

INTERdisciplina

Volume 2 / Number 3 / May – August 2014

Articles published online in their original language

Dossier

- *Writing, Body, and Voice in Puga's Diary of Pain* 269
Sonia Cejudo
- *Embodiment and Voice Hearing* 295
Lisa Blackman
- *O corpo estranho: Orgânico, demasiadamente orgânico.* 315
Paula Sibilía

Sonia Cejudo*

Writing, Body, and Voice in Puga's *Diary of Pain***

*I apologize for the handwriting,
but with my twisted hand I cannot write well*
C.H. —extract from a letter of a patient
with rheumatoid arthritis

Abstract | This paper analyzes the construction of an embodied subject in María Luisa Puga's *Diary of Pain*. Having as a benchmark psychoanalytical theories, it is noticed that the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis caused in Puga a feeling of dispossession of the body, which is reinforced when she finds difficult to communicate or express her suffering. Focusing on the process of writing, it is shown that while in the first entries Puga depicts herself as a passive and silent character, such conception changes as she continues writing about her experience of pain. At the end of the book, Puga represents herself not only as a writer in pain, but of pain. The aim is to demonstrate that, in *Diary of Pain*, although the feeling of dispossession leads to an explicit figuration of a disembodied subject, María Luisa Puga does embody her writing through her own literary voice.

269

Keywords | subjectivity – embodiment – writing – voice – pain

FAR MORE THAN a critique to the decartian subject, the affirmation of the embodiment of the subject frequently represents a form of pointing out one's own subjectivity. With a feminist focus, Luce Irigaray (1974), Hélène Cixous (1976) and Rosi Braidotti (2011) have encouraged a creative writing which emphasizes the importance of the body in the constitution of the subject: "By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display [...] Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time" (Cixous 1976, 880). From this perspective, the construction of an embodied subject in some way would depend on the recognition of the body and the will to speak about it. However, what happens within the bodies in pain? Indeed, the experience of

* Utrecht Universit t The Netherlands. E-mail: cejudo.sonia@gmail.com

** I am grateful with Dr. Marta Zarzycka and Dr. Rita Monticelli for their support while writing this paper.

pain puts at stake a power of speech and a straightforward embodiment. On the one hand, as David Le Breton affirms, "Pain is a moment of existence where the person has the impression that his body is other than his" (1995, 24; translation mine). On the other hand, pain has been commonly labeled as incommunicable (Breton 1995), inexpressible (Scarry 1985), and that which is out of language (Rorty in Arias 2007).

The literary work of María Luisa Puga (Mexico 1944-2004) offers us an example of the intersection between writing, subjectivity, body and pain.¹ In 1990, Puga reflected on her job as a writer in *With a Whole Body* [De Cuerpo Entero] and "The writer that one wanted to be" [El escritor que uno quería ser].² In the latter, Puga declares that "[she] can't separate the oral language from the written one" (1990b, 15). Certainly, her literary voice³ is marked by simplicity, an avoidance of long subordinate clauses and a frequent use of colloquial expressions, giving the impression that the narrator is talking. In *With a Whole Body*, Puga acknowledges the importance of the body and her daily life in the moment of writing. The author admits that her books are nourished with her personal experiences, which "dilute and flow [...] until they become a body of writing" (19). After discussing her first steps as a writer and the difficulties that she endured when working on her first novel, she concludes: "Anyway, the space of writing is in oneself" (56).

Eleven years later, in 2001, the author was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, a chronic disease in which the immune system attacks the tissues of the body, causing pain in the joints, inflammation and handicaps (Arthritis Foundation 2013). From this experience *Diary of Pain* (2004) was born. In Puga's words: "There have been so many adaptations that I have done to my life (physically, logistically and psychologically), that I came up with the idea of writing this *Diary of Pain*" (Cover of the audiobook, 2004). In addition, in an interview with Eve Gil she confesses: "When one has an experience like this one [painful] one must write it, otherwise it remains there, stuck" (quoted in López 2006, 235; translation mine). The diary⁴ is conformed by one hundred entries which have no date

1 All the translations from Spanish to English of Puga's books are mine.

2 This phrase in Spanish also alludes to persons who are self-controlled, thorough and level-headed. One makes decisions with the whole body.

3 I am using literary voice as defined by Vincent Casaregola: "[the literary] 'voice' describes the effect, on writer and reader alike, of experiencing a unique personality evoked from the text (the result of stylistic choices)" (2009, 68).

4 María Luisa Puga's *Diary of Pain* has been labelled as an autobiographical text, a fictional one or a combination of both. In addition, although Puga used the word "diary" in the title, the book has been identified as an essay (Preiffer 2008) and as a novel (Zaldívar 2007). As I have developed elsewhere, the word "diary" is significant through out the book, therefore I prefer to maintain this term understanding it in words of Rosario Ferré: "the diary is a

but a title. With her characteristic literary voice, through the book Puga constructs a first person narrator and her inseparable companion, Pain; she speaks about her routines, the adaptations that she has made in her life, the medical appointments and her writing.

Considering that María Luisa Puga tried to write with her whole body and about her pain, whilst at the same time taking into account that pain might be inexpressible and an experience which changes the relation of the person to the body, in this paper I approach *Diary of Pain* guided by three questions: How does Puga describe her body? Which difficulties does she endure when trying to communicate her pain to other people?

How do her power of speech and physical capability affect her subjectivity? To answer these questions, I use a psychoanalytical benchmark based on Lacan's and Ettinger's theories. My aim is to show that in *Diary of Pain* the construction of an embodied subject goes beyond the will of speaking and writing about the body, but it lays more on the ability of expressing pain with an own literary voice. In my analysis I trace the evolution

The construction of an embodied subject goes beyond the will of speaking and writing about the body, but it lays more on the ability of expressing pain with an own literary voice

of a subject who feels dispossessed of her body and has difficulties speaking about her suffering, to a subject who, through her voice, embodies her writing and achieves depiction herself as a writer of pain. The paper is structured in three sections.

