

THE FISSURE OF TEXTUALITIES: LA BRECHA BY MERCEDES VALDIVIESO

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Abstract

La brecha (1961) by Mercedes Valdivieso enters the intimate world of the nameless voice of a woman from the Chilean high society who complains, as Fernando Alegría's prologue states, with "stark frankness" (11). Alegría is moved by the novel in the sense that it shakes him: he has no background on the author, he cannot define her style, there is no rhetoric, no entanglements of passion; nor is his course clear, since the story has no end and "will continue to move between real beings and shadows of beings, searching for its path" (ibid.). It is precisely this way of inhabiting space through movement that I will attempt to address in the analysis of this novel. The reading proposal will address three approaches from the figure of space in La brecha. First, we will analyze the institutional spaces (family, marriage) and how they are mobilized towards a process of denaturalization of their distribution associated with gender roles. For this, it is necessary to consider the power relations that construct rules and set limits or coordinates, whether spatial or corporal, that control the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Secondly, we will analyze the scriptural spaces or, what Alegría called an "empty rhetoric", which allows us to create "the gap" for the fissure of these guarded spaces. And finally, we will look at the process of consciousness of the narrative voice through the concept of "gender essays". © 2021 Universidad de Chile, Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Departamento de Literatura. All rights reserved.

Author keywords

Feminist conscience; Gender essay; La brecha; Mercedes Valdivieso