

Diamela Eltit: A Gendered Politics of Writing

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Introduction

The narrative and performative project of the Chilean author, Diamela Eltit (b.1949) spans the period of the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990) and redemocratisation (1990-) in Chile. Eltit is probably best known for her novels (six to date) and the sociological study, *El padre mío* (My Father), in which she transcribes the oral discourse of a male tramp.¹ Her first novel, *Lumpérica*, was published in 1983 and her latest novel, *Los trabajadores de la muerte* (The Workers of Death), in 1998. Eltit has also collaborated with the Chilean photographer, Paz Errázuriz, on the book *El infarto del alma* (Soul Attack), published in 1994. In this book, Eltit's text accompanies photographs of the residents of a psychiatric hospital in rural Chile, always photographed in pairs, and focusing on the loving relationships developed among them. Eltit is a Professor of Spanish American literature in Chile and was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 1985. In 1990, she was made the Chilean cultural attaché to Mexico by the incoming transition government of Patricio Aylwin, a post which she took up for almost four years. In the last decade especially, Eltit's work has attracted much attention from critics in Latin America, the United States and Europe, and three of her novels have been translated into English.

The aims of the complex narrative project carried out by Eltit have been described by the cultural critic, Jean Franco, in the following terms: 'to act against the authoritarian state, to take literature symbolically into the most marginal of spaces, to work against the easy readability of the commercial text, to foreground the woman's body as a site of contention, to increase or exaggerate the marginality of art, and juxtapose literature's marginality to that of prostitutes, vagabonds and the homeless'.² While it is beyond the scope of this paper to look in detail at the different strands of Eltit's literary project, as described above by Franco, an examination will be offered of the way in which Eltit uses her writing as a social instrument. She fuses the political and the aesthetic in order to protest against the authority of prevailing social structures and the oppression of what she terms the 'feminine' in her society. While concentrating mainly on how Eltit carried out this protest during the period of dictatorship, this paper will also aim to trace the continual oppression of the feminine in post-dictatorship Chilean society through the problematic of 'memory'. It is, however, necessary at this point to explain what Eltit understands by the category of feminine, since she does, in fact, extend this category to include *all* those who are oppressed by hegemonic power in her society. Eltit argues that, 'if the feminine is that which is

oppressed by the central system of domination [...] we can, say, think of ethnic groups, sexual minorities and even whole countries as the feminine'.³ Eltit thus links the condition of women to the fate of all those subjected to negative pressures by the dominant forces and relegated to the margins of society. This is a position also taken by the Chilean cultural critic, Nelly Richard, who, along with Eltit, forms part of the neo-avant-garde movement in Chile. Richard similarly expands the category of feminine, arguing that the feminine and the peripheral are the privileged sites of insubordination.⁴

Before beginning an analysis of the ways in which Eltit uses her writing and language as a means to voice her protest, it is first necessary to place her work in context. Eltit has stated that her work is a 'reading' of the political, social and cultural environment of her country.⁵ Eltit remained in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship, a regime which came to power in 1973 after the brutal overthrow of the Socialist President, Salvador Allende. The military initiated a campaign of terror immediately after the coup which targeted those connected with, or suspected of sympathies for, Allende's Popular Unity government. Tens of thousands of Chileans were forced into exile, among them many artists and intellectuals which, along with the military's systematic repression of the 'literate legacy' of the Popular Unity government, had severe consequences for the Chilean cultural sphere.⁶ In the late 1970s, opposition to the military began to re-emerge. The aim of the Chilean partisan left was to organise mass opposition to the dictatorship and to prepare the conditions for a national insurrection. These traditional left-wing parties generated an art of direct political commitment which was given expression primarily through testimonial literature and the protest song. However, in the late 1970s, a movement made up of artists and intellectuals emerged in Chile which broke away from the 'popular' cultural organisations of the left. Termed the 'escena de avanzada' ('vanguard movement') by its most important theoretician, Nelly Richard, and later known as the neo-avant-garde, this vanguard movement encompassed a broad spectrum of practices in the plastic and literary arts. It focused on unconventional acts of protest against the military and distanced itself from direct political activity. While working to prevent the mutilation of the past that the military aimed to carry out, the work of the neo-avant-garde has also been described by Jean Franco as transgressing 'the rigid disciplinary lines - including those of gender - established by the government', focusing on questions of 'exclusion, marginality, and the abject rather than defining themselves in terms of left or right'.⁷ For Franco, it is this transgression of the established categories of gender (which supported the authoritarianism of the Chilean military and after) that distinguished the neo-avant-garde from the traditional left.