The first one, "The body begins to be in pain," focuses on the descriptions of the body and the (in)communicability of pain in the first half of *Diary of Pain*. I analyze how Puga describes her body and the meetings with other people that she reports, noticing that there are figurations of a disembodied subject. Based on Lacan's theory of the construction of the subject, I argue that the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis caused in Puga a feeling of dispossession of the body, leading her to reject her body. Such feeling can be noticed in the way Puga speaks about her body: she objectifies it, attributes it bad feelings and speaks of it in third person. In addition, I show that Puga stresses that it is difficult to

genre halfway between psychoanalysis and artistic creation, a frontier where the intellectual and objective knowledge of an external reality is merged with the subjective knowledge of an inside reality." (quoted in Zaldívar 2007, 133-134; translation mine) In this sense, when speaking about the subject of *Diary of Pain*, I do not refer strictly to María Luisa Puga, but to the subject that she constructs under her name.

explain her pain to other people and she rejects any medical approach to pain. In the conversations that she reports, Puga's feelings of dispossession can also be noticed for she gives voice to the doctors, but not to herself. She depicts herself as a passive and quiet subject, turning her attention to the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

In the second section, titled "The process of writing *Diary of Pain*," I point out the difficulties that Puga endured while writing the book. My analysis is based on the notion of the voice as an analytical tool: Lacan's concept of the voice as object a, an element that marks the limit of that which is thinkable, and Ettinger's concept of the voice as matrixial link a, an element that creates "unconscious meanings." I notice that in *Diary of Pain* Puga introduces one character, Pain, which acquires the role of voice object a and voice matrixial link a. I argue that in the entries 1 to 36, Pain is the voice object a. Puga unsuccessfully tries to describe this character. Pain represents the limit of that which Puga can understand and, consequently, she is hampered in making sense of her life with rheumatoid arthritis. The entry 37 marks the transition between Pain as voice object a to Pain as voice matrixial link a. Puga begins to speak with Pain. I notice that Pain as matrixial link a offers new analytical elements. As of the entry 38 Puga plays with the spelling of the words, uses more irony, and is less argumentative. In addition, instead of describing the character Pain, she invents stories with him.

In the third section, "The writer of pain", I focus on the descriptions of the body and the (in)communicability of pain in the last part of *Diary of Pain*. I analyze the last descriptions that Puga gives of her body as well as two meetings with other people that she reports. I notice that Puga still experiences feelings of dispossession for she continues to speak of her body in third person. Nonetheless she is no longer a passive person who focuses her attention on the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis. Instead she stresses her power of managing uncomfortable conversations. Furthermore, Puga mentions her creative writing workshops and a literary conference that she attends in order to position herself not only as a writer in pain but of pain. I conclude that Puga closes her book depicting herself as a person who writes about pain with her own voice and with her whole body.

The body begins to hurt: the figures of disembodiment in the first half of *Diary of Pain*

Lacan explains that a child becomes a subject when he sees himself on the mirror and enters the linguistic system. In this stage "the sole view of the full human body gives the subject an imaginary mastery [maîtrise] of his body" (1975,

93; italics mine; translation mine). Lacan understands mastery in two senses: as a possession and as a skill, a capacity to control and to do. Thus, a child becomes a subject when he realizes that he has a body and that he can control it. The mirror stage coincides with the period in which the child learns to perform and master the activities of daily living (ADLs), i.e. activities that are oriented toward taking care of one's own body and enable basic survival, like walking, dressing, going to the bathroom, taking a bath, etc., (AOTA 2009). Hence the subject also thinks that he can master his body when he is able to perform such activities. In opposition, Lacan argues that when there is a reduction of mastery, the person perceives his body as something "which escapes from him" (2004, 104; italics mine, translation mine). The feeling that something is escaping might be interpreted as a feeling of loss. There is a transition from possession of the body to dispossession of it.

Diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, María Luisa Puga underwent this process of dispossession. In the first half of the book, the feeling is present when Puga speaks about three symptoms of her disease: pain in the joints, the change of her physical aspect, and more emphatically her walking disability. In the following paragraphs I explain why Puga felt dispossessed of her body, noticing that in these passages, Puga refers to her body in five forms: a. She speaks of her body in third person: the body, instead of my body; b. She objectifies her body, saying that the walking stick is her arm; c. She attributes it bad feelings, qualifying it as grotesque; d. She speaks as if she existed out of her body: I see my person in a wheelchair; e. A combination of these.

Puga describes the pain in the joints as "pinches" or "jalones", a Spanish expression which refers to someone pulling something towards him. Thus, the "jalones" alludes to a loss of control of the body. When having rheumatoid arthritis, the patient has the certainty of experiencing pain in the joints, but he cannot guess in which part of the body, in which moment of the day, or for how long he is going to experience them. Although Puga more or less learns how her body hurts, she cannot know where and for how long it is going to hurt. The unpredictability of the pinches makes Puga feel that she is neither possessing her body nor controlling it: "the body is not steady" (9). This loss creates in Puga a need to re-possess the body, therefore each morning begins with a "slow survey of the body in order to know where one does not have to go" (17; italics mine). In these quotes, it can be noticed that Puga speaks about her body in third person, marking her feelings of dispossession.

In addition to the unpredictability of the pinches, Puga reflects upon her inability to recognize her own body in the mirror. Puga does not discuss whether she is less beautiful than previously or not. Instead, when speaking about her physical modifications, she focuses her attention on her posture and on her

legs. The pinches, her physical image, and her walking handicap are normally stressed in the same phrase: "I see my person [...] propelling with the chair, with Pain in the right shoulder [...] it's that... it's not me. And to be sincere, I am not the one limping, bent and with the face rubbed" (62). Indeed, the walking disability is Puga's biggest feeling of dispossession of her body. Puga recurrently speaks about the operation that might enable her to walk again, the walking stick, the wheelchair and the desk chair (which she uses at home). The repeated references to the operation point out Puga's profound desire to use her legs again. Even if in some occasions she stresses that she does not want to undergo the surgery for it might entail new pains, she constantly discusses what the doctors say about the operation. Moreover, when Puga mentions the chairs and the walking stick, it can be noticed a strong feeling of dispossession of the body.

The descriptions of the chairs are marked by painful feelings of shame which, Kay Toombs explains, "are endemic among patients with disabilities" (1993, 85). In his analysis of the body in illness, Toombs argues with Sartre that the person experiences her body "as 'being-for-the-Other' [...] even if no one is actually looking at him" (1993, 85). Despite being alone, the person might be ashamed for he has "the sense that the others are viewing one's body in a negative fashion. Consequently, the sense of alienation from the body [...] is particularly profound" (1993, 85; italics in the original). In the passages where Puga describes the chairs, she looks at herself from the perspective of the other, she speaks as if she existed outside of her body. In addition, the painful shame can be noticed in the fact that whilst she attributes herself bad feelings, the chairs are labeled with positive characteristics: "The delicate chair goes on carrying something ignominious" (43).

