

The Taste of Nostalgia: The Case of Socorro Venegas and Laia Jufresa

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Abstract

In Mexican literature, the subject of death has been present since the earliest texts. The novels *Vestido de Novia*, by Socorro Venegas, and *Umami*, by Laia Jufresa, re-address this subject, but from nostalgia's perspective, a feeling relatively unexplored in the narrative written by young women until now. Overcome mourning, the protagonists manage to assimilate a series of memories that plunge them into nostalgia, getting rid of depression. This paper will analyze both novels, aiming to point out this singularity, which turns them into a benchmark for future studies on the subject.

Keywords

Nostalgia, Death, Grief/Mourning, Melancholy, Depression

1. Introduction

Mexican literature written by women has gradually decentralized its focus of attention, from the concern to portraying the intimate and private world of women to the representation, among other topics, of the violence the country suffers from. In this sense, we can say that Mexican female writers, particularly those born in 1960, have diversified their topics and literary searches thanks to a greater participation of women in the public and occupational sectors. The uprise of female writers in Mexico is largely due to feminist struggles, that have managed to break ground and overcome obstacles that seemed unwavering. Hence, young female authors (born during the 1970s and onwards) have greater access to the publishing world and, therefore, to publications. Thus, being before a prestigious group of female authors who manage to recreate the social situation Mexico is going through is not surprising.

Be as it may, out of this female author fusion, two writers stand out. They

re-explore the private world, but not from a denouncing perspective, as once was the case of Rosario Castellanos, Inés Arredondo, or Elena Garro, but from a profound reflection upon death. In this narrative line, so constantly referred to by Mexican authors (starting from Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, followed by Jorge Ibarguengoitia's *Las Muertas* [*The Dead Girls*], to the present time, with Vizania Amezcua's *Una manera de morir* [*A way of Dying*], among others), we find Socorro Venegas and Laia Jufresa, with their novels *Vestido de novia* [*Wedding Dress*] (Tusquets, 2014) and *Umami* (Literatura Random House, 2015), respectively.

Thus, the aim of this work is to analyze the figure of nostalgia after the loss of a loved one that is present in Venegas' and Jufresa's aforementioned novels, while trying to outline a brief overview of the most outstanding features of the Mexican narrative written by women.

This work is divided then into three sections: in the first, the most outstanding characteristics of the narrative written by women on the subject of death are pointed out; in the second and third parts the texts of Venegas and Jufresa are analyzed from the duel and the overcoming of it thanks to nostalgia, the central theme of our study.

2. Features of the Literature Written by Women in Mexico

Before analyzing the two novels, the features of literature written by women in Mexico will be outlined. As stated above, the subject of death has been present in Mexican literature, from the pre-Hispanic poems that mention or make reference to it, to the present day. One of the highest representatives, Rulfo (2019: p. 5), centers his masterpiece *Pedro Páramo* around death, by recreating a dialogue between the dead: "I imagined seeing that through my mother's memories; of her nostalgia, between snippets of sighs. She always lived sighing for Comala, for the return; but she never came back." In literature written by women, Nellie Campobello stands out with her storybook *Cartucho* [*Cartridge*] (1931), where she recounts the atrocities of the Mexican Revolution from a girl's perspective. Elena Garro also stands out with her short story *El árbol* [*The Tree*] (1964), which recounts both the murder committed by the protagonist against her husband's mistress, and the murder of the co-star. Another female author who excels in the subject of death is Amparo Dávila who, in her short story "*Tiempo destrozado*" [*Shattered Time*] (1959), narrates how someone's parents die in a pond full of fish and apples where, apparently, water sets a high cost on those characters who dare to delve into it. These authors refer to death realistically and crudely since, for the sake of providing an objective view of the narrated events, no metaphors are used to announce the deaths: "They already killed Bartolo there in Chihuahua; I was knocking the door of his house. Nobody knows who, but they sewed him up with gunshots" (Campobello, 2018: p. 25). In such context, we could then say that Mexican female writers allude to the subject of death from different angles: from violent, chaotic, and terrifying perspectives to calm and serene approaches resulting from resignation for the inevitable. However,

the feeling of nostalgia linked to the loss of loved ones addressed in this paper has been little explored by Mexican female and male writers since, even when they tell different stories where death is present, they never refer to the feeling caused by the irredeemable loss of those who died, but to different approaches which include, among other things, black humor. That is the case of *Las Muertas* [*The Dead Girls*], a novel by Ibarguengoitia (1977: p. 46): “Their skulls smashed against the concrete and broke like eggs. At that moment both their lives ended. Their names were Evelia and Feliza”.

