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ABSTRACT

Ignacio Manuel Altamirano's narrative has been one of the testimonies more remarkable of Mexican literature of the XIX century. Its study suggests many ways of approach to one of the more important historic and cultural time living in Mexico. The actual work analyses from the perspective of the ecocritic theory the fundamental importance of space and nature in literature. *Clemencia* is a novel that inscribes in the romanticism, nature develop in an open space with notables descriptions about mountains, plants, and gardens.

The Ecocritics based its study in a natural perspective and about how it comes an active part in the narration; it gives a testimony of a concrete époque and reveals the relation between human / no-human. It is in *Clemencia* where this characteristic works in a space, where the natural world has and gives transcendental importance, a poetic scenery, nature, conforms for the nineteenth landscape in Guadalajara city.

Keywords: Nature. Space. Landscapae. Literature. Ecology. Enviroment.

RESUMEN

La narrativa de Ignacio Manuel Altamirano ha sido uno de los testimonios más notables de la literatura mexicana del siglo XIX, por lo que su estudio sugiere diversas vías de acercamiento a uno de los momentos históricos más importantes de la vida cultural de México. El presente trabajo analiza desde la perspectiva de la teoría ecocrítica la importancia fundamental del



espacio y la naturaleza en la literatura. Al ser *Clemencia* una novela inscrita dentro del romanticismo, lo natural se conforma dentro de un espacio abierto con notables descripciones acerca de las montañas, plantas y jardines.

La ecocrítica sienta su estudio desde la perspectiva de la naturaleza y el cómo se vuelve parte activa en la narración; da testimonio de una época concreta en donde se revela la relación humana / no-humano. Es en *Clemencia* donde estas características funcionan dentro de un espacio, en el cual el mundo natural posee gran importancia, un escenario poético, natural, conformado por el paisaje decimonónico de la ciudad de Guadalajara.

Palabras Clave: Naturaleza. Espacio. Paisaje. Literatura. Ecología. Medio ambiente.

Introduction

The study of narrative space offers various possibilities of approach: from traditional philosophical studies, to Gastón Bachelard's proposal on poetic space.

The philosophical tradition follows particular lines of thought. For Plato, space refers only to a receptacle: what can be filled. He treats it through the world of ideas. Instead, Aristotle conceives of space as a place; its treatment starts from the physical space. The space is visual and in it the being is immersed. This is how he introduces the concept of being within spatiality; it is material, for it exists in time and space. In turn, Heidegger in his work *Being and Time*, addresses the subject from a fundamental ontology that studies being. From this *dasein* is derived; it is the reciprocal relationship of man and being, "it is from this analytical structure of *Dasein*, which relates man to being, to the world and time, that the understanding of space in the structure of *Dasein* is given" (Gómez, 2016, p.5). The meaning and the search for it start from the analysis of man, who is a being who questions himself about his own existence.

For his part, Gastón Bachelard (2000) approaches the space from the poetic image where he seeks the phenomenological determination of the images; the image emerges by being from its visible condition. His study covers the values of intimacy of space, where he mentions: "Because the house is our corner of the world [...] every truly inhabited space carries as its essence the notion of home"



(p.28). In this way, he continues the philosophical tradition proposed by Aristotle and Heidegger from the poetic perspective.

Observations are expanded in extent and complexity, the foundation of spatial elements is laid. Briefly mention is made of it, as a way to show the background of the study of space, phenomenology. However, for the reasons for the present research, the focus is on the field of ecocriticism, which is also responsible for the study of space, but at a level of human union with nature. Ecocritical theory underpins this study of the spatial elements of *Clemency's narrative*.

Space: a review from ecocriticism

Clemencia gives a significant sample of the importance that Altamirano attaches to space, and if it is understood from the Aristotelian conception that space is a container, something physical, it brings to light the constituent elements perceived by the eye. Nature is discovered as a fundamental, active part in the exterior and interior of human life. The natural landscape manifests itself with determination in the protagonists, and in turn defines them in their environment as part of the influence. The application of ecocritical analysis demonstrates, from the perspective of nature, the narrative space of the novel.