Puga asserts that she feels bad about being in a wheelchair because walking is a "natural" human capacity (68). This loss of naturalness entails in Puga a feeling of shame and dispossession: she looks at herself from the perspective of the other (she speaks of herself in third person) and attributes to herself bad feelings. In the entry 23, she compares her inability to walk with a lame dog. In this passage, Puga links the dog with its body because she has the impression that the dog can master its limp. She transforms the dog's handicap into capability. In opposition, Puga delinks herself from her body for she is unable to use her legs as a "natural" human: "[The dog] masters perfectly its limp and soon its ability astonishes us [...] The chair has fearless traces, but it is out of proportion, almost in the realm of the grotesque, for there is a human figure settled there" (23-24). Seated on the chair, Puga feels grotesque, that is she feels that she distorts the natural (Merriam Webster Dictionary). She believes that her movements and, consequently her body, are not hers: "On the chair one moves less [...] Not naturally. Not like stretching an arm or stretching a leg. Not our

movements" (23). Far more than a "natural" capacity, walking is a daily life activity which guarantees the independency and survival of the person. Hence to be in a wheelchair leads Puga to an extreme state of dispossession. Puga mentions that she is no longer able to drive or swim, and that she cannot enter her studio or her house freely.

In addition to the chairs, one can notice Puga's feelings of dispossession of the body in her descriptions of the walking stick. In these entries, Puga objectifies her body. She describes the walking stick as "her telescopic arms" or an "extension of her arm." This objectification of the body, Kay Toombs explains, "results from a forced attention to physical function and the awareness of some impairment or other physical change" (1993, 75). Indeed, it is important to notice that although Puga is objectifying her arms in the descriptions of the walking stick, in fact, she is forcing her attention to her walking disability. Seated in the wheelchair, Puga cannot reach the pans in the kitchen or the objects on the floor, thus the walking stick is surmounting the incapacity of bending. This mastery of the body is what leads Puga to speak positively about herself, in opposition to the descriptions of the chairs: "the walking stick hoists the shoe—a thing that should be similar to a maritime maneuver—and places the stubborn object in your lap" (58).

The feeling of mastery can also be noticed when Puga describes how she makes the bed. Puga mentions the "list of materials" that she needs for accomplishing her task: one bed, two sheets, two pillows, one walking stick and one desk chair. In this entry Puga gives priority to the walking stick and describes it as "the extension of her arm." Whilst the chair only gives her access to "one side of the bed" (18), the walking stick enables her to reach the other side and extend the sheets. Puga asserts that the task sometimes "requires several intents and is a little painful" (19). Nonetheless, since the walking stick helps her to surmount her disability, she describes her movements with positive attributes: "Make your movements brief, soft, almost pleasurable. To make a bed can be like making a master piece" (18). Despite the optimistic descriptions of herself when speaking about the walking stick, in these passages the feeling of dispossession of the body is still evident: Puga speaks about herself in third person.

Until here, I have argued that the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis provoked in Puga a feeling of dispossession of her body. In the first half of the book, this feeling hampers the configuration of an embodied subject. As Linda Fisher explains: "[The] 'normal' embodiment is construed not only in terms of appearance, but also importantly in terms of capability and functionality" (2010, 91). Feeling that she cannot control her body, Puga is prone to radically reject it or only partially accept it. On the one hand, Puga delinks herself entirely from her body referring to it as "the body" instead of "my body"; or referring to it as

an object which is not hers: “seated on the chair there is an ignominious figure.” On the other hand, when she accepts her body, it is done in a partial way for she objectifies it, pointing out her disability. I will continue my analysis showing that this feeling of dispossession also appears when Puga addresses the difficulties that she endures when trying to speak with other people about her pain.

Lacan explains that “first of all that which we have to present ourselves among the others [is] our body” (2004, 104; translation mine) but we also present ourselves through language for the self is a linguistic self (Lacan 1973). We speak with the people who surround us, we share our ideas, we have discussions,

*Pain resists language
because the words seem
to be too short to describe
one’s painful situation*

we interact with others through language. Elaine Scarry coincides with Lacan in the fact that the self is embodied in language (1987, 49) thus she argues that “whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language”

(1987, 4). Pain resists language because the words seem to be too short to describe one’s painful situation. When one explains to another person how one feels, there is the impression that the others cannot or do not understand. Since the self is embodied in language, the impossibility to get through to others also causes a feeling of dispossession. From being useful, the language becomes useless. The words, which previously helped the person to communicate and express himself, are no longer enough to express his feelings. In addition, Scarry argues that in the moments in which a person wants to express his pain there are two registers: the register of the person who is in pain, and the register of the person who is not in pain. On the one hand, the sufferer has the “certainty” that he is in pain because he is feeling it. On the other hand, the addressee, since he is not experiencing pain, can have no certainty.

In the first half of *Diary of Pain* the unsharability of pain appears explicitly when María Luisa Puga notes that she cannot share her pain with other people. In addition, the unsharability of pain is also addressed implicitly for Puga barely writes about how she interacts with other people, and when she does so, she always draws her attention to the fact that she is not walking. These passages are significant for they show how the unsharability of pain is related with the feeling of dispossession, hampering the construction of an embodied subject.

Puga stresses her incapability to explain her pain to other people in the entry 12, which is titled “When the others speak about him.” In this passage, of barely fourteen lines, it can be noticed that the person who has no pain might be dubious about other person’s pain (Scarry 1987). Puga fashions a conversation and

mentions two questions that the persons ask her: “Did it hurt you?” and “Right now is it hurting you?” (14). These questions are marked with uncertainty. If the question is in past tense, it means that the person is no longer in pain; if the question includes the adverb “right now” it opens the possibility that in the future the pain is gone. How to explain that pain is always there? How to express that one is certain that pain is always there? Puga finds herself at lost and, although she tries to explain how she feels, she has the impression that nobody understands her: “What a mood, people tell me, what a strength. I am surprised again. They become more unknown than Pain” (15; italics mine). In this passage, rather than affirming that she has the words to explain her pain, Puga depicts herself as a person who fails to express her pain, remarking on her feelings of dispossession.

The resistance of pain to language can also be noticed in the entry 29, which is titled “Specialized explanations.” In this passage Puga understands any medical explanation of her pain as futile. In this entry she reconstructs a conversation with a physician. Trying to be emphatic, the doctor explains his patient what rheumatoid arthritis is and why the “pinches” can be experienced in the whole body. However, Puga loses interest. Instead of acknowledging what the doctor tells her and how it helps her to understand her disease, she begins to deconstruct the medical terms, hinting that the conversation with the physician increases her feeling of dispossession of her body:

ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS.⁵ Wow! what a cute term, I wish I could have that. It makes me think, well, feel, those school erasers called ‘soft erasers.’ How they glided on the paper. How they vanished the trace of the pencil. That is exactly what Pain does [...] (28; capitals in the original).

However specialized, the medical explanations cannot give account of the pain that a person with rheumatoid arthritis undergoes. With the use of capital letters, Puga is emphasizing the absurdity of the medical term and, at the same time, pointing out the fact that she feels dispossessed of her body. Puga thinks that the pain that she experiences “erases” her body.