The treatment given to death is diverse, although accepting it as a natural thing is the least common approach. Instead, the main features that stand out are a sense of playfulness, intimacy, the effect of wonder, and even originality, topped up by the 1970s postmodern style that brings along uncertainty, disappointment, and hopelessness.

In this way, death is associated with the pain caused by losing something or someone and is, therefore, closely related to nostalgia and melancholy. That said, nostalgia (from the Greek *nostos*, meaning “homecoming” and *algo*, meaning “pain” or “ache”), is primarily linked to the pain caused by leaving one’s homeland. At first, nostalgia was linked to the psychic and physical pain experienced while being away from home. However, it was subsequently connected to the loss of a loved one and associated with overcoming grief. Thus, from psychology, nostalgia is linked to the “final stage of mourning [which] is for realignment and readjustment and implies being able to remember the loved one as no longer present, evoking them without pain or overwhelming emotions, but with affection and nostalgia; without the memory being strong enough to unbalance the person on account of the intensity of their emotions and thoughts around the loved one’s passing¹” (Yoffe, 2004: p. 136).

Hence, nostalgia differs from melancholy because it refers to an idealized past, which is longed for. Therefore, nostalgia went from referring to a space (home), to a time (the lost time), whereas melancholy is linked to an experience of existential loss “which cannot be overcome through the common mourning that ends at a given time but becomes a constant factor of the psychic state: the loss seems an ‘open wound’, a void that will never be filled (Freud 346)” (Litz, 2008: p. 166). In that way, nostalgia becomes a condition of the “spirit or the psyche, incurable, but dimmable” (Flores, 2008: p. 57), while melancholy holds on to the idealized past and translates into permanent sorrow that (in extreme cases) may result in depression, turning into unresolved grief.

However, as researcher Quezada (2011: p. 12) points out, Mexican idiosyncrasy “accepts death as a motif in terms of art, games, even in gastronomy itself. In literature, Mexican tales of such nature are of global interest [...]. In Mexico, funerary events become festive at times, and even openly erotic”.

Hence, Mexican female writers born in 1970 will inherit from their predecessors a rich literary tradition that will lead them to explore different topics and

¹Translator’s Note: All the translations of citations by Susana I. Sevilla Beltrán, unless otherwise noted.

forms of expression. Therefore, the subject of death will reappear in those generations born since 1970, but without the obvious mark of patriarchy, as these generations have an “uninhibited gaze, without guilt or remorse, and openly sexed” (see Vivero Marín, 2006: p. 198). In this framework, the approach to nostalgia will stand out in a special way since it is a novel vision little explored by Mexican writers.

Death and nostalgia

Thereby, in this conglomerate of subjects, styles and writing proposals, the subject of death looms, as was said, from various angles, and the feeling of nostalgia caused by the loss of loved ones appears as a new feature in Socorro Venegas’ *Vestido de novia*, and Laia Jufresa’s *Umami*, analyzed hereunder.

Socorro Venegas was born in 1972 in San Luis Potosí. She holds a degree in Social Communication from the Metropolitan Autonomous University, Campus Xochimilco (Mexico), and completed a master’s degree in Literature at the Center for Research and Teaching in Humanities of Morelos. She also holds a post-graduate degree in Cultural Policies and Cultural Management, organized by the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture.

Venegas has also been Deputy Director and Director of the Ricardo Garabay School of Writers, based in Cuernavaca, which belongs to the *Sociedad General de Escritores de México* (General Society of Writers of Mexico). She was Deputy Director General for the Promotion of Reading and Books, program of the National Council for Culture and Arts (Mexico). She is responsible for the book collection for children and young people of the *Fondo de Cultura Económica* (Economic Culture Fund). She currently resides in Cuernavaca.