Ecocriticism studies the relationship between nature and literature, which develops in an ecological consciousness established by the link with the physical environment. Space becomes a field of connection between all living beings, relationships are determining parts that are represented in texts, in writers, in the world. Such representations show contact; coexistence is subject to a coexistence, which is represented in the literature under contextual and historical forms about processes, denunciations and ways of life. The premise in which the central point of ecocriticism unfolds is the following:

Ecocriticism, then, takes as its central point the analysis of the representation of nature and the interdependent relationships of human and non-human beings as reflected in the works of culture and literature (Flys et. al., 2010, p.18).



Such interdependence between the physical world and human culture is observed from a mutual affectation and impact. The physical environment in literature is observed as an active agent, as it falls directly into the narrative world. This is how the protagonists and characters in general are involved with each other and what is not human: flowers, animals, landscape, nature. There is a clear relationship between place and identity.

Ecocriticism¹ emerged in the 1990s. Its founders belonged to the American West Literature Association. Part of the process that led them to form this literary theoretical branch, refers to the observation of the impact of the landscape on the lives of the inhabitants, as an integral part of cultural development. Flys, Marrero and Barella (2010), state that the canonical text that inaugurates ecocritical studies is the introduction of the anthology of *The Ecocriticism Reader* written by Cheryl Glotfelty (1996), who in her text examines the origins of the word ecocritic:

The term *ecocriticism* was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". By ecocriticism Rueckert meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature". Rueckert's definition, concerned specifically with the science of ecology, is more restrictive than the one proposed in this anthology, which includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world.

[El término de *ecocrítica* posiblemente fue mencionado por primera vez en 1978 por William Rueckert en su ensayo "Literatura y Ecología: un experimento en la ecocrítica". Por ecocrítica Rueckert quiere decir "la aplicación de la ecología, así como conceptos ecológicos para el estudio de la literatura". La definición de Rueckert, encaminada específicamente con la ciencia de la ecología, es más restrictiva que la propuesta en esta antología, la cual incluye todas las posibles relaciones entre la literatura y el mundo físico]² (pp.19-20).

¹ Ecocriticism, according to Carmen Flys, José Manuel Marrero and Julia Barella (2010), is a new school of literary criticism of North American origin, which has transcended to other countries. The University of Alcalá, Spain, has a research project that seeks the dissemination, interest and theoretical development of the school.

² My translation.



The beginnings of ecocriticism respond to the call of a global crisis in which natural changes are taken into account, as Rueckert³ demonstrates in his definition, but Glotfelty sees in it a necessary starting point between literature and the physical, natural world. In this way, on these foundational premises, ecocriticism is shown as a literary critical school of wide field of action between literature and nature. Carmen Flys (2010) in her article "Literature, criticism and environmental justice", delves deeper into its origin:

Ecocriticism arose from an interest in the literary genre of *nature writing*, a series of literary essays on nature, the next environmental movement and in favor of the conservation of nature and its enjoyment. Ecocriticism was defined as the study of human relations with their environment as reflected in the literature (p.84).

Literary analysis focuses on place and nature, with the aim of making visible the series of current problems with the environment, as well as the impossibility of observing the distance between human beings and nature; varies according to region. In such a way Flys (2010) -together with Marrero and Barella- address one of the most relevant critics of the movement, Lawrence Buell, who distinguishes two historical waves in ecocriticism:

In the first, the primary interest was focused on the preservation of nature and the exaltation of its beauty. Many of its initiators rejected that criticism and literary theory were climbed on an ivory tower, and sought to bring them closer to the real world (p.16).

One of the main characteristics of ecocriticism and that permeates today, is preservation; ecological activism, from which the pertinent reflections are derived according to literary analysis. In this first wave, experience prevailed over theory and it was even debated whether it should be personalized to the extent of including one's own experiences in the academic essay. The need to move away from academic rigor was one of the most important points, as it implied limitations within the field of study.

