

FUERA DE LUGAR

cuerpos (in)tangibles
en las culturas minorizadas
de la Península Ibérica

Literatura, cine y arte

LEKUZ KANPO: GORPUTZ UKIGARRI(EZ)IN/ AK IBERIAR PENINTSULAKO KULTURA GUTXITUETAN. LITERATURA, ZINEMA ETA ARTEA
FORA DE LLOC: COSSOS (IN)TANGIBLES EN LES CULTURES MINORITZADES DE LA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINEMA I ART
FÒRA DE LUGAR: CORPOS (IN)TANGIBLES NAS CULTURAS MINORIZADAS DA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINE E ARTE
FORA DE LUGAR: CORPOS (IN)TANGÍVEIS NAS CULTURAS MINORITÁRIAS DA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINEMA E ARTE



FUERA DE LUGAR

cuerpos (in)tangibles
en las culturas minorizadas
de la Península Ibérica

Literatura, cine y arte

FUERA DE LUGAR

cuerpos (in)tangibles
en las culturas minorizadas
de la Península Ibérica

Literatura, cine y arte

Editores

Magdalena Anna Gajewska

Aitor Arruza Zuazo

Ana Garrido González



LEKUZ KANPO: GORPUTZ UKIGARRI(EZ)IN)AK IBERIAR PENINTSULAKO KULTURA GUTXITUETAN. LITERATURA, ZINEMA ETA ARTEA
FORA DE LLOC: COSSOS (IN)TANGIBLES EN LES CULTURES MINORITZADES DE LA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINEMA I ART
FÓRA DE LUGAR: CORPOS (IN)TANGIBLES NAS CULTURAS MINORIZADAS DA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINE E ARTE
FORA DE LUGAR: CORPOS (IN)TANGÍVEIS NAS CULTURAS MINORITÁRIAS DA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA. LITERATURA, CINEMA E ARTE

Reseñadores

Mikel Ayerbe Sudupe

Amaia Elizalde Estenaga

Redactor jefe

Małgorzata M. Przybyszewska

Redacción y corrección

Irene Tetteh Morcilo

Marzenna Gottesman

Krzysztof Heymer

Diseño de cubierta y portadas

Anna Gogolewska

Ilustración en la cubierta

Esther Arnaiz García

Composición y compaginación

ALINEA

Publicación financiada de los medios de la Universidad de Varsovia

Publikacja dofinansowana przez Uniwersytet Warszawski

Publicación bajo licencia Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 PL (CC BY 3.0 PL)

(texto completo disponible en: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl/legalcode>)

Aitor Arruza Zuazo ORCID 0000-0003-3139-8042 Uniwersytet Warszawski

Magdalena Anna Gajewska ORCID 0000-0001-7126-9179 Uniwersytet Warszawski

Ana Garrido González ORCID 0000-0002-4978-8498 Uniwersytet Warszawski



(Otra)Iberia

Grupo de investigación

ISBN 978-83-235-5518-6 (impr.)

ISBN 978-83-235-5590-2 (pdf online)

ISBN 978-83-235-5598-8 (e-pub)

ISBN 978-83-235-5575-9 (mobi)

Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego

PL 00-838 Warszawa, ul. Prosta 69

e-mail: wuw@uw.edu.pl

Księgarnia internetowa: www.wuw.pl

Edición 1, Varsovia 2022

GARBIÑE IZTUETA-GOIZUETA

ORCID: 0000-0001-9036-1739

Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea UPV/EHU

SICK BODIES AND SPACES OF ALTERITY: SPACES OF (IN)TANGIBILITY IN RECENT BASQUE AND EAST GERMAN NARRATIVES¹

Identity, alterity and periphery are central concepts in postmodernism. The so-called historical postmodernism started with the French revolt of May 1968 and the pacifist movement, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and reached its peak with the fall of the East European Stalinist systems (De Toro 1991: 445, Esparza 2017: 37). The social, political and economic changes which resulted from these events also provoked a transformation in cultural discourse. Moreover, literature also became a space for this new approach to the world, appealing to the disappearance of absolute theories and truths and to the need for multiple and peripheral discourses. In short, questioning discourses of modernity (Lyotard 1986), claiming the disappearance of closed texts (Foucault 1999) and the polyphony of texts (Derrida 1967) are the main theoretical grounds of postmodern literature. Among its main features are experimentation with language, the dissolution of agent subjects, playing with the reader, intertextuality, and polysemy of the text.

Identity in postmodernism has been a central subject of study in the research dealing with the narrative of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as in the case of many local literatures, also both the German literature after the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (Sistig 2003) and the Basque literature (Esparza 2017, Kortazar 2007, Olaziregi 2009, Gabilondo 2008, Aldekoa 2006).

The postmodern subject merges with a process of hybridisation, complexity and resolution, while reconstructing itself through memory, as Kortazar points out in relation to Basque modernist literature (Kortazar 2007). Likewise, a lot of research, from different perspectives, has analyzed the relationship between identity in East German literature after 1989 and the memory of the German Democratic Republic (Cambi 2008, Köhler 2007, Eke 2013, Goudin-Steinmann & Hähnel-Mesnard 2013).

¹ This publication is part of the project FFI2017-84342-P (MINECO).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to study two Basque female authors (Ixiar Rozas and Uxue Alberdi) and two East German female authors (Paula Fürstenberg and Maren Wurster) born in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to highlight their contribution to the literary approach to identity and memory. On the one hand, they share several biographical and cultural characteristics regarding their origins and the generation they belong to. They were born at the threshold of or a few years after a radical historical, political, social and cultural shift: the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German Democratic Republic in the case of Fürstenberg (1987) and Wurster (1976), and the end of the Franco Dictatorship in the case of Rozas (1972) and Alberdi (1984). We could say that all four authors are also located on the cultural periphery, in a space of minorization and alterity: Fürstenberg and Wurster have consciously or unconsciously grown up with cultural references of a disappeared country, while Alberdi and Rozas belong to the linguistic and cultural Basque-speaking community in the officially Spanish-Basque bilingual society, where in sociolinguistic terms the Basque community is minoritized and inscribed in a peripheral position in relation to mainstream culture. None of them has memories of her own related to the officially closed down chapter of the history of the German Democratic Republic or the Franco dictatorship. On the other hand, in their literary works the authors consider identity and alterity in societies strongly affected by a silenced past and by a sudden change (German Reunification and the Spanish Transition to Democracy), by focusing on memory and by employing the representation of sick bodies as a narrative strategy. As noted, although in different ways, periphery and alterity are represented in the selected works by Fürstenberg, Wurster, Rozas and Alberdi. Although both topics are closely linked to postmodernity, this article focuses more on the contribution of all four authors as representatives of a post-generation to East German and Basque social and cultural memories.

If we look at the so-called **post-generation** (Hirsch 2012: 3, Hoffmann 2004: 187, Erll 2014: 399)² according to memory studies, this would mean, in the East-West German context, the generation born several years before or after the disappearance of the German Democratic Republic, and in the Basque context the generation born shortly before or after Franco's dictatorship. The elaboration of memory presents several particularities in this post-generation, since it is a generation that

² This concept was created by Eva Hoffmann in the context of her research on the memory of the *Shoah* and it goes beyond the denomination of the **second generation** understood in the family context. Hoffmann identifies herself as post-generation: she is pursued by the legacy of the suffering of previous generations in the *Shoah* and feels a responsibility to carry out a mission through that legacy. According to Erll, post-generations are all generations identifying themselves as descendants of parents or ancestors who have suffered violence and trauma.

finds it difficult to have its own memories and that follows the traces of the influence that the German Democratic Republic or Francoism have exercised on them in different ways in their literary works. However, these four authors use the same topos, that of a sick body, in order to create new spaces of perception, to rethink the experience of alterity and to approach memory from the perspective of the post-generation.

The analysis will focus on Uxue Alberdi's novel *Jenisjoplin* (2017), the essay *beltzuria* (2014) by Ixiar Rozas, as far as Basque literature is concerned, and Paula Fürstenberg's *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* (2016) and *Das Fell* (2017) by Maren Würster, as examples of the East German literature.