Diamela Eltit was a founder and leading member of one of the groups of this artistic and cultural vanguard, collaborating with two visual artists, a poet and a sociologist in order to form the group CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte; Collective of Artistic Actions). Nelly Richard states that this particular group aimed to practise an art of social commitment through their fusing of art, life and politics.⁸ Between 1979 and 1982, the members of CADA collaborated in a

series of predominantly urban ‘performances’ which, Eltit explains, had as their aim the reoccupation of the city, the site of the worst of the military’s repression.⁹ One of the major performances of CADA, carried out in 1981, was entitled ‘¡Ay Sudamérica!’ (Oh, South America!), where the group threw 400,000 pamphlets over Santiago from a plane. The text of these pamphlets read: ‘the work of improving the accepted standard of living is the only valid art form/ the only exhibit(ion)/ the only worthwhile work of art. Everyone who works, even in the mind, to extend their/ living space is an artist’.¹⁰ Eltit’s literary project arose in direct relationship to the practices of this group, in the sense that her first novel, *Lumpérica*, initiated the publishing venture of CADA (Ediciones del Ornitorrinco; Platypus Publications) and her second novel, *Por la patria* (For the Fatherland), was published by Platypus Publications three years later. The logo of the Collective’s imprint, which appears on the copyright page of the original edition of these novels, suggests a national struggle for survival, paramount in this bleak period of Chilean history: ‘In a lost corner of the planet, the platypuses are becoming extinct. Surely, there is not on all the Earth beings that struggle with more determination to survive’.¹¹

Since redemocratisation, which took place in 1990, the emphasis of the neo-avant-garde has been on the struggle against the dominance of market mechanisms in Chilean society, a legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship which, they argue, reinforces social marginalization. The neo-avant-garde has continued to proclaim its independence from bureaucratic structures, denouncing the pacted consensus of the newly democratic government with the outgoing military and the social and political ‘amnesia’ that this has brought about.¹² Much of their work has been published in the *Revista de Crítica Cultural* (Journal of Cultural Criticism), founded in Santiago in 1990 and edited by Nelly Richard, and to which Eltit frequently contributes.

Writing Against the Dictatorship

Against this backdrop, Diamela Eltit forged what is considered as one of the most risk-taking and consistent narrative projects to emerge in Chile in the last decades. During the dictatorship, Eltit’s denunciation of the authoritarian regime was inextricably linked to a critique of the patriarchal values propagated by this regime, since much of the claim to moral legitimacy of the Chilean military was based on its defence of the Christian values of family and motherhood. While Eltit articulates resistance to authoritarianism in particularly gendered terms, it should be pointed out that the perceived link between authoritarian and patriarchal practices was an important aspect of the political mobilisation of women in Chile. It is paradoxical, as the Chilean sociologist, Julieta Kirkwood has asserted, that the authoritarian government often forced women to perceive a direct correlation between state and domestic violence, leading them to view authoritarianism as an extension of domestic repression.¹³ The discourse of the Chilean military sought to unite the ideological nucleus of the family by glorifying ‘woman’ as wife and mother, and thus as moral defender of the nation. However, the terms ‘mother’ and ‘family’ were manipulated by the military regime in a contradictory manner, since the abuses it carried out resulted in the destruction of the family among those sectors of society in opposition to the

dictatorship. So while women of the upper and middle classes (generally in support of the dictatorship) were venerated as the guardians of the sacred values of the nation, those women, also wives and mothers, who saw the male members of their families disappear took to the streets in protest, thereby appropriating the same legitimating values as the military in their strategy of protest. Nelly Richard states that the protests of these women redefined the traditional link between mother and home, since they brought about a political reconfiguration of women's role as mother *in the public sphere*, a space usually reserved for men.¹⁴

Eltit's second novel, *Por la patria*, published in 1986, begins with a linguistic deconstruction of the term 'mother':

ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma
 ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma
 am am am am am am ame ame ame ame dame dame
 dame dame dame dame dame madame madame madame
 dona madona mama mama mama mama mama mamá
 mamá mamá mamacho [...] (p.1).

