



# **Speculative Fictions: Chilean Culture, Economics, and the Neoliberal Transition (Pitt Illuminations)**

*Alessandro Fornazzari*

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*Speculative Fictions* views the Chilean neoliberal transition as reflected in cultural production from the postdictatorship era of the 1970s to the present. To Alessandro Fornazzari, the move to market capitalism effectively blurred the lines between economics and aesthetics, perhaps nowhere more evidently than in Chile.

Through exemplary works of film, literature, the visual arts, testimonials, and cultural theory, Fornazzari reveals the influence of economics over nearly every aspect of culture and society. Citing Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin, Willy Thayer, Milton Friedman, and others, Fornazzari forms the theoretical basis for his neoliberal transitional discourse as a logical progression of capitalism.

Fornazzari identifies *Casa de campo*, José Donoso's allegory of the military coup of 1973 and the ensuing monetary crisis, as a harbinger of transitional texts, challenging them to explore new forms of abstraction. Those forms are explored in the novels *Oir su voz* by Arturo Fontaine and *Mano de obra* by Diamela Eltit, where Fornazzari examines divergent views of workers in the form of neoliberal human capital or post-Fordist immaterial labor. In documentaries by Patricio Guzmán and Silvio Caiozzi, he juxtaposes depictions of mass mobilization and protest to the mass marketing of individual memory and loss, claiming they serve as symbols of the polarities of dictatorship and neoliberalism. Fornazzari then relates the subsuming of the individual under both fascism and neoliberalism by recalling the iconic *imbunche* (a mutilated figure whose orifices have been sewn closed) in works by Donoso and the visual artist Catalina Parra. He continues the theme of subsumption in his discussion of the obliteration of the divide between physical labor and intellectualism under neoliberalism, as evidenced in the detective novel *A la sombra del dinero* by Ramón Díaz Eterovic.

In these examples and others, Fornazzari presents a firmly grounded theoretical analysis that will appeal to Latin Americanists in general and to those interested in the intersection of economics and culture. The Chilean experience provides a case study that will also inform students and scholars of neoliberal transitions globally.

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