1. CONCEPTS

Alterity and memory will be two key concepts in our approach to these four literary works. Alterity is defined in dialogue with the concept of identity, among other ideas, and in both concepts space, body and perception play a determinant role. Following the theoretical paths developed by Henri Lefebvre (2011), Yi-Fu Tuan (2001) and Martina Löw (2011) on the concept of space, the body deserves special attention as one of the factors intervening in the production of space. Thus, we will understand space as a social process in which bodies, subjects and other spaces interact.

The representation of sick bodies is a key strategy in the creation of spaces of alterity in the selected works. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the body is the only way to perceive the world, as we observe external objects through its filter (1999: 87–216). At the same time, as the body is a decisive agent in the perception of the world, Merleau-Ponty also concedes the body the category of object of perception and he points out that the information we receive from the body about the world is always conditioned by space, time, memory and body movement: the body is neither neutral, nor omniscient, nor stable. An example of the solid connection between body and space is, according to the French philosopher, the fact that objects always show us a single face, because we perceive them from the body located in a certain place (Merleau-Ponty 1993: 88–89). On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty also highlights the determinant influence of memory on the body's perception of stimuli: he offers the example of a certain area of the skin stimulated continuously with a hair, and he explains that at the beginning, the body identifies and places exactly the perceived stimulus. However, if the stimulus is repeated several times, the body progressively loses the ability to locate the stimulus with

accuracy, until in the end the body does not even perceive it (Merleau-Ponty 1999: 93–94). Thus, a body can only perceive a stimulus when it is associated with a new sensation. Consequently, Merleau-Ponty highlights the interest of the body as an object of study for research on perception and the important role of memory when analyzing perception.

Returning to our main subject, we consider it is essential to analyze the nature of the bodies represented in post-generation literary works which are inherently unable to remember certain chapters of the past. It is through this literary strategy that new spaces to rethink the past and new spaces of perception are created, and alterity is tackled. In addition, Rozas, Alberdi, Fürstenberg and Wurster, whose biographies fall under the category of post-generation, locate the bodies of their protagonists in very meaningful positions as regards space and illness.

Virginia Woolf's essay "On Being Ill" (1926) and Susan Sontag's "Illness as Metaphor" (1978) offer an interesting view on illness and sick bodies for our analysis. Woolf's "On Being Ill" was decisive for a new social perception of the sick female figure. The British writer refers not only to the isolation, solitude and vulnerability that a disease entails, but also to the fact that her sick body enables her to return to a temporary childhood. She also reflects on the relationship between body and words, pinpointing the ineffectiveness of language when it comes to expressing the experiences and sensations of a sick body. Woolf's main contribution is probably the concept of **moments of being** associated with illness: she presents illness as an added value, since it blesses the patient with an almost mystical capacity to create a new meaning of things, to see beyond the surface of daily life and to understand existence anew: "in illness, the words give out their scent, and ripple like leaves, and chequer us with light and shadow, and then, if at last we grasp the meaning, it is all the richer for having travelled slowly up with all the bloom upon its wings" (Woolf 1926: 41).

A further illuminating reading is Sontag's reflection in the essay "Illness as Metaphor" on the cultural discourse about sick bodies: she rejects the traditional metaphorical approach to illness and the "guilt-embroidered phantasies" (Sontag 1978: 39) around certain diseases as cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis and AIDS. Furthermore, she calls for a sensual experience of literature and art in her essay "Against Interpretation" (1964): "We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more. [...] In place of hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art" (1964: 9–10).

As to the concept of memory, the theoretical basis for our analysis is provided by Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida and Jan Assmann. They all conceive of memory as a subjective and individual process, intertwined nevertheless with a cultural and collective scope. Memory is the process of giving meaning to experiences,

knowledge and identities of the past, a process where the individual dimension meets the collective. If we consider Halbwachs' argument, then we conclude that not only society gives meaning to memories, but each subject will also generate his/her own differentiated memory, from his/her own distinct place in the world as a member of a certain group, society or culture (Halbwachs 1950: 26–35). Memory is, therefore, diverse, and it includes key categories such as subjectivity, diversity, process and transference.

Among the different types of memories that Aleida and Jan Assmann present in their (communicative, social, collective and cultural) research, the most significant ones for our analysis would be communicative, social and cultural memory. Communicative memory reaches down to the third generation and is configured in daily communication. Social memory also has an expiration date, as it will survive as long as a group of people having shared the same experiences in the past continue sharing their memories in dialogue and exchange their individual different perspectives. Cultural memory, meanwhile, is the result of institutional communication, is placed further away from everyday life and consists of the transmission of experience, knowledge and identity of the past through rites, monuments and texts (Assmann 2006: 2–3). In addition, Jan Assmann and John Czapp, in the article written in 1995, concede that communicative and cultural memory's main function is the "concretion of identity". Not only communicative memory but also cultural memory "preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive ("We are this") or in a negative ("That's our opposite") sense" (Assmann and Czaplika 1995: 130).

Our approach to body representation, space, alterity and memory will be made from the senses. By using the paradigm of the senses, we will observe the similarities and differences between authors of the same generation in the literarization of alterity and memory in the German and Basque literary spheres. We will focus on two senses: touch and hearing. Analysing them, we will tackle the question of how communicative, social and cultural memory is confronted from the perspective of these post-generation authors.

2. ALTERITY AND THE MEMORY OF SICK BODIES IN EAST GERMAN AND BASQUE LITERATURE.

2.1. “TOUCHES” OF ALTERITY AND MEMORY IN *DAS FELL* AND *JENISJOPLIN*

In the novels *Das Fell* and *Jenisjoplin* alterity is directly related to alterations or diseases affecting the sense of touch. Both works present a problematic relationship between the skin of the protagonists and the world surrounding them.

In the novel *Jenisjoplin*, Nagore Vargas (or *Jenisjoplin*, as her father calls her) narrates in first person her dramatic personal history, which also integrates many Basque social histories between the 1980s and the second decade of the new millennium. Nagore bases her personality on three categories: Basque militancy (her activism in a peripheral free radio station), sex and dissent. Having grown up in a hybrid home (with a Basque mother and father from an immigrant family), she consciously locates herself on the side of the working-class and immigrant collective. Moreover, the dramatic consequences for the whole family of her aunt Carmen’s drug addiction and catching AIDS leads Nagore to stand up for the marginalized collectives. Nevertheless, it is when Nagore herself is diagnosed as HIV-seropositive and becomes an AIDS patient that her deep repositioning of herself as a perceiving subject begins. The novel is a chronicle of the disease. Her new identity as HIV-seropositive and a potential risk for those around her affect the contact of her skin and her intimacy with others in the first place. In line with the problems of post-modern identity, Nagore ceases to be an active subject capable of shaping her own identity and faces the condition of **alterity**, which the scientific, medical and social canon imposes on her as HIV-seropositive.

The truth is that alterity is already present before the medical diagnosis, in the retrospective passages on Nagore’s childhood and adolescence, as highlighted in the following example, where, at the age of 8, she asks her father about her identity as a *maketo*³:

—Aita, gu maketoak gara?

Matrailezurra estutu zuen.

—Hi horiek bezain euskalduna haiz, aditu²-esan zuen eskaileretan behera zetozenak sein-
alatuz.

³ A slur word used from late 19th century on to designate Spanish immigrants in the Basque Country (Arozamena 2020)

Ez nintzen kontra egitera ausartu, baietz egin nion buruaz, nire baitan taxuzko euskaldunak nor ziren argi neukan arren: ikastolakoak, arratsaldeetan solfeora, euskal dantzara eta ingeleseko partikularretara joaten zirenak, azoka txikiko arroparik ez zutenak, eskolarteko kiroletan makinaz inprimaturiko letra dotoredun elastiko eta galtzamotz uniformatuak zerabiltzatenak [...] Aitarentzat ez beste guztientzat, euskaldunak hauek ziren: Lasalden bizi ez zirenak, besteak. (JJ 72)⁴

According to this passage, Nagore's father's definition of Basqueness is in conflict with the conventional definition. As a child, Nagore is already able to capture the features conventionally assigned to Basque identity: being educated in a private Basque school in the Basque language, having access to a complementary formation in music, Basque traditional dance and English, enjoying a comfortable lifestyle, being a visible part of a community through sports and living in non-peripheral, in geographical and sociological terms, neighbourhoods (like her own, Lasalde). Thus, Nagore has at the age of 8 already developed a sense of alterity.