The disrupting aural and visual effects of these opening lines epitomise the experimental aestheticism of Eltit's literary project. Its prime features include the use of alliteration; the ludic repetition of the same word or syllable, or of phonetically similar words or syllables; the creation of neologisms; non-grammatical usage and the rupture of syntactical conventions. The effect of these is to disrupt any sense of 'naturalised' meaning, in this way rejecting the notion of language as referential vehicle. In this specific example, the juxtaposition of such contrasting, culturally coded words as 'madame' and 'madona' (lines 4-5) serves to dismiss any essential meaning inherent in the term 'mother', denaturalising this term in order to show it to be a social, discursive construction. While the discourse of the military was characterised by *closing off* the flow of meaning, Eltit's literary experimentalism works precisely to *open up* the flow of meaning. In addition, the disparity between violence, and the language used to describe it requires original strategies being employed in order to effectively communicate horror and its intensity. The shattering of language into fragments can be seen to have as its reflection the institutionalised state violence of the Chilean military and, specifically in this example, the violence carried out on mothers. In order to intimate thematic content, therefore, Eltit performs violence at the rhetorical and structural levels, eliminating linear plot, character identification and unity, and breaking down language into frequently incomprehensible fragments. Such linguistic experimentalism has as its aim a specifically political strategy since, for Eltit, it is through the language in which a novel is written, even more than the message it communicates, that protest and resistance, as well as complicity, are engendered. Language thus indicates the fundamental political filiation of a work, leading Eltit to argue that 'Writing a novel is not innocent: The deployment of linguistic materials evinces a political meaning, by which I mean a politics of writing'.¹⁵ Eltit's 'novels' (and I use

this term in its most general sense, since her writing stretches this genre to its absolute limits) have progressively developed a more traditional and accessible style, both structurally and linguistically, but Eltit has stated her continuous opposition to traditional literary genres and canons.

Eltit's literary experimentalism can thus be seen as both aesthetically and politically preoccupied. Only by altering or questioning the legitimacy of the codes used, the consensus, does Eltit believe that it is possible, not only to dis-articulate the fundamentally monolithic discourse of the military, but also to provide a space for those discourses which have been occluded in her society. In her novels, therefore, there is not one authoritative narrative voice or one definitive version of history put forward, but rather a conflict of discourses, where marginality provides a critical source of insight into the hegemonic power structure. The protagonists of Eltit's novels are all marginal characters. They include, for example, a female tramp in *Lumpérica*, Eltit's first and most experimental novel; a 'mestiza' (a woman of mixed indigenous and Spanish blood) in *Por la patria*; and the race of the 'sudacas', the derogatory term used by Spaniards to describe Latin Americans. The latter are epitomised in the characters of the twins, one male and one female, who are the protagonists of her third novel, *El cuarto mundo* (The Fourth World), published in 1988. In *El cuarto mundo*, the family life of the twins is portrayed as chaotic and under constant threat from the outside world. They struggle to survive against the encroachment of what they call 'the most famous and powerful nation in the world'¹⁶ (a possible reference to the consumer-orientated society that Chile has increasingly become since the early 1980s). The home of the twins is the stage for their sexual confusion, dis-identity and outlawed sexual practice of incest, a parody of the espousal of traditional gender roles and the nation/family formulations that were such an integral part of Pinochet's discourse. Nelly Richard argues that the government of the transition in Chile has continued to emphasise the discourse of the family in order to create a foundation of familial unity. They hoped that this, in turn, would bring about the unity of the (extremely polarised) country as a whole, a point which will be dealt with further in the following section of this paper.

From Dictatorship to Democracy: 'Model' Chile and the Problematic of Memory

The values espoused by the newly democratic government in terms of the family are, states Nelly Richard, complicit with the dogma of the Catholic Church. Its beliefs have pervaded the cultural sphere of contemporary Chile to such an extent that they form the basis of what she terms 'a pervasive normalising discourse that censures sexualities, bodies and identities'.¹⁷ Since the figure of mother is traditionally distant from all that is violent, the insistence of the democratic government on the family as the centrepiece for social unification, with mother as the moral centre, can be seen to lead to a deliberate silencing of any evocation of the abuses of the past. Such a 'whitewashing' of the past is, states Richard, the key to sustaining the complacent continuity of the pacted consensus of the democratic government.¹⁸ Representing national unification in this way can, therefore, be seen as an imposition on women. There are many

women who still campaign for justice, fighting precisely against the ‘whitewashing’ of the past that the government of the transition has deployed in order to present Chile as exemplary in the way in which it has reverted to democracy.