³ Flys, Marrero and Barella (2010), in turn locate a different source regarding the term: "The name of *ecocriticism* (ecocritic) was coined by William Howarth in his essay, 'Some Principles of Ecocriticism', dating from the 1970s" (p.17). The origins of the word are mentioned by both authors.



The second wave brought with it new debates and questions regarding the vision of nature of the first; debates focused on its status no longer as pure and intact, but as a source of direct contact in society. This brought with it the inclusion of new literary genres, as well as varied perspectives:

This wave is characterized by the consolidation of trends such as ecofeminism⁴ and environmental justice, without the first trend having been abandoned. As Lawrence Buell has already pointed out, ecocriticism, today, has not followed any revolution in terms of methodology, nor has it provided a definitive paradigm, although the debate is still open (pp.19-20).

The trends also follow the same central axis of ecocriticism: they focus on the land. Regarding the lack of a methodological revolution, there is a clear and repetitive pattern within the studies: interdisciplinarity. There is a general desire for the inclusion of various branches in which dialogue is sought to actively serve as agents of change in a deep ecological spatial vision. Leaving the debate open is equivalent to the elaboration of new proposals by academic scholars of the subject, with it the inclusion of voices and diverse social realities that respond to the trends and needs of today. The revolution could be met with the opportunity for dialogue between society, literature and nature.

The main objective is to regain awareness about space. The present research follows lines of ecocritical analysis, such as the search and observation of space in the novel. Flys (2010) explains the relationship between text and nature:

Literature has always been a representation, whether of the life or cultural attitudes of a people [...] Thus, the text reflects the beliefs and values of the author, but the reaction of the reader who tries to value the message of the text also reveals his own way of living in the world. In fact, through the study of the literature of a time or people, you can get to know what their values are (including those related to the environment). (pp. 106-107).

⁴ According to the basic bilingual glossary proposed by Carmen Valero and Carmen Flys in the anthology *Ecocritics*, the term ecofeminism is defined as: "1.m. Current of thought appeared in Europe in the last third of the twentieth century that studies the relations between women and nature from very different perspectives" (Valero and Flys, 2010, p.373). Regarding the diversity of specialized terms used in ecocriticism, those related to the analysis of *Clemency* in the second section of the chapter.



Such a relational sample is reinforced by the words of the researcher Julia Barella (2010), who in her article:⁵ "Nature and landscape in Spanish literature", continues with the main idea of Flys:

We will consider, in this work, that ecocriticism incorporates an enriching approach when reviewing some of our literary works, if we attend to the relationship of the writer, his characters and / or his metaphors with the environment. (p.219).

One of the issues that stand out from his argument is the sentence: "in this work", which shows the presence of pertinent adaptations according to the research topic.

While some studies focus on environmental justice,⁶ others delve into the various aspects that literature provides as testimony. It seeks the representation of nature, as well as the elements of space and its significance in the narrative; each study conforms to the concepts of its objectives.⁷ Ecocritics are linked to unique intentions, continues Barella (2010) with his reflection:

Ecocriticism has become an interdisciplinary movement that brings together researchers from the world of art, literature, philosophy, biology, sociology and anthropology (Lastra); to all of them he brings interesting points of view to address the relations of the human being with nature, with the environment and with the world that surrounds him (p.219).

The grouping of various branches lends itself as a necessary connection for knowledge, where the fundamental thing comes to be the conception of space; understanding with nature. The place has a transcendental impact on human life, every part of space is filled with every particle of such life, as well as non-human. The essence of man resides in nature; it is transluded in the literary works of each era.

⁵ The article is in the anthology *Ecocritics*.

⁶ According to Flys (2010): "Environmental justice texts are mostly written by people belonging to minority groups, whether racial, ethnic, sexual or cultural" (p.109).

⁷ Emphasis is placed on this point with the aim of further illuminating the unique details that unfold in ecocritical studies, since its flexibility is a feature to review.



Altamirano and ecocriticism

While at present a world-class crisis arises, due to the inability to coexist with nature that starts from a denial towards it, in the nineteenth century in Mexico, one of the concerns of the intellectual-cultural world had to do with the synthesis of national identity, so that when observing nature they endow it with acceptance and valuation.