A new dimension will be added to this alterity by means of integrating the theme of illness in the novel, and thus a hybrid and integral approach to the issue of alterity in Basque cultural memory is put forward.

In *Das Fell*, a third-person narrator recounts in the present tense a journey by the protagonist Vic, from Berlin to an undetermined small town by the Baltic Sea. She travels by bike and with a stone in her backpack, after her boyfriend Karl has decided to spend a few days of his summer holiday with his ex-wife and daughter, leaving Vic on the emotional periphery. This journey, which starts with Vic's strong thirst for revenge, becomes a learning exploration for her. During the trip, Vic's body suffers from hypertrichosis syndrome, so thick dark hair begins to grow on her back, which also alter day by day the perception that her skin has of the environment. In addition, Vic will undergo a process of renegotiating her position in her relationship with her body and with others, along with her encounters with

⁴ "– Dad, are we *maketos*?

He clenched his jaw.

– You are as Basque as they come, do you hear? – he said pointing to those coming down the stairs.

I did not dare oppose him, I nodded, even though I clearly knew who authentic Basques were: those at the *ikastola* (=Basque school), who in the afternoons went to the music school, to private classes of Basque dance and English, who did not wear clothes from the flea market, who wore uniform-like shorts and t-shirts with elegant machine printed letters for interscholastic sports. [...] To everyone but Dad, Basques were those who did not live in Lasalde (= a peripheral working-class immigrant neighbourhood where Nagore herself lives), the others". (JJ 72)

Quotes from *Jenisjoplin* will be cited with JJ followed by a page number. All quotations translated by Garbiñe Iztueta-Goizueta unless stated otherwise.

strangers, new friends and lovers, as well as with her brother and family. Vic will grow as an emotional and sensual subject and her evolution throughout the journey can be traced back to her perceptions of the world as well as perception of herself. After having stalked Karl and his family for several days by the Baltic Sea, Vic returns to Berlin alone, without having fulfilled her revenge.

Both Nagore and Vic rethink their relationship with identity and alterity, as they reflect upon their relocation. An example of this is the process of re-exploration of their bodies and the process of re-reading reality through the sense of touch. In this relocation the *numinosum*, periphery and alterity will be key concepts.

2.1.1. The *numinosum*

As a first step in the conceptual and literary reflection on alterity, both *Jenisjoplin* and *Das Fell* show a re-negotiation of the relationship with the *numinosum*. In 1917, the philosopher, theologian and historian of theology Rudolf Otto published *Das Heilige – Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*, and approached alterity in the context of religious transcendence and in the realm of ambiguity: in Otto's work the other stands for the transcendental Other, while one is mortal; furthermore, this transcendental Other has the quality of "awfulness" [sic] and at the same time is "uniquely fascinating" (Otto 1917: 31). On the other hand, establishing a relationship with the Other also requires a new dimension in the previous knowledge of oneself:

Of course it [the feeling of the numinous] can only emerge if and when certain conditions are fulfilled, conditions involving a proper development of bodily organs and the other powers of mental and emotional life in general, a due growth in suggestibility and spontaneity and responsiveness to external impressions and internal experiences. (Otto 1917: 128)

In the relationship with the *numinous* the subject also re-evaluates its position as to the awful and the fascinating.

In *Jenisjoplin* and *Das Fell*, the new relationship between the protagonists and their skin as a consequence of an illness indicates a new position in relation to the world and the act of rewriting memory. While the *numinosum* is a direct consequence of an external virus invading Nagore's body, Vic's skin disorder has been produced naturally by the body. As Nagore herself recognizes, it is not possible to locate that external invading *numinosum* in a specific part of her body, while in Vic's case it is visible in a specific area on her back. While Nagore's disease is contagious, Vic's body presents no danger to others. Therefore, in *Jenisjoplin* and *Das Fell* the reader is facing diseases developed in opposite directions, and analysing the

different literary elaborations of the *numinosum* and the processes of remodelling the relationship with the body and the world offers interesting conclusions.

In the case of *Jenisjoplin*, a three-phase evolution is presented in the relocation process of the subject as to her sick body and the world:

- 1) In the first phase, the diagnosis as HIV-seropositive echoes the *numinosum*: the body is simultaneously perceived as awful and fascinating. On the one hand, a new identity is applied to Nagore from the exterior following scientific criteria. She is marked as the Other and as a contaminant, which Nagore herself initially assumes: “Lehenengoz atera nintzen kalera diagnostikodun gorputzean, poltsikoan lehergailu bat daramana bezala. [...] Heriotza-printza bat nuen orain, identifikatu ezin zen gorputz atalen batean”⁵ (JJ 40). However, in this first stage the dominance of the fascination pole of the *numinosum* is shown in Nagore’s sensing her own body as being healthy and strong in spite of her diagnosis, as well as in her negation of the terrifying element and her rebellion against medical authority (JJ 103). This has to be interpreted as the trial of a subject in order to maintain empowerment over one’s own identity, as it is also Nagore’s silence on her seropositive condition, as an effort for external forces not to condemn her to a mutilated identity as a sick and contagious body. This first phase is also a clear stage of internal and external struggles in her body, and it is not for nothing that the protagonist refers to enemies inside and outside her body: “Puertas doktoarearen kontsultatik nire gorputzarekin etsaituta ateratzen nauk beti”⁶ (JJ 151). In this stage the impulse for the fascinating dimension of the *numinosum* is highlighted, and the inner fight with her body is explained as a consequence of the external forces of the medical community. However, in this phase of dissent with medical truth, the skin indicates that the *numinosum* has two faces. A clear example is the fact that her sex life with her partner Luka suddenly ceases because of the fear of contagion, as if sexuality and the realm of the skin have also become a battlefield: Accepting Luka’s caresses with no resistance becomes a challenge for Nagore (JJ 104). Skin becomes a sensual indicator for the “awfulness” of the sick body, but also channels the impulse for the fascinating pole of the *numinous* in the very few moments of sensuality that occur when the “awfulness” is ignored by the consciousness and **moments of being** are experimented with. To put it in Woolf’s words, one of these very rare and fleeting moments is Nagore’s brief dance, which goes unnoticed by her

⁵ “For the first time I went out in public in a diagnosed body, as if I were carrying a bomb in my pocket. [...] Now I had a death ray, in an unidentifiable body-part”.

⁶ “I always leave Dr. Puertas’ practice in enmity with my body”.

boyfriend Luka, with a stranger: she touches his belly with her fingertips and their long kiss awakens her memories of past pleasures (JJ 189–190).

- 2) In the second phase, the learning process towards recognition of alterity in one's own body and the first step in accepting its alterity is made visible. The reader assists Nagore's turn to acknowledge the terrifying part of the *numinosum*. While hospitalized for severe pneumonia, Nagore herself manifests her experience with metaphors of imprisonment (JJ 212). As if being arrested, at being hospitalized, Nagore feels forced to "confess" to being HIV-seropositive (JJ 211). She adopts a position of dissent from her perspective as a sick body: in spite of being in a hospital, her decision to reject antiretroviral therapy puts her in a position of a double alterity, as a sick and contagious body on one hand, and as a rebel against the scientific truth (JJ 215), on the other. At this point, her skin sensations signal to her the distance kept by her environment as a consequence of her double alterity. Nagore becomes an observer of the unwilling distance between her skin and her beloved: "Ez ninduten ukitzen. Ez Lukak ez aitak ez amak. [...] hiruretari inor ez zen nigana gerturatzen, ez nik haiek sentitzeko adina. Aldamenean esertzen ziren, niretzat iritsezina zen distantziara"⁷ (JJ 215).
- 3) In the third phase we can observe the reconciliation between the *I* and alterity, as there is an approach to the *numinosum* as a whole. The protagonist compares her second hospitalisation to the experience of being in a monastery (JJ 275), and it results in an experience of contemplation. She discovers an inner balance in herself, she recognizes the self in the other and the other in the self: "Azaltzen ez nekien hura guztia nire baitan zegoen instalatuta. [...] nire baitan zegoen dena"⁸ (JJ 276). Like the *numinosum*, Nagore perceives a terrible and fascinating "It" in herself, which is impossible to express in words.