The problematic of memory is prominent in *Los vigilantes* (The Guardians), Eltit’s first novel to be written during the period of redemocratisation and published in 1996. In this novel, post-dictatorial Chilean society is portrayed as acritical and disaffected and the stability of the pacted consensus of the transition government is guarded by its citizens. The protagonist, Margarita, is a single mother whose letters to the absent father of her son, a father who colludes with the political order, constitute the main body of the text. It is through these letters that we learn of the policing of the city by Margarita’s neighbours whose aim is to protect the social realm in which they live through a process of exclusion. Those who are excluded, and perceived as a fundamental threat to this petrified sector of society, are the silent destitute of the city. They exist precariously on the margins of society and are referred to by the protagonist as a multitude ‘shattered by panic, pain and blood, barely bringing suffering as a memory of the blows [...]’.¹⁹ Nelly Richard has described such marginalised sectors of society in post-dictatorial Chile as those who embody the past, ‘refusing to disguise the stigmas attached to them through the appearance of well-being’.²⁰

Margarita’s refusal to adhere to the city’s strict code of practice, by giving shelter to the silent destitute, eventually leads to her being hounded out of her home by her neighbours, an act seemingly initiated by the ever-absent father of her son. Writing, for the protagonist, comes to be increasingly associated with isolation and sheer survival; in her words, ‘a written, desperate and aesthetic survival’.²¹ The pervasive indifference of post-dictatorial society cannot be seen to constitute a viable adversary. As the literary critic, Idelber Avelar, has noted ‘Eltit’s wager is that writing, no longer able to affirm any oppositional principle, can at least, by virtue of its mere existence, remain as bearer of an irreducible trace of memory and experience [...]’.²² Margarita’s attempts to write the destitute into the body of her letters could be explained as an attempt to prevent their omission from the dominant, economic discourse of her society. This is an omission that Eltit refers to as a symbolic extinction ‘because their body is made to vanish at the public level, along with their expectations’.²³ In this way, while the protagonist does not share the experience of the silent destitute, her writing can be seen as an act of solidarity and an attempt to prevent their memory from ‘whitewashing’. Since theirs is a memory viewed as *inconvenient* for the success of the society of consensus, it is important to unearth what Richard terms ‘the truths and positions that are still unreconciled and in conflict’.²⁴

Conclusion

As in all aspects of the social, Eltit believes that there are dominant forms of writing that the market expects, legitimates and promotes, and which leads to the exclusion of certain types of writing.²⁵ Eltit has consistently refused to comply with market expectations and, although she

has an ever-growing readership, is resigned to the fact that her work is not read widely in her country. Eltit's work was originally received by critics with fascination, on the one hand, and horror and/or irritation at its 'inaccessibility' on the other.²⁶ Such criticisms have been countered by Eltit who argues that the problem lies not in her style of writing, but in the 'domestication' of certain modes of reading which, especially since redemocratisation, have been dictated by powerful, international publishing houses.²⁷ The role of the reader is, therefore, absolutely fundamental to Eltit's literary project and she has stated that she writes with a very clear perception of her ideal reader in mind. Reading, as well as writing, is a political act for Eltit and she argues that 'The part of me that writes is neither comfortable nor resigned and does not want readers who aren't partners in a dialogue, accomplices in a certain non-conformity'.²⁸ Eltit's 'ideal' reader must, therefore, work to make sense of her text, constructing meaning through the process of reading rather than accepting as 'natural' or transparent that which appears in writing. What is important to Eltit is her continual emphasis on those who are oppressed, repressed or discriminated against by the central power. It is those who, if we return to the definition of 'feminine' given by Eltit at the beginning of this paper, could all be collapsed into the category of feminine. Finally, what I hope to have illustrated throughout this paper is how the innovative literary practice carried out by Eltit (a practice which she calls her 'militancy') links the political and the aesthetic. She protests against the exclusions and repression brought about by the dominant discursive structures in Chilean society. This protest can be seen to go beyond an act of resistance since its final aim is to achieve a profound socio-cultural change at the linguistic and symbolic level through a radical questioning of language and discourse.

