Rethinking Disappearance in Chilean Post-Coup Narratives

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of René Jara,
who was my scholarly mentor, friend, and a beautiful human being.

Abstract

This dissertation explores Chilean narratives produced since the 1973 coup d'état (from the dictatorship and post-dictatorship periods) and analyzes representations of disappearance, which range from the institutionalized practice of enforced disappearance during the dictatorship, to the erasure of inconvenient histories and memories during the transition to democracy, and the persistent vanishing of marginal subjects in neoliberal democratic Chile. Focusing on the work of Ana Vásquez, Luz Arce, Ariel Dorfman, Roberto Bolaño, and Diamela Eltit, who present disappearance in numerous forms and in a variety of genres (novels, testimonio, drama, film, and texts that blur generic boundaries), I argue that, as one of many authoritarian continuities in democratic Chile, disappearance persists in the present. My study begins to articulate other manifestations of disappearance that extend beyond the notion of enforced disappearance as a phenomenon contained during the dictatorship period, and constitutes a space for rethinking disappearance in neoliberal democracies.

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Introduction

In a desolate desert in the Chilean north, the remains of a man who has been disappeared since the early years of the Pinochet dictatorship are finally unearthed. A group of family members observe in silence. Their emotions are still very raw. It appears that this loss is not a part of the past for them, but instead a part of the present. A woman, the mother of the victim, wears a photograph of her son around her neck. While she is unsure of what kind of healing the unearthing of his remains will bring, she claims that she feels his presence, and that she feels calmer just knowing that he is there. The woman's other son, the victim's brother, also speaks about his loss. His voice shakes and he looks up at the sky as he struggles to maintain his composure. At one point it becomes too difficult for him to continue speaking. This opening scene of Patricio Guzmán's documentary, "El caso Pinochet" (2001), shows how Chile's painful past is not really past at all, but still very much a part of the present.

While it has been over two decades since the transition to democracy began, a fractured postdictatorial Chile continues to be haunted by the Pinochet military regime. While some see the need to uncover the horrors carried out during the dictatorship and question the traces of this period that persist in the post-dictatorship, others are convinced that the best thing for the country is to forget and move forward. It is well known that the dictatorship was marked by the enforced disappearance of thousands of individuals. The question, then, arises: what traces of disappearance remain in the present? More specifically, in what ways does disappearance continue to haunt post-dictatorial Chile?

In addition to the obvious impacts of this crime, what are the other less apparent effects that it has had on contemporary Chilean society?

Since the coup, literature has played an essential role in denouncing and resisting injustice as well as in remembering that which is in danger of being forgotten. Truth was one of the principle victims of the dictatorship, which used arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance, and execution to install a deep-rooted fear and institutionalized silence in the Chilean community. Since the official discourse of the regime denied the voice of the repressed, literature played an important role in representing this voice – unlike the singular voice of the dictatorship, the literature that arose to denounce the repression of the regime presented a multiplicity of voices. Literary texts have served as a means to record and preserve the experiences of marginal subjects, thereby rescuing from oblivion those stories that had been excluded from the official versions of history. Through literature, writers have been able to speak out against injustice and document human rights violations, which were skillfully concealed and systematically denied by the military regime. In some cases, the very act of writing has served as a cathartic exercise and a means of working through an individual's own personal trauma. Through the use of literary devices and poetic language, artists have been able to achieve new ways of communicating amid the utter breakdown of language and meaning that resulted from the coup. This way they are able to provide a more effective means of representing (or, better said, attempting to represent) that which escapes words. In this way, literature is uniquely capable of representing reality, of bringing about a representation of that which

is otherwise difficult to see, that which is hidden, that which is there and not there (present and absent, appeared and disappeared) at the same time.

This dissertation explores the representation of disappearance in a corpus of what I consider to be key texts in Chilean literary and cultural production from the 1973 coup d'état until recent times. I will examine texts from different literary genres – including novels, testimonios, drama, documentary film, and works that blur these distinctions – produced at different moments – including the dictatorship, the transition to democracy, the post-dictatorship, and post-Pinochet periods – in order to study the various forms of disappearance that both accompany and follow the internationally recognized crime of enforced disappearance[1]. What I have found is that while the secret detention and torture of dissidents is no longer practiced on a massive scale as it was during the dictatorship, other related forms of exclusion and silencing have continued since the transition to democracy. As a practice, disappearance invites us to rethink not only the dictatorship but also the persistence of disappearance, and its effects or new practices, in the present.

[1] Many of the terms referring to periods of time in Chile since the dictatorship are problematic. While I will use these terms (for lack of better options), I would like to highlight some of the disputes regarding their meaning. First, the term transition to democracy is widely debated among intellectuals (which I will discuss later in the introduction). Some have used the term to represent the years that Patricio Aylwin, the first democratically elected president since the 1973 coup, was in office, 1990-1994. Others have understood the transition as an extended period, reaching 1998 when Pinochet ceased to be commander in chief of the Chilean Army and also when he was arrested in London. Still others consider the transition to democracy to be an ongoing process, due to the great number of authoritarian continuities that remain in neoliberal democratic Chile. For the purposes of this dissertation, I understand the transition to democracy to be an ongoing and incomplete process. Similarly, the term post-dictatorship has been disputed since it implies that the dictatorship can be contained in the past. On the contrary, intellectuals such as Willy Thayer have argued that the dictatorship is not of the preterit, they are not completed actions, since aspects such as torture, murder, and disappearance continue to affect the present. While I will use the term post-dictatorship to mean the years since 1990, I am also aware that these legacies of dictatorship remain in the present. Finally, while the term post-Pinochet generally refers to the period which began after the former dictator's death on December 10, 2006 (and this is the way I will use it in the dissertation), this term is also problematic since Pinochet's presence is still felt in Chile, and in some ways became even more evident in the absence of his physical body.

This persistence of disappearance is one of many consistencies between dictatorship and post-dictatorship society in Chile. For this reason, rather than focusing on the transition to democracy as a moment marking significant change between the dictatorial (1973-1990) and post-dictatorial periods (1990-present), I see instead one continuous period: post-1973, or post-coup. Although I am conscious of the differences between the dictatorship and post dictatorship, my intention is precisely to consider the continuities of authoritarianism in the democratic transition.

The term disappearance is most commonly used to refer to the phenomenon of enforced disappearance as defined by the United Nations. In other words, the term disappearance typically denotes a juridical figure. Enforced disappearance is a crime that encompasses the violation of several human rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security of person, the right to humane treatment (including freedom from torture), the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, and the right to a fair and public hearing (Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Articles 3, 5, 6, and 10 respectively). In Spanish, the term *desaparecido* is all too familiar in Latin America, particularly in Guatemala, Argentina, and Chile, carrying with it a memory of unthinkable abuses. In fact, the international legal norm outlawing the practice of enforced disappearance was molded in direct relation to the Latin American experience of dictatorships during the 1960s and 1970s. In the U.N.'s first resolution on disappearance in 1978, there was a hesitancy to define the term since by nature the phenomenon "eludes precise definition" (Frey 66). However, after nearly three decades of development, the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from

Enforced Disappearances was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006. The Disappearances Convention states that:

> 'enforced disappearance' is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.

Desaparición forzada, or enforced disappearance, became an institutionalized practice under the Pinochet regime. In 1990 the Chilean National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (Rettig Commission) was created with the directive to investigate and document human rights abuses that resulted in death or disappearance. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report documented 3,428 cases of disappearance, killing, torture and kidnapping, although some human rights organizations estimate that number to be higher. In his introduction to the Rettig Report, José Zalaquett characterizes the practice of disappearance that took place in Chile primarily during the early years during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1977) as such:

> Detention of the victims was not acknowledged. They were kept in clandestine detention, subjected to torture and eventually summarily executed. Their bodies were disposed of in secret. This report documents close to one thousand of such cases. During the first months of military rule these "disappearances" were not centrally coordinated. But with the establishment of DINA, the regime's secret

> police, toward the end of 1973, "disappearances" became a carefully organized method designed to exterminate opponents considered dangerous and to avoid accountability for such crimes.
>
> The families of the executed prisoners were at least able to bury their dead. However, the relatives of the "disappeared" have endured for many years the cruel uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones, both mourning for them and hoping against all hope. They desperately needed to know the truth. (8)

Zalaquett's description of the disappearances that took place in Chile during the dictatorship is very much in line with the U.N.'s definition of the violation. The victims of enforced disappearance in Chile were those deemed by the military regime as threats to the integrity and safety of the nation. The military targeted individuals who were associated with the political left (whether this association be real or perceived), and victims were often educated elites, "including lawyers and other professionals, academics and political leaders, many of whom had personal relationships with international colleagues" (Frey 57).

In response to the vast number of disappearances, society began to ask: who were the disappeared citizens? How can their loss be mourned? How can they be incorporated? In one of the most resounding contributions to the study of the Chilean postdictatorship, The Untimely Present (1999), Idelber Avelar explores the very possibility of mourning and its relation to narration. On the part of individuals, there has been much effort (during the dictatorship and continuing after the transition to democracy) put into reappearing and rehumanizing the *detenidos desaparecidos*. The

mothers, grandmothers, and spouses marched the streets wearing or holding photographs of the disappeared and calling out their names. Other women protested the disappearance of their loved ones through artistic practices, such as the cueca sola and the arpilleras. The cueca, the national dance, is typically danced by a man and a woman together. By dancing the cueca alone, the woman emphasizes the absence of the man, and in this way she appears his disappearance. An entire group of women dancing the cueca sola in public spaces created a spectacle that forced onlookers to see absence in a new way[2]. Other women began a movement of quilting as another form of making visible the disappeared. Their quilts, or *arpilleras*, depicted the suffering of the disappeared as well as the difficulties faced by those left behind. Some common quilted scenes remembering the disappeared included torture being carried out in the national soccer stadium and cemeteries filled with anonymous graves (marked with N.N. to signify ningún nombre, or no name)[3]. This movement grew to be international when the Vicaría de la Solidaridad began to purchase the quilts from the women and sell them abroad[4]. Family members of the disappeared formed organizations such as the Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (AFDD) with the objective of locating and burying the remains of their loved ones but also as a means to remember those lost[5]. Members of the AFDD shared their stories in order to foster their personal memories, but they also worked to incorporate the disappeared into the collective historical memory.