Among her short story books are: *La risa de las azucenas* [*The Laughter of Lilies*] (Tierra Adentro, 1997), *La muerte más blanca* [*The Whitest of Deaths*] (Instituto de Cultura de Morelos, 2000) and *Todas las islas* [*All Islands*] (Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca, 2002). Among her novels are: *La noche será negra y blanca* [*Night will be Black and White*] (Ediciones Era/UNAM, 2009) and *Vestido de novia* [*Wedding Dress*] (Tusquets, 2014). She has also received several awards and distinctions, such as the Scholarship of the State Fund for Culture and the Arts of Morelos (1995-1996), the Scholarship of the Mexican Center of Writers and Artistic Exchange for an internship at The Writers Room of New York (2003), the Carlos Fuentes Novel Award 2004, Opera Prima Category, for her novel *La noche será negra y blanca*, and the Honorable Mention at Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Award 2010, for her novel *La noche será negra y blanca*.

In *Vestido de novia*, she tells the story of Laura Dumas, a widowed woman who has apparently overcome grief after the death of her first husband, Aldo, as she marries a second time and has a child. Thirteen years after her loss, one day, she goes to pay the rent of the crypt where Aldo’s remains are buried, and the manager of the cemetery asks her if she would like to sell it. As a result, the memories of her previous life emerge amid a series of questions. Her memories of those times and the emotions she feels again occur amid her longing for what

is gone and the satisfaction of what she now has. For this reason, the death of her first is conjured, to permanently overcome her grief and manage to go on with her life.

Thus, in *Vestido de novia*, nostalgia is present through the analepsis that refers to the years before Aldo's death, leading us into details and objects the protagonist still retains as remnants of a distant past. Nostalgia comes not only when Laura must make the decision whether to sell the crypt or not and think about what she will do with her ex-husband's ashes, but also when she notices she still preserves the collection of little wine bottles that Aldo formed over the years. Then again, Laura must face her past, knowing she has not entirely detached from it, and will have to overcome it if she wishes to continue her life with her new husband and with her son, Emilio. However, before that happens (or is about to happen, as suggested by the author), Laura makes a precise recap of the moment when Aldo died and everything that happened immediately after. Hence, we learn about her inability to dress Aldo's corpse in the Cruz Azul football shirt, as had been his wish:

I didn't realize Aldo was right there, forever disabled. His eyelids closed, without any rictus [...].

I couldn't finish putting his shirt on. I didn't have that kind of strength. I touched his soft cheeks with my hands. They were frozen, and it was only mid-May. He had the same fine white skin as his mother. Aldo would have to forgive me. I wasn't going to dress him for his last journey. I had to get out of there (Venegas, 2014: p. 51).

Nostalgia, as mentioned above, unlike melancholy, is associated to the memory of a loss, whether of the homeland or of a person (see RAE, virtual edition); therefore, Laura recounts the past from this sorrowful look for all the things that could not happen due to Aldo's sudden death (he dies of a heart attack in the bathroom of their house, and Laura is an eyewitness to that death). Her anger, which at times arises throughout the story, reveals to us Laura's inner conflict when transiting between the anger and acceptance stages by means of her reflection on nostalgia, which allows her to psychically work on the past, since this nostalgia "is recreated in the ruins and entails a critical scrutiny of history and memory. It attempts to understand the past to assess and value the present" (Celi, 2008: p. 96).

Thereupon, it is not surprising that a feeling of sorrow becomes apparent at times. However, unlike other female writers who have also addressed the issue of the loss of a loved one, as in the case of Coral Bracho in her poetic production or, more recently in the case of Sylvia Aguilar Zeleny in her novel *Una no habla de esto* [*One does not talk about this*] (2007), in Venegas' writings such sorrow is nuanced with an interplay of light and shade, since the protagonist marries a second time and has a child, situations that foster a better processing of grief, by granting her emotional comfort, thus helping her transit into the acceptance of Aldo's death.

In this way, sadness does not become permanent, but appears only when Aldo's death and the subsequent days are recalled: "How long does it take for what we've loved to burn? Is it all, in its entirety, in here? These ashes [...] and suddenly, through the window, I began to see how people and things followed their daily existence, everything seemed like the same world I knew [...]. And I had the warm box with Aldo's ashes on my legs" (Venegas, 2014: p. 66).