NOTES

¹The publication details of Eltit's six novels, her sociological study and her collaborative photo-essay are as follows: *El cuarto mundo* (Santiago, Seix Barral, 1996; originally published by Planeta, 1988). Translated and with a foreword by Dick Gerdes, *The Fourth World* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995), *El infarto del alma*, with Paz Errázuriz (Santiago, Francisco Zegers, 1994), *El padre mío* (Santiago, Francisco Zegers, 1989), *Los trabajadores de la muerte* (Santiago, Planeta, 1998), *Los vigilantes* (Santiago, Sudamericana, 1994), *Lumpérica* 3rd edn (Santiago, Seix Barral, 1998; originally published by Ediciones del Ornitorninco, 1983). Translated by Ronald Christ, *E. luminata* (Santa Fe, New Mexico, Lumen, 1997), *Por la patria* 2nd edn (Santiago, Cuarto Propio, 1995; originally published by Ediciones del Ornitorninco, 1986), *Vaca sagrada* (Buenos Aires, Planeta, 1991). Translated by Amanda Hopkinson, *Sacred Cow* (London and New York, Serpent's Tail, 1995).

² Jean Franco, 'Going Public: Reinhabiting the Private', in *On Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture*, ed. by George Yúdice, Jean Franco and Juan Flores (Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp.65-83 (p.70).

³ Juan Andrés Piña, 'Diamela Eltit: Escritos sobre un cuerpo', in *Conversaciones con la narrativa chilena* (Santiago: Los Andes, 1991), pp.223-254 (p.244). While this extension of the category of 'feminine' to include all forms of marginality may be problematic, and requires further analysis than this paper can provide, Jo Labanyi states that the point Eltit is making is that, for her, to write as a woman is political in 'Topologies of Catastrophe: Horror and Abjection in Diamela Eltit's *Vaca Sagrada*', in *Latin American Women's Writing: Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis*, ed. by Anny Brooksbank Jones and Catherine Davies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.85-103 (p.90).

⁴ For further details, see Richard's collection of essays, *Masculino/Feminino: Prácticas de la diferencia y cultura democrática* (Santiago, Francisco Zegers, 1993). Briefly, the starting point of the theoretical ideas on gender put forward by Richard can be traced to the positions taken by French feminism, in which the feminine is essentially that which is marginal and dispersed. Of particular relevance are the theories put forward by Hélène Cixous in her essay 'Sorties', where the gendering of symbolic structures is illustrated by setting up a series of binary oppositions, underlying which is the binary opposition of sexual difference: the polarity man/woman. Julia Kristeva's theory of 'abjection' is also pertinent to Richard's work, and will be referred to again in note 7 of this paper.

⁵ Sandra Garabano and Guillermo García-Corales, 'Diamela Eltit', *Hispanamérica* (1992), 62, pp.65-75 (p.65).

6. I borrow the term 'literate legacy' from the literary critic, Idelber Avelar in *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction and the Task of Mourning* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999), p.45. Avelar states that the experience of readership was revolutionised in Chile during the Allende years (1970-73), as Chile's editorial industry expanded and made available at low cost a vast number of national and international literary classics, a process which was reversed during the dictatorship. Avelar quotes from the Chilean author, Jaime Collyer, who points out that, during this period, Chile 'was one of the few countries where attested book burnings proliferated and editorial activity was reduced to a minimal expression' (p.45). This is only one example of the repression of the Chilean cultural sphere by the military, since the activities of Chile's universities and its vibrant theatrical scene were also curtailed.

7. Jean Franco, 'The Mares of the Apocalypse', in *Critical Passions: Selected Essays*, edited and with an introduction by Mary Louise Pratt and Kathleen Newman (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999), pp.109-122 (p.117). In her essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), p.2, Julia Kristeva argues that all societies constitute themselves through an exclusion process which, in psychoanalytical terms, is called 'abjection'.

8. Richard, *La insubordinación de los signos, (cambio político, transformaciones culturales y poéticas de la crisis)* (Santiago, Cuarto Propio, 1994), p.40. Critical reception of the work of CADA was mixed. While some critics argued that their 'performances' were extravagant and unintelligible, others considered them to be a valuable contribution to the very reduced Chilean cultural sphere at that time. Eltit considers the most significant of the Collective's actions to be the creation of the slogan 'No+' (No more). This slogan was taken up by the populace at large who would add words such as 'violence' or 'dictatorship' to it. It became the slogan with which the alliance of opposition parties campaigned against Pinochet in the run-up to the 1988 plebiscite which led to the end of the dictatorship.