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[2] The documentary "La cueca sola" written and directed by Marilú Mallet and produced by Les Films de l'Atalante (2003) shows the plights of several women who chose to perform the dance alone.
[3] N.N. comes from the Latin Nomen nescio, which means "I do not know the name"
[4] For a detailed history of the arpilleras see Margorie Agosín's Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008
[5] The AFDD published a book of images in 1997 under the title Un camino de imágenes. 20 años de la Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos de Chile.

More recently, the United Nations' Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has defined the crime as continuous, one that is considered ongoing until the whereabouts of the person are clarified[6]. Specifically, the UN Working Group has declared that: "Enforced disappearances are prototypical continuous acts. The act begins at the time of the abduction and extends for the whole period of time that the crime is not complete, that is to say until the State acknowledges the detention or releases information pertaining to the fate or whereabouts of the individual" (General Comment). This definition allows us to look at disappearance as a practice (act) of the present, rather than one confined to the past, to the period of dictatorship.

The practice of disappearance, therefore, invites us to rethink not only the dictatorship period, but the effects of persisting disappearance and new practices of disappearance since the transition to democracy as well[7]. In this dissertation I propose to look at disappearance in a broader sense. It is not in any way my intention to negate the horror and the atrocity of enforced disappearance. On the contrary, I would like to contribute to the discussion of this very topic by reflecting on other forms of disappearance, including those that are a continuation of the enforced disappearances of the dictatorship in addition to those that result from oblivion and dismemory[8]. I will

[6] The United Nations' Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance issued a general comment in 2010 that defined enforced disappearance as a "continuous crime."

[7] While the term detenidos desaparecidos has often been translated as disappeared prisoners, this literal translation does not capture the true meaning and complexity of the term in Spanish. The detenidos desaparecidos are not prisoners. Although some prisoners did disappear, they were not disappeared while they were prisoners. Instead, the moment they disappeared they ceased to be prisoners and became disappeared. In this particular expression, detenido (as opposed to prisionero) means someone who is deprived of their liberty and taken by authorities, but not in a legal arrest. Therefore the detenidos desaparecidos are not prisoners, since this would imply a legal detention.

[8] The term dismemory, which I am translating from the term in Spanish desmemoria, does not imply forgetfulness or amnesia, but instead, that there was never a memory to forget.

explore the return of disappearance, the residues of disappearance, the persistent disappearance of persons without rights, marginal subjects, and even invisible subjects. I will also examine the forces behind these disappearances.

The postdictatorship puts on display the forms of silencing that are closely linked to enforced disappearance as they are forms of persistent disappearance, ones that continue even after survival. In this regard, one of my chapters will discuss how Luz Arce, a former political prisoner and DINA collaborator, has been denied of her voice to the extent that, even while she speaks, her voice is not heard. As a subject, she has been discredited to the point that she is virtually silent. Like marginal subjects such as Arce, many spaces in Chile have also been disappeared even while their physical structures remain. Although the disappearance of spaces of memory is not a primary focus of this dissertation, I would like to point out a few examples that could serve for future consideration. For example, the country's national soccer stadium in Santiago was used as a detention and torture center in the months immediately following the coup. Formerly called the Estadio Nacional de Chile, the stadium was renamed the Estadio Nacional Julio Martínez Prádanos in 2008. While the name change alone is not responsible for the disappearance of the stadium, when the new name is uttered, it does not recall the horrific past. In this way the renaming works to disguise the building's history. What has contributed to the disappearance of the stadium more than the name change, however, is that fact that many stories of persecution remain untold, and those that have been told have been downplayed or their access made difficult (truth commission reports, for example, have never been made available in printed form). The

stories of many victims remain invisible as do the spaces where the wrongs took place. Another former torture center in Santiago, Londres 38, has not had to change its name to hide in plain sight. Located in a wealthy and cultural neighborhood known as Barrio Paris-Londres, many people stroll the cobblestone streets to admire the European style architecture without being aware of the building's sinister past. Only a trained eye would notice the small markers built into the stone that represent the names of the victims. Many passersby may see the markers but, without any further explanation, would have no idea of their meaning. While the organization Colectivo Londres 38, which is made up of former victims and family members of victims, continues to struggle to get the victims' stories heard and to recognize the building as a site of historical memory, Londres 38 remains largely invisible. While the physical construction itself remains, the memory of its past has been disappeared.

In this regard, a primary focus throughout several chapters will be the persistent disappearance of marginal subjects (those without rights) in the transition to democracy. While the physical disappearance of bodies is no longer an immediate concern, marginal subjects are being made invisible in other ways. In Precarious Life (2006) Judith Butler explores the exclusion of voices and the dehumanization of social subjects. In a discussion of post 9/11 United States, Butler describes how certain groups have maintained firm control over what is spoken and seen in the public sphere. Any voice that has challenged or criticized official views has been accused of terrorist tendencies. Regarding this exclusion of voices, Butler maintains that:

> dissent and debate depend on the inclusion of those who maintain critical views of state policy and civic culture remaining part of a larger public discussion of the value of policies and politics. To charge those who voice critical views with treason, terrorist-sympathizing, anti-Semitism, moral relativism, postmodernism, juvenile behavior, collaboration, anachronistic Leftism, is to seek to destroy the credibility not of the views that are being held, but of the persons who hold them. It produces the climate of fear in which to voice a certain view is to risk being branded and shamed with a heinous appellation. (xix)

Can a true democracy exist in a climate of fear where people are censored and subsequently begin to self-censor? While Butler's analysis relates specifically to the United States, the questions are just as relevant for any society that excludes those voices that do not fit within its narrow definition of the ideal citizen.

This control over what is seen and spoken in the public sphere has been used as a means to dehumanize and disappear certain individuals that are seen as unworthy of human life. As referenced in the title of her book, Butler is concerned with precarious lives, those lives which are unsafe because they have been cast outside (banned from) "the human." It was Giorgio Agamben, in his book Homo Sacer (1998), who proposed the term bare life to refer to a life that was deemed unworthy of being lived, a "life that may be killed but not sacrificed" (83). Agamben uses the figure of the Homo Sacer as the starting point from which to develop his notion of bare life. Sacer means "set apart", and therefore can be interpreted as either sacred or accursed, both imply that he is not part of the human. From here, Agamben developed the concept of bare life, or life that is

expendable and disposable, life that is placed outside the protection of the law, and in this way is excluded from humanity (if all humans have rights, he who is placed outside the protection of the law must not be human). Agamben's theory on bare life is useful in examining the position of the detenido desparecido, whose illegal detention makes impossible any legal remedy, such as the writ of habeus corpus. The desaparecido may be killed with impunity, since a murder outside the law does not consist of a homicide.

Although Agamben resounds in Butler's text, the latter sets out to oppose precarious life with human life via the axis of the grievable. Butler poses the questions: Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? What makes for a grievable life? Examining the forces that humanize in contemporary society, Butler looks at the case of Iraqi and Afghan casualties of war whose deaths are excluded from the news media and public obituaries, hence implying that they are not grievable subjects, not human. In this way Butler questions the ways in which the concept of who is human and whose life is grievable is defined in public discourse. This new form of dehumanization then is achieved through an absence of discourse. By excluding certain individuals from the public sphere, their loss is made easier to bear. Butler argues that "violence against those who are already not quite living, that is, living in a state of suspension between life and death, leaves a mark that is no mark" (36). If society does not view them as human, then there is no loss of human life. Also indicating our role in this practice of exclusion, Butler asks: did we at one point acquiesce or are we simply complacent? This dehumanization achieved through the absence of discourse is much more subtle, less apparent, than the active forms practiced during the dictatorship; however it is no less

effective, rendering invisible entire groups of social subjects – such as survivors of disappearance and those who do not contribute to economic production – and excluding them from the so-called democracy in Chile.

The postdictatorships, such as the Chilean one, can be privileged spaces in terms of the theorization of forms of precarious life, and even more so, the ways in which the dictatorships and the neoliberal democracies are producers of spaces of precarious life. Nelly Richard, for example, has examined this precariousness through the axis of marginality, noting how the transition to democracy has excluded anyone and anything that was inconvenient to the project of consensus, anyone who did not want to forget the past, anyone whose poverty or unsightliness challenged the beautiful façade created by the transition governments. Richard has theorized this notion of the exclusion (disappearance) since the transition to democracy in Chile in her book Cultural Residues (2004), where she argues that, in addition to marginal subjects, inconvenient truths, conflicts, and memories have been discarded (disappeared) so as to avoid interruption of the official project of consensus. Richard describes how the Chilean Transition sought to homogenize and beautify so as to avoid stirring up any undesirable images of the past. Anything and anyone "shamefully dirty [or] disastrously poor" was pushed to the margins (disappeared) (8). Likewise, any voices that threatened to disrupt the happy consensus – with demands for justice, for example – were excluded. Richard, in her book Políticas y estéticas de la memoria (2000) insists that these fractured and powerless voices (these memories that are struggling to be heard) be included in the historical narrative:

> Son, sin embargo, estas señales truncas las que deben ser incorporadas a las narrativas históricas de la Transición para que cobren visibilidad no sólo los brillos del éxito político-administrativo y técnico-comercial de la modernización democrática con los que se viste la actualidad chilena sino, también, lo mas oscurecido por ella: lo fracturado y convulso de biografías rotas, de subjetividades en desarme, de lenguajes y representaciones llenos de cicatrices que el frenesí mercantil ha desalojado cruelmente de sus vitrinas del consumo. (11)

> It is, however, these truncated signs that should be incorporated into the historical narratives of the Transition so that not only the glittery political-administrative and technical-commercial success in which present-day Chile cloaks itself is visible, but also that which has been osbscured by it: the fractured and convulsed of broken biographies, of dismantled subjectivities, of language and representations full of scars that the commercial frenzy has cruelly evicted from its display cases of consumption. (my translation)

Richard calls for society to see, to remember, the failures in addition to the successes, the unsightly in addition to the beautiful.

Following the disappearance of social subjects is the disappearance of truth. These two forms of disappearance are intricately linked, since the social subjects who are made invisible often times have a story (a truth) that challenges the projects of consensus, reconciliation, and forgetting, and once these subjects are disappeared they are unable to tell their stories. In addition, given the ongoing tense political climate, many victims

have remained extremely reluctant to come forward, reveal their identities, and tell their stories for fear that they will not be believed or that they will suffer some form of reprisal.

