as soon as possible due to the scarcity of sexual relations that, months later, will be relegated to Saturdays. After a while, Desideria tries to remedy the failure of her marriage by redirecting her desire to the experience of motherhood. But unlike her friends, she cannot get pregnant because Ramiro is not fertile. However, Desideria decides to communicate to her friends that it is she who cannot have children. In this way, she consciously turns her body into a prison that prevents her from projecting her desire to be a mother and lover. Likewise, in *The Outskirts of God*, the vow of chastity that Sister Nazareth has taken implies total ignorance of her body. One afternoon, when the rain stops, he goes out to the garden to splash in puddles with bare feet. Despite being "concentrated on her earthly and immediate joy of splashing her habits held mid-leg," (Gala, 1999) the surprised look of an asylee reminds her that his behavior is not typical of the rule that one day he decided to abide by. In that same garden the new building is being raised, with which Diego Bastida - the man with whom Nazaret will fall in love - is responsible for its construction. On the other hand, in *Los papers de agua*, Deyanira Alarcón discovers that her husband and editor is homosexual after the death of their son. She takes refuge in her work and chooses to release sexual desire through masturbation, what she calls autosexuality: “(...) the habit of autosexuality had settled, widely and comfortably, between my legs: excellent handicrafts pure” (Gala, 2008). Finally, Palmira Gadea, star of more than the garden is in full menopause grazing a depressive state. There is a physical change even going through a cosmetic surgery operation, whatever it is before losing her "womanhood." Palmira, like the rest of the married protagonists, recognizes that "Willy [her husband] is a brother" for her, emphasizing the fact that "he was never a great lover (...). And now it is more mechanical than before”. However, she has not lost her sexual desire as evidenced by her flirtations with her son's friends and the relationship that she will later maintain with a man younger than her.

Second, the body is also configured as a space through which a social discourse is articulated. The physiognomy welcomes and embodies the actions undertaken by the individual and the events that happen to him in the course of time. Hence it can not escape, as Lluís Duch hold and Joan-Carles Mèlich from anthropology - the question of the body:

“A body that is not simply an objectified and objectifiable artifact, but a form of presence that, in a better or worse way, radically affects all the moments and all the situations of its existence, and that, in the course of the biographical journey of each person will have to express themselves symbolically. From here on, the human body reveals itself ("metamorphoses" into) corporeity" (Ibanez, 1993).

This symbolic functionality makes us aware that "the human body - or what we call "corporeity "" allows us to position ourselves and install ourselves as actors or actresses in the world - . These researchers consider the human world a "representational world" in which each "human character" is configured based on their relationships and experiences. Furthermore, the fact that her body stands as her only "form of presence" makes her the "privileged setting" that allows her to "construct multiple characters."

Taking into account all these observations, the female characters of *Gala* also disguise the insubstantiality of their daily lives by adapting or, better, accepting their environment in each case. The use they make of their own image is very emphatic based on the clothes, postures or gestures they adopt. For example, Desideria Oliván is aware that Ramiro's elections have determined her silence. Her wedding dress was "a gift from her and to her liking (...) for me a little too impressive." And some time later he specified that the diminutive Desi refers to the name of Désirée, since Desideria is "too small-town for Madrid" Similarly, in her first appearance, Palmira Gadea talks with her husband's brother pretending to "distract himself by balancing his low-cut shoe on his right foot with his bare heel". However, late in the conversation, he suffocates imagining receiving a kiss from his brother-in-law, which is why "his shoe slipped off his foot". This and other details illuminate a possible dismantling of the device created by Palmira. The characterization of the character elaborated in the first pages reveals that the same woman who exhibits the emerald that "flashes on her ring finger" also hides "with what enthusiasm" she cuts the roses in the morning and how she cooks "the sirloin and the mousse of chocolate" for food. Still, the aristocrat reaffirms her role at the end of the chapter when she does not hesitate to ask the butler what they are going to eat. Ultimately, both accept social rules and heteronormative patterns derived from a lack of economic and emotional autonomy. However, Desideria's disengagement contrasts with Palmira's self-absorption. The obsessive fixation on herself delays the discovery of her husband's infidelity and the depression that her son is suffering. Finally, the death of the young man will determine Palmira's decision to sell the house of Santo Tirso and her beloved garden that so much effort involved maintaining. That was "the last push that is always necessary to grasp the last influence of life"; to bloom, like a garden, in "the last spring" (Gala, 1996).