At this stage, Nagore changes her relationship with the world as well, as she leaves her dissent, her political and social struggle aside to accept treatment (JJ 218). She also observes her body from the outside and relocates it in regard to sexuality, eroticism and seduction. Likewise, she also reformulates her discourse about concepts such as political conflict, war, battle and surrender.

During the process of de-eroticizing her skin, Nagore stands out as an empowered subject over her sick body in the last two phases, retrospectively she becomes

⁷ "They did not touch me. Not Luka or Dad or Mum. [...] None of the three came close to me, not enough for me to feel them. They sat next to me, at an inaccessible distance for me."

⁸ "All that I couldn't express was already settled in me. [...] everything lied within".

aware of its location and behavior with others prior to her illness. Consequently, the protagonist locates herself in a new place in relation to the male gaze and voice: “[Gaixotu aurretik] Larruaren bidez iristen nintzen samurtasunera, batasun sentimendura, eta are onarpen intelektualera”⁹ (JJ 248). Her re-reading of her skin is in line with the creation of new spaces of intimacy with female characters, especially with her best friend Irantzu and her mother.

We can affirm, thus, that skin is a key element in Nagore’s process of coming to terms with the *numinosum*. In the first place, skin was an area of impulse and hunting in the era before her diagnosis as HIV-seropositive. At a first moment after the diagnosis the sick body resists the touch of the other, only to pass on to a further stage, where, as the protagonist states, “ezinezkoa eskatzen nien: nire azalaren barnetik eutsi nintzatela”¹⁰ (JJ 216), that is, Nagore discovers herself in need of an “inner touch” rather than being willing to establish an active relationship with the world through her skin. Nagore craves inner touches of her loved ones, thereby revealing her body’s interior weakness from the inner side of her skin; in her final stage, the protagonist finds all she needs inside her skin and gets over her sensation of destitution.

If we come to *Das Fell*, the evolution of Vic’s hypertrichosis syndrome runs parallel to her interior and exterior journey to the Baltic Sea. The reader is faced with a double process of self-knowledge: on the one hand, Vic will leave her comfort zone in Berlin and during the trip she will analyze her own behavior, thoughts, memories and tendencies in a mirroring exercise with the **Other** in peripheral villages; on the other hand, she will undergo a special process of self-knowledge of her body which has been affected by the numinous hypertrichosis in her attempt to explore by touching the numinous area on her back, which she cannot see directly with her eyes. At each stage of her journey Vic plays the role of the mirror and of the Other for the inhabitants of each small place, while she permanently observes herself in the mirror, as well as the *numinosum* on the most invisible spot on her back. Thus, the novel discovers the interplay between the visibility and invisibility of alterity, between its tangibility and intangibility.

Beside the passages in front of the mirror, the sensory descriptions related to the sense of the touch are very precise (F 52–53)¹¹, with an inevitable echo of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*. The change in Vic’s self-perception and her self-exploration by touching is directly related to her new sensory experience of her own back and of the world.

⁹ “I reached tenderness, a feeling of unity, and even intellectual recognition through my skin”.

¹⁰ “I was asking them for the impossible: to hold me inside my skin”

¹¹ Quotations from *Das Fell* will be indicated with F followed by a page number.

The transformation of the skin begins with a feeling of pain (F 25) and Vic begins the exploration of her skin through pain. Apart from her first shock, Vic's relationship with the *numinosum* is not dominated by fear of her body, but rather by her fear of the gaze of others. She takes advantage of every moment of solitude to study the hairy zone of *numinosum* on her back by touching it, and she constantly measures the growing hair and its exact location with the tip of her fingers: "die Stoppeln stellen sich unter den Kuppen auf, piksen, den Rücken hinab, die Haare drücken sich borstig an die Haut. Sie spült Rücken und Hände ab, tastet wieder"¹² (F 52–53). Experimenting with new and unknown perceptions does not cause fear in Vic, but rather reinforces the sensitivity of the skin on her back during the journey and transforms the perception of her back as far as objects that it touches are concerned (such as perceiving the pressure of the clothes on her back in a different way (F 55), becoming aware of the subtle contact of the hair on her back on her skin (F 66–67)); the hairy zone creates a new space with its own peculiar nature and just as a new eventually stiff armchair softens with use, so Vic's *numinosum* on her back is transformed from a rough zone (F 79) into a soft one. On the other hand, at times her own touch becomes more dreadful (F 112), before she gets used to it and adapts (F 133, 139). After the first neutral and precise descriptions, the narrator gives a name to the *numinosum* with the inscription of *das Fell* (F 76, "fur"), until the protagonist herself appropriates the most terrifying part of the *numinosum* with the expression "mein Fell" (my fur), and even ends up by spontaneously caressing her numinous part on her back.

Obviously, this skin disorder also provokes a crisis of Vic's femininity: because her partner has abandoned Vic for a few days and gone on vacation with his ex-wife and young daughter, Vic has been marginalized to an emotional periphery and she is in a moment of crisis. Simultaneously, the Other born in her body makes her observe herself and the others by new means, such as the sense of touch. The reader can identify different steps in her process of redefining her femininity, like the repeated scenes in front of the mirror, her rejection of dresses or her attempts to make her new skin invisible. At the final stage of her evolution, on her return to Berlin, she opts for a dress showing her back for the first time. Although her original goal was to take revenge on Karl, Vic has overcome the thirst for retaliation at the end of the process of self-knowledge and, having confronted the *numinosum* and repositioned her femininity, the story closes with the relocation of her emotional

¹² "the thick hair stands up under the fingertips, pricks down the back, the hair press bristly against her skin. She washes her back and hands, touches it again". All quotations translated by Garbiñe Iztueta-Goizueta unless stated otherwise.

life. She leaves the periphery of Karl's life and ends up being at the center of her own journey.

2.1.2. Periphery and memory

The novel *Jenisjoplin* tackles two main topics by means of a comparison between the sick body and the *numinosum*: the critique of subalternity and the re-codification of memory using the voice and the texture of a sick body (therefore, memory approached from alterity and periphery).

From the second phase of Nagore's evolution on, the transformation in her gaze towards her own body and in her sense of touch has already been mentioned. Furthermore, a change in her discourse about social and political concepts occurs, for instance in her reflections on hegemony, periphery and dependence, and the critiques of social behaviors around them.

With Nagore's self-identification as a sick body and as seropositive, Uxue Alberdi introduces the subaltern and peripheral status (JJ 255) of sick bodies in relation to instances of authority. In this context, the limits of being Basque and non-Basque lose relevance for Nagore, as she captures a new form of periphery, alterity, power, and social and cultural memory, when she understands them within a more hybrid and integral scope. In the new spaces of sorority, Nagore's Foucaultian discourse is developed on the basis of her new perceptions: how the behaviors of the environment change with the establishment of the "sick" identity, how the gaze of alterity is transformed, how some bodies place themselves in positions of power and dominance over the sick body (JJ 255).

Thus, at this second stage, the political and social aspect of alterity is overcome by a more intimate and emotional dimension. Furthermore, the protagonist also reaches a new position from her sick body to reinterpret and rediscover her family memory. Rereading and remembering more integrally the figure of her aunt Carmen, who died at the age of 20 from AIDS, is in particular made possible by means of the perceptions of her skin. Nagore can now recall her aunt and her illness from the very special perspective of her own sick body in a more tangible way:

Izeba Karmenekin oroitzen nintzen, nola eskatzen zigun, hilzorian zegoela, estuago besarka genezala. Amama eta biok haren gorputzaren barrura sartzeko ahalegin desesperatua orduantxe ulertu nion. Haren ohearen barruan nahi gintuen, azalaren barruan ezin gintuelako.¹³ (JJ 215–6)

¹³ "I remembered my aunt Carmen, when she was about to die she asked us to embrace her more tightly. It was then that I understood her desperate attempt for grandma and myself to enter the interior of her body. She wanted us inside her bed because we couldn't get inside her skin".