The failure to find truth and justice seems to be due, at least in part, to a lasting cooperation between the democratic governments and the armed forces. For example, many government sponsored initiatives for truth finding, including the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Mesa de Diálogo, and the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture have been extremely limited in their scope and have excluded many victims, prohibiting them from ever telling their story in a public venue and denying their voice a place in official history. Although both national commissions (the Rettig and the Valech) presented themselves as projects dedicated to the mission of truth finding, it seems that this was never the actual intention. Instead, only a partial truth was ever sought by the Commissions. Similarly, the Mesa de Diálogo concluded although it had only obtained information from a mere fraction of the unsolved cases. For example, information regarding the experiences of victims was incomplete given that the Rettig Commission excluded the stories of surviving victims and the Valech Commission excluded those victims who did not come forward to present their testimonies. In addition, the identities of the perpetrators were excluded from both reports, and therefore, from official discourse. Concerning the lack of justice, as Hernán Vidal indicates in Política cultural de la memoria histórica (1997), the discourse of the Rettig Report replaced the notion of justice with that of reparations, positing the latter as

that which would help the country to move forward and live together in peace (15) [9]. While the decisions made by the transition governments to hide the truth and retreat from the search for justice have been explained as in line with the political reality of the time (supposedly trying to prevent another coup from the Armed Forces should they feel the pressure to answer for their actions during the dictatorship), these same excuses do not work for more recent examples of cooperation with the Armed Forces (at a point when there has been a stable democracy for two decades and there is no credible threat of a coup).

Butler's theory on precarious lives, Agamben's theory on the homo sacer, Vidal's theory on the obscuring of truth, and Richard's theory of the exclusion of the marginal offer the lens through which I will look at the multiple forms of disappearance that are represented in Chilean post-coup literary and cultural production from the coup until recent times. Before delving into my literary analysis, however, I will begin by

[9] For an extensive discussion on the issue of reparations see Elizabeth Lira and Brian Loveman's book Políticas de reparación: Chile 1990-2004 (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2005). Lira and Loveman, while arguing for the need for reparations for the victims, address the complexity of the situation by posing a series of difficult questions with respect to the issue: "¿Cómo y qué reparar si un gobierno y sus agentes habían violado todas las garantías estipuladas en la Constitución y las leyes de la República, habían detenido a miles de ciudadanos sin orden de detención y habían torturado a sus 'enemigos' hasta el límite de la muerte? ¿Si habían enjuiciado a civiles en consejos de guerra o se los había retenido sin proceso alguno en campos de concentración? ¿Si los detenidos habían sido relegados a lugares distantes o casi inaccesibles por disposiciones administrativas? ¿Si se los había condenado al exilio, prohibiéndoles volver a su patria? ¿Si se les había confiscado sus bienes bajo el pretexto de que podría tratarse de bienes de partidos políticos? ¿Si se les había expulsado de sus empleos por disposiciones administrativas? ¿Si se les había ejecutado en juicios sumarios, sin defensa ni debido proceso por delitos supuestos? ¿Si se había asesinado a ciudadanos por orden de la autoridad o se los había hecho 'desaparecer'? ¿En que podría consistir la reparación?" (13-14). Regarding reparations for the victims, Lira and Loveman argue that ""La historia de las políticas de reparación es también una historia de los esfuerzos realizados en la sociedad chilena para asumir el pasado conflictivo y reparar a las víctimas. Aunque los años de sufrimiento y pérdidas, así como la denigración y el desamparo, sean irreparables, *la existencia de una política de reparación con varios programas dirigidos a distintos grupos de victimas es el resultado de una lucha moral y política colectiva contra el olvido y la impunidad, que va más allá de las víctimas* (my emphasis). Este libro, además de documentar las políticas de reparación, deja constancia de esta lucha que todavía sigue vigente" (16)

reviewing the history of Chile since the 1973 coup d'état as well as the traumatic effects that this period had on Chilean society. This framework will then allow me to explore issue of disappearance in several pieces of literature that were produced in this very context.

The September 11, 1973 coup d'état that ousted the democratically elected Socialist president Salvador Allende Gossens put an end to a nearly 150-year tradition of democracy in Chile[10]. What followed was the seventeen-year dictatorship, known as the "reign of terror", led by General Augusto Pinochet de Ugarte. During this time, the military regime was intent on eliminating all remnants of the former administration. Arbitrary detention, torture, assassination and disappearance became commonplace during the years endured under Pinochet. Anyone who posed a threat to the continued control of the regime was eradicated, either by way of detention, exile, assassination, or disappearance. It is estimated that there were over 1,200 torture centers (this was the number of "official" torture centers as named by the Valech Report, but surely there were many additional make-shift centers in private homes and other obscure locations), which included the Estadio nacional (the national soccer stadium), as well as Villa Grimaldi, Pisagua, Dawson Island, Chacabuco, Esmeralda, and Colonia Dignidad, among others[11]. La Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación (the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation) reported in 1991 that 2,279 persons were killed for political reasons

[10] While Chile had previously experienced a military dictatorship from 1924-1931, this period has disappeared from the country's national historical narrative. Hernan Vidal discusses the vanishing of this period of dictatorship in his article "The Gravitation of Narratives of National Identity on Human Rights: The Case of Chile" (2010).

[11] For a comprehensive list of detention / torture centers see the following website: http://www.memoriaviva.com/, which is maintained by the London based organization Proyecto Internacional de Derechos Humanos.

between 1973 and 1990, with the majority of enforced disappearances occurring between 1974 and 1977. In addition, the Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura (National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture) reported in 2004 and 2005 (in two separate reports) that 28,459 persons were detained and tortured for political reasons from 1973 to 1990. Human rights organizations, however, have estimated higher numbers of murders and disappearances as well as cases of political imprisonment and torture. Drastic differences in estimates of torture victims are due to groups' differing notions of torture. For example, the Valech report followed a much different definition of torture (the detention must have been for at least five days, and must have been in one of the official torture centers) than that issued by the United Nations. There is no official statistic on the number of exiles, however, it has been estimated that anywhere between 200,000 and 1,000,000 Chileans were forced into exile after the coup (Aguierre and Chamorro). The violent coup d'état, in addition to causing the dissolution of democracy in Chile, marked the fragmentation of communities, families, and individual lives. The extreme terror caused by the coup and dictatorship completely altered daily life, and fear became a way of life for many Chileans.

The transition to democracy began in 1990 when Patricio Aylwin was inaugurated as the first democratically-elected president in seventeen years. Aylwin was the first in a series of presidents elected from the Concertación coalition[12]. This first transition government, especially, was faced with the daunting challenge of reintegrating an

[12] All presidents between 1990 until the most recent election have been from the Concertación (a coalition of center-left political parties). These include, Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994), Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994-2000), Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006), Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010). The election of Sebastián Piñera in 2010 was the first presidential candidate outside of the Concertación to win since the transition to democracy.

extremely fractured Chilean society. However, many of its promises (which included clarifying the truth about the atrocities committed under the Pinochet dictatorship and building a just society) were never accomplished (nor does it seem that they were attempted with any real effort). Aylwin's infamous declaration that the government would seek, "La verdad y la justicia en la medida de lo posible" ("Truth and justice within the possible") turned out to mean that government commissions would seek a partial truth and no justice (the only justice to be achieved would come at the hands of lawyers and judges who found loopholes in the 1978 Amnesty Law, which every democratic government since the transition to democracy has continued to uphold). Under pressure from the military, which threatened the new government with another coup d'état if it pursued trials for crimes committed during the dictatorship[13], Aylwin attempted to appease the victims by creating the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, also known as the Rettig Commission after its chairman, Chilean lawyer Raúl Rettig. While the very name of the commission included the word "truth", the truth that it sought was extremely limited in that its directive was to investigate only cases of death or presumption of death. By official mandate, the Commission ignored the cases of surviving victims, many of whom both wanted and needed to tell their stories and have them validated in an official arena. The Commission submitted its final report in 1991 in which it documented that 2,279 persons were killed for political reasons. This estimate,

[13] In any case, Pinochet had assured before leaving office that military officials would be protected from prosecution after the return to democracy by passing the 1978 Amnesty Law, which granted impunity to perpetrators of human rights abuses in Chile between 1973 and 1978 (the years between which most of the violence occurred). In addition, the 1980 Constitution contained provisions that would safeguard the military as well.

of course, excluded the hundreds of thousands of victims who had survived detention, torture, and other grave human rights abuses at the hands of the military regime.

Following the Rettig Commission, the Mesa de Diálogo (1999-2001) was another apparent attempt at uncovering what happened to the disappeared. However, like the Rettig Commission, it proved to be unsuccessful in its mission. Organized by then Minister of Defense Edmundo Pérez Yoma (under then President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle), the Mesa was a round-table discussion that included "former cabinet ministers, lawyers, religious leaders, representatives of the armed forces, and prominent intellectuals, among them psychologists, writers, and historians" (Aguilar 417). The primary objective was to bring members of the military into dialogue with human rights lawyers in order to uncover new information regarding the whereabouts of the disappeared. While the idea was that those providing information would remain anonymous and therefore safe from prosecution for involvement in any crimes, the members of the military remained extremely reluctant to offer any new information and stayed firm with their original position that there should be no further investigations into human rights abuses. At the close of the Mesa in early 2001 the military produced a dossier that included information on 200 cases of enforced disappearance, leaving another 600 cases unaddressed (Aguilar 420). Once again truth had been privileged at the sacrifice of justice, and once again the truth that resulted was very limited, vague, and even highly unreliable (Collins 81, Aguilar 421-422).

In response to the shortcomings of both the Rettig Commission and the Mesa de Diálogo, there was a call for the creation of a second truth finding commission, one that

would investigate abuses beyond those that resulted in death or the presumption of death. Therefore, the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, also known as the Valech Commission (named for its Chairman Bishop Sergio Valech) was established in 2003 under the direction of President Ricardo Lagos. Composed of eight members – which included lawyers and one psychologist, but excluded any representatives for the victims – this new Commission was mandated to document cases of politically motivated detention and torture that took place between 1973 and 1990. In its final reports (there were two) the Commission documented having found 28,459 cases of political imprisonment and torture. This estimate, which has been deemed an extreme underestimate by human rights organizations such as the UN, is most likely very low due to the practices of the Commission that excluded large numbers of victims.