Therefore, as has been seen so far, the body symbolically shows the psychological state of the characters also attributed to the garden. In this way, the locus agrestis articulates the sexual desire of the protagonists despite the apparent well-being caused by the locus amoenus, which is nothing but a hortus conclusus. The body becomes a prison in which they cannot satisfy their personal desire to fulfill themselves as mothers and as lovers. But the knowledge of the beloved implies the discovery of the body, the assumption of the last function: the potager garden. This change brings with it the abandonment of the garden (Istanbul / Venice / Madrid / Gihara) and a metaphorical displacement of the inner journey of the protagonists. Following Domenico Nucera, "you start to change, (...) you move away from your own customs so that a part of yourself dies and at the same time to allow a new one to be born." The transfer of the garden is a progressive process that brings the rediscovery of one's own body through

the body of the other. So, with this distancing, the symbolic dimension of the flag body is not a metaphorical function but an expressive one of the character's state. Faced with the characterizing function of geographic space, anthropomorphic space reveals per se the relocation of the subject, who becomes self-aware of himself because he wants and feels desired. From that inflection, the female character discards another space that is not the one that is linked to the body of the loved one.

3. LEAVING THE GARDEN

Throughout the literary tradition, the journey has always functioned as a correlate of the change experienced by the character who undertakes it. Nucera investigates the etymological root of the verb "to depart", from the Latin *pars*, that is, fraction, and argues that, a priori, this verb refers to death. But that same root - he adds - articulates the verb "give birth", that is, birth. Taking into account the polysemy of the term "depart", the author also reflects on the noun "voyage" which, he explains, is a debtor of the Provençal *viatge*, from *viaticum*, a Latin word that indicates the provisions for the journey:

“For a trip to be such, it is not enough to consider the pure displacement made by an individual from one place to another, but it is necessary to observe what has fueled their journey, what has been the exchange that has taken place along the way: In other words, how the experience of the trip, that is, the discovery of the "other place", has been received and transformed.

While it is true that travel and discovery go hand in hand, it is also true that the trip, if it ever occurs, is only the excuse. Displacement, better still, the eviction of oneself is unavoidable to discover one's own identity. The permanence of the travel resource in postmodernity only emphasizes the need to start over for the misplaced characters presented by the current Spanish narrative according to Sánchez Dueñas:

“The theme of flight and travel with its inherent charges of alienation, anguish, isolation, bewilderment, search for identity and loneliness function as a link with one of the main plot features and discursive parameters of postmodernity, which is the crisis of the subject, the internal conflicts of the people and the vital anxieties that oppress the consciences and the lives of the individuals in society” (Gala, 2002).

However, according to Sánchez Dueñas, it is not lost on us that the trip is not always pleasant. Hence the last etymological contribution of Nucera, who also reminds us that the word "to travel", in English to travel, is related to the "suffering" that the one who departs will encounter on the road (Gnisci, 2002).

Following the sociologist Anthony Giddens, if the crisis of the subject is internal, the journey towards the renewed identity will also be. For this reason, the (re) construction of the "I" is "internally referential":

The 'identity' of the self is not a distinctive feature, not even a collection of features possessed by the individual. It is the self reflexively understood by the person based on his biography. Here identity supposes continuity in time and space: but the identity of the self is that continuity reflexively interpreted by the agent. (...) The ability to use the "self" in changing contexts, characteristic of all known cultures, is the most elementary feature of reflex conceptions of personality (Flecha, 1999).

