

NEOLIBERALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS: THREE DECADES OF CHILEAN WOMEN'S POETRY (1980-2010); 1980S FOCUS

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The present work studies how Chilean women's poetry aesthetically reacts to the imposition, development and consolidation of neoliberalism in Chile between 1980 and 2010. The first stage explores poems 'Bobby Sands desfallece en el muro' (Bobby Sands expires against the wall) (1983) by Carmen Berenguer and 'La bandera de Chile' (The Chilean Flag) (1981) by Elvira Hernández. These works signpost the main ideological purpose of the dictatorship: the imposition of neoliberalism through the privatisation of state-owned institutions and services.

The second stage studies 'Escrito en Braille' (Written in Braille) (1999) by Alejandra Del Río and 'Uranio' (Uranium) (1999) by Marina Arrate. The 1990s are characterised by utter disillusion and a recent past still haunts Chilean society. The hopelessness expressed in the poems studied signals the impossibility to escape neoliberal rule. Finally, '©Copyright' (2003) by Nadia Prado and 'Bracea' (Butterfly Stroke) (2007) by Malú Urriola as texts that are even more explicit in developing a neoliberal critique. The 2000s would encompass the consolidation of neoliberalism and the texts studied certainly refer to its discontents.

This presentation will focus on the two texts selected to study the first decade of this chronology, the 1980s. I will offer a succinct summary of the circumstances surrounding General Pinochet's coup in 1973, followed by an economic shift to neoliberalism led by the Chicago Boys under the tutelage of Milton Friedman. I will offer carefully selected examples from both poetry books to shed light on the way in which these works attempt to react against changes that were being imposed but not fully understood during the 1980s. These also emphasise poets Carmen Berenguer (1946) and Elvira Hernández's (1951) concern for Chilean society and its future.



Dr Bárbara Fernández Melleda completed her PhD in Hispanic Studies at The University of Edinburgh in 2018, after studying a Master of Arts in Literature at Universidad de Chile (2013), and a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Linguistics at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2008). Her research focuses on contemporary Chilean poetry, from the 1980s until our current times. Her interests go from intersections between articulations of the female psyche and the criticism of neoliberal principles, to the role of pornography and eroticism in contemporary poetry. She successfully passed her viva in September 2018 and is currently working as a Teaching Fellow in Spanish in the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures at The University of Edinburgh. She is also the co-founder of the Connecting Memories Research Initiative currently based in Edinburgh, and works as an ad-honorem prologist for La Joyita Cartonera in Santiago de Chile. She is also a peer reviewer for the prestigious *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* and is affiliated to the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), and the Memory Studies Association (MSA). Bárbara is also an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom.

All are welcome. No registration is required. For enquiries, please contact Ms Evelyn Lo at evelynlo@hku.hk.



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