Similar to the criticisms that had been made on the Rettig Commission, the Valech Commission was criticized for its exclusionary nature. Only those who initiated contact with the Commission and came forward with their stories were included in the final report[14]. There are several problems with this criterion. First of all, in order for victims to approach the Commission with their testimony, they must first know that such a Commission exists. With a large number of Chileans who have continued to live in exile since the coup, many may not have known of the Commission's invitation. Another problem was that many ex-political prisoners remained extremely reluctant to publicly reveal their identities and tell their stories for fear that they would not be believed or would suffer some form of reprisal. In addition, the Commission used a very narrow

[14] The Valech Commission began accepting new testimony in the spring of 2010. Exactly what will come of this new testimony and if another report will result have yet to be seen.

definition of torture (it did not use the definition outlined by the United Nations in its Convention against Torture), which also excluded the experiences of many individuals. Many cases brought before the Commission were declared invalid as they did not fit the Commissions' definitions of torture and detention. This exclusion and denial of suffering (the notion that one must have suffered a specific form of torture for a specific length of time in order to qualify as a victim) could have also prevented other victims from coming forward. Chilean writer and ex-political prisoner, Hernán Valdés, maintains that he was never approached by the Valech Commission to give an official testimony and his name was not included in the Commission's final report even though he is a well-known survivor of political imprisonment and torture – his book Tejas verdes (1974) was the first in a series of testimonios that documented the suffering endured by prisoners held in secret detention centers. Valdés has expressed his disillusion with the Commission's exclusionary practices in saying that

> Esa Comisión debería haber tenido las atribuciones, o debería habérselas tomado, de invitar a declarar ante ella, en vez de esperar a que las víctimas se informaran de su existencia. Ante un hecho así, cualquiera podría sospechar una intención del gobierno de limitar el número de víctimas y, consecuentemente, de economizar. Además, con esos criterios, una vez establecida su lista, la Comisión y el Gobierno que la creó, ponen a todas aquellas personas no reconocidas o ignoradas en la grotesca situación de tener que exhibirse y justificarse a sí mismas en la situación de víctimas. No todos tienen la posibilidad de hacerlo. Ésa es una doble humillación. (http://www.letras.s5.com/hv171205.htm)

> That Commission should have had the power, or should have taken it, to invite individuals to give their testimonies, rather than wait for the victims to inform it of their existence. Facing this kind of act, anyone could suspect an intention of the part of the government to limit the number of victims and, consequently, to economize. In addition, with these criteria, the Commission and the government that created it, put all those not recognized and ignored individuals in the grotesque situation of having to justify to themselves their status as victims. Not everyone has the possibility of doing this. That is a double humiliation. (my translation)

Many intellectuals such as Hernán Vidal have criticized both Commissions for their separation of truth and justice, meaning that any information gathered (the identities of perpetrators would remain concealed) could not be used in trials concerning human rights violations.

Like the search for truth, the search for justice has been a lengthy and difficult process, and while progress in this area has most certainly been made, this has not effected any substantial change in post-dictatorial Chilean society. Between 1990 and 1998, Chilean courts were extremely reluctant to accept Pinochet-era cases of human rights abuses, claiming that the 1978 Amnesty Law prohibited the prosecution of many of the crimes committed between September 1973 and April 1978. One of the few exceptions to this early lack of trials in Chile was the 1993 sentencing of two former members of the DINA (Chief Manuel Contreras and his second-in-command) for the 1976 assassination of Orlando Letelier and his assistant in Washington, D.C. While this

sentencing marked a victory for justice seekers, it was a severely limited victory: it took approximately two years for the sentencing to be confirmed, at which point the military declared that they would only hand over Contreras to the authorities if he were jailed in a military-run prison (where he would be among his peers). The Contreras case is yet another example of the power maintained by the military after the transition to democracy.

The arrest of Chile's former dictator, Augusto Pinochet, in London in 1998 initiated a substantial number of efforts among Chilean lawyers and judges to prosecute violations of human rights that had occurred during the military regime. Pinochet's arrest not only marked a momentous occasion for defenders of human rights in Chile, but also for the world at large. The expressions "Garzón effect" and "Pinochet effect" became popular ways to describe the effects of the ex-dictator's arrest both nationally and internationally[15]. Regarding the influence of Pinochet's arrest on Chilean courts, Cath Collins has maintained that, "the putative demonstration effect of Spanish judicial zeal, supposedly stimulating Chilean judges to act with more of an eye to international law and their own reputation, almost certainly contributed to later change" (79). Regarding the effect in Chile, Alexandra Huneeus has argued that since the Chilean judiciary's "human

[15] These expressions have been used for over a decade in order to convey the global importance of the arrest of the former Chilean dictator in London. The "Garzón effect" has been used by Chilean lawyer Roberto Garretón and Law Professor Naomi Roht-Arriaza to describe the zeal that was passed from the Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón (who issued the arrest warrant for Pinochet in London) to Chilean judges after the ex-dictator's arrest. The "Pinochet effect" is generally used to describe the door that was opened to a willingness to hold former heads of state accountable for abuses committed while in office. James Reynolds at BBC News contributed an article titled "The Pinochet Effect" on August 14, 2000 in which he declared that ex-dictators were no longer untouchable and that others too would face trials. Naomi Roht-Arriaza employs the expression in the title of her book The Pinochet Effect: Transnational Justice in the Age of Human Rights (2005). In 2008, the International Center for Transitional Justice sponsored a conference titled "The Pinochet Effect" at the Universidad Diego Portales in Santiago, Chile. Most recently, Cath Collins makes use of the expression in her article "Human Rights Trials in Chile during and after the 'Pinochet Years'" (2010).

rights turn" in 1998, Chilean judges have "sentenced more former officials of the military regime than judges of any other country in Latin America" (1). "Judges have opened over 2,500 investigations, and have handed down over 480 indictments; 256 persons have received sentences" (1). While a certain amount of optimism can be gained from these judicial successes, much work remains to be done in the realm of justice.

Although the 1978 Amnesty Law remains in force, lawyers have been successful in finding loopholes that have allowed them to bring cases to trial that may have been previously seen as covered by the Law[16]. One of the most significant turns was made by Judge Juan Guzmán, who altered the approach to cases of enforced disappearance by claiming that disappearance is an ongoing event and therefore cannot be covered by the Amnesty Law (which only covers crimes committed between 1973 and 1978). With this new approach Guzmán began an extensive investigation that included hundreds of victims. As conservative who had supported the 1973 coup, Guzmán had much to learn about the human rights violations committed during the Pinochet dictatorship. He looked to investigative reporter, Patricia Verdugo, to uncover information about the infamous Caravana de la muerte (Caravan of Death) led by General Sergio Arellano Stark that disappeared 75 people in the months immediately following the coup[17]. Guzmán's search for the disappeared spanned the nation. The conviction of General Arellano in

[16] Various international human rights organizations, including the Organization of American States, Amnesty International, and the United Nations have repeatedly condemned Chile's Amnesty Law. In 1989 the United Nations General Assembly declared that Chile's Amnesty Law infringes upon the right of victims of human rights abuses to judicial remedy. Most recently in 2009, the United Nations Committee against Torture called on Chile to abolish its Amnesty Law.

[17] Verdugo's book Caso Arellano: Los zarpazos del puma (1989), named for the helicopter used by the Caravan of Death, offers a detailed account and key evidence of the death squad carried out by General Sergio Arellano that was ultimately ordered by Pinochet. The book was later translated to English using the title Chile, Pinochet, and the Caravan of Death (2001).

2008 marked another significant milestone in the human rights turn since 1998. On the other hand, despite the successes of Pinochet's arrest and the stripping of his immunity, the ultimate goal of convicting the former dictator of crimes against humanity will never be achieved due to the fact that Pinochet died in December 2006 before he could be brought to trial for the many cases brought against him.

While some progress has been made in the way of trials for violations of human rights during the dictatorship, this progress has not been successful in bringing substantial changes in terms of healing to the Chilean community. The arrest of former dictator Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998 certainly marked a turn in the quest for justice – a number of investigations and trials were opened, whereas there had been practically none before that point. While change has certainly happened (resulting from truth commissions and court cases) and it appears that Chilean governments have attempted to deal with this painful past, this change is not enough. There was still no widespread acknowledgement or condemnation of the human rights abuses during the dictatorship. The country severely divided with respect to this acknowledgement, and many still refuse to support victims or condemn past abuses.

Chile's transition to democracy has been widely criticized among scholars and artists as being incomplete and exclusive. Some have even referred to the transition a charade, based on the fact that many of the democratic governments since 1990 have maintained many of the political structures (such as the 1980 constitution, Supreme Court judges, and a number of senators) and economic policies (the neoliberal model) installed by the previous military regime. Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian first called attention

to the continuities between the dictatorship and the democratic governments that followed it. He harshly criticizes the lack of any real change: "En la Matriz de una dictadura terrorista devenida dictadura constitucional se formó el Chile Actual, obsesionado por el olvido de esos orígenes" (28) (It was in the Womb of a terrorist dicatorship turned constitutional dictatorship that Present-Day Chile was formed, obsessed with the oblivion of these origins). More than ten years after the transition to democracy began, Diamela Eltit exclaimed that there was not yet a complete democracy in Chile: "Chile no está democratizado. ¡Chile no está democratizado! Entonces, por lo tanto, en algún punto débil el golpe sigue ocurriendo. Es decir que si se escribe directamente el golpe o si mas bien no se menciona, todavía estamos con enclaves de la dictadura fuertes: ¡y Chile no está enteramente democratizado!" (Lazzara 51) (Chile is not democratized! Chile is not democratized! Therefore, in some way the coup continues. That is to say, whether it is directly written or not mentioned, we still have strong dictatorial enclaves, and Chile is not completely democratized! (my translation).

