

Summary

The PhD thesis entitled *Continuidades, tensiones y rupturas en las representaciones de género. Una lectura a la obra narrativa de Elena Aldunate (Continuities, tensions and ruptures in gender representation. The analysis of Elena Aldunate's narrative)* recurs to the tools elaborated by sociocriticism, parting from the assumption that the literary texts form part of a broadly comprehended social discourse. The discursive practices, operating as conscious and unconscious cultural processes, are responsible for the formation of values, attitudes, margins of the speakable, as well as the subjectivity itself. The vision of reality encoded in literature remains the creation of a specific culture and the discursive practices used by its participants. Within the methodology adopted in this PhD thesis, Elena Aldunate's (1925-2005) fiction, similarly to other forms of artistic expression, is characterized by its dialogical and dynamic relations with all types of discourse and the ideology it contains.

The corpus of this PhD thesis is constituted by Aldunate's narrative production written for adult readers: *Candia* (1950), *María y el mar* (1953), *Ventana adentro* (1961), *Juana y la cibernética* (1963), *Del cosmos las quieren vírgenes* (1977), *Francisca y el otro* (1981) and *El molino y la sangre* (1993). The objective of this study underlines the urgency of problematizing both Aldunate's literary texts and the social image of the writer herself. Thus, this research aims at analyzing and deconstructing myths and convictions related to the writer's literature and figure which are encoded in the Chilean social imaginary and literary criticism. In other words, it studies the writer's reception and production so as to question widespread convictions concerning the writer that have seemed unquestionable. It is generally assumed that Aldunate was marginalized as a writer in Chile's cultural and literary field; that she was undeniably a feminist author or that the character of her writing –disruptive and rebellious– is largely due to the fact that she suffered from this supposed marginalization. Those socio-literary myths that began to gain strength short after the author's death have become unquestionable in the Chilean literary criticism. Thus, inspired by sociocritical and gender theory perspectives, this thesis brings to light the reality of the supposed marginalization of Aldunate, confronting this myth with the number of publications,

the support of the publishing houses, frequent coverage in esteemed newspapers and magazines and favorable reviews of her work.

In accordance with sociocritical premises, the analysis of Aldunate's fiction aims at identifying types of discourse it encompasses and determining its specificity within the field of Chilean fiction. More specifically, it aims at investigating types of discourse, ideologies, values and judgments which Aldunate's literary production conveys in terms of gender and identity constructs. In Western culture, such concepts as "femininity" or "woman" have been reduced to the area of emotions and to the private sphere. Therefore, the analysis of love discourse, dominant in Aldunate's fiction, takes into account the dynamics of power as inseparable from the construct of love and femininity, providing new readings of the analyzed prose and setting them in theoretical, sociocultural and political contexts. It concludes that the literary production in question conveys a conservative, often anti-feminist, if not reactionary Weltanschauung. However, the writer does show certain feminist sensibility in such texts as *Ventana adentro* (1961) or *Juana y la cibernética* (1963) and it is possible to detect feminist overtones in the rest of the corpus studied.