The cultural attitude for nineteenth-century writers was based on the necessary nationalization of perspectives. After the turbulent wars that hit the country, it was necessary to have an exalted feeling towards the homeland. The writer Ignacio Manuel Altamirano highlights the need for Mexican integration. Forged in Romanticism, it corresponds to its characteristics, which are: the discovery of man in himself; the conception of outer space as an extension of it; nature is presented through the landscape; natural reality is the ideal environment of contemplation and reflection, man is in harmony with his spirit. Such an inscription of the nineteenth-century man brings to account present events, which Barella (2010) explains through ecocriticism:

Phenomena such as deforestation, with the consequent desertification, the disappearance of animal species or the pollution of waters are some of the consequences of urban excesses [...] These events are substantially modifying a nature and a landscape on which the memory of its inhabitants and their cultural identity has been built throughout history. From ecocriticism, we can see how this cultural landscape has been built through our literary texts, decipher its aesthetic qualities and recognize its history (p.220).

The construction of the cultural landscape in nineteenth-century Mexico responds to a construction of identity, in which each citizen faces an irrevocable general geographical condition. Altamirano's thought accounts for this. In *Letter to a Poetess* (1872) published in parts on 3, 10, 31 March and 7 April 1872, he states arguments regarding the elaboration of poetry; his discourse focuses on taking the national elements, observing and being inspired by the environment:

Thus, you will not have to go to look for in the travelers of the Holy Land, such as Chateaubriand and Lamartine, the description of Jerusalem (which you do not know), to form your painting, but it will be enough to look out your window or walk the fields around that



beautiful tropical population in which fortunately resides, to give us in your compositions, beautiful paintings of American nature, capable on their own of enchanting lovers of true poetry, which is national poetry (p.47).

It is entrusted to the American nature as the root of the nation and it is more expensive to leave aside the use of foreign models, since the space responds to particular realities. He takes up nature as a central point within his poetic-aesthetic recommendations:

From all the dangers she and others have run, you can get rid of just by seeking inspiration from nature. There is no poetic art like the one she offers us with her eloquent truth. Studying it, you will understand that, although in erotic poetry it is very difficult to be original, at least you can get off the beaten path [...] (p.68).

The divine, poetic contact between God and humanity resides in nature. The constant between such visions evokes a relationship of creative direction. He insists on finding the answer in the very environment of poetry, which responds to a common landscape. Throughout the letter he highlights among his "literary advice", the word truth; the "eloquent truth" that nature provides.

For Altamirano, nature is shown in favor of aesthetics, which leads to a method of inspiration on the part of the artist, since it is the production of beautiful images. However, God and truth are also found in it. The representation of such a truth responds to the necessary mission of Ignacio Manuel Altamirano in the construction of the nation.

In his chronicles the author of *Clemency* also leaves testimony about his relationship with nature and space: on March 20, 1870 he writes: "I understand very well that, for some, as for me (I sincerely confess) the place is something that lives and that speaks, something that enters by far into our effects and that powerfully influences the heart"(1870, p.131). The conception of space, for Altamirano, becomes a central issue within his thought; it is a deep understanding that shelters interdependence. The place moves and acts in conjunction with man.



The space confers the elements of appreciation, which leads to a deep contemplation; spiritual settlement that influences human activities. Barella (2010), who in turn quotes Rafael Argullol (2006), concludes that space becomes more than a framework:

As Rafael Argullol assures in his reflection on the romantic landscape, the split between man and natural environment occurs irreversibly; since then, man will be fascinated by the immensity of nature that surrounds him and that he contemplates, but, at the same time, he will feel expelled from it. The solitude and melancholy of the romantic contemplator confronts a landscape that "is no longer a mere physical framework but a deep space, essence". (p.226).

