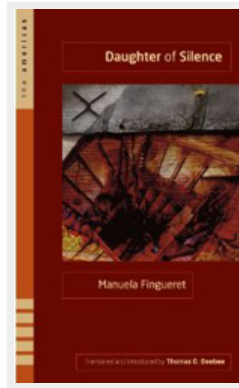


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Reviews



Texas Tech Univ. Press,
paperback, 9780896727311

DAUGHTER OF SILENCE

by *Manuela Fingueret*

Translated from the Spanish by Darrell B. Lockhart

Reviewed by **Andy Barnes**

A caste of murderers. The Nazis gassed, starved, humiliated. Here they insult, torture, rape. Caste of murderers....Am I here or there?

Rita lies on the floor of a cell in Buenos Aires' infamous ESMA building, the premier site of torture during Argentina's 'Dirty War'. Between sessions of torture and rape, she recalls the story of her mother, Tinkeleh, a Belarusian Jew from Minsk who was deported first to Terezin, then to Auschwitz during World War II. Given her own situation, Rita begins to understand Tinkeleh's life for the first time, and bemoans the silences that have existed between them.

Rita's reminiscences of Tinkeleh's life form the bulk of the novel. She pieces her mother's life together through what she has been told and tries to fill in the silences with her new found understanding of atrocity. Contemporary Argentina gives Rita new insight into the fear-filled streets of Minsk, the absurdity of trying to build a life in Terezin while disease and transports take her friends one-by-one, and the first horrifying views of Auschwitz. Both Tinkeleh and Rita have been raised to believe that it is a woman's lot to suffer in silence. Rita, and the reader, begin to see the damage that this philosophy has done, not only to her understanding of her mother, but to the world she lives in.

Daughter of Silence is a very well written short novel. Despite the harrowing subject matter, Fingueret steers away from graphic descriptions, perhaps inviting the reader to do their own filling in of her silences. It also, rightly or wrongly, creates a more palatable narrative, one which contributes towards making Fingueret's book a fairly easy read. The linking of two apparently disparate atrocities is a powerful device that serves as a reminder of the importance of speaking out, and the mother-daughter relationship is the perfect situation for examining the costs of not talking. *Daughter of Silence* is a fantastic, evocative novel, and a thought-provoking look at the forces that shape our relationships, and our world.

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