

Proposal

History is a construction that happens over time. Some authors have intimated that history is created with an agenda in mind. That, in fact, the historian uses similar tools as the fiction and nonfiction writer; all collate, narrate, edit, create voice, imitate conversations and dialogues, describe, provide internal monologues and bring to life historical actors and protagonists alike. However, the role of the historian is not seen in the manner as it is hidden behind the veneer of it being an anonymous work that evolves over time. Taking into account this perception, this dissertation will endeavour to understand Miguel Bonnasso's nonfiction text, *Recuerdo de la Muerte* (2006) – Remembering Death – in the context of the Argentine dictatorship and the history war that resulted from this period in the nation's past.

In 1976, after much bloodshed, political and economic instability – caused by Peronist and anti-Peronist factions both in the left and right side of politics – the military junta under the leadership of the commander in chief, Jorge Rafael Videla, declared a state of war and overtook the government declaring a dictatorship. During this time, the new military junta established the Plan of National Reorganisation, which comprised of finding those subversives that were attacking the nation and ensuring the upkeep of conservative, catholic values. In fact, they instituted a state of terror where they kidnapped and tortured more than 30,000 argentinians. Many of these were assassinated where even today, the bodies of those that have 'disappeared' have not been recovered.

As can be appreciated, this is a sensitive topic, where even to this day the history wars are still in evidence. Currently, the military and the far right (supported by Carlos Menem during his presidency throughout the 1990s) maintain that the Dirty War – as it is known – was necessary to curtail subversives that were acting as terrorists against citizens of their own nation and Government. They suggest that they successfully eradicated Marxism from Argentina, allowing it to be the democracy it is presently. The Argentine left, mainly represented by political factions and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (who since 1977 have attended their weekly protest meetings at the Presidential palace reclaiming the bodies of their sons and daughters), claim that the military junta assassinated 30,000 of its citizens without

impunity. Although a lot has been written of this period, a lot of it is fictional, not taking into account an objective overview of this historical episode.

As such, when history fails to account for the past, what fills this void? Section one will endeavour to provide a literature review of much that has been written about the role of history and the role of other texts in securing official and unofficial accounts of the past. Section two will concentrate on the methodology that will be adopted in reviewing the past and comparing differing sources. Section three of this dissertation will endeavour to provide a historical account of this past, using documents and evidence from both sides of the political divide. Section four will then go on to thoroughly analyse Bonasso's text, concentrating on particular protagonists and matching the representation of these with other representations found in other documents. Section five will then attempt to marry the theoretical understandings of history, together with the understanding and representation of this particular history of a nation.

From here, the dissertation will turn to the conclusion, and endeavour to reveal the function of *Recuerdo de la Muerte* in chronicling a difficult period in the Argentine past.