Thus, the presence of her current husband and her son Emilio will serve as emotional support for Laura to overcome melancholy and remain only with the feeling of nostalgia. Similarly, although the anger phase appears from time to time, Laura performs a kind of rite of passage at home, months after Aldo's death, closing a great cycle that concludes at the end of the novel: saying goodbye to Aldo, permanently. In fact, even though Laura has provided closure to her profound sorrow, it is not until she manages to shed the ashes that her mourning ends. Therefore, the rite makes her feel relieved for the first time, which is reflected by the fact that she stops talking to herself:

An altar² for Aldo. I stayed up and waited for him, so he wouldn't have dinner alone. I waited, in the middle of the night, for the gates of the underworld to open.

It was a farewell. He knew I wouldn't cook all that food for nothing. It was to tell him that I had finally understood that he was gone. That he wouldn't be here anymore. Six months had passed, and I finally realized he wasn't coming back. That is why I told him that, from now on, I wouldn't expect him anymore.

After that, I stopped talking to myself (Venegas, 2014: pp. 92-93).

In this sense, we can say that grief is overcome in two moments: firstly, after the rite described above; secondly, with the detachment of the ashes when she casts them into the sea. And during that process, which lasts 13 years, the presence of her husband and son plays a central and fundamental role while she overcomes and closes her mourning process. We could say that, without them, it is highly likely that the protagonist could not have successfully closed the cycle and that, while she still feels angry about Aldo's departure, it is also true that without them two, the protagonist could have fallen into melancholy.

Nonetheless, nostalgia is fully installed in the life of the protagonist when she decides not to forget the past she lived with Aldo. Without the objects that remind her of the pleasant and unpleasant moments of her relationship with her ex-husband, the freedom to move forward with her new life would seem like a natural consequence that would send a major life event into oblivion. However, she decides to transform her experience into a less painful memory, which is also the reason why she decides not to part with her past but to recover it once she

²T. N. In this context, altar refers to the Mexican Day of the Dead Altars, or *Ofrendas* (offerings), which, every year, are traditionally placed and decorated with food, flowers, and symbolic objects in remembrance of their deceased loved ones. It is believed they return every year from the underworld and feast with what their family members placed in the altar for them.

has processed it again, with the additions of her recent relationship. Thus, the process will gradually become nostalgia of the past until transformed into a memory further away from the pain and sorrow it causes. In this third stage, much brighter and more joyful, Emilio plays a central role, because, thanks to him, the protagonist makes the decision to move on: “Someday I will tell Emilio about you. I want him to know who his mother is and how much she has loved. Otherwise, he won’t know me” (Venegas, 2014: p. 138).

The protagonist progressively transforms nostalgia into hope through another highly symbolic act: with the birth of Aldo into a new form of existence. As a woman-mother, she recalls the feeling of gestation to symbolically become Aldo’s mother and bring him back to the moment of his birth. The process, carried out from within her, recovers sensations of various kinds until she comes to express to herself her desire to become her ex-husband’s mother: “And now I think how much I would have liked being your mother, to teach you this, my love” (Venegas, 2014: p. 138). Through this symbolic significance, Laura manages to transform the experience of death into one of life since, in this rebirth of Aldo, the last havens of sorrow and pain are slowly consumed until, after the deep forgiveness for having left her, she becomes joyful for having known him and shared beautiful moments together: “You will no longer be in my house in any way. In my heart, you will be a remote tenant. Only then can I look at you again without pain. I need to rejoice for having met you. Forgive you for abandoning me. I want to love you again. Until the day of my death, and one day more” (Venegas, 2014: p. 140).

Finally, after this significant transit, Laura can get rid of Aldo’s ashes in the sea. Accompanied by her son, Laura lets go of the wedding rings, and then floods the urn with seawater and lets the ashes go in the motion of the tide: “I take him [Emilio] by the hand to get into the gentle waters. Now, Aldo, let’s collect the sea in your linaloe box” (Venegas, 2014: p. 140). Thus, the protagonist will begin to overcome nostalgia to make way to other positive feelings outlined by the author, although we no longer see their course of action within the protagonist. Therefore, this open ending acts as a kind of door that will give way to a new stage and, thereby, to what we assume will result in a new life while the reflection upon nostalgia will once more allow processing the events of the past, to incorporate them as active elements of her present. The pain of loss is then overcome thanks to this series of symbolic rituals and to the protagonist’s personal and inner search.