The split of man from romanticism is irremediable; it arises as an appropriation of space in which the individualization of man and the ties with the earth are visible; it suits the nationalist enterprise, characteristic of the Romantics. Altamirano clearly demonstrates this in another of the passages of his chronicles:⁸ the *Correspondencia entre Próspero y el Nigromante* (1868), dated in Colima on February 20, 1864. In the letter he shows his impressions of the sea:

The sky has a terrible beauty there; the waters with their unchanging abysses seem to look at us with pity. Then you love life more because you feel weaker and more miserable. I did not feel the pride of seeing myself mastering that terrible element, nor did I feel, as others feel, the superiority of man, king of creation. I confess to you that, seeing me in that small and old ship, managed by five sailors, and delivered to the mercy of the waves that opened aroundus, terrifying depths, far from the protection of men and trusting only in the greatness of God, I believed myself humiliated and I came to want to kneel when I felt that it was blowing in my wild hair and in my forehead, something unknown and terrible like the breath of the Eternal [...] (p.113).

⁸ In general it is observed how in his chronicles he paints pictures of customs, the national feeling is active in Altamirano; observe the needs of the people. It is in nature that he observes the nation at its fullest extent and recreates himself in it. Through the descriptions of the space you can have knowledge about the impact of the landscape in Altamirano.



As Barella expressed through his quote to Argullol, it is about the existence of a romantic spectator who faces nature; such contemplation makes him enter a deep space, an essence. The fundamental characteristic is finally seen, it exerts such an attraction that it affects the spirit. Altamirano has a high understanding of what arises after the contemplation of his surroundings; the influence on itself. Flys mentioned how ecocriticism made it possible to make the author visible and his relationship with space in order to obtain knowledge regarding the various perspectives with which the past is viewed. The understanding of the author and his metaphors in the narrative, the space as the integral element. In the chronicle "Chapultepec" (1875), dated August 2, 1875, the writer manifests a high degree of affinity with the existence of a forest in the middle of the city:

The most beautiful without a doubt of the entire valley of Mexico. Nature has gathered here all its charms to give attractiveness to the place. These colossal and majestic trees that form a gloomy forest circumnion with a huge garland the hill, which resembles a fortress sails near the big city [...] the softness of the air embalmed with the aroma of plants and flowers, everything must make Chapultepec the favorite asylum of Mexicans [...] (p.159).

Nature for the author of *Clemency* entails five essential elements: national unity; divine contact; aesthetic inspiration, truth and the refuge of urban life. In the five points influence is taken as the general starting point of the relationship between human/non-human contact. Through the review of his letters and chronicles, it is observed how Altamirano's relationship with the environment generates in him a vital bond.

When studying the narrative space, the unique forms that are attached to the incorporation of active elements in the events of the story are taken into account. The fact of finding numerous allusions to flowers, trees and palms in *Clemencia*, makes them essential components of nature in the plot because they exercise activity in their lives, beyond presence; ecocriticism looks at such samples as cultural processes. The sensitivity to the natural space becomes evident. Glotfelty (1996) is responsible for describing the common questions shared by ecocritics, in favor of similar concerns:



Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it?

[Ecocríticos y teóricos se preguntan cuestiones como las siguientes: ¿Cómo la naturaleza se representa en este soneto? ¿qué rol juega el escenario físico en la trama de esta novela?, ¿los valores expresados en la obra traen consigo sabiduría ecológica?, ¿cómo nuestras metáforas de la tierra influyen la manera en que la tratamos?] (pp. 18-19).

The space is seen as the center of the problems; the relationship of the characters and the use of their spaces appear on a discourse regarding nature. However, later Glotfelty (1996) includes questions to what are now considered part of the theoretical tendencies of ecocriticism:

How can we characterize nature writing as a genre? In addition to race, class, and gender, should *place* become a new critical category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time?

[¿Cómo podemos establecer la *escritura de la naturaleza* como un género? Adicionalmente a la raza, clase, y género, ¿el *lugar* debería considerarse como una nueva categoría crítica?, ¿los hombres escriben acerca de la naturaleza diferente a como las mujeres lo hacen?, ¿de qué maneras el conocimiento en sí mismo ha afectado a la humanidad y su relación con el mundo natural?, ¿cómo el concepto de la naturaleza cambia de acuerdo con el tiempo?] (p.19).