In a similarly critical evaluation of the transition to democracy, Nelly Richard has focused on what and who were left out of the consensus that was pushed by the early democratic governments. She has discussed how inconvenient conflicts, negative memories, and undesirable social subjects were excluded by the new government as it attempted to force reconciliation. Richard questions:

> What overflows did the consensus try to limit, in attempting to force a unanimity of voices and conduct related to the formal and technical rationalization of the agreement? An overflowing of names (the dangerous revolt of words that

> disseminate their heterodox meanings in order to name what is hidden-repressed outside the official networks of designation); an overflowing of bodies and experiences (the discordant ways in which social subjectivities break the ranks of identity normalized by the political script or the publicity spot with its zigzagging imaginary lines of escape); an overflowing of memories (the tumultuous reinterpretations of the past that maintain the memory of history open to an incessant struggle of readings and meanings). (15)

In trying to force consensus and create the image of a homogenous whole, one that was content to move forward and forget the undesirable memory of the past, transition governments left out (of national historical narratives) anyone or anything that did not fit. Just as the military regime had done, the democratic governments excluded those who that threatened the successes of their project.

A common critique with regard to the transition to democracy from both scholars and artists is that the democratic governments have upheld the economic transition to neoliberalism brought about by the dictatorship. Many now agree that the real transition in Chilean society was that which was carried out by the dictatorship: the transition from a state to market economy. Idelber Avelar contends that the end of the dictatorship signified little change and should not be considered a transition, since it was "nothing but the juridical-electoral legitimation of the successful transition carried out under the military" (59). For Avelar, the transition to democracy actually perpetuated or even deepened the traumatic wounds caused by the military regimes: justice was abandoned for reconciliation; democratic governments legitimated the neoliberal economic policies

installed by force during the dictatorship; said policies increased social fragmentation and encouraged a forgetting of the past. Regarding this last point, neoliberal economic policies have been highly criticized by scholars and artists alike for their devaluation of human life and focus on an eternal present. In this regard, Moulian argues, "En la Matriz de una dictadura terrorista devenida dictadura constitucional se formó el Chile Actual, obsesionado por el olvido de esos orígenes" (28).

It is among the aforementioned criticism of the transition to democracy that the current study is situated. Contributing to the plethora of studies that have pointed out and condemned the consistencies between dictatorship and post-dictatorship Chile, this dissertation highlights how the persistence of disappearance is yet another consistency between the two supposedly distinct periods. In focusing on this constancy I argue that the transition to democracy is not yet complete. With the exclusion of so many social subjects, there is not a full democracy in Chile. Given this context, I see my work as part of a corpus of work that calls attention to this lack and insists on a more inclusive society, a more democratic Chile.

After two decades since the transition to democracy, a Truth Commission report, a policy of reparations to the victims, the construction of several monuments to the fallen, numerous human rights trials, and the death of the former dictator, trauma continues to hold a firm grip on many individuals and Chilean society as a whole. Psychic trauma (most commonly known today as post-traumatic stress disorder), is defined by Cathy Caruth as:

> a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. (4)

Caruth also states that "to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (5). She describes how the individual does not own the event – s/he cannot recall it in his/her conscious memory, but instead has a sort of imposed amnesia with regard to the event. On the contrary, the event haunts the traumatized individual (it returns in nightmares or flashbacks, often against the will and out of the control of the individual).

While the most brutal years of the dictatorship occurred over three decades ago, trauma continues to be a phenomenon of the *present*, rather than an element of the *past*[18]. As Cathy Caruth has maintained, trauma is atemporal. For the victim, the traumatic event is not located in the past (coinciding with the time of the original event, for example), but is instead part of the present. According to Caruth, trauma occurs when an event surpasses an individual's capability to process it. When an individual lacks the tools necessary to comprehend the event, s/he passes through the event without ever really experiencing it. Thus it never becomes part of the individual's memory, part of the individual's past. The incident then continues to haunt the individual; this continued return may be in the form of nightmares or unconscious reenactments, for example. In order to put an end to these traumatic returns, the individual must deal with the trauma,

[18] 1973-1977 were the most violent years of the dictatorship, with the highest rates of torture and disappearance.

s/he must realize that the event is in the past rather than in the present, and that therefore, it has no harmful power over him/her.

In order to begin the healing process, the traumatic event must be put into words. Dori Laub argues that the telling of the event is instrumental to the victim's reintegration. According to Laub, the victim must engage in:

> a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing a history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event*… This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside of oneself and then take it back again, inside. (69)

Through testimony an individual / community can externalize and bear witness to the traumatic event (traumatic events are those that do not fit within existing mental schema, and therefore are not encoded in normal memory). Therefore, this putting into words takes the power away from the event, and frees the victim from its repeated returns.

This process of narration, however, cannot be undertaken by the victim alone. An empathetic interlocutor can not only listen to the victim's story, but also validate their experience and emotions as well. The role of this listener is just as crucial in the process of healing. Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane have also stressed the importance of the listener by stating that "external validation about the reality of a traumatic experience in a safe and supportive context is a vital aspect of preventing and treating posttraumatic stress" (25). Regarding the essential role played by the listener, Dori Laub has warned that: "the absence of an empathetic listener, or more radically the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish…and thus affirm and

recognize their realness, annihilates the story" (Felman and Laub 68). The lack of an empathetic listener, therefore, could actually result in the further wounding of the victim.

Since there have been few public and official venues for victims to tell their stories, many have chosen not to speak for fear of not being believed. Others have bravely chosen to testify in courtrooms or tell their stories in other public arenas, and many of them have faced denial or attacks on their integrity. In a way, the truths of these victims – those who do not speak due to fear, and those who do speak but are not heard due to the marginalization of their voices – have been disappeared. Regarding the silencing of victims, Dori Laub declares that "the 'not telling' of the story serves as a perpetuation of its tyranny" (Caruth 64). Given the aforementioned need to narrate the traumatic event, literature can play an important role in the healing process. Therefore, in addition to its aesthetic value, literature also has an important ethical value in society.

By examining the role played by literary texts in shedding light on the persistence of disappearance, I am focusing on the ethical value of literature in addition to its aesthetic value. Art and literature play a vital role in society, especially during times of atrocity, because they reaffirm the human. Literary texts often preserve the marginal stories that have been excluded from official history while also documenting abuses and injustices (such as the persistence of disappearance). In this way, literary texts can help to reveal what is going on in reality. Since only in recognition of what is going on can one / society hope to change reality, literature can play a vital role in this first step towards change.

Several literary critics have highlighted the role of art and as a vehicle to shed light on injustices and demand a more democratic society. In her book The Art of Transition (2001), Francine Masiello stresses the ethical role of the aesthetic in postdictatorship neoliberal societies, arguing that the artist can (and should) produce work that "interrupt[s] the comfortable 'flow' of postdictatorship regimes" and demands a more inclusive and democratic society (3). Likewise, Idelber Avelar has examined the task of mourning undertaken in literary texts, stressing the ethical value of literature in confronting the losses of the dictatorship in addition to the present reality: "a global market in which every corner of social life has been commodified" ("Restitution and Mourning, 203). In a similar vein, Hernán Vidal has insisted on the responsibility of individuals in seeking out the truth and demanding justice for abuses committed by the State (Política cultural). Like the disappeared bodies, the truth can be uncovered and identified. The intention of my dissertation is to participate in what Masiello refers to as a project of "interruption." By calling attention to the persistence of disappearance, it is my hope that my dissertation will in some way aid in the formation of a more inclusive and democratic Chile.

The texts analyzed herein include: Ana Vásquez's novel Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos (1981), Luz Arce's testimony El infierno (1993), Ariel Dorfman's play La muerte y la doncella (1992) and documentary "A Promise to the Dead" (2007), Roberto Bolaño's novel Estrella distante (1996), Diamela Eltit's testimonial novel El padre mío (1989), and Diamela Eltit and Paz Errázuriz's hybrid text El infarto del alma (1994). Each one of these texts presents several forms of disappearance. In addition, each text can

be seen as a meditation on the relationship between art, ethics, and politics, and in particular, the ethical responsibility of the artist. Regarding the order of the chapters, rather than following a chronological order according to the texts' publication dates, they are ordered according what I conceive of as a progression in the practice of disappearance and its traumatic effects on the individual and society. Therefore, I begin with enforced disappearance and I move on to other forms such as the return of disappearance and the persistent disappearance of marginal subjects, in addition to more symbolic forms such as the disappearance of truth and meaning.

Chapter one analyzes two testimonial texts in order to explore the relationship between two related forms of disappearance: the enforced disappearance of a political prisoner and the symbolic disappearance of a social subject, in this case, the ex-detenido desaparecido. The first text studied in this chapter, Ana Vásquez's testimonial novel Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos (1981), portrays the enforced disappearance of a political prisoner as a form of state-sponsored terrorism. Abel Rodríguez is informed on by his brother for having supposed ties to leftist organizations and is subsequently disappeared by the military regime. The second text analyzed in this chapter is El infierno (1993), Luz Arce's testimonial account of her experience as a disappeared detainee and her life after her release. In response to the brutal torture she endured as a prisoner, Arce began to collaborate with the DINA (National intelligence agency under the dictatorship) as a means of survival. Despite the acknowledgement that Arce endured unimaginable suffering during the period that she was disappeared, she has been widely condemned as a traitor, and both the political right and the left in Chile have worked to delegitimize her

voice. Through attacks on her integrity, honesty, and personal motivations, Arce's voice has been silenced, and in a way disappeared. While both texts present instances of enforced disappearance, Arce's text contributes to a discussion on the persistence of disappearance by raising a series of difficult questions: What remains after the survival of disappearance? What space do these survivors have in the context of the transition to democracy? What kind of life is possible after disappearance? And to what point can their survival be considered as such?

Chapter two studies Ariel Dorfman's play La muerte y la doncella (1992) as well as his most recent documentary "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman" (2007) in order to discuss the symbolic disappearance of the victim and the truth in postdictatorial Chile, as well as the mechanisms that make these disappearances possible. In La muerte y la doncella, the character Paulina is a survivor of enforced disappearance who continues to struggle with her traumatic past despite the return to democracy in her country. While Paulina physically exited prison, she remains disappeared in another sense. During the nearly two decades that have passed since her detention, she has been unable to tell her story. Trauma and fear once prevented her from putting her experience into words. While she is finally able to speak, her voice is not heard because upon telling her story, she is labeled insane. Neither victimizers nor bystanders want her to tell her story because they would rather forget. In a supposedly democratic society where (threats of) physical violence is no longer a viable means of controlling dissidents, those who wish to silence the victims must find another way to do

so. In order to delegitimize her voice they label her as mad / crazy / hysterical, this way even if she speaks no one will hear her voice, so she is essentially silenced.