The feeling of dispossession of her body and the resistance of pain to language are highly accentuated when Puga reconstructs the discussions with the doctors about the possibility to undergo the operation. As I previously stressed, Puga deeply wishes to walk again and the surgery is a crucial mean to re-connect to her body. Nonetheless, she is part of a medical apparatus which, as Foucault

⁵ This term refers another kind of arthritis. It is not rheumatoid arthritis.

explains, blocks the possibility to create an empathetic relationship between patient and doctor. In his book *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault argues that in the medical appointments “doctors and patients do not occupy a place as of right; they are tolerated as disturbances that can hardly be avoided: the paradoxical role of medicine consists [...] in maintaining the maximum difference between them [...]” (2003, 9). Puga refers to the difference between patient and doctor vehemently. In these passages the impossibility to get through to the doctors and the feelings of dispossession that Puga endures can be traced. Puga barely mentions what she says during the visits to the doctors, pointing out that she finds it useless to explain how she feels. The medical appointment is the “unavoidable disturbance” to repossess her body. Furthermore, she only mentions the doctors’ negative attitudes towards her, specifically those ones which hamper her desire to walk:

Now you have the help of the wheelchair, you are not lacking of mobility. Why don’t you stay like that? [...]

—But... —I wanted to protest.

—Do your exercises, continue going to the pool and adapt your life (29).

In these passages, Puga gives little voice to herself; she barely relates what she answers or her rejoinders. Puga stresses the doctor’s disinterest or indifference towards her in order to point out her feelings of dispossession. But, I may ask again, while writing the book, did Puga also encounter the resistance of pain to language? Which others difficulties did Puga endure when trying to speak about her pain? I further develop these questions in the following section.

The process of writing: Pain as voice object a and matrixial link a

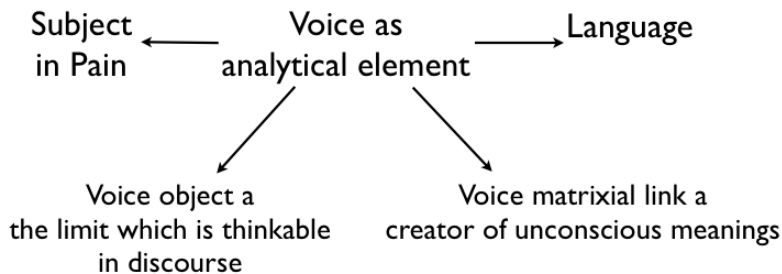
So far I have shown that rheumatoid arthritis provoked in Puga a feeling of dispossession. The pinches, the inflammation and her walking handicap entailed a loss of control of her body. In the first half of *Diary of Pain* the feeling of dispossession can be noticed in the way Puga speaks about her body: she dissociates from it or objectifies it. The feeling of dispossession is also present when Puga reflects upon the impossibility of getting through to others, either doctors or people who surround her, blocking the figuration of an embodied subject.

With *Diary of Pain*, Puga is precisely trying to surmount such feelings. As Molly Andrews notices, “Only when we can emplot our experiences [...] can we decipher meaning in the events of our lives” (2010, 153). Indeed, Puga never thought that pain was inexpressible for she had the desire to write a book about pain, and more precisely about her pain. In this section I show that Puga endured difficulty

to write about her pain, leading her to a moment of great anxiety and a fear of death. However, her desire to confirm herself as a writer led her to find new narrative tools and, at the same time, allowed her to cope with her feelings of dispossession and give a sense to her life. I will do so turning to Lacan's and Ettinger's concept of the voice as an analytical tool that can either point out an "impossibility of articulation in discourse" or create "unconscious meanings."

In his seminar on anxiety (2004), Lacan analyzes the constitution of the subject in the mirror stage—when the child sees her body and enters the linguistic system. In this seminar he explains a third element: the object *a*. For Lacan the object *a* is key in the constitution of the subject for it has the function to link the body with the language as well as the self with the language. Thus he considers that one of the modalities of the object *a* is the voice. Lacan did not fully develop the functions of the voice as object *a*, but this seminar paved the way to in-depth psychoanalytical studies about its characteristics.

In her article "Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis" Alice Lagaay explains that one of the functions of the voice as object *a* is to signify an "area of analytical impossibility [... the] voice is the empty placeholder that represents the limit of that which is thinkable or inexpressible in discourse" (2008, 60). The psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger has also revised Lacan's concept of the voice. She argues that besides being an object *a*, the voice can also be a matrixial link *a*. In this modality, one of the functions of the voice is to open "unconscious meanings" (2004, 187). Ettinger explains that the voice can be an alternation between a matrixial link *a* or an object *a*. Thus while in some moments the voice has a predominant role as object *a*, other times it has a predominant role as matrixial link *a*. We can sum up these considerations in the following scheme:



From the 1st to the 36th entry: the apparition of the voice as object *a*

At the beginning of *Diary of Pain*, María Luisa Puga lays out her situation. In the first entry "The form", Puga centers her attention on language, on the possibility

to describe and define what she feels and how she feels. In this entry, Puga tries to give form to her feelings: "It's itchiness, discomfort, impossible postures. It produces the feeling that the body is not steady. It's an unavoidable company [...]" (9). In the following entry, "The space", Puga centers her attention on her body and she mentions the word pain. Puga introduces her self, her body and pain: "We, my body and I, understand that the space is no longer us; it's neither of pain. And we must learn to share it" (10). This is the quest of *Diary of Pain*, how to explain what am I feeling? How to deal with this constant feeling of dispossession? How to make sense of life with this body which is no longer mine?

Facing this situation, the voice as object appears. Puga introduces two characters Pain and the writing. This objectification of pain and language, Elaine Scarry explains, is part of the process to cope with a painful situation: "pain [...] becomes an intentional state once it is brought into relation with the objectifying power of the imagination: through that relation, pain will be transformed from a wholly passive and helpless occurrence into a self-modifying and, when most successful, self-eliminating one" (164). In Puga, these characters are analytical tools, they are a form to represent the limit of that which she can think or understand.

The character Pain appears in the third entry, playing the role of an empty placeholder. Conceived as a person, Puga aims to describe his characteristics and his attitudes towards her in order to "recognize it, understand its height, its volume [and...] enclose it" (13). With this character, Puga tries to fill in the placeholder and to deal with her feelings of dispossession. She attempts to recognize and understand how she feels, and comprehend her new life with rheumatoid arthritis.

The writing appears in the entry 17 and it has two roles: to set out once again Puga's feeling of dispossession, and to reinforce the function of Pain as an empty placeholder. Whilst Pain has predominance with the suppression of the definite article (the), and the capitalization of the letter P, the writing has little importance with the smaller case w and the permanence of the definite article. Puga tries to construct a clear image of Pain, describing his personality and physical attributes. The writing instead remains an empty character. Puga never says what she looks like, what she does or what she likes. The writing is a sign of Puga's incapacity to give sense to her life. In the book, the writing cannot explain Puga's new situation: "I don't know what it means to be healed [...] That's why I say the writing because she is the one who cannot find the words to speak about a possible healed reality" (20). The writing as an analytical tool reinforces the idea that Pain represents the limit of that which is thinkable. Thus the writing disappears after the entry 35.