The taste of nostalgia

Laia Jufresa was born in 1983, in Mexico City. She has lived in France, Argentina, Spain, Germany, and Scotland. She holds a degree in Arts from the University of La Sorbonne and a master’s degree in Children’s Book Illustration.

She has been an intern of Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas [Foundation for Mexican Letters] (2004-2006) and the National Fund for Culture and the Arts of Mexico (2008-2009 and 2012-2013). She is the author of a book of short stories, *El esquinista* [*The artist of corners*] (Tierra Adentro, 2014) and the novel

Umami (Literatura Random House, 2015), which has been translated into nine languages and with which she was a finalist for the Best Translated Book Award.

Jufresa has published articles and short stories in Spanish and English. She has written radio for the BBC and was selected as one of the 20 authors under the age of 40 by the Mexico20.3 project. In 2017, she was selected as one of the 39 most distinguished authors in Latin America by the Bogotá39 project.

Umami chronicles the losses and mourning of the inhabitants of *Campanario* housing complex where a girl, named Ana, wants to plant a *milpa*³ in the backyard. Thus, through this anecdote, we learn of the death of Ana's sister; the mourning of Alonso, owner of the housing complex, over the loss of his wife; the story of Pina, Ana's friend, who was abandoned by her mother; and the story of the young neighbor who moves to the capital of Mexico. Narrated in first person, the stories are told in reverse chronology, which is made clear throughout the different sections. Thereby, we can appreciate how the subject of nostalgia (linked to the loss of a loved one) becomes present in Ana, while the rest of the characters depict several unresolved grief processes that lead to melancholy and depression.

In fact, in *Umami*, we find both situations: nostalgia and melancholy, which leads to depression, as grief has not been properly processed. In terms of melancholy, we can observe the inability of Alfonso and Ana's mother to overcome grief as, in both cases, there is a sense of guilt for having directly or indirectly "induced" the death of the wife and daughter, respectively. In Alfonso's case, his indifference towards Noelia's first symptoms of cancer makes him assume that, had it not been for his laid-back attitude, Noelia would be alive, as they would have treated her disease at an earlier stage. However, since he does not listen and attributes her discomfort to minor ailments, Noelia learns she has cancer when the disease has already progressed and, although she undergoes chemotherapy, the treatment does not work as expected, so her cancer continues to spread until Noelia's death. Hence, Alfonso feels guilty, and ends up agreeing to be the "father" of a pair of *reborn* dolls, with which couples without children (as was the case of Alfonso and Noelia) can compensate for the absence of offspring and partly alleviate their emotional vacuum. The dolls, hence, play a crucial role in this permanent grief in which Alfonso settles and, as a result, he never overcomes grief, and remains prisoner of melancholy and subsequent depression:

Noelia never spoke of this, of our bond with the girls [the *reborn* dolls], at any table-talk. [...] It doesn't matter anymore. I don't mind being the crazy old man down the block. Months ago, I started showing them around the house complex, explaining somehow that yes, they are dolls, but that they are special dolls. The kids love them. [...] I still don't dare walking outside the house complex and taking them down the street, but I am starting to consider it (Jufresa, 2015: p. 226).

Ana's mother also undergoes melancholy for an extended period, which also

³T. N. The word *milpa* usually refers to a cropping field. In Mexico, their particularity is that they consist of maize, beans and squash.

leads to depression. Same as Alfonso, she feels guilty about Luz's death, as she disregarded the girl's comment about her intention to enter the water to become a fish. Luz's desire to transform into a fish arose after her grandmother told her that her mom was a fish, and Luz wished to resemble her mother. This being the case, and knowing Luz's intentions in advance, her mom pays no attention to what she considered a children's game and thought of her comment as just part of the conversation, resulting in Luz diving in the middle of the pool, and drowning. This tragedy will become a turning point for the whole family and will persistently be remembered by the mother until she is no longer able to perform with the orchestra (both parents are musicians). Although Ana's mom keeps attending the rehearsals and playing her instrument at home, it is also true that she stops giving concerts, as she is emotionally disabled to overcome her grief. The deep sorrow that comes with melancholy and, therefore, with depression, seizes her, since she cannot stop blaming herself for what happened:

Mails and pictures make Mom cry. It gets worse in the summer. As a dirty river brings garbage, each summer brings to our door the anniversary of my sister Luz's death. She was the youngest.

[...] Luz was six years old when she drowned [...]

