

Spiller, Roland, Heydenreich, Titus, Hoefler, Walter and Alarcón, Sergio Vergara (eds.) (2004) *Memoria, duelo y narración. Chile después de Pinochet: literatura, cine, sociedad* (Memory, Mourning, and Narration. Chile after Pinochet: Literature, Film, Society), Iberoamericana Vervuert (Frankfurt am Main), 334 pp. £24.50 pbk.

This collection draws together a total of 22 essay articles on the socio-cultural and political tendencies in post-Pinochet Chile. The stated objective is to analyse the process that began with the 1988 vote against Pinochet, covering themes such as the connection between memory and identity, the economy/culture divide, and responses to the collapse of meta-narratives. The collection lacks a strong thematic coherence, while the order of the articles does not follow a consistent structure. With that in mind, however, the book's stronger articles do raise some interesting points. For example, a few essays examine new genres of narrative born out of the legacy of the dictatorship, while the socio-economic analyses trace the effects of neo-liberal policies in present-day Chile.

Pagni's stimulating essay proposes that, in the light of an altered relationship between memory and language in post-dictatorship, there is a need for a new conception of 'narrative' so as to envelop varied forms of post-traumatic articulation. The meaning of the word 'narrative' is to include film as a visual tool for remembering, political journalism as a written form of detective work, the novel as allegory and the essay as an intent to articulate that which is left behind by the hegemonic discourse. In line with Pagni's suggestion of amplifying the meaning of the term 'narrative', Alarcón proposes the 'open letter' as a new genre in today's Chile as a reflection of the desire to recuperate speech and to re-establish communication between sender/receiver and private/public. Illustrative of this new genre would be Isabel Liphtay's *Carta abierta al Capitán General*, included as the last piece in the book. Nitschack concentrates on the essay genre as a specifically Latin American response to the collapse of meta-discourses, opening a space for dialogue due to its dynamic format and its wide thematic range. Developing the dynamic logic of the essay, Morales proposes to read Diamela Eltit's novels as pertaining to the essay genre, because of their distinctive thematic and discursive features.

Other strong essays, such as Schlickers's and Munro's essays on *Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman, are concerned with the psychological effects of trauma. Schlickers highlights gender power relations and private/public tensions surrounding one's desire for justice, while Munro offers a reading of the 'voice' that problematises the psychoanalytical concept of 'cure through speech'. Along the same lines, Cortínez analyses the role of communication in coming to terms with the traumatic past of the dictatorship in the film *El chacotero sentimental* [*The Sentimental Teaser*] by Cristián Galáz. While stubbornly Chilean, the film's central theme is universal: how to overcome the past, not by forgetting, but by acknowledging the continuation in the present of patriarchal values that make dictatorship possible. Sibert focuses on the multimedia installations of feminist writer Pía Barros to analyse 'pain' in all its personal and historico-social aspects as a central element in the understanding of the concept of power.

A third part of the book is concerned with the effects of neo-liberal policies on all aspects of today's Chilean society, giving appealing examinations of the structure of political discourse, the educational system and the labour market. Martin and Schwermann reflect on the present-day Chilean publishing market, the power of the media and the dominance of ultraconservative sectors in the press, while evaluating the tactics of alternative publishing houses, such as Cuarto Propio and LOM Ediciones. Noemí Padilla considers the role of ideology in the discourse of the transition to democracy, concluding that there is no such a thing as a 'post-Pinochet' era, given the fact that all discursive structures have stayed the same and have not allowed for an overall national redefinition. Burgos discusses the discourse of validation of educational reform in Chile in the last 50 years, pointing to the system's transformation into a business-like enterprise. Leiva analyses the labour market situation in Chile under neo-liberalism to show that, while the poverty level has decreased overall, social inequality and labour market exclusion have increased.

The section dedicated to poetry is the weakest, the authors of the essays seeming to struggle to present poetry as a viable alternative to the collapse of philosophical meta-discourses, but in general failing to assess the artistic and critical potential of the

poetical discourse. For example, Altenberg's study on the exposure of Parra's poetry on the web is an attempt to illustrate its accessibility to the 'non-specialised reader', but lacks appropriate experimental methods.

In conclusion, the collection contains several thought-provoking articles that bring in fresh perspectives on their respective fields. However, other pieces in the collection lack depth and originality, being generally more descriptive than analytic. The poor organisation of the articles also detracts from the overall quality of the book.

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