The questions pursue an end closely related to social ties and ties to the natural world that seems so far away; it translates into the coexistence of everyone in space. There is a concentration of doubts about the path that humanity has followed in conjunction with nature, especially the cultural attitude that has permeated man. Later Glotfelty (1996) brings up the differences between general literary theory and ecocriticism as follows:



Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory "the world" is synonymous with society —the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law ecology, "Everything is connected to everything else", we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, and ideas interact.

[La teoría literaria, en general, examina la relación entre escritores, textos, y el mundo. En la mayor parte de la teoría literaria "el mundo" es sinónimo de sociedad -esfera social. La ecocrítica expande la noción de "el mundo" para incluir a la ecosfera entera. Si estamos de acuerdo con la primera ley de ecología de Barry Commoner, "Todo está conectado con todo lo demás", debemos concluir que la literatura no se encuentra sobre el mundo material en un poco de éter estético, sino que más bien juega una parte dentro de un inmenso y complejo sistema global, en el cual la energía, la materia e ideas interactúan]. (p. 19).

The narrative space is shaped in the same way for the world of the characters as for the natural world. Glotfelty points out the link between everything that contains space, as Bachelard (2000) would say: "Space concentrates being in the interior" (p.22). Likewise, such concentration makes it possible to coexist at a level of intimate value. For its part, ecocritical theory considers all the elements that conform in space, as a natural sphere.

Frederick Turner (1996) in his article "Cultivating the American Garden" published in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, puts it this way: "We are *natura naturans*, *nature naturing*" (p.42). Beyond the good, right or beautiful, nature lives with us, it is the space that is revealed under a form of union; a sense that gives action. In unveiling the meaningful notion of what the word nature truly implies, Turner clarifies the following in this regard:

Most of us, asked what nature is, would probably make a vague gesture toward the nearest patch of Green vegetation and say, to begin with, something like "Well, it's what's out there, not what's in here." [...] Nature bears the weight of our activities, but in the long run



renews itself and remains just as it was [...] Nature, according to science, is as much "in here" as it is "out there"

[La mayoría de nosotros, al preguntarse qué es la naturaleza, probablemente con un vago gesto señale el prado verde más cercano y diga algo así como: "Bueno, es lo que está ahí, no lo que está aquí." La naturaleza soporta el peso de nuestras actividades, pero a la larga se renueva a sí misma y permanece como era [...] La naturaleza, acorde con la ciencia, es tanto lo que "hay allá" como lo que "hay aquí". (p.42).

Nature manifests itself in everything that surrounds living beings. It is the support of human activities, it is visible both in the interior and exterior space. There are scenarios within *Clemency* in which both can be clearly perceived: "what is here" as well as "what is there". The following passage corresponds to the first moments of contact with the natural place. According to Turner's proposal, the space outside, the outside is described:

Indeed, the plain that surrounds the city gives a strange aspect to the landscape, which is not observed when approaching any of the other cities of the Republic. In the mornings of summer, or in the days of autumn and winter, as in those when I first arrived in Guadalajara, that valley is sad and severe; the sky is radiotic and uniform, but the sun scorches and seems to pour torrents of fire on the thirsty earth (Altamirano, 2016, p.15).

On the other hand, the description of Isabel's house corresponds to "what is here", interior space:

The two young men happily crossed the thresholds of the cute little house, then a small courtyard that looked like a grotto of vegetables and flowers with a laughing marble fountain, and under a curtain of vines they penetrated the corridor and stopped at the door of the anteroom (p.23-24).

In the passages described above, both spaces correspond in the same way and the natural presence in each of them becomes visible. On the one hand, there is the description of the landscape; plain and valley of Guadalajara. The exterior locates and informs about the process of observation by the



narrator. On the other hand, Isabel's house describes the space of an interior, in which it is possible to observe how the link with nature is reinforced; really when he speaks of what is "here" as "there" he alludes to the realization of an inseparable relationship.