9. Piña, p.233.

10. Richard, *La insubordinación de los signos*, p.40: 'El trabajo de ampliación de los niveles habituales de vida es el único montaje de arte válido/ la única exposición/ la única obra de arte que vale: cada hombre que trabaja para la ampliación aunque sea mental de sus espacios de vida es un artista'. Translated by Idelber Avelar, in *The Untimely Present*, p.166. All further translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

11. In Djelal Kadir, *The Other Writing: Postcolonial Essays in Latin America's Writing Culture* (W.Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 1993), pp.180-181: 'En un perdido rincón del planeta los ornitorrincos se extinguen. Con seguridad, no hay en toda la Tierra seres

que luchan con más empeño por sobrevivir en ella'. Translation his. I have been unable to obtain a copy of the original editions of these novels.

¹². I use the term 'pacted consensus' to refer to the bargaining that took place between the alliance of opposition parties and the outgoing military, whereby Chile reverted to democracy in a manner highly controlled by the latter and in exchange for untouchable impunity and a 'whitewashing' of the past. The government of the transition took power by following the electoral process determined by Pinochet and was, from the very start, restricted by the 1980 Constitution which included appointed senators and military prerogatives. It was agreed to by the populace in a plebiscite organised with only one month's notice, thereby giving very little chance to those opposed to its terms to mobilise against it.

¹³. Julieta Kirkwood, *Ser política en Chile* (Santiago, FLACSO, 1986), p.180.

¹⁴. Richard, 'Género, valores y diferencia(s)', in *Residuos y metáforas. Ensayos de crítica cultural sobre el Chile de la Transición* (Santiago, Cuarto Propio, 1998), pp.199-218 (p.201). Women who had seen family members disappear often protested by marching through the streets in silence, carrying photographs of those who were missing, a form of protest that was developed in Argentina by the influential 'Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo'.

¹⁵ Eltit, 'Writing and Resisting', *Review: Latin American Literature and Arts* (1994), 49, p.19. Translated by Alfred Mac Adam.

¹⁶. *El cuarto mundo*, p.124: 'la nación más famosa y poderosa del mundo'.

¹⁷. Richard, 'Género, valores y diferencia(s)', p.204: 'una fuerte política normativizadora que censura sexualidades, cuerpos e identidades'.

¹⁸. Richard, 'La cita de la violencia: convulsiones del sentido y rutinas oficiales', in *Residuos y metáforas*, pp.27-50 (p.32)

¹⁹. *Los Vigilantes*, p.102: 'una multitud que se desgrana atomizada por el pánico, el dolor y la sangre, llevando a cuestas el sufrimiento como memoria de los golpes [...]'. Translated by Avelar, in *The Untimely Present*, p.184.

²⁰. Richard, 'La cita de la violencia', p.43: 'los que llevan sus estigmas en carne viva sin querer maquillarlos con las cosméticas del bienestar y sus modas de la entretención'.

²¹. *Los Vigilantes*, p.115: 'una sobrevivencia escrita, desesperada y estética'.

22. Avelar, p.185.
23. Eltit, 'On Literary Creation', in *The Novel in the Americas*, ed. by Raymond L. Williams (Niwot, The University Press of Colorado, 1992), pp.143-150 (p.146).
24. Richard, 'La cita de la violencia', p.29: 'las verdades y posiciones todavía sin ajustar, en conflicto'.
25. Orquendo, Carmen L., 'Yo nunca querría ser una vaca sagrada: Entrevista con Diamela Eltit', *Nomada: Creación, Teoría, Crítica* (1995), 2, pp.113-117 (p.116).
26. Eugenia Brito, *Campos minados: Literatura post-golpe en Chile* (Santiago, Cuarto Propio, 1990), p.173. In his article 'Apuntes sobre la novela *Por la patria* (1986), de Diamela Eltit', *Acta Literaria* (1990) 15, 147-160, the Chilean literary critic, Rodrigo Cánovas, observes that resistance to Eltit's literary project could be due to the persistence in Chilean literature of a 'naturalist' style, against which Eltit writes. Mary Beth Tierney-Tello states that Cánovas and other critics have agreed that Eltit's innovative practice would perhaps have received a larger acceptance if it had come from some 'masculine' hand. See *Allegories of Transgression and Transformation: Experimental Fiction by Women Writing Under Dictatorship* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), p.240n.
27. Eltit, 'On Literary Creation', p.146.
28. Eltit, 'Writing and Resisting', p.19.