In these entries (1-36), Puga tends to be objective, methodic and analytical. The diary is formed like a sort of inventory. The title of the entry serves like a label of the content. Puga offers descriptions (the presence, the maliciousness) and classifications (types of mornings, the difference between melancholy and depression). In the entries, Pain appears as the other. His characterization varies but it is marked by a sentiment of rejection: he is laconic, misogynist, skinny, dark, the intruder, and a knight. He is a mute companion: "to carry Pain on one's back is like going out to nobody's land... well it is like going to a land that is of everybody except of oneself" (22). Although Puga wants to enclose Pain with her descriptions, Pain is only playing the role of voice object a: it is signifying a limit. Pain points out Puga's impossibility to understand her feelings of dispossession and give sense to a life with rheumatoid arthritis: "It's the lack of words [...] A moment of suspension in the vacuum. The vacuumed sense of the words." (20-21) This suspicion that, despite writing, Puga is neither understanding her life nor coping with the way she feels leads to a state of extreme anxiety and a fear of death.

The entry 37: the transition from voice object a and voice matrixial link a

Lacan argues that when a person feels that his body "escapes from him" a sentiment of anxiety can emerge. In an extreme point, this anxiety can be a fear of death (Breton 1995, 36-37) for "the subject is in relation with his lack" (Lacan 2004, 271; translation mine). The person feels that he can neither exist through his body nor through language. Paradoxically, the lack is the only thing which is present.

After the disappearance of the writing and the confirmation of Pain as object a moment of extreme anxiety can be noticed in the entry 37, called "There are worse things than prison." Puga begins the entry saying that she has not written for a long period and that Pain is looking at her. Pain is there as object a, he is the unthinkable. Thereafter the vacuum reappears: "I am back, well not exactly that, I am not back. I am here, but in the vacuum [...] All I can do is to compare it [the vacuum] with the anesthesia, it's like being anesthetized, not dead, only anesthetized, it feels so weird" (37). Puga relates such vacuum to the fact that the operation might not take place. The vacuum is worse than being in prison because it is more than isolation, the vacuum is a suppression of words, the ones that a writer should be able to master.

Indeed, Puga has been writing a book about pain however she is terribly doubtful that she can find sense in her life. It is not coincidental that Puga figures her situation as an anesthetized body. As Elaine Scarry explains, whilst in

normal conditions the self makes herself present through language, “in death the body is emphatically present while that more elusive part [the language] is so alarmingly absent that heavens are created to explain its whereabouts” (44). Puga underlines the fact that the anesthesia is not a total suppression of life for the writer can feel. However the anesthesia is also a state mimetic of death. If it not were for the vital signs, one could think that the person who is anesthetized is dead for the body is emphatically present while the language is alarmingly absent.

Furthermore, it is important to notice the change of the description of the vacuum. In the first instance, it is a lack of words, a loss of the linguistic self. In a second moment, it is like being anesthetized, a lack of the body. Hence when Puga feels that she is neither able to give sense to her life nor cope with her feelings of dispossession, she thinks that she is completely dead.

Pain is the object a. It is the empty placeholder. It represents the limit of that which can be understood in discourse. Nonetheless there is another function of the voice: it can be a matrixial link a and create “unconscious meanings.” The function of the voice as matrixial link a was gestated since the apparition of Pain. However it was not so evident, in the first section the voice as object a was predominating, and simply pointing out the limit. Despite Puga's descriptions and attempts to enclose Pain, the words lose sense until they become a vacuum in the entry 37. In this situation, the voice as matrixial link a appears strongly:

Pain didn't understand [...] Shut up, I said to him, I am going to try to explain: we were following the steps, these ones were marked, who knows by who but they were marked. It was like following a numbered path, very clear, although no one could see the total design, and suddenly the path was cut... no, it's very radical, the path was deflated. All you had walked just vanished. You could no longer see the line or the numbers. That, my dear Pain, is called vacuum [...] Pain looks at me astonished. He has me in front of him. He doesn't know what to do (37; italics mine).

In this fragment, Pain as matrixial link a represents a new analytical tool, which can be noticed in two changes. First, Pain is no longer the rejected other, but he is the “dear”. Second, this character is not a mute companion, but someone with whom Puga can talk, and in this dialogue an “unconscious meaning” emerges. While Puga tries to explain her feelings to Pain, the figuration of the vacuum changes again. Pain as matrixial link a transforms the vacuum into action. The author is in the vacuum but she is no longer anesthetized, she can speak and (meaningfully) walk. Puga perceives herself moving, and with this movement she little by little begins to give sense to her life and cope with her feelings of dispossession. Puga closes the entry saying that going back to the diary was “an

act of health” and that she wants to recuperate the “perspective” (37) of her life.

What enables the predominance of the voice as matrixial link a instead of object a? Ettinger explains that the alternation between one function of the voice or another is not systematic, and one cannot determinate when is going to happen. Nonetheless she stresses that “female subjects have double access to it [for] they experience the womb [...] whether they are mothers or not” (2004, 143). Puga experiences the womb in the process of creating, as she later states in *Diary of Pain*: “the postnatal depression [...] is what you feel when you finish a book” (84). In my view the desire of positioning herself as a writer activated in Puga the function of the voice as matrixial link a. Puga thought of herself as a writer and she considered that rheumatoid arthritis was a new challenge. She also believed in the force of literature and the diary, as she argues in her *What Happens to the Reader*. In this essay, she comments on the *Diaries of Giovanni Papini* saying: “It’s amazing to see how he works with tenacity [...] despite his physical handicaps. He doesn’t stop reading. He doesn’t know to stop writing. He is a writer every single minute of his life” (1991, 136). Puga wanted to create the same impact in her future readers, but in order to have future readers, she had to write. She had to cope with her feelings of dispossession and go back to the diary. She had to give birth to the book and position herself as a writer for, at the end, that was the most important goal of her life.

The voice as matrixial link a: plays, irony, and the placement in the here

After the entry 37, where Puga imposes her speech over Pain, the relationship with this character takes a turn. Pain becomes a character that can hear and talk. Puga stops describing Pain as the other (intruder, laconic, and misogynist) and she begins to speak with him. In addition, there is also a change in the title of the entries. While in the first part they are labels: “The space”, “To wait”, “Time and Pain”, “The mornings”, “The writing demands”. In the second part, they tend to be like a fragment of a dialogue: “Do not laugh, Pain,” “Hey!,” “I miss things, Pain,” or “We are going on a trip, Pain.”