The disappearance of social subjects, who are unable to tell their stories, carries alongside it the vanishing of truth, at least their truth. Through the character Gerardo's unwillingness to listen to the victim and hear her truth, La muerte y la doncella achieves a harsh critique of the role played by Chilean institutions in the disappearance of marginal histories. The Rettig Commission, for example, was ordered to exclude the stories of the surviving victims as well as the identities of the perpetrators. In this way, the democratic government cooperated with the military to obscure the truth and guarantee the impunity of those responsible for violations of human rights.

Like his play, Dorfman's documentary "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman" also makes evident the invisibility of social subjects who challenge the (false) image of consensus projected by transitional governments. In this case, the disappeared is one who obscures her own identity out of fear. While the film includes various family members of the disappeared, the focus of my analysis is on those who are absent from the film: those who are symbolically disappeared by a persistent climate of fear. During his talks of making this documentary, Dorfman spoke of his plans to search out his "Paulina", the woman he credits with saving his life after the coup. However, upon locating this woman he found that she was opposed to appearing on film for fear that her identity would be revealed. With friends and family who were Pinochet sympathizers and had no idea that she had sheltered those fleeing from the military after the coup, she was concerned that there would be reprisals against her.

Chapter three examines Roberto Bolaño's Estrella distante (1996). This novel, which spans various periods from before the coup to after the transition to democracy, portrays multiple and interconnected forms of disappearance. These include the enforced disappearance of several of the narrator's friends, which is followed by an absence of narrative. There is no one who can speak this experience since it is one without a witness. In search of his friends, the narrator becomes a kind of detective aiming to fill the gaps in the historical narrative. He follows a very faint trail of clues, and just when he thinks he has found a trace of meaning, it dissolves into nothingness. Over a long period of time, this vanishing of sense and meaning makes the narrator very disillusioned and hopeless. Although he finally succeeds in locating the man responsible for the disappearance of his friends, the narrator chooses to walk away rather than enact his own form of justice. Unlike Paulina who recognizes that she deserves (and has the right to) justice and therefore takes matters into her own hands, Bolaño's narrator chooses to do nothing. Disillusioned by the realization that no amount of vengeance (or even justice for that matter) will bring his friends back, rather than becoming an advocate who will insist that he speak on behalf of his disappeared friends, the narrator gives up. Bolaño's novel shows that the gap in the historical narrative will remain since it is not possible to tell disappearance.

Chapter four investigates two texts that deal with the disappearance of marginal subjects who do not fit within the goals of the neoliberal order imposed by the dictatorship and reinforced by the successive democratic governments. El padre mío (1989) by Diamela Eltit and El infarto del alma (1994) by Diamela Eltit and Paz

Errázuriz are two texts that perhaps best illuminate this broader understanding of disappearance, specifically the persistent disappearance of marginal subjects in neoliberal postdictatorial Chile. First, El padre mío presents the ramblings of an apparently insane homeless man who, although he lives on the streets of Santiago, remains largely invisible. This particular text invites us to question new forms of disappearance in neoliberal democratic Chile. Amid the official image of economic success and a peaceful and smooth transition to democracy, who is being left out? What are we not seeing? Later in El infarto the mentally insane, who have no (production) value to neoliberal society, vanish behind the walls of the state-run asylum. These precarious lives, much like those disappeared during the dictatorship, have no legal names, and therefore have no rights as citizens. One significant difference between those disappeared by force during the dictatorship and these invisible mental patients is that few people notice that the latter are gone because their humanity was never recognized in the first place. Their mothers do not parade the streets wearing their photos and shouting their names. No one forces us to look at their images, no one states their names, and no one obliges us to question our acquiescence in their disappearance. As Butler has questioned, how could we possibly grieve the loss of a life that never counted as a life? Eltit's texts contribute to bringing awareness to these invisible and dehumanized subjects.

Through these chapters it is possible to see that there is a need to reformulate the meaning of disappearance in order to include other manifestations beyond just enforced disappearance. As we will see, there are many forms of vanishing that both accompany and follow enforced disappearance. During the dictatorship, through the institutionalized

practice of enforced disappearance, state forces illegally detained and/or murdered thousands of individuals who had been deemed threats to the military's goal of national reorganization. This crime involves not only the physical disappearance of a human body, but the disappearance of the crime and the criminal as well. The perpetrator's goal is to vanish all witnesses and evidence so that, legally speaking, no crime has been committed. The military regime's discourse manipulated public understanding of the violence, and the seventeen year dictatorship was characterized by silence with regard to victims' suffering. While the transition to democracy brought new democratic governments, there was no clean break with the former dictatorship. Instead, the neoliberal democracy was founded upon the violent economic transition that had been carried out by the military regime. What we can see in the chapters of this dissertation is that marginal subjects continue to be made invisible, disappeared, in neoliberal democratic Chile. Some victims returned from enforced disappearance only to vanish again, only this time in plain sight. Although some victims chose to speak out and tell their stories, their voices were muted, silenced, and in this way they were made invisible. The new democratic government protected the former regime, taking measures to assure that its members would not be held accountable for their crimes, such as silencing surviving victims. Those voices that did not fit neatly and cleanly with the projects of consensus and reconciliation were delegitimized and relegated to the margins. Many of these subjectivities were denied in official versions of events, such as the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The role of literature has been to represent

those experiences and voices that have been marginalized from official histories and in this way resist the dehumanizing forces of the unregulated free-market economy.

Chapter 1. Ana Vásquez's Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos and Luz Arce's El infierno: What Remains for Survivors of Enforced Disappearance?

In this chapter I will analyze two testimonial texts – one from the early years of the dictatorship and one from the period of redemocratization – in order to explore the relationship between two forms of disappearance: the enforced disappearance of a political prisoner, and the symbolic disappearance of a social subject. First, in my analysis of the novel Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos (1981) by Ana Vázquez, I will explore the issue of enforced disappearance as defined by the United Nations as the (secret and illegal) detention (or murder) carried out by state agents, which is followed by a denial of having carried out the act, thereby placing the person outside the protection of the law (International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance). Second, I will examine Luz Arce's testimonio El infierno (1993), focusing on what kind of life remains for survivors of disappearance, including the way in which these survivors have returned only to vanish once again (only this time in a different way). While these two texts seem different, one about disappearance and the other about survival, I would like to reconsider their connection by showing how Arce's text presents the disappearance of the survivor as a social subject. While, Vásquez' novel presents forces that actively dehumanize and disappear the victim, this is a much more subtle process with Arce, who vanishes as a result of an absence of discourse.

Psychologist and writer, Ana Vásquez-Bronfman (1931-2009) went into exile in France in 1974, where she wrote six novels, a number of short stories, as well as several

studies on exile. Vásquez also worked, in the capacity of therapist, with survivors of political imprisonment and torture. Based on her personal experience of the coup in Chile as well as insight gleaned from working with survivors of torture, several of her texts, including Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos (1981), Sebasto's Angels (1985), and Los búfalos, los jerarcas y la huesera (1987), relate the history and the effects of the coup and military dictatorship through fiction. In fact, Abel Rodríguez was one of the first examples of the *novela testimonio* (testimonial novels, or novels based on a real life experience that call attention to human rights violations and demand redress for these abuses) to be written by a Chilean after the 1973 coup. This novel offers insight into the psychological effects of political imprisonment and torture. In addition, both Abel Rodríguez and Los búfalos offer a shrewd perspective of this historical moment because rather than glorifying one side and demonizing the other – as was common in many narratives at the time – Vásquez' work offers a more balanced view of the political climate in Chile. Despite its rich aesthetic and ethical value, much of Vásquez' work remains understudied by literary critics.

Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos portrays a family that is torn apart by the divisive political climate in Chile during the 1970's. The narrative covers three important periods in Chilean history: the mounting political tensions during the Allende government, the coup d'état, and the consolidation of the Pinochet dictatorship. Vásquez uses the Rodríguez family as a metaphor for the nation, and each member represents a different segment of Chilean society. The main characters consist of three brothers: Abel, an artistic free spirit and sympathizer of the political Left; Ramón, who has a military

background, is determined to make a place for himself in the upper class, and is firmly planted on the Right; and El Cachorro, who grew up idolizing his older brother Abel, and is a militant in the Communist Party. Through the Rodríguez family and the conflicts that ensue between the brothers – and also between father and son – the novel portrays the breakdown in the social fabric of the nation. Resulting from the betrayal of his brother Ramon, Abel Rodríguez becomes one of the thousands of detenidos desaparecidos. Through this representation of Abel's experience, the novel achieves a very insightful look at the psychological effects of clandestine detention and torture on the victim, as well as on those left behind.

As the title suggests, Abel Rodríguez, the eldest of the three brothers, is the novel's central character. Abel is an artist who has spent a large portion of his life traveling the world and mingling with diverse cultures. For example, during his travels Abel visited Cuba and participated in the Revolution, and when he returned to Chile he brought with him the ideals he formed during the ten years he spent abroad. During his travels Abel fathers a child, and when he returns to Chile he brings his daughter Montserrat with him to raise her on his own. Abel makes his life decisions according to his passions, and makes a meager living from his art. When Montserrat is old enough, Abel sends her to a public school in the city that focuses on art education. While Ramón and his wife criticize Abel for sending her into what they consider to be a dangerous neighborhood, Abel responds that he refuses to shelter his daughter from the world. Seeing value in empathizing with other and distant realities, Abel encourages his daughter to learn about poverty and suffering. After their father dies, Abel helps to run

the family business, an Esso service center. Working with his brother Ramón becomes complicated since the two have radically different worldviews and aspirations. Abel begins to resent his brother, because while he has given up his pursuit of art to contribute to the family shop, Ramón takes vacations and spends the store's money, "ahora empezaba a culpabilizar a su hermano porque él ya no podía pintar. Abel vivía corriendo del negocio a los bancos, y a veces se cruzaba con Ramón, bronceado y sonriente, que bajaba en las tardes del Club de Campo" (180) ("now he was beginning to blame his brother because he could not paint anymore. Abel's life was running between the business and banks, and sometimes he ran into Ramon, tan and smiling as he left the Country Club in the afternoons"). Although at one point Abel was an active member of a leftist party, encouraging the workers to form a union, he later becomes disillusioned with politics and ceases to consider himself a member of any party. Increased disputes between the brothers with regard to the family business, which are heightened by political tensions during the end of the Allende administration, eventually culminate in betrayal and death when Ramon informs on Abel resulting in the disappearance of the latter. While the reader is privy to his experiences as a detenido desaparecido, including his torture and murder, his family is deprived of any concrete answers with regard to his fate.