The new perceptions of her skin allow Nagore to approach the memory of her aunt more closely and to show this in her thoughts, dreams and in dialogues with her family memories that have faded over the years, thus restoring communicative and social memory.

The approach to memory proposed by Maren Wurster on sick and/or altered skin has some stimulating particularities. Firstly, in line with the phenomenon of hypertrichosis and the new sensations on Vic's back and fingertips, cognitive memory is differentiated from sensory memory. Vic is confronted with the new experience of remembering something cognitively but not being able to feel the remembered sensation: "Aufgewöhlt merkt sie, dass sie zwar noch weiss, dass ihr voriges Körpergefühl anders war, es aber nicht mehr empfinden kann" (F 60)¹⁴.

Secondly, it is interesting that the novel offers far from conventional approaches regarding the relationship between alterity and memory. Although elements and characters from West and East Germany appear in scenes of the journey from Berlin to the Baltic Sea, and certain references are made to different historical and political eras, the focus on alterity and memory is developed and constructed in the relations between cities and rural landscapes, rather than between political centers and peripheries, or between the two states. Vic, as an urban woman from Berlin traveling on her own, will stand for the Other in her brief stops in isolated houses, camping areas, small accommodations, villages, and during her visit to her brother and family. On the other hand, driven by the *numinosum* on her back, Vic's new and stronger sense of touch enables her to perceive the landscapes on her journey more deeply and in a more detached way. In addition, Vic will record, from her location of periphery and alterity, the memory of her body on the way from Berlin to the Baltic Sea, which is to be interpreted as a trip from the center to the periphery. When facing the *numinosum* of the hairy skin on her back, echoes of previous *numinosi* and transformations related to the body are brought to the text: the growing of breasts, her first sexual encounter with Karl, her secret attempts to become a mother, the alterity of not being a mother and her peripheral position in the relationship with Karl when she compares herself to Karl's ex-wife and daughter.

In both *Jenisjoplin* and *Das Fell* the *numinosum*, either located inside the body or on the skin, triggers fear and fascination with different intensity at different points. Both novels point out perceptions of the skin as vehicles to rethink femininity. Alberdi and Wurster also integrate new dimensions in their respective social and cultural memories, while the relocation of both protagonists as to their memories of

¹⁴ "Agitated, she notices that she still knows that her previous body feeling was different, but she can no longer feel it".

the past and to others takes place. Alberdi highlights the relevance of the memory of the suffering derived from the social drama of drug addiction and AIDS epidemic for the recent Basque cultural memory.

2.2. Sense of hearing, alterity and memory in *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* and *beltzuria*

beltzuria (2014) by Ixiar Rozas and *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* (2016) by Paula Fürstenberg deal with alterations that affect speech, and on the basis of this motif alterity plays a very significant role in the construction of memory and identity.

In these two works, both imbued with autobiographical elements, a female *I* travels to rescue and reinterpret the voice of a male character who has lost the power of the word, while the memories of the different generations and the identities of the self are configured.

The protagonist and narrator of the novel *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* is Johanna, who in the 2000s, at the age of 21, comes to East Berlin from Uckermark, a small region of East Germany, in order to pursue an apprenticeship as a tram driver. One day, the young enthusiast of maps and plans receives a message from her father Jens, who disappeared on 4th October 1989, one month before the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to her mother Astrid, he fled to West Germany for good to become a famous rock musician, leaving behind her and their then-two-year-old daughter. Johanna has no memories of her father or the German Democratic Republic. 19 years later, Johanna finds her father sick with cancer in hospital and meets her grandmother Hilde and half-sister Antonia for the first time. The protagonist and narrator, who radically questions her own identity and the facts she has heard from her mother about her father and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), wants to know directly from the sick man's mouth the truth about his decision in October 1989 and about his ideological position regarding the GDR. Johanna needs to relocate herself in an inner emotional map in relation to her own identity, to the past of the GDR and to her family. However, probably as a consequence of his medication based on morphine, Jens offers only cryptic answers to her daughter's direct questions, and soon he loses his speech due to cancer and dementia. In Johanna's task of finding out the truth about her speechless and voiceless father, she will focus on the voices of different generations and biographies that lived through the history of GDR. They will offer her very different versions of the story of Jens' disappearance: according to some of them, the Stasi imprisoned Jens, another voice states that Jens went to the historical demonstration of 4th October 1989 in Berlin, etc. The narrator and protagonist also puts these voices in dialogue with photographs and documents, in her search for the ultimate truth, until in the end she comes

to a sceptical conclusion about the truth of memories and memory artefacts, and finally after Jens' death she even refuses to see his Stasi record. Instead, at this point, after the death of her father, Johanna builds a creative memory discourse based on her father's cryptic phrase and on the information on a receipt from a car repair in October 1989, which is found in Jens' house. Since then, anyone asking about Johanna's father receives the answer that Jens suffered a car breakdown and that Erich Honecker's physiotherapist, Erika, stopped to help him on the road, and that both he and the car were towed to West Berlin, being swallowed by the city until it was too late to return home.

The author Ixiar Rozas presents *beltzuria* as a documentary essay, a reflection on the social and political space of the voice that runs through some of her family stories. The moment the *I* hears the polyphonic word "beltzuria"¹⁵ from the mouth of her mother, the process of rescuing the voice of her late grandfather, Xamuio, begins. The man who had returned from the Rif War almost speechless, spoke only when singing traditional *bertsos*¹⁶. His voice was lost, and the *I* takes over the task to resound the voices of the peasant soldiers and families that the world refused to hear. The *I* starts her search for Xamuio's voice in a phonic sense. In fact, the *I* inevitably discovers in a 1970 research work by Antonio Zavala, that Xamuio learned by heart and performed a *bertso* composed and sung by the late *bertsolari*¹⁷ Axura in 1917, and that her grandfather's voice was even recorded. She will trace back the recording, by searching in Xamuio's hometown Etxalar and also in San Sebastian, and by making various voices visible and tangible: in addition to Xamuio's voice, the voices of her grandmother Lina, of her mother and popular voices of four generations are brought to the text of *beltzuria*. In the absence of recordings,

¹⁵ Rozas highlights on the first page of her documentary essay the semantic potentiality and polyphony of the title *beltzuria* (meaning literally "black and white" in Basque), specifying four meanings as in a dictionary entry: 1) adj. frowning; 2) adj. black, dark (sky before the rain is about to pour); 3) n. scare, shock; 4) gender-related nuances: in times of war women suffered deprivations (literally in Basque: "saw blacks and whites"); in the last months of the two-year mourning, women began to wear black and white clothes; (B 9)

¹⁶ A *bertso* is a sung composition, performed in Basque and a capella, in spontaneous verse, following various melodies and rhyming patterns. It belongs to the art of *bertsolaritza*, "a rhetorical genre of an epideictic, oral, sung and improvised nature" in the Basque language (Garzia, Sarasua, Egaña 2001: 181). It has a performative dimension, as *bertsos* are usually composed and performed on a variety of occasions, by one or multiple *bertsolaris* onstage in an event arranged for the purpose or as a sideshow, in homage ceremonies, in benefit lunches and suppers, with friends or in a competition.

¹⁷ A person who sings *bertsos*.

the *I* (B 52)¹⁸ tries to rescue the nuances and uniqueness of her grandfather's voice in the alterity of the conversation of four female bodies of different ages in the kitchen, until the process of rescuing Xamuio's memory is completed (B 98). This process of vocalizing memory can be heard, seen and touched in a specific oneiric exercise of self-resonance at the end of the essay: in 1970 Xamuio could not remember the last two lines of the *bertso* by Axura when he sang it by heart and Zavala made this void visible in the written research work by writing two lines with discontinuous periods, until the *I* manages to capture both missing lines in dreams and at the very moment of perception between dreams and awakening: she creates an inscription of two verses over the two intermittent lines written by the researcher Zavala, thus creating a palimpsest.

