

Pacto De Otro Mar

Dr. Valentina Paz Osses Cárcamo

Postdoctoral Researcher, Playa Ancha University of Educational Sciences,
Valparaíso, Chile

To read the book “Pacto de otro mar” or “Covenant of another sea”, published in H2 2025 by LP5 editors by the Venezuelan poet Mariela Cordero, I try to set aside and/or suspend all those categorizations, abstractions, and biographical keys found in both the prologue and the final interview—which seem to say something about her work as a poet—that is, to suspect that they already propose a unique specific reading and, with it, they close down her lyrical possibilities, replacing them with interpretive attempts.

As the poet Gary Snyder would say in 1974: “Gratitude to water: clouds, lakes holding or releasing toward all our salty marine bodies. May it be so in our minds.” First, we begin with gratitude to the sea.

Is Mariela the sea, or does Mariela rather wish to merge with the sea? I cannot assert that pointing to Taoism constitutes the Taoist experience for that fusion, nor that by alluding to this gesture she is following that path. As Thomas Merton (1915–1968) said in his book “The Way of Chuang Tzu”: “Words and formulas about reality mean nothing to Chuang Tzu; what matters is the direct existential apprehension of reality itself. Such an apprehension is, by necessity, obscure and does not lend itself to abstract analysis that does not touch the body itself. It can be presented in the form of a parable, a fable, or a humorous story about a conversation between two philosophers.” Hence, perhaps Mariela Cordero’s poetic locus is the desire to flow; rather, within that locus, where she recognizes its depth, and when exploring in it, that movement allows her to seek out that universal harmony. Mariela is going through an exercise of dawning her introspection through elements of Eastern philosophy, blending a unique fusion of poetic thought and glimmers of Taoist philosophy. But what is present in that junction?

The poetry we find in “Pacto de otro mar” springs forth as a fleeting decisive measure, decisive transient act that vanishes and returns from an untimely place with new questions, and through that act harmonizes its seemingly indecipherable bifurcations [dualisms], which are descriptively reorganized by “stillness”—as a guiding zone of being / state of becoming for the author. Without turning this into a poetic pedagogy, given its obvious impossibility—but rather a careful approach, a brush with her personal history, fantasies, and dreams that, through lyrical, figurative, or poetic activity, make us part of her disentangled movements “driven by unknown sequences”—a uncanny, verse of inquiry that serves as a driving force of orientation toward her inner self (“Poem: The Voice of the Sea,” p. 12).

It is the lyricism of silence—between one verse and another, between one page and another—with its bodily/scriptural orchestrations (or its distinct temporalities)—that shows us the path beyond any standard. From my blind spot, poetry is a singular form and being without interpretive or categorical closure; rather, it is play, reflexivity, and inconceptuality.

Now, to fathom Mariela Cordero’s poetry, one must accept its relationship to the immeasurability of its natural objects as their elusiveness—which brings her back to being human, finite, and with a lost magnitude of that other vastness—its Taoist, personal, Venezuelan, natural, undulating chaos—and the transpositions between the personification of the sea (when she lets go of its incorporeal abstraction) and his explicit poetic writings of the “I” that needs the mirror to “mosaic” the very complexity and nethermost of that pact that elevates the condition of being another. Therein lies

the sublime presence of her captivating writing, while she the depth of her own cosmos: “The sky is not the limit / of the sea / it is the mirror of its vastness / merely the beginning / of its greed” (p. 12); for us as readers, it leaves us in the abyss.

Poetry is a rare object, because it is useless, open, and re-creative as a writing technology. Those who seek to shape it are immediately ejected from that space, since they transform it into yet another object captured and caged by other words of artifice (instructionals) and/or codifying materials. Poetry is also a music that encounters more or less unknown recesses of the body; it intrudes upon it without asking permission, as the poem “What We Are in the Tide” states: The air smells / of the skin / that barely / contains me / to another inflows / it is not the full moon phase/ it is vertigo itself / on the verge / of revealing / what we are in the tide (p. 51). This strangeness here consists of a *modus habitare*, and the collection of memories and diverse projective exercises that could be called a “mosaic” — which, in this ars poetic, emerge from the poet’s unconscious and are seen a lost magnitude of that other vastness— its Taoist, personal, Venezuelan, natural, undulating chaos—and the transpositions between the personification of the sea (when she lets go of its incorporeal abstraction) and his explicit poetic writings of the “I” that require the mirror to “mosaic” the very emergence from the poet’s unconscious, and which are now reassociated as the poet’s figurative experience: in some they occur as a whole, in others as parts, in others as chiaroscuro, and in others as prescriptive poetic and philosophical associations of the Tao.

Thomas Merton warns: “In any case, Chuang Tzu’s ‘path’ is mysterious, because it is so simple that it can be traveled even without navigating an absolute path. What it certainly is not is a ‘way out.’ -Or a tour style-. Chuang Tzu would have agreed with (Sister) Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz that one enters this kind of path when one abandons all the traditional paths and, in a certain sense, one loses oneself.” Why? Because the collection of all these poems is paradoxical, contradictory, or *Nomen nescio* (N.N.), and in them both personification and hyperbole become mimesis, and that is where certain playfulness reside that produce a poetic subjectivity situated in natural landscapes that disrupt their phenomena; and while it alters their vestiges, it returns our gaze, and we commiserate, we become companions of that chaos, and we find ourselves surprised in the warmest of silences.

*This Postdoctoral researcher role is a “Project financed within the framework of the State University Strengthening Plan UPA 24991 of the Ministry of Education – University of Playa Ancha of Educational Sciences.”

Bibliography

Cordero, Mariela. *Pacto de otro mar* [Covenant of another sea]. LP5 editors, 2025.

De la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. *The Answer*. The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2009.

Merton, Thomas. *The Way of Chuang Tzu*. New York: New Directions, 1965. (Cited in text).

Snyder, Gary. *Turtle Island*. New Directions Books Publisher, 1974(Cited in text).