In this point it is important to make a remark. As I mentioned in the beginning of this essay, the oral narrative is characteristic of Puga, not only in *Diary of Pain* but also in other books. In *Diary of Pain* the difference between the first entries (1-36) and the rest of the book is the addressees. In the first part Puga only speaks to someone else. Her methodic descriptions of Pain and of her feelings are addressed to another person. In the second part, she speaks to someone else and also to Pain: “How could I endure so much pain? I say it quietly, very quietly, because I don’t want a discussion with Pain” (62). Pain as matrixial link a does

not activate a new mode of writing, Puga respects her own literary voice. Nonetheless Pain as matrixial link a does pump up new analytical tools.

On the one hand, the voice as matrixial link a poses a suspicion on language, and on the other hand, creates “unconscious meanings.” Following Ettinger’s psychoanalytical theory, Griselda Pollock identifies two analytical tools: to play with the words and irony (21, 2006). Apart from these ones, in *Diary of Pain I* also identify the “suppression of judgement” and the “HERE”. These techniques were already present in the beginning of the book, but they were not so marked. In this section I show some of the moments in which the voice as matrixial link a appears in *Diary of Pain* and how they construct an “unconscious meaning.”

To play with the words

Pollock explains that if one wants to stay beside a traditional discourse and create new meanings one can invent neologisms or play with the words (21, 2006). This analytical tool is not so enhanced in Puga, however the entry 59 exemplifies this procedure. Puga titles the entry “La quebradita.” This one is a dynamic traditional dance from Sinaloa (Mexico), where Puga spent part of her adolescence. The writer is using this dance to allude to her situation for “quebradita” is the female diminutive of the adjective broken. Nonetheless the title is not a label but a motif. In the entry, Puga does not describe her feelings, “la quebradita” serves as a pretext to narrate a scene and play dynamically with the words: “Pain dances like crazy, even if he really can’t dance. I love him because he dances more with the fingers than with his body” (60). Pain as matrixial link a plunges dynamism into the narrative and Puga begins to change the spelling of the words. She modifies the words “cadera” [hip] and “krack” [Spanish onomatopoeia of crack], marking that the hip causes her more problems. In addition she associates the word “encementada”⁶, an adjective that alludes to her hip, with planes, Mexican parties and the corruption of municipal governments.

In this entry, “la quebradita” creates meaning because it explains Puga’s situation, but not in a traditional way. Puga no longer tries to label her feelings or just focus on them, instead she plays with the words. This play helps her to express her feeling of dispossession, and at the same time to cope with her pain, for she focuses her attention on other features and criticizes the poor condition of Mexican towns.

6 Covered with cement.

Irony

In her book *Irony*, Claire Colebrook asserts that “irony is both a figure of speech—saying one thing and meaning another—and an attitude to existence, in which the ironic subject adopts a position of scepticism and mistrust in relation to everyday language” (2004, i). This analytical tool is most recurrent in the second part of *Diary of Pain*. While in the first entries Puga tried to explain carefully which was the form, what does it mean to wait and which was the difference between depression and melancholy, in the second half she expresses her feelings ironizing the character Pain. In an individual form, the use of irony shows Puga’s mistrust on language: perhaps the words cannot accurately express what she feels. Nevertheless, the recurrent use of this rhetoric figure shows her trust in language. It is important to notice that, in the second half, Pain is constructed through a series of ironies. These ones create as well a series of meanings which, gathered together, enable Puga to understand her feelings of dispossession.

Puga also speaks about her depression, her “blue mood” or about how the pills make her feel sick. Nevertheless she is less methodic and she normally uses irony. Pain as matrixial link a makes her narrate new stories, giving her a tool to express in different manners the way she feels. The words, which initially became a vacuum, acquire new senses and are meaningful: “I am not only with Pain. I am with my partner, who hasn’t been mentioned because, as Borges says: we know that the Koran is an arabic book because it never appears the word camel” (50; italics in the original).

The diversity of the situations and the comic feature of the irony eliminate the monotony and the vacuum, creating a sense of life for Puga. Puga is writing, she is inventing stories, situations, little adventures. She begins to be more optimistic and to speak about the way she adapts her life. For instance, she describes with technical terms (pulleys, harness, hoists) the mechanism that her partner constructs to plunge her into the pool, and she ironically concludes: “Isn’t it brilliantly simple?” (53). In this entry Puga does not deny her feeling of dispossession, finally the mechanism substitutes the use of her legs. However Pain as matrixial link a gives her the opportunity to look at her life with a new perspective: “[When I am in the pool] the dogs and Pain look at me open-mouthed” (59).

Suppression of judgment and the placement in the here

Pain as matrixial link a offers Puga a new analytical tool: the “Suppression of judgement. Do not qualify, do not try to explain anything. Above all do not compare” (56). This analytical tool projects a new characterization of Pain. Instead giving attributes to Pain, Puga suppresses them: “[Pain] I know that you are neither

a reader nor a humanist, and that you are neither classic nor postmodernist. I know that you are neither cool nor against. I know that you are not anything but that what you are" (73; italics in the original). Pain as matrixial link a is something whose meaning cannot be directly described in language: I know you are not. At the same time the series of negations creates unconscious meanings for it leads to the conclusion: Pain you are.

We can also notice these attitudes in the play of words and in the irony. As Colebrook explains "The difference between irony, say, and metaphor is that other figures of speech make a comparison, contrast or likeness while irony invokes an absent or hidden sense" (2004, 23). The irony and the play of words permit Puga to focus in the here and now of the words, in the meaning that they are creating in the entry. Therefore Pain as matrixial link a can acquire as many ironic or playful descriptions as possible. Pain does not have to be defined or catalogued. His meaning is always underneath the literal sense of the words. Each irony and each play of words pumps up that unconscious meaning. Pain is no longer something that should be enclosed, but something that creates meaning in irony and in the succession of negations "Pain you are not."

Pain as matrixial link a is placed in the present with no comparison between a past characterization or a future characterization. He gives Puga as analytical tool the HERE. Puga neither judges Pain nor qualifies him. The new perspective that Puga adopts is, ironically, the present. Puga recurrently says the word HERE (with capital letters). She places herself in the day and the moment in which she is writing. The meaning of Pain as well as the sense that Puga's life can have is the HERE.

In entry 82 it can be noticed that Puga undergoes a new state of extreme anxiety. This time Puga does not mention that she is in prison, in a vacuum, or that she feels anesthetized. Instead, she moves, reflects on the condition of the country, and tries to place herself in the HERE. The title is "Ok, let's talk." In this entry Puga accepts that she is afraid of losing more capacities, that she is afraid of dying. The dispossession of the body is leading her to an extreme state of anxiety, to the fear of death.