Therefore, both literary works allow their authors to build the memory of previous generations through the sense of hearing. In *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* (2016) and *beltzuria* (2014) it is researched through a silenced man and his past. In both cases the starting point is a missing voice, no longer audible, and both voices leave the legacy of two traumatic moments in the recent European past.

Walter Benjamin pointed out that, after the First World War, the ability to share experiences among human beings in society was reduced (Benjamin 2007: 104). Xamuio's silence after his experience in the Rif War can be considered an echo of the post-war trauma and post-traumatic stress:

Gerra hartatik itzuli zenean, Xamuiok ez zuen apenas hitz egiten. Lehen Mundu gerratik itzultzen ziren soldaduen antzera, izandako esperientziak mututu egin zuela pentsa daiteke. [...] Izaki isil bilakatu zen Xamuio. [...] nire aitona zen. Etxean entzuten nizkion bertsoak, Lasarten, eguberri bezperako afari eta biharamuneko bazkarian. Kantu horietatik eta agurretatik haratago, apenas entzun nion beste hitzik¹⁹ (B 18–19).

Jens is not affected by a war, as his silence is a result of cancer and dementia. However, the lack of information on the causes and details of his disappearance in October 1989 is a reflection of the silence that settled after the sudden historical change in recent German history about the years, attitudes and decisions after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic. In both cases, the past has become

¹⁸ Quotes from *beltzuria* will be cited with B followed by a page number.

¹⁹ "When he returned from that war, Xamuio hardly spoke. Like the soldiers returning from World War I, one can think that the lived experience muted him. [...] Xamuio became a silent being. [...] it was my grandfather. At home I listened to his *bertsos*, in Lasarte, at the Christmas Eve dinner and lunch the following day. Beyond those songs and greeting words, I barely heard another word from him". All quotes translated by Garbiñe Iztueta-Goizueta unless stated otherwise.

a blank space, and voice devices such as Jens' message to Johanna on the answering machine and the recordings related to a research work found by chance by the *I* push the protagonists into a search process. Both Johanna (FGT 19)²⁰ and the *I* of *beltzuria* (B 19, 21, 129) become aware that a text written at some point in the past has been erased by the force of silence.

2.2.1. Embodying the voice: the *numinosum* and dialogicity

In this voice-related search it seems that the subjects of both literary works, following Susan Sontag's expression, strive to regain their senses and to learn to see, hear and feel more. As a matter of fact, the embodiment of the voice is at the center of both texts: the voices of Johanna's father and grandfather Xamuio are important and meaningful beyond the word and meaning. Johanna's first conversation with her father includes descriptions of indefinite sounds, rather than words: laughter, the sound of choking, a cough, breath (FGT 53). The father's voice will not offer any reliable information about the truth that Johanna wants to find, since he answers his daughter's direct questions in a confused way and under the influence of strong medication:

Wieso bist du damals in den Westen gegangen? fragte ich.
 Jens lachte.
 Das war gar nicht nötig, sagte er, der Westen ist zu mir gekommen.
 Wohin bist du dann gegangen, am 4. Oktober 1989?
 [...]Die haben mich um fünfzigtausend Mark betrogen, sagte er dann. (FGT 56)²¹

These are the two responses she will hear from her father. His inability to speak as a consequence of the illness will by no means satisfy his daughter's thirst for truth. On the contrary, the father's mouth will become a metonym of his fading body rather than as an authorized access to the truth. This voice, which disappeared nineteen years earlier, will be the clearest example of the body in transit between presence and absence: only unintelligible syllables will come out of Jens' mouth (FGT 81), saliva running out of it (FGT 82), his open mouth (FGT 96), a cough

²⁰ Quotes from *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* will be indicated with FGT followed by a page number.

²¹ "Why did you go to the West? I asked.

Jens laughed.

It wasn't necessary, he said. The West came to me.

Where did you go on the 4th October 1989?

[...] They cheated me out of fifty-thousand marks, he said". All quotes translated by Garbiñe Iztueta-Goizueta unless stated otherwise.

(FGT 98), bad breath (FGT, 102), the sound of nausea and his mouth full of yellow liquid (FGT 127).

In the essay *beltzuria* the subject gives a bodily form to her reflections on the embodiment of the voice and on the senses of hearing and touch throughout the process of searching. In fact, first of all, the self explains this process as a search for accessible places for her body, rather than a collection of data from the past. In addition, according to the *I*, in the writing process the whole body speaks, it is situated in an open gate (B 214), so writing is a process of the whole body.

The voice is defined as “the skin of words” (B 40) and as the thing that emerges every time we bring the words, sounds, vibrations, and stutters to our mouths (B 29). This means that the word, voice and body are considered inseparable elements. This leads to a connection between the senses of hearing and touch, since the voice can be touched: “Ahotsak gainezka egiten duenean, entzuteaz gain, ukitu egin dezakegu. Entzumenarekin ukitu”²² (B 41). At the end of the day, the self understands all the senses as a prolongation of touch, as indicated by Pallasmaa (2006: 10).

In this process of searching for a voice, two realms related to alterity will be thematized in *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* and *beltzuria*: the *numinosum* on the one hand and dialogicity and diversity on the other hand.

The subject will be confronted with the *numinosum* in the first place: this will generate in turn rejection and admiration, it will be both dreadful and fascinating. In *Familie der geflügelten Tiger*, Johanna will undergo this confrontation with the *numinosum* in her role as a daughter and a member of the post-generation of the GDR. Her father’s voice, which disappeared for 19 years, will be terrifying and fascinating to Johanna; it provokes rejection and anger and, above all, it will remain a powerful presence in her thoughts. Johanna acknowledges anger and smallness in her inner self when one single message on the answering machine after a 19-year silence makes her thoughts circle around the diffuse image of her father (FGT 32), when she feels threatened by the city of Berlin due to the eventual presence of her father there (FGT 21) and when she discovers that she is trying to avoid her father out of fear (FGT 28). Internally Johanna condemns her own mother for having chosen such a father for her (FGT 34).

In spite of the fact that, at the first moment after Jens’ reappearance, Johanna responds with self-sufficiency (“Ich bin auch ohne Vater ganz passabel geworden”²³

²² “When the voice overflows, besides listening, we can touch it. We can touch it with the hearing” (B 41).

²³ “I’ve managed quite fine without a father”

FGT 15), when she is face to face with the consequences of his absence, she will have to acknowledge her ignorance or inadequate knowledge about her father. At the same time, when other voices of the family question Astrid's truth, the relationship between Johanna and her mother will stumble, giving rise to the former's distrust towards the latter and her memories. In the process of elaborating the memory of the GDR, Paula Fürstenberg reveals the contradictions in the communicative and social memory and offers a critical look at the truth of memory.

Therefore, the *numinosum* appears as a space pending investigation in the memory of the family and of Germany, which generates the fascinating aspect: the lack of knowledge about her father is compared by Johanna to her favorite map from the 13th century, created by the monks of Ebstorf monastery in the region of Lüneburg. This map is the richest *mapa mundi* of the Middle Ages, locates Jerusalem at its very center, points at the East on the upper side, and unknown territories, the *terra incognita*, are teeming with fantastic beings, such as a winged tiger. Jens is *terra incognita* on Johanna's inner emotional map. Jens stands for the winged tiger on the *mapa mundi* of Ebstorf. In the same way as West Berlin appeared as a blank space on the Berlin plan during the time of the GDR, Johanna is aware that the absence of her father has generated a void in her identity, and Johanna's first quest is the attempt to inscribe that blank space with the truth. If, according to the political, social and cultural paradigm of GDR on the Berlin plan, the unknown zone of the Western part of the city was marked with blank spaces and Soviet inscriptions, and, in the case of the *mapa mundi* of Ebstorf, *terra incognita* was drawn with fantastic beasts, Johanna will first of all accept the fear and fascination that the appearance of her father, the *numinosum*, causes in her. At the end of her postmemory process, Johanna will decide to draw her own flying tiger on her personal emotional Ebstorf *mapa mundi*, exactly on the spot of her memory void about her father, and she will create her own version of the story of his disappearance.