Is there anything you would like to tell your children? The psychologist asked [...]. Mom finally gave in. She looked at us, her three remaining children, one by one, and speaking at a slow pace that accentuated her foreign accent, said: Kids, you are brave, and I am not a fish (Jufresa, 2015: pp. 22-23).

As far as Ana is concerned, since she is a child and is continuously surrounded by the memory of her dead sister, it would be reasonable to think she is also filled with melancholy and mired in depression as her mother and Alfonso, with whom she became friends because she wants to sow a *milpa* (Alfonso had previously sown amaranth in the backyard and understands Ana). However, being just a child, and maybe because of her friendship with Pina, Ana does not fall into depression, however she experiences the feeling of nostalgia. Ana certainly misses Luz, but she continues with her ordinary life, in both her family and neighborhood environments which are filled with deep sorrow caused by the several mourning processes the characters experience. In other words, Ana suffers the loss of her sister, but does not cling to the past like her mom (who is not able to overcome her loss), nor she recalls the moments spent with Luz as relentlessly as Alfonso remembers his wife.

Certainly, Ana is not exempt from the sorrow of grief, nor she is immune to the melancholic environment, but her young age, the concerns of her friend Pina (whom her mother abandons, and then returns intermittently) and her yearning to grow a *milpa* in the neighborhood help her work through grief in a more positive way, transforming her feeling into nostalgia. Thus, the young protagonist lives intensely every moment, which favors her not holding to the past as strongly as Alfonso and her mom do:

[...] Then, it was clear to me: around Christmas, Easter, and births, the gift industry is American-like, but, in terms of death, it appeals to the Mexican tradition. I had never received as many *pepitorias*, *jamoncillos*, and *palanquetas*⁴ as when my sister died. It seemed dumb to me back then, and still seems dumb to me now. But I ate them anyways, mine and my siblings' (Jufresa, 2015: p. 71).

Ana therefore continues with her life somewhat apart from the lives of adults and, although we learn from her about her mother's melancholy, she manages to pull away from that grey and grown-up world. While there are some crucial moments when she cannot detach from maternal influence, especially on the anniversary of Luz's death, she never ends up immersed in melancholy. Instead, the comments, accusations, and clarifications she makes to her mom reveal that Ana manages to cope with the situations she experiences with a less sad turn, remembering Luz, but in a peaceful and sometimes luminous way. In this way, Ana is portrayed as a prudent child who manages to give advice to her own mother, which makes her an ally to her father due to the wise words with which she leads her mother towards reflection:

Dad and I exchange patient looks and, when Mom finally declares in rage that she won't come with us, I think we're relieved. Dad tries to convince her, either ways. But she won't let him. She says this year I am going on her behalf [to visit Luz's grave for her third anniversary of death]. And she says to me: remove the weeds. And then, she hugs me dearly [...]. Come on, I say while she hugs me, let's go visit Luz (Jufresa, 2015: p. 135).

For the aforementioned reasons, Ana represents a wise young girl with the intuition needed to express her nostalgia. Furthermore, Ana is a symbol of light in the middle of a sometimes-chaotic atmosphere. Due to her simplicity and clarity of thought, Ana manages to overcome grief, although she does remember and miss her sister. But her sadness is usually temporary, and she manages to live with nostalgia. For all this, Ana becomes some sort of bridge between the grey world of adults and the world of childhood, which is brighter.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the novels *Vestido de novia* and *Umami*, we observe death from a different approach to that given to this date by Mexican female writers, since both texts manage to recreate the feeling of nostalgia and neither refer to melancholy, nor to the festive, ghostly, or playful tone used by the female writers of previous generations. Thereby, in both novels, the protagonists overcome the death of their loved ones, either through rituals (*Vestido de novia*), or through the artlessness with which the world is seen (*Umami*).

Moreover, the element of innocence represented by childhood opens the path of hope we appreciate towards the end and, therefore, we know that despite their

⁴T. N. Mexican pumpkin seed candy, milk and sugar candy, and peanut brittles, respectively.

pain, both protagonists will be able to successfully overcome grief, although there will always be longing for what is already gone and irrecoverable. *Vestido de novia* and *Umami* are, therefore, fine examples of a narrative line that perpetuates that of death in Mexican literature, but brings a different perspective, one that is full of hope.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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