About death who can tell anything? [...] And about my fear you [Pain] will insist in the boat HERE. Leave yourself be, the things go over by themselves [...] You will say all this, you are saying it while I am writing because you, Pain, have no age, no motherland, no mother, no father. And you say to me that I should find my place in the here and let myself be; that in this Day of the Dead eve.⁷ I should let myself be, but that

⁷ The Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday celebrated the second of November. According to the tradition, in this day Mexicans go to the cemetery and sing on the tombs. The death

doesn't work for me. Maybe it works for you, so go on, sailor. [Adelante, navegante]" (79; italics mine).

The feelings of dispossession of the body cannot be surmounted. Although Puga has new analytical tools to understand her feelings and find a sense of her life, this does not entail that she can fully regain mastery over the body. For a patient with rheumatoid arthritis the body is the everyday surprise. Where am I going to feel pain? Which new handicaps will I have? How will I have to adapt my life? Rheumatoid arthritis is a constant negotiation with the body, and also with the words. The Day of the Dead which is supposed to be joyful, ironic, and a suspension of the fear of death, turns out to be exactly the opposite for Puga. In the entry a profound sense of desolation can be perceived, and a new voice object appears: death. Pain as matrixial link cannot create that "unconscious meaning" (perhaps the very limit is death), but it gives her an analytical tool to surmount it: the HERE. Certainly, Puga does not seem to be completely convinced, however she closes the entry with a discrete play of words, with a rhyme: adelante, navegante.

Puga continues writing *Diary of Pain* with the attempt to position herself in the HERE and do not qualify. The task is not easy. Puga addresses her feelings of dispossession until the end of the book. Nonetheless there is certainly a change in the way Puga speaks about her body and how she projects her use of language when she meets other people. I will show in the following section how these changes helped Puga to depict herself as a writer of pain.

The writer of pain: the figures of disembodiment in the last part of *Diary of Pain*

Towards the end of the book, when the voice matrixial link is more present,

becomes a female character who is awkward, funny or non talented. Mexicans give chocolate or sugar skulls to their friends. In addition people write "calaveritas", poems in which the writer ironizes the way her friends are going to dye.

For a patient with rheumatoid arthritis the body is the everyday surprise. Where am I going to feel pain? Which new handicaps will I have? How will I have to adapt my life? Rheumatoid arthritis is a constant negotiation with the body, and also with the words

the text contains less descriptions of the body. Puga still complains about the pain in the joints and she continues to remark on her walking handicap. However there is a subtle change in the way she refers to her body and to her walking disability. Certainly, there is a figuration of a disembodied subject, nevertheless this subject is trying to surmount a painful situation.

Instead of describing the chairs, Puga narrates a story and depicts herself as confined to a wheelchair. Puga continues to feel ashamed of her walking disability for she speaks of herself in third person and attributes to herself bad feelings. Nonetheless she does not objectify herself: “[In the beach] Even the bureaucrats, my dear Pain, look more fresh than you. And you should not care at all, look that the person who speaks is in a wheelchair that refuses to walk on the sand” (82). Furthermore, Puga’s hands are no longer “telescopic arms” with a walking stick. Her hands are the ones of a writer who either uses the computer or tries to cope with the pain and write in the notebook: “Don’t grip my hand. That won’t change my decision. My letter might be twisted and I may drop one or another tear” (86). Puga continues to mention her feelings of dispossession nevertheless she depicts herself as person who is able to speak and to write about pain.

Puga dedicates six entries to recall a conference of writers that she attended: “The territories of violence.” In these passages Puga mentions that the pain makes her feel uncomfortable during the sessions and, in one occasion, it forces her to abandon the room. Nonetheless Puga actively reflects upon what is said during the conference: “The poets were kind of aggressive. The poets, Pain, more than the narrators. They are right. They have the role, more than the narrators, to speak about violence, but also, Pain, skinny and clumsy, you are not violence” (71). Puga stresses that pain is not violence, and whilst she acknowledges that the poets have to write about violence, she does not cede them the right of speaking about the feeling of pain.

Puga depicts herself not only as writer in pain, but as writer of pain. In the entry 66, she alludes to her literary courses: “I remember an exercise that I use in my creative writing workshops: ‘Someone touches your shoulder; you turn and...’ I see Pain [...] Mmm there’s nothing to do, buddy [Pain], do what you have to do” (65). In this entry, Puga mentions that she is suffering, but she also stresses that she is a writer of pain. Another example is the entry 87, where she invents a fictional story. In this passage she uses her colloquial style and orality vehemently, and she only mentions that she feels pain in the joints in the last sentence. Puga writes that she was on the beach and needed to go to another town, but Pain decided to stay. When she came back, Pain was sunburned:

when we saw you [Pain] weaken on the hammock, disheveled and red as a shrimp, I thought: Gosh, he is sunstroke! [...] To see Pain so red and eating lobster was kind of cannibalesque [sic]. I gave him a cream and told him: Easy, you are not going to die. / Who can guess what night he had. I only had pain in my knees, nothing of the other world (83).

The ability to use the words to speak about pain is also noticed in the passages where Puga reports meetings with other people. Towards the end of the book, Puga mentions two different conversations: one with a woman that she meets in a bathroom, and another with a doctor. In these passages, which are no longer than eight lines, Puga gives voice to herself. She does not only mention what the other persons said, but she also mentions what she answered. In addition, it is important to notice that she introduces the irony. In the scene of the bathroom, Puga says that the woman asked her why she was in a wheelchair. Puga was trying to explain but the woman constantly interrupted her. Thus Puga ended the conversation with an irony: "But it's not that bad, I had jumped⁸ all I wanted" (69). In the entry 91, Puga discusses the probability of the operation and relates the opinions of the doctors. In this passage, the difference between patient and doctor is still addressed, showing Puga's feelings of dispossession. Nonetheless, Puga also gives voice to herself, reproducing her rejoinders to the doctor:

- [Doctor] Why you want to walk? You will still feel pain in the feet [...] anyway, look at the color of your palm [...]
- You see, doctor, the point is that I am of blue blood and you aren't (86-87).

Despite the feeling of dispossession, in these passages Puga explicitly depicts herself as a subject who is having control of her words and of her speech. These entries show a writer who has the words to answer in uncomfortable situations. While at the beginning of the book Puga was the painful and silent character, in the last part she is happy to say what she answers to people that cannot understand her.

