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Custody of the Eyes

Diamela Eltit

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"*Custody of the Eyes* is Helen Lane and Ronald Christ's brilliant translation of Diamela Eltit's *Los vigilantes* (1994). In the novel, Eltit dramatizes voice, gender, and power in the relationship among mother, son, and father. As translators, Lane and Christ capture the intensity of expression that evokes, calls upon, even preys upon the figure of the mother as the lightning rod of power and repression in an oppressive society. *Custody of the Eyes* explores the climate of vigilance related not only to gender and familial relations but also to the social fabric torn by the Chilean experience of Pinochet's dictatorship. Earlier translations of Eltit's novels, such as *Fourth World*, *Sacred Cow*, and Ronald Christ's *E. Luminata*, introduced English-language readers to Eltit's radically experimental prose. *Custody of the Eyes* brings into English the challenging and questioning linguistic performance that sustains Eltit's approach to the novelistic genre."—Danny J. Anderson, editor, *Pan-American Literature in Translation* for the University of Texas Press

Diamela Eltit has "forged what is considered as one of the most risk-taking and consistent narrative projects to emerge in Chile in the last decades."—Mary Green, University of Manchester

Jean Franco describes the goals of Eltit's fiction: "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."

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