Ramón Rodríguez, the middle brother, is nicknamed Overo due to a skin disease that causes alterations in skin pigmentation, "Le dicen Overo como los caballos manchados, porque tiene unas manchas en las manos" (67) ("They call him Overo like the spotted horses because he has spots on his hands"). Upon entering a military boarding school, Ramón becomes enchanted with the military lifestyle, "Estaba contento

en la FACH. La disciplina, el uniforme, el ambiente" (48) ("I was happy in the FACH. The discipline, the uniform, the environment"). For Ramon, being a military official meant being a part of an elite group and enjoying a particular lifestyle, one that was both respected and coveted by the masses. In school the cadets revered the officials, spying on them whenever possible in order to get a glimpse into their existence. Ramón desperately wanted to become one of them, not in the sense that he would be a soldier, but in the sense that he would be part of that elite group:

> Me hubiera gustado seguir en la Escuela, para tener derecho a ir al casino de oficiales. Los veíamos reírse durante horas, contándose anécdotas, jugando cacho o poker…Todos admirábamos a los oficiales; a veces se contaban detalles de su vida legendaria. Para nosotros, llegar a entrar a ese casino con pleno derecho era la meta más anhelada (48).
>
> (I would have liked to continue at the School, to have the right to go to the officials' casino. We used to watch them laugh for hours, telling anecdotes, playing dice or poker…We all admired the officials; sometimes we talked about the details of their legendary life. For us, earning the right to enter that casino was the most desired goal)

This extreme dedication to military culture informs many of Ramon's political beliefs. Also solidifying Ramon's commitment to the lifestyle is his wife Betty, who comes from a military family and who has every intention of continuing the tradition with her own family. With her hair dyed blonde to match that of Marilyn Monroe, Betty loved all things originating from the United States. Like her dyed hair, her name change – from

Beatriz to Betty – is an attempt to transform herself into one of the products that she loves so much. At Ramón's insistence, Betty studies the Manual de Carreño, a guide to proper etiquette, so that she will be a proper military wife, one that would make both other men and women envious. Betty's father, Don Raul, is a commander in the army and sees no use in a woman who educates herself in anything other than etiquette, "Don Raúl estaba seguro de que era mejor que las mujeres no estudiaran demasiado porque 'se ponían muy contestadoras'" (49) ("Don Raul was certain that it was best that women did not study too much because 'they would begin to talk back a lot'"). Her father's ideology that the armed forces constituted the moral fiber of Chile without doubt affected Betty's attitude towards military men, and in choosing a military man as her partner, she shows her allegiance to her father's beliefs. However, after only one year in the academy, Betty becomes pregnant and Ramon is forced to leave school and begin working at his father's business. Despite his deep dismay and regret that his fellow cadets would finish school without him, they made vows to remain close friends. Ramón's parents protest to the marriage of the young couple, urging instead that she get an abortion. While he insists on his desire to marry Betty, Ramón also considers how his life may have been different had he not pursued her. He wonders if this small part of his past were different, if it would have been he that traveled the world as his brother Abel had done. Ramón and Betty have a son, Ramoncito – later known as el Moncho –, and at the insistence of Betty, the family lives above its means. El Guido, a classmate from the academy, and Ramón have remained close friends over the years. Guido, now a pilot in the army, earns a lot of money. Whereas Ramón and Betty struggle financially to maintain appearances– at one

point Ramoncito declares that he no longer wants a ride to school because the other kids taunt him about his father's old jalopy of a vehicle – el Guido and his wife, Ximena, have many nice things and never want for money. In order to both keep up with his friends' lifestyle and pacify his wife's demands, such as summering in the most exclusive locations, Ramón makes a habit of skimming from the family business. His actions and attitude anger his parents, especially his father, who does not understand the mentality of the need to "advance" in life by climbing the socio-economic ladder. As Ramón continues to take money from the store, his father's debt and worry continue to build. While the father-son relationship deteriorates, so does his father's health. Tensions also grow very tense between Abel and Ramon after the former comes to work at the store. In a possible misunderstanding, Ramon reports his brother to the authorities after he finds a chest containing weapons and mistakenly believes it to belong to Abel (when it actually belongs to the youngest brother). Realizing that his actions are what lead to Abel's likely torture and murder, Ramon suffers a mental breakdown and is interned in an asylum.

El Cachorro (Cub), the youngest of the three, is the only brother never mentioned by his real name. In contrast to Abel and Ramón, El Cachorro is a minor character that is introduced only through the thoughts or dialogue of other characters. El Cachorro idolized Abel as a boy; he wanted to do everything the same as his big brother, and as he grew up he followed his brother into politics, "El Cachorro crecía...Su ídolo era Abel; guardaba sus cartas para releerlas, las comentaba hasta aburrirnos, hacía las cosas que pensaba que a Abel le gustaría que él hiciera" (86) ("El Cachorro was growing up...His idol was Abel; he would keep his letters to reread them, he would talk about them to the

point of boring us, he would do the things that he thought that Abel would like him to do"). El Cachorro became involved in Leftist politics, engaging his brother and parents in deep ideological conversations, but as Abel began to remove himself from the party, el Cachorro delved even deeper into the resistance movement. The cache of weapons that cause Abel's arrest actually belong to the youngest brother, who is part of an armed group ready to defend the democratically elected Socialist government.

While the brothers obviously differ in political ideology, Ramon's decision to inform on his brother Abel is ultimately based on economics. The family business represents the Chilean economy and the conflicts that arose during this particular moment in time about how it should be run. As many Chilean intellectuals have noted, the primary reason behind the coup was to carry out an economic transition, reversing the economic reforms made by the Allende government and transitioning from a state to market economy[19]. With regard to this motive, Idelber Avelar has succinctly argued "the real transitions [were] the dictatorships themselves" (58). For the Rodríguez family, the business became a point of contention because it was the source of their salaries and, hence, determined their style of living. In addition, after the election of Allende it was a space where the workers were demanding their rights. As previously mentioned, Ramón regularly skims money from the store profits to help support a lifestyle that values the accumulation of goods as a sign of success. Disagreements about salary caused much tension between Ramon and his father, and later with Abel who encourages the workers to form unions to protect their rights. Believing that workers should have no inherent

[19] See Moulian's Chile actual, anatomía de un mito, Brunner's "Entre la cultura autoritaria y la cultura democrática", Thayer's El fragmento repetido (124), and Michael Lazzara's Diamela Eltit: Conversacion en Princeton (41).

rights, this angers Ramón, because for him the unions complicate his life and threaten his continued manipulation of the business and monopoly of its profits.

Presenting the ultimate betrayal among brothers, the novel calls to mind the story of Cain and Abel. The similarities between the two stories increase as the relationship between the Rodríguez brothers is developed. In the biblical tale, the brothers Cain, a farmer, and Abel, a sheppard, offer sacrifices to God. While God is pleased with and accepts what Abel has sacrificed, he rejects the sacrifice offered by Cain. Due to his intense jealously, Cain murders Abel with his bare hands. In response to Cain's actions God puts a mark on him and sentences him to wander the earth.

Like the biblical characters, Abel and Ramón Rodríguez also represent the nomadic versus the settled – Abel is an artist who travels the world, while Ramón takes a stable position in the family business – with the settled eventually conquering over the nomadic through violence. Tensions mount as Ramón feels like his parents favored Abel. While at one time Ramón felt like his father favored him, condemning his brother's lack of responsibility, over time he begins to feel like his father's preference has changed. He sees that his father and Abel are very similar in their political ideologies, and he feels like an outsider when they immerse themselves in conversations that consistently revolve around politics, at topic that is not of personal interest to him, and forget his presence. Ramón's relationship with his father becomes increasingly worse, and he feels that his father is never happy with the work (personal sacrifice) that he puts forth:

> Desde que entré a trabajar en el taller me trataba como un niño chico, controlándome las horas, pagándome una miseria porque él mismo no gastaba más que eso, exigiéndome que me quedara a trabajar los sábados en la tarde cada quince días, bajo el pretexto de que era el día de más clientela (88).
>
> (Ever since I came to work at the garage he treated me like a little boy, controlling my hours, paying me horribly because he didn't spend more than that, demanding that I work Saturday afternoons every fifteen days under the pretext that it was the day that we got most customers")

While Ramón does not actively murder his brother (as Cain murders Abel), he is ultimately responsible for his brother's death in that he sealed his fate by turning him in to the newly installed military regime. Like Cain, Ramon also bears a mark, a skin discoloration. Or perhaps the mark can be read as a scar, one left by the trauma that he suffered after realizing that his actions resulted in his brother's death. There is a principle of justice absent from both stories. Both stories represent one who betrays and murders his brother in world without justice.

Unlike the tale of Cain and Abel, however, this narrative does not present a Manichean view of the world where one brother is pure good and one brother is pure evil. Instead, the characters are much more complex, each possessing both good and bad qualities. Perhaps most importantly, nearly every character (and most are archetypes for different sectors of Chilean society) shares some of the responsibility for the coup d'état. In this regard, Ignacio López-Calvo, in "El discurso de Ana Vásquez como respuesta al heroísmo liberador" argues that Vásquez is part of a group of writers whose work marked

an important shift in Chilean literature after the coup. According to López-Calvo, unlike the liberationist novel, which presented the struggle of the heroic against the evil, Abel Rodríguez presented a much more complex critique of Chilean society after the coup, "Ademas de la evidente denuncia de las atrocidades causadas por la Junta Militar del General Pinochet, desde el hombre de la calle, hasta el exiliado, pasando por el militante y el mismo Presidente Allende, todos los chilenos parecen finalmente haber tenido su parte de culpa en el desastre" (102). Clearly open to self-questioning and self-critique, Vásquez presents a much deeper, and therefore more useful, analysis of this historical moment and its effect on the individual as well as Chilean society as a whole.

