
REVIEWS

Amy K. Kaminsky. *After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. 189p.

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In *After Exile*, Amy Kaminsky addresses the literature of exiles from Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, writing in the United States, Sweden, Spain, Mexico, and France. Focusing on the relation of exile to space, the body, and language, Kaminsky couches her views in the works of both well-known, widely translated writers such as Luisa Valenzuela, José Donoso, Cristina Peri Rossi, and Mario Benedetti, and less-known authors such as José Leandro Urbina, Leonardo Rossiello, and Vlady Kociancich. However, because of its global implications, this critical work is very accessible to scholars whose main interest would be other literatures of exile. Kaminsky provides the English translation to all the passages quoted; primarily targeting the non-Spanish speaker, her work is a focused introduction to the writing of these Latin American authors.

The author's main thesis is the importance of the effect of exile and its representation in the literature of these writers. She establishes the literary interpretation of deterritorialization, alienation, acculturation, and reterritorialization, often complicated processes which accompany exile and its aftermath. The author pays special attention to the instability of exile and its repercussions on the concept of national identity. As the title clearly states, Kaminsky's focus is the literature produced by exiles in foreign lands, bridging the gap from exile to diaspora. Exile is portrayed as a lived reality and, as such, Kaminsky's work is certainly engaging.

After Exile is divided into eight chapters which thematically address different aspects of exile literature. In chapter one, the author establishes the notion of exile in relation to that of home, nation, and homeland/hometown. Kaminsky defines exile in terms of a physical process, a feeling of loss and the assimilation of new families, new languages, new work, and new ways of living. She addresses the exile's sense of identity and sense of exile as a u-topia, a no-place: after exile, the place and person that existed previously cease to exist. Chapter two examines the subject of national identity in terms of the nation itself and the exile identity as being tied to a particular place where one belonged. Kaminsky clearly defines exile

as a forced separation and explores the question of the subject's sense of identity understood as both "physical-geographic and symbolic-political space" (23). The author addresses the "otherness" of both the exile that returns and the exile that chooses to remain. In chapter three Kaminsky charts the passage from exile to diaspora, and the pluri-faceted experience of exile. The processes of acculturation (moving along axes of transition from space to place) and alienation (effected both internally by keeping oneself apart and externally by being perceived as "other" or not at all) are the main focus of this part of the analysis. It is interesting to note that Kaminsky includes the notion of cyberspace and cyber-communication into her discussion of exile, stating that "the technologies of rapid communication do not repair the damage of exile. They merely have the capacity to make connection possible despite distance" (46). In chapter four the author turns to the mutual constitution of language and space, linked by analogy and practice to the experience of exile and its aftermath. Specific examples, such as the language associated with food and the preparation of raw ingredients illustrate the author's thesis that language is a means to establish as well as to recover a sense of place. Kaminsky also refers to the relationship of the writer to his/her audience and exile as a linguistic event. As pertinent to this study, the author evokes the image of Spanish in the country of exile. Chapter five focuses on the subject produced in and by exile, the process of *desexilio*, as illustrated in the works of Donoso, Bendetti, and Gianelli. Chapter six focuses on the need for the exile to understand reality and his/her place in it. The author examines different meanings of gender and history, defined in relation to the nation's representation of itself. Kaminsky illustrates how gendered sexuality and the violence of history intersect in the naming and therefore in the making of the nation as well as of the individual who identifies with that nation. Unlike the previous chapters, whose examples are taken from a wide variety of authors, in chapter seven Kaminsky focuses her remarks around the works of the Argentine writer Luisa Valenzuela and the Chilean José Donoso in connection to the writing of the return from exile. The role of the media in projecting or deforming reality is also discussed in relation to specific texts by each of these authors. In the final chapter, which also serves as the conclusion to this work, the author establishes that despite geographical transplantation and the trauma of exile, there is a sense of coherency when the exile is successful in incorporating the new into the old. In this chapter, the author supplies many examples of exiles who chose to remain in France after going back to their country of origin, illustrating "the irreconcilability and mutual need of separation and connection" (144).

Through the eight chapters that constitute this work, based in theoretical analysis and illustrated with pertinent examples from Latin American writers, Kaminsky

maintains the reader's interest as she addresses specific issues surrounding the question of writing in exile. The author's concern for clarity and the thematic links that she establishes between the different chapters further enhance the author's work. Kaminsky establishes a balance between theory and concrete examples, thus addressing global issues linked to specific writings. True to the author's intentions, the text provides a valuable analysis of the writing of exiles, from exile to diaspora. This thematic examination of important literary texts, stemming from particular political, geographic, and social contexts, will definitely contribute to broadening the understanding of Latin American writers to an English-speaking public. ✿