The author follows the studies of the psychotherapist Janette Rainwater who is also committed to the evaluation of his own biographical journey as well as its causes and consequences. This kind of "autotherapy" reviews the past and structures the future of the individual, whose continuity of the "I" will be reflected in this exhibition. Although this practice subsumes the control of time by the narrator, the control of space is effected through the body, what Rainwater calls body consciousness:

The author presents body consciousness as a means to build a differentiated self, and not to dissolve the ego. The experience of the body is a way of uniting the self as an integrated whole that allows the individual to say: "This is where I live".

Therefore, even the displacement of the individual will not seek the establishment of the identity of the "I". Or he will do it as long as his own reflective operation is projected on his body, making it the only possible space for the individual's self-identification. For Giddens, who admits that "the self is naturally embodied", the body is not just a "physical entity that we" possess ": it is a system of action, a mode of practice." Furthermore, the body, as a border space, presents a setback: it is the place that keeps the "I" safe, but it is also the territory that endangers it, because the "I" is symbolically exposed through the body. After all, the journey always leads us towards otherness, but that otherness does not have to be a geographical destination. Nor does the journey end with arrival then, perhaps, having arrived the real departure begins. Only the body will then accuse a journey that is not geographical but biographical. Let's not forget that the body is the first place we inhabit. And also the last one.

When the female characters of Gala set out on the journey, they were not particularly excited about their destination. On the outskirts of God, Nazareth finds Madrid snowed in, but this "kind welcome" causes him to cry not because of the "beauty of so much whiteness", but because of his feeling of "incommunicability and helplessness." (Gala, 1999) Let's not forget that she requests the transfer to distance herself from Diego Bastida. Instead, Desideria is forced to travel to Istanbul, "a city devoid of enchantment" (Gala, 2008). Deyanira also shows a certain distrust in Los Papers de Agua when she arrives in Venice. The presence as a deceptive mirage, an undoubtedly beautiful place that "silently destroys itself." Palmira is the only protagonist who leaves her garden excited and determined; but despite the fact that the beauty of Kigali "made an effort to give it a particular welcome", the protagonist dreams of the fusion of the Rwandan and Andalusian landscapes: "Rwanda and Santo Tirso were the same thing." In the case of the last three, the perception of these places changes with the making of contact with the loved ones - all of them foreigners - who will embody the true discovery of the trip. The aristocrat thinks that the doctor Bernardo Mayer has "a deep, enveloping and persuasive voice. So much so that, contemplating the landscape through the window, there were moments when Palmira let her voice surround her" (Gala, 1999). In the case of Desideria, "suddenly, a deep, welcoming male voice, in Castilian Spanish with an identifiable accent, filled everything." When directed his gaze to Yamam, the tour guide, dizzy invaded by the "certainty that the most important thing in my life just happened." Finally, Deyanira, who loses consciousness with Aldo's nudity, says she hears the call of the male sex and with penetration discovers a new landscape:

"I saw the sea serene and at the same time rough and calm again (...) and I thought with joy that my life had been a desert with fake oases and I got lost in a vegetation oozing with slippery and tasty juices and there were lights that warmed and fruity and fleshy turgencies and a trunk hard and tender, I never imagined that my tongue caressed and devoured my mouth without ceasing hunger and I felt the heat and shared sweats and my body was another and another" (Gala, 2008).

Finally, the writer says she experiences a kind of "transmutation" and abandons herself to a "sea in which she was shipwrecked, receiving a hot rain from above" before feeling "annulled and lost." In the same way, after meeting Yamam, Desideria changes her impression of Istanbul. Yamam's description is mixed with his description of the city during a panoramic tour. In addition, the first physical contact occurs during a guided visit to the church of San Salvador de Cora. When the group raises their heads to admire some mosaics, Desideria responds to a bite from Yamam by feeling her upright sex. He responds to this gesture by adding that "Istanbul must be seen from everywhere (...). Here we are looking at it from behind.