In the case of *beltzuria*, the *I* places the *numinosum* in the framework of her literary task. In addition to describing Xamuio's own voice as fragile and strong at the same time (B 31), in the process of her search for her grandfather's voice the *I* carries out the task of locating her own poetic voice in the general mission of writing. In this process, the relationship with the *numinosum* is determined by the concepts of **ambiguity** and **diversity**: the voice of the *I* does not offer any certainty or comfort (B 34); it is both a poetic and performative voice, diverse in both of these dimensions. Connected to the concept of **diversity of the voice** is the explanation of the self about the dialectical relationship between poeticity and performativity: poetics is a backwards and upwards movement, while performativity is anterior and horizontal (B 173). In the perseverance of the creative quest, the battle

of desires that emerges during writing is like hunting: “Ehiztaria ere ezian dabil. Desioa eta ezetza”²⁴ (B 49). The reader is thus confronted again with an image of dialogicity between desire and denial. Desire and denial are also fused in writing, as the *I* describes her writing process as entering the rhizomatic battlefield formed by desires, a battlefield where a fight takes place between the conscious will to know and the unconscious desire to ignore certain things (B 49).

The second axis of alterity is constituted by dialogicity and diversity. The poetic *I* of *beltzuria* perceives the voice connected to diversity (B 34) and resonance (B 147). In the process of rescuing Xamuio’s voice as a grandfather and a *bertsolari*, the *I* discovers the first layer of resonance generated by Xamuio: the grandfather collected in his memory the *bertso* by the *bertsolari* Axura, who belonged to a previous generation and, by using resonance, Xamuio returned this *bertso* back to the 1970 present by vocalizing it in a different frequency. This way Xamuio, in rescuing the old *bertso* by Axura to sing it from memory, represents a first layer of dialogicity. This two-voiced conversation of Xamuio and Axura becomes a polyphony of several voices when the two lines forgotten by Xamuio in 1970 are reconstructed by the *I* after having drunk from the memory source of several other voices.

In the novel *Familie der geflügelten Tiger*, dialogicity often comes to the surface in relation to maps and to words pronounced by Jens. On the one hand, Johanna gathers in her research on Jens’ past the semantic potentiality of his words, which have been kept in the memory of different members of the family. She also discovers in the answers of different information sources the resonance of expressions inherited from previous generations. On the other hand, Johanna sees a similarity between Jens himself, the memory of West and East Germany, and blank spaces or winged tigers on various maps: they both stand for a dialogicity between presence and absence, between knowing that they exist and ignoring their nature.

The alterity of the voice has a third dimension in *beltzuria*, since, according to the *I*, the voice is relational, and exists with respect to the listener: the voice is a fugitive, it flees through the mouth (B 34), and the voice exists because it finds its way to someone (B 215). So the voice is movement by definition, and arises in motion towards the Other.

2.2.2. Memory

The concept of postmemory is appropriate for the generation not only of the authors, Rozas and Fürstenberg, but also of the protagonist Johanna and the *I* in *beltzuria*. It is a general statement in both examples that the past has a direct or

²⁴ “The hunter is also silent. Desire and Denial” (B 49).

indirect influence on the individuals that cannot remember it. The past generates concerns and questions about one's own identity and position as to the world and as to the past itself.

In both cases, memory is developed in the context of the so-called postmemory: in *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* the focus is set on the postmemory of GDR from the perspective of the generation born in the late 1980s; in *beltzuria* the main perspective is that of generation born in the 1970s in Basque society, with the aim of configuring the memory of the generation that experienced various peripheral wars around the First World War.

According to Marianne Hirsch's definition of postmemory:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (Hirsch 2012: 5)

While this concept was initially focused on the memory associated with the Holocaust, Hirsch herself later extended its use to different contexts: "I explicitly engage in such connective and intersecting analyses that I have come to see absolutely necessary if we to move forward in the field [of postmemory]" (Hirsch 2012: 19). Therefore, both the quest for Johanna and the *I* of *beltzuria* move beyond individual memories, in areas of "imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch 2012: 5), to the memories about those who came before. Thus, both authors move in the realms of postmemory.

Gabriele Schwab's "multidirectional or connective approach" is also useful for our analysis, as, according to her, memories "are always already composites of dynamically interrelated and conflicted histories" (Schwab 2010: 30). Therefore, memories have been the subject of conflict at the time of their configuration. In the case of postmemory, this conflictive and composite nature emerges more clearly, since the subject of a post-generation soon gains full awareness of dependence on the memories of others to shape postmemory, as well as of the conflicts and controversies among those memories of Others. Thus, all kinds of memories show evidence of dialogicity and the *numinosum*.

Memory in the texts by Rozas and Fürstenberg is composed of dynamically related and conflicting stories, drawn from sources of information of all kinds, so that the questing subjects will discover the conflict and the internal potentiality of

each piece of memory. The diversity in the materiality of memory is found in both literary works, since the search process of both Johanna and the *I* in *beltzuria* is formed by pieces of information of very diverse nature: incomprehensible words, ambiguous words, photographs, conflicting testimonies of the time, research documents, museum exhibitions, artefacts of different kinds (an answering machine, voice listening machine, objects exhibited in museums), maps, dictionaries, and bibliographic sources.

It is striking that both literary works present a silenced male voice at the core of the memory void, while the quest is carried out by a female voice. Likewise, it should not be ignored that, in Johanna's and *I*'s process of configuring postmemory, a clear predominance is given to the contributions of female voices during the quest.

In both cases, the blank spaces of the past are reinterpreted in the context of the process of memory: Johanna is initially aiming at collecting data in order to gain actual knowledge about her father, especially through communicative and social memory; however, in her process the need for further elements arises and discovering the dialogicity and potentiality of memories leads Johanna to a reinterpretation of memories. Jens' sudden and unexpected appearance has blurred Johanna's hitherto apparently transparent inner emotional map. In this new situation, the way to find her place on that emotional map and to trace her way in life is to revisit the memory transferred by her mother, to listen to the memories of her newly discovered relatives, to listen well between lines, to recognize contradictions, to access old photos of her father for the first time, to carefully look at the Berlin plan from the GDR times, and to observe the objects displayed in the Berlin DDR-Museum.

In *beltzuria* the quest for memory is not presented as an investigation, and it can be interpreted as an ethical task of the *I*, rather than a personal search for identity²⁵. It is an ethical initiative that makes visible the silence about the experience of the First World War and the Rif War. In fact, this search with the goal of rescuing silenced and ignored voices is the ethical task of recovering the silenced link in communicative and social memory for the Basque cultural memory.

Familie der geflügelten Tiger and *beltzuria* present postmemory as a social process created by bodies and voices. In her search, Johanna listens to the voices of the different generations of GDR citizens, she keeps a protocol of the contradictory discourses of different memories and inconsistencies of each voice, while weaving these voices of different generations and biographies into her configuration of

²⁵ I agree with Esparza that postmodern identity is a powerful motif in *beltzuria* (Esparza 2017: 19–20). According to our analysis, the ethical dimension proves to be stronger than the need for reconstructing individual identity.

postmemory. The *I* of *beltzuria* highlights the alterity of the conversation and of the scene staged by four female bodies in a kitchen in Xamuio's hometown, Etxalar. As a matter of fact, postmemory is not conceived as an individual process, but in the context of the communicative and social performative memory, since it is through the force and the voices of these four bodies that, apart from Axura's *bertso* that Xamuio learned by heart and sang in 1970, the one and only legacy of the *bertsos* created by Xamuio himself (B 98) is remembered. Therefore, the self manages to recover Xamuio's voice and his own *bertso* for cultural memory, while also creating the palimpsest of the *bertso* composed by a previous generation represented by Axura.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In the works analyzed, connections are established between visibility, audibility and tangibility in relation to alterity and memory. In line with postmodernity, Alberdi, Rozas, Wurster and Fürstenberg reject the discourse which interprets alterity as anomaly. This rejection is carried out by means of their sensual literary elaboration of sick bodies. Their literary proposal is to approach alterity from the senses rather than from the intellect, just as the *numinosum* as the core element of alterity is closely connected to irrationality.