The narrative space aims to make clear the interdependence between the human and the non-human. The narrator is able to observe, as Aristotle (2011) mentions: "the view better than the other senses, gives us to know the objects and discovers between them a large number of differences" (p.5). However, more than the differences, it allows to establish a pattern in the relationship with nature. The points of common encounter with everyday life.

Clemencia is a remembrance of that nature of large extensions; when even the urban area made up a limited part of the territory. It is a testimony that reveals the romantic concerns of Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, who in his close connection with space alludes to the atmosphere of the moment. Climate is presented as a primary part within spatial contextualization.

The time of year in which the introduction of the story takes place suggests a very specific climate: "A night in December" (Altamirano, 2016, p.3). The weather, in turn, encourages the mood of the individuals present at the evening. It also penetrates the interior space as a kind of flood by the outside climate. He continues:

[...] while the penetrating wind of winter, accompanied by a small and glacial rain, drove away from the streets the passers-by, several friends of Dr. L.... we had tea, comfortably bundled up in a comfortable piece of their cute, though modest house(p.3).

The primary interaction with nature is located in this first part, with the climate; it is nothing more than the establishment of dialogue between the characters and the space. It will be a key point within the story, since, the approach to consider the climatic issues is determined as a constant when it comes to manifesting certain scenarios in which the characters develop.

The manifestation of the time of year is found in various passages. Chapter two, for example, is called "The Month of December 1863." There it alludes to the climatic situations coming from the time, the incidence of winter is visible. The following lines express its continuity:



- "[...] while the penetrating wind of winter [...]" (p.3).
- "Although winter here is nothing harsh as you know it [...]" (p.59).
- "After Christmas there was war, mountains, deprivation, defeat, perhaps death" (p.75).
- "Winter with its snow galas, with its pines and mosses (which is an exaggeration in Guadalajara, where there is almost no winter) [...]" (p.76).
- "It was January 5, 1864, and late at night, it was cold and hazy" (p.83).

The winter condition is interpreted as the anticipation of events. There is a connection between weather and events throughout history; a melancholy of a loving nature is perceived. The experiences coming from the months determine the beginning of an end; winter is a defining moment in the characters' lives. In chapter 23: "The Last Christmas", the promise of mourning between Fernando Valle and Enrique Flores takes place. It becomes the culminating event between the two because it supposes a rupture.

[...] I take back the thread of my narration, so I will go back to the last of December 1863, a time when everyone in Guadalajara was already making their preparations, pray to also leave the city with the Republican governor, pray to receive the invaders (p.75).

The weather activates certain feelings about the plot; winter is nothing more than an anticipation of a term, the end of life as it was known to that extent by the characters and the narrator. Winter envelops the inhabitants of outer space, but it strictly influences human events.

Altamirano devotes three chapters, exclusively, to the description of nature: "Arrival in Guadalajara" (5); "Guadalajara de lejos" (6) and "Guadalajara de cerca" (7). They reflect the need to make national landscapes visible. They are short chapters that are responsible for enunciating space, the earth. The intention of Altamirano (2016) is justified in the following passage: "Forgive my fondness for describing, and do not judge it so reprehensible while it serves to make known the beauties of the homeland, so ignored still" (p.17). Through the voice of the narrator, the need to spread the existence of the nation's natural places is informed; all this is established as a further



extension of the previously established spatial conditions. It is an essential part within the narrative space.

By way of conclusion...

In *Clemencia* you can find an intense dialogue between nature and characters; however, in the chapters dedicated to the description you can find particularly a detailed image of the city of Guadalajara. To contemplate the layout of the nineteenth-century space is to bring up what Barella mentioned about how with ecocriticism it is possible to observe how the cultural landscape has been built through the ages.

The physics of space, how man relates and settles through the series of relationships he weaves with the world, reveal an identification in which a relationship aimed at the place is based and how it contributes to the construction of human identity. It gives meaning to the search for meaning, which for Altamirano is none other than national identification.

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