But all of him is beautiful. Like Deyanira, the first time Desideria makes love to Yamam, she feels that her life is justified by "getting there." The adverb of place refers to the body of the beloved, who having found it, paradoxically, she finds herself "lost and could not stop being so." The union of the two is defined as "a country for two in which only one can fit (...) an unbeliever in any heaven and in any hell other than his own." (Gala, 1996).

The long-awaited potager garden seems to them like a paradise sponsored by the union of the bodies of lover and loved. When Nazareth and Diego finally begin a loving relationship and, therefore, a sexual relationship, she claims to learn through sex "what is heaven according to the Apocalypse and the Psalms and the Song of Songs." In her case, Deyanira feels that she has found a mutual paradise: "Aldo's unforgettable body ... Why am I not convinced today that it is not absurd to think that the true Eden is where we are?" Isabel Martínez Moreno includes Gala's conception of the Edenic space in her study of this author's dramatic work. She defines it as "the territory of the Ideal, whose conquest justifies the existence of the individual" (Moreno, 1994). The researcher synthesizes the meaning of Eden in two concepts: freedom and fullness. So, in the first instance, the female body represents these notions not only by the consummation of sexual desire, but also by the unfolding of the loving feeling that unites body and soul. Consequently, to the four categories established by Martín is added the Edenic garden. For example, when Palmira begins a life in common with Bernardo, she can "walk around the house naked, or open the shared bathroom naked for him. Neither of them had anything to hide from the other." Both agree on the same perception of love, which does not consist in "reducing the universe to the size of eyes, nor in seeing it through only them." Thus, Palmira manages to reconcile with her own body, accepting the climacteric, although she silently wishes to have a child with Bernardo. In the same way, Nazareth does the same with his own and, therefore, also with his soul. Together with Diego she becomes aware of her body and through the body she becomes aware of herself:

"It has been, in the extremes, me as never; as nobody has been my body. In the solidarity of love and the isolation torn apart by death, when something in me wanted to expire, the body fought the greatest assaults; when something wanted to close my eyes and conclude, my body resisted".

The body that channels sexual pleasure and loving feelings also metabolizes the pain of loss and uprooting or, in other words, expulsion from paradise.

D. CONCLUSION

Throughout these pages it has been shown how the physical dimension of the character can be constituted as a narrative space in which events are ordered. As we pointed out, according to Natalia Álvarez Méndez, the space in the novelistic genre brings together a series of functions that, beyond reflecting a location, determine a referential, social and psychological hyperspace with broad symbolic potential. In the whole of Antonio Gala's narrative work, the garden emerges as the symbolic place par excellence, understood as a border place between a space considered alien and the conquest of one's own space. Gala's garden represents the artifice in which the life of its female protagonists unfolds, whose identity will not be realized until they undertake an initiatory journey that leads them - as one of the author's titles says - beyond the garden. M^a Amor Martín Fernández explored the symbolism of Gala's garden through four topics: the locus amoenus (pleasant space), the hortus conclusus (closed space), the locus agrestis, (wild space) and, finally, the potager garden (Renaissance space). To this relationship we have added a last space by the hand of Isabel Martínez Moreno, the Edenic Garden (space of plenitude and freedom).

Throughout this research we have established a parallel study linking two narratological categories, space and character, in order to demonstrate how in Gala's novels the female body

also reveals the space of meaning. The physical dimension of the protagonists hosts a symbolic dimension through the deployment of the geographical, social and psychological functions attributed to the garden through the topics studied. These *locus communis* are reflected in anthropomorphic spatiality - "I look at myself in the garden as in a mirror," says Palmira Gadea - thus recreating a body garden. The body, like the garden, represents the border between the individual and the world; between what is own and what is foreign; between death and life. The abandonment of the garden or the awareness of her body, supposes for the female characters of Gala a search for paradise in the arms of the loved one, being the conjunction of both bodies the only space in which they wish to stay. The exterior geographical spaces and the interior architectural spaces testify to the foray of the protagonists in a new, previously unknown order. But only the body, the last space of love that justifies the realization of the "I" in these novels, accuses the actions and events of the characters on their journey to life. And on her journey back to death.

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