Puga mentions that she misses her handwriting and the times when she could swim, run and go to the beach by herself. Nonetheless she is actively using the words to construct an image of herself as a writer: "I have always enjoyed to write with my hands and see how I fill in the lines at the same time that I tell what I want to tell, but now I do it in a slow manner" (90). Just before the end, in the entries 98 and 99, Puga asserts that she uses the computer to write

⁸ Puga uses "brincotear," a colloquial expression for "jumping".

new stories which could or could not dwell with suffering. Nonetheless, in the last entry she emphasizes that in *Diary of Pain* she is speaking about the experience of pain:

“100. Anyway / This is what pain is, everyday” (92).

Conclusion

To construct an embodied subject when one undergoes a feeling of dispossession of the body is not an easy task. For Puga it was difficult to forget that once

Since the embodiment depends on the physical capacities and abilities, Puga never manages to surmount her feelings of dispossession. Nonetheless the desire to position herself as a writer forced Puga to write about pain, a feeling which has been largely affirmed as inexpressible and incommunicable

she was completely independent and had the capacity to walk, jump, swim, drive and write without pain in her hands. Since the embodiment depends on the physical capacities and abilities, Puga never manages to surmount her feelings of dispossession. Nonetheless the desire to position herself as a writer forced Puga to write about pain, a feeling which has been largely affirmed as inexpressible and incommunicable.

In the first section, “The body begins to be in pain”, I analyzed how the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis provoked in Puga a feeling of dispossession of the body, hampering the construction of an embodied subject. Puga frequently speaks about herself as if she existed outside of her body, she objectifies her body, attributes

it bad feelings, or speaks of it in third person (the body instead of my body). Furthermore, her feelings of dispossession are also noticed when Puga reports conversations with other people. In these passages, Puga explicitly represents herself as a passive character who cannot communicate her pain to other people.

In the second section, “The process of writing”, I have shown that, despite her desire to write, Puga did endure some difficulties when trying to express her pain and give a sense to her life with rheumatoid arthritis. I have argued that the character Pain plays the role of voice object a and matrixial link a. In the first part of the diary Puga tries to be methodological and to enclose the character Pain with her descriptions. Nevertheless the procedure is not fruitful and in the

entry 37 Puga undergoes a great feeling of anxiety, fearing death. In this moment Pain as voice matrixial link a activated new analytical tools: Puga begins to speak with Pain, and she plays with the words, uses the irony and tries to place herself in the HERE. These tools enabled Puga to continue writing about her pain.

In the third section, "The writer of pain", I noticed that in the last part of *Diary of Pain* there are less descriptions of the body. However the feeling of dis-possession can still be traced. Puga continues to speak as if she existed outside her body, and she stresses that she misses performing some activities, especially walking. Nonetheless she explicitly depicts herself as an active subject who surmounts a painful situation. When she reports the meetings with other people, she gives voice to herself. She mentions the ironic answers that she gives when the people do not let her talk about her feelings or cannot understand her pain. Furthermore she speaks about her trips, her literary workshops and the literary conference that she attended, positioning herself as a writer of pain.

The publication of *Diary of Pain* confirms María Luisa Puga's will to position her self as a talented writer. Although at the beginning of the book she represents herself as a quite and passive character, at the end she depicts herself as an active narrator who has a power of speech and is sure about the meaning that her words are creating. Gathered together, the one hundred entries which constitute *Diary of Pain* present a writer with pain, but more importantly a writer who, with her whole body, speaks of pain. Indeed, given that Puga underwent a feeling of dispossession of her body, she does not explicitly constructs an embodied subject. On the contrary, she is prone to reject her body. Nevertheless, the last entry, "Anyway / This is what pain is, everyday", alludes to her 1990 essay "With a Whole Body", where she concludes: "Anyway, the space of writing is in oneself" (56). The similarity of the phrases assert that she was writing *Diary of Pain* with her whole body. This body is not visible, but it can be heard. In each letter, in each word she was embodying her writing with her own literary voice.

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). "Companion to the AOTA Classification Codes for Continuing Education Activities." 2009. www.aota.org.
- Andrews, Molly. "Beyond Narrative: The Shape of Traumatic Testimony." In *Beyond Narrative Coherence*, edited by Matti et al. Hyvärinen, 147-166. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010.
- Arias, Luis Martín. "El Lenguaje y el Mundo. Consideraciones en Torno al Relativismo." *Trama y Fondo: Revista de Cultura*, no. 23 (2007): 15-30.
- Arthritis Foundation. "What is Rheumatoid Arthritis." 2013. <http://www.arthritis.org/conditions-treatments/disease-center/rheumatoid-arthritis/>

- Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Breton Le, David. *Anthropologie de la Douleur*. Paris: Éditions Métailié, 1995.
- Casaregola, Vincent. "The 'exact location of the voice': Walter Ong and the 'embodiment' of discourse." *Proceedings of the Media Ecology Association* 10 (2009): 65-70.
- Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs* 1, no. 4 (Verano 1976): 875-893.
- Colebrook, Claire. *Irony*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Ettinger, Bracha. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Fisher, Linda. "Feminist Phenomenological Voices." *Continental Philosophy Review* 43, no. 1 (2010): 83-95.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum de l'autre Femme*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1974.
- . *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian G. Gill. New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Le séminaire. Livre I. Les écrits techniques de Freud*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975.
- . *Seminaire X: L'angoisse (1962-1963)*. Paris: Seuil, 2004.
- . *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1956-1960*. Translated by Dennis Porter. New York: WW Norton and Company, 1997.
- Lagaay, Alice. "Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis." *E-pisteme* 1 (2008): 53-62.
- López, Irma. "(Re)composición del Cuerpo/ Texto en Diario del dolor." *Anuario de Letras* 44 (2006): 233-253.
- Pfeiffer, Erna. "María Luisa Puga, una Conciencia Descentralizada." In *Negociando Identidades, Traspasando Fronteras: Tendencias en la Literatura y el Cine Mexicanos en Torno al Nuevo Milenio.*, by Vervuert Verlag, 85-98. Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana, 2008.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Introduction. Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference?" In *Matrixial Borderspace*, by Bracha Ettinger. Minneapolis y Londres: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Puga, María Luisa. *De Cuerpo Entero*. México, DF: UNAM-Ediciones Corunda, 1990.
- . *Diario del Dolor*. México, DF: Alfaguara-Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana-Conaculta, 2004.
- . "El Escritor que Uno Quería Ser." In *Ruptura y diversidad*, edited by Hernán Lara Zavala, 15-19. México, DF: UNAM, 1990.

———. *Lo que le Pasa al Lector*. México, DF: Grijalbo, 1991.

Real Academia Española. RAE. n.d. www.rae.es.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Toombs, Kay S. *The Meaning of Illness: A Phenomenological Account of the Different Perspectives of Physician and Patient*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993.

Zaldívar Vallejo, Gloria. "La Construcción Novelística de María Luisa Puga." *La Experiencia Literaria*, no. 14-15 (2007): 131-137.