The relationship with the *numinosum* is a key element in these four literary works. In *Jenisjoplin*, when facing the **other** within one's own body, an evolution is shown from a discourse of struggle to a discourse of contemplation, and the skin is the physical field and main exponent of the relationship with the **other** during that journey. In the novel *Das Fell*, just as a traveler who observes and discovers new places on the journey with curiosity and wide-eyed wonder, Vic during her particular journey discovers a new area in her body and repeatedly explores the new hairy zone on her back by touching it, until she can appropriate it as one more body part, and even build an emotional bond with it. Fürstenberg places the *numinosum* in the family universe; she embodies it in the disappeared father. When his intermittent voice appears and fades away forever, the mystery, potentiality and ambiguity of the words pronounced by him are emphasized, and consequently, so is the *numinous* character of postmemory.

As for periphery, Alberdi invites the reader to reflect on the subalternity of sick bodies in connection to other situations of periphery: the periphery of Basque identity, geographical and social periphery in cities and towns, the periphery of Basque culture and society. Wurster, on the other hand, applies her reflection on periphery

to the context of emotional relations and of the city-village dichotomy. The concept of periphery is circumscribed in *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* to the context of recent German cultural memory: the memories of East and West Germany are confronted, as well as the opposing memories of the voices of different generations and biographies. The sceptical and playful attitude towards truth and memory is also manifested in Johanna's process of configuring postmemory. Rozas transposes to the Basque cultural memory the perspectives offered by both Wurster and Fürstenberg for the German context: Rozas reclaims the visibility of the cultural memory of previous generations in Basque rural areas as well as their experiences in different wars. Therefore, it is her claim for giving voice to the memory that has remained on the periphery and in silence.

A repositioning of memory is also evident in all four literary works discussed. Alberdi faces a society where political conflict has been at the core of its cultural memory. With *Jenisjoplin*, the author assumes the task of recovering the memory of the suffering caused by drug addiction and AIDS epidemic in the 1980s in Basque society, rescuing this component of Basque cultural memory from the periphery. Wurster differentiates herself from the discourses of alterity based on the East-West German paradigm in order to explore further spaces related to alterity. The concept of postmemory is especially present in *Familie der geflügelten Tiger* and *beltzuria*. In both cases, it is a process closely linked to creation, to embodiment and to a palimpsest: Fürstenberg uses the image of old maps to represent her palimpsest, while Rozas uses the *bertso*. In both of their works, the subject is engaged in a task of re-inscribing and, as a consequence of the process of listening in new ways to silenced voices of previous generations, the authors integrate their heritages from the realm of communicative memory to the field of cultural memory.

REFERENCES

- Alberdi U. 2017. *Jenisjoplin*, Susa, Zarautz.
- Aldekoa I. 2006. *Postmodernitatea gurean?*, "EGAN". 1–2, 141–156.
- Arozamena Ayala A. 2020. *Maketo, Auñamendi Entziklopedia* [on line], <http://aunamendi.euskokaskuntza.eus/eu/maketo/ar-91241/> [29.04.2020].
- Assmann A. 2006. "Soziales und kollektives Gedächtnis" file:///Users/garbineiztueta/Downloads/0FW1JZ.pdf [29.04.2020].
- Assmann J., Czaplicka J. 1995. *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, "New German Critique" 65, 125–133.
- Benjamin W. 2007. *Der Erzähler Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows (1936)*, in: *Erzählen: Schriften zur Theorie der Narration und zur literarischen Prosa*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 103–128.

- Cambi F. ed. 2008. *Gedächtnis und Identität: die deutsche Literatur nach der Vereinigung*, Königshausen und Neumann, Würzburg.
- Derrida J. 1967. *L'écriture de la différence*, Seuil, Paris.
- Eke N.O., ed. 2013. "Nach der Mauer der Abgrund"? (Wieder-)Annäherungen an die DDR-Literatur, Rodopi, Amsterdam, New York.
- Erl A. 2014. *Generation in Literary History: Three Constellations of Generationality, Genealogy, and Memory*, "New Literary History", 45: 3, 385–409.
- Esparza I. 2017. *Identitatearen eraldatzea XXI. Mendeko euskal narratiban: subjektu literario postmodernoa/Transformación de la identidad en la narrativa vasca del siglo XXI: el sujeto literario postmoderno*, Euskal Herriko Uni-bertsitatea/Uni-versidad del País Vasco. https://addi.ehu.es/bitstream/handle/10810/28424/TESIS_ESPARZA_MARTIN_IRATXE.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [29.04.2020].
- Foucault M. 1999. *Las palabras y las cosas: una arqueología de las ciencias humanas*, Itzul. Elsa Cecilia Frost, Siglo Veintiuno, México DF.
- Fürstenberg P. 2016. *Die Familie der geflügelten Tiger*, Kiepenheuer&Witsch, Köln.
- Goudin-Steinmann E. and C. Hähnel-Mesnard 2013. *Ostdeutsche Erinnerungsdiskurse nach 1989: Narrative kultureller Identität*, Frank&Timme, Berlin.
- Gabilondo J. 2008. *Globalizazioak eta kulturantziztasunaren fantasma: Biopolitika eta diferentzien polemikak euskal kultura eta literaturan, Postmodernitatea eta globalizazioa*, ed. G. Etxebarria, J. Gabilondo, Erroteta, Bilbo, 37–67.
- Halbwachs M. 1967. *La mémoire collective*. Les Presses uni-versitaires de France, Paris, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Halbwachs_maurice/memoire_collective/memoire_collective.html [29.04.2020].
- Hoffman E. 2004. *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, Public Affairs, New York.
- Köhler A. 2007. *Brückenschläge. DDR-autoren vor und nach der Wiedervereinigung*. Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- Kortazar J. 2007. *Postmodernitatea euskal kontagintzan*, Utriusque Vasconi-ae, Donostia.
- Lefebvre H. 1991. *The production of Space*. Itzul. D. Nicholson Smith, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford
- Löw M. 2001. *Raumsoziologie*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.
- Liotard J.-F. 1986. *La condición postmoderna. Informe sobre el saber*, Itzul. M Antolín Rato, Cátedra, Madril.
- Merleau-Ponty M. 1993. *Fenomenología de la percepción*, Itzul. J. Cabanes, Editorial Planeta-Agostini, Barcelona, https://monoskop.org/images/9/9b/Merleau-Ponty_Maurice_Fenomenologia_de_la_percepcion_1993.pdf [29.04.2020].
- Olaziregi M.J. 2009. *Is There a Return of the Real in Postmodern Fiction, Basque/European Perspectives on Cultural and Media Studies*, ed. M.P. Rodríguez, Center for Basque Studies-University of Nevada, Reno, 53–80.
- Otto R. 1931. *The Idea of the Holy: an Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, Itzul. J.W. Harvey, Oxford University Press, London.

- https://archive.org/stream/theideaoftheholyy00ottouoft/theideaoftheholyy00ottouoft_djvu.txt [29.04.2020].
- Pallasmaa J. 2006. *Los ojos de la piel. La arquitectura y los sentidos*, itzul. M. Puente Rodríguez, Editorial Joaquín Gili, Barcelona.
- Rozas I. 2014. *beltzuria*, Pamiela, Arre.
- Schwab G. 2010. *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Sistig S. 2003. *Wandel der Ich-Identität in der Postmoderne?: Zeit und Erzählen in Wolfgang Hilbigs "Ich" und Peter Kurzecks Keiner stirbt*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg.
- Sontag S. 2002. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors (1978)*. Penguin, London.
- Sontag S. 2013. *Against interpretation (1964) and other essays*. Penguin, New York
- Toro F. de (1991). *Postmodernidad y Latinoamérica (con un modelo para la narrativa postmoderna)*, "Revista Iberoamericana", 155–156, 441–467.
- Tuan Y-F. 2001. *Space and Place*, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota.
- Woolf V. 1926. *On being ill. The New Criterion*, 1926, 4:1, 32–45. <https://thenewcriterion1926.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/criterion-eliot-woolf-jan-1926.pdf> [29.04.2020].
- Wurster M. 2017. *Das Fell*, Hanser, Berlin.
- Zavala A. 1970. *Bidasoa aldeko bost bertsolari*, Auspoa, Tolosa.