While clearly a work of fiction, Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos is firmly based on historical experiences in Chile. In this *novela-testimonio* (testimonial novel), narrative devices are used to depict real world events. References to historical figures (Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet), political parties (Unidad Popular and the Partido Comunista), institutions (FACH, DINA, and SIFA), politically-based organizations (Patria y Libertad), dates (el once, 1976), places (Santiago), and multinational corporations (Esso and Shell) help to establish a firm connection between the fictional account and a particular moment in Chile's history. Rather than serve as a mere backdrop for the plot, the history is key to the novel's message and purpose. As a testimonial novel, Abel Rodríguez communicates a sense of urgency about a real-life injustice.

In order to better understand the testimonial nature of Vásquez' novel, it is important to begin with a notion of the *testimonio* genre and its characteristics and

functions in Chile during the early years of dictatorship. In Against Literature (1993) John Beverley offers a definition of the genre as:

> By testimonio I mean a novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is, printed as opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also a real protagonist or witness of the event he or she recounts. The unit of narration is usually a "life" or a significant life experience (for example, the experience of being a prisoner)… A variety of different kinds of texts – some of which would be considered literature, some not – can fit under the label of testimonio: for example, oral history, memoir, autobiography, chronicle, confession, life history, *novela-testimonio*, documentary novel, nonfiction novel, or "literature of fact." … [Testimonio is also] a story that [urgently] *needs* to be told – involving a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, exploitation, or simply survival that is implicated in the act of narration itself. (70-71, 73)

While Beverley has described the genre as being "against literature," typically written by a non-professional writer, Elzbieta Sklodowska has resisted this characterization, treating the testimonio as a literary form. In Testimonio hispanoamericano: historia, teoría, poética (1992) Sklodowska enters into a debate with the then current critique of the genre, and as the title of her book suggests, insisting on the literary quality of the testimonio is her primary argument. In "Political Code and Literary Code" Ariel Dorfman discusses the characteristics common to the testimonial genre in Chile during

the dictatorship[20]. Testimonies in Chile, Dorfman informs, were often written by non-professional writers who felt compelled to narrate their experiences of extreme repression and abuse and to publish them in written form[21]. The reasons for writing one's testimony abound, and some of these include:

> indignation at the treatment received and the desire and duty to proclaim the infamy of their captors; the silence enforced during their captivity; the linguistic counterproposal that was quietly being formulated during the events; service to a cause; making comprehensible – and bearable – past afflictions; and emphasizing the heroism (at least in the majority of cases) of those who did not succumb in the face of catastrophe. Neither should we ignore the cathartic, almost therapeutic and confessional, direction taken by certain testimonies. But if all this is true, what one senses more than anything else in each one of the accounts, whether published or not, whether formulated by professionals of the word or by amateurs, is the dignity of the prisoners. (136)

For many authors, writing the testimony became a means to distance themselves from their captors; their cultural productions emphasized the humanity which had been denied by their oppressors. While reliving traumatic experiences can often be painful, many authors write their testimonies in response to a feeling of responsibility to those who did not survive to tell their stories. Speaking these stories aloud takes the power away from the victimizer, the tyrant. In this same regard, Dori Laub has proclaimed that, "The 'not

[20] Dorfman originally wrote this article for the edition Testimonio y literatura edited by René Jara and Hernán Vidal. Since this title was published in 1986, we can see that when Dorfman speaks of "today", he is speaking of a point in time around 1985-1986.

[21] Hernán Valdés is a clear exception to this case as he was previously established as a professional writer.

telling' of the story serves as a perpetuation of its tyranny" (Cauth, Trauma 64). The testimonial genre gives voice to those not included in the official history. By offering what Hugo Achugar, in "Historias paralelas," refers to as "la historia desde el Otro" (history from the Other), testimonio fills the gaps in history by including the experiences of marginal subjects, and allows the lettered western subject to come to a better understanding of the Other (56). The attempt to convey the suffering of others, and bring the reader closer to this distant Other through the traditions of literature gives the testimonio genre both an aesthetic and an ethical value.

Although criticism with regard to testimonio has transformed substantially in the last ten years, it is important to remember what Dorfman argued about the genre in Chile in 1986. Dorfman outlines three primary functions of testimony: to accuse, to record, and to inspire (141). Regarding those texts produced during the dictatorship, authors intended first and foremost for their testimonies to serve as denunciations. For this reason they presented names of perpetrators and details regarding their detention and torture to the reader who serves as a kind of judge, offering a moral verdict. While many did not offer legal testimony in a court room (due primarily to a lack of opportunity), these authors write their testimonies in order to achieve a form of symbolic justice, "presenting their authentic observations as part of a worldwide trial of the insanity of the Chilean government, with the peoples of the world, history or posterity, indistinctly acting in the role of judges" (142). Many of them wrote with the hope that, while legal justice was not an option for them at the moment, hopefully one day in the future it would be. Secondly, testimony records (documents and remembers) the experiences of those who have been

left out of the history books and other official sources of public knowledge. The belief that the past must be remembered in order for the future to be any different served as a guiding factor for the authors of testimony. In this vein Dorfman urges, "To forget, then, even if it's just an incident or a name, is to allow the jailors to control the conscious minds just as they control the bodies" (143). Finally, testimony served as a means to inspire those lost in the depths of defeat. In contrast to the official discourse that aimed to create the image of an all-powerful junta, testimony conveyed messages of hope, courage, and perseverance (144).

Written by a non-professional writer who felt compelled document real-life experiences of extreme repression and abuse (albeit through fiction), Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos fits within the parameters of Dorfman's characterization of the testimonial genre in Chile during the dictatorship. The novel also serves the three primary functions of the testimonio as described by Dorfman: to accuse, to record, and to inspire. As one of the first fictional accounts of the dictatorship in Chile, Vásquez's novel narrates the experience of a disappeared detainee, one who did not live to tell his own story. The very genre of the novela-testimonio sets up a distance with historiography in a strict sense, and therefore, allows for more reflection and analysis of the situation. From this discussion on the functions of the testimonio the questions arises: what does Vásquez' novel testify to (denounce) exactly? What I will show in my analysis of Abel Rodriguez is that the novel testifies to enforced disappearance, specifically the forces behind dehumanization and disappearance in addition to the destructive psychological effects of clandestine detention and torture on the victim.

As emphasized in the title, much of the narrative focuses on Abel Rodríguez, his experience of enforced disappearance and torture, as well as the effects of these events on his family members. In this way, the novel presents a decidedly strong condemnation of the practices of enforced disappearance and torture that were systematic under the Pinochet regime. In the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances, the United Nations has defined the practice as:

> the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law. (Article 2)

Legal instruments such as the above Convention clearly outline the parameters of this human rights violation, but novels like Abel Rodriguez y sus hermanos are also essential in that they help to understand the human experience of the crime, including the suffering endured by the victim (both physical and psychological).

In what had become a typical practice after the military coup, Abel was kidnapped from his home by non-uniformed men who concealed their identities as state agents. Neither Abel nor his family members were informed as to his whereabouts, nor were they informed of the reasons for his arrest. While Abel's daughter, Montserrat, files a habeas corpus, this attempt to find her father via legal means is of no use since his detention is outside of the law. Similar to Agamben's characterization of bare life in the case of the

homo sacer, Abel (the detenido desaparecido) is cast outside the protection of the law, where he has no rights. At the same time that he is outside the law, however, he is inside the law since his torture and murder are sanctioned (and in this case carried out) by the state. Like the homo sacer, the detenido desaparecido is in the precarious position of being outside of the protection of the law where he may be killed with impunity (71).

During his captivity in "la venda", a term used by the prisoners to refer to the torture center, Abel suffers various forms of torture, both physical and psychological[22]. Starkly opposing the official language of the regime, which claimed the practices of torture and disappearance were "excesses" committed by individuals, Vásquez' novel represents these practices as part of an organized system that relied on the participation of various professionals, including trained military officials and medical personnel. While the prisoner was being tortured, there were individuals watching and taking notes, they analyzed each detainee in an attempt to figure out which techniques would work best in getting him to break.

Clandestine detention and torture were employed as a means of destroying subjectivities, detaching the detenido desaparecido from the world s/he once knew and damaging him/her to the point that s/he could longer return to who s/he was before. Torture plays a vital role in the disintegration of the self, since the victim suffers both a physical and a psychological deterioration. In this vein, Elaine Scarry, in The Body in

[22] The term la venda literally means blindfold in Spanish. While many political prisoners in Chile were required to wear blindfolds, according to Lucia Guerra-Cunningham the usage of this term has a symbolic meaning in addition to obvious association of blindfold and torture center. Guerra-Cunningham argues that "la venda" refers to an environment of hidden repression, one where everything and everyone as masked with a façade that hides its true essence (7). This could refer to the interrogator who feigns friendship with the victim in order to gain his confidence, or the use of banal words such as submarine to refer to a cruel form of torture that involves drowning the victim in a liquid (which may be water or urine, etc.).

Pain (1985), has discussed the role of torture in the "unmaking of the world" for the victim. Through the infliction of extreme pain and the unshareability of this pain, the victim is isolated from the world around him. Through the representation of Abel and the other detenidos, Vásquez' novel explores the psychological effects of clandestine detention and torture on the victim of disappearance.

While some forms of physical torture, such as beatings, electric shock, and submersion in water or other fluids can be clearly defined as methods of torture, others are much less obvious as such. Vásquez' narrative invites the reader to confront questions such as: How can we define torture? Where are the boundaries between mistreatment and torture? Does the term torture include only the physical, or can torture be psychological as well? What are the effects of torture, both short-term and long-term – on the victim? The novel shows how physical and psychological torture were often employed simultaneously so as to increase the effect in the victim without leaving visible scars. Conscious of the fact that they may one day be held accountable for their actions, the military regime took steps to disappear all evidence of the crimes committed. Aware that severe physical torture would transform the body into a witness to the crime committed against it, "[los torturadores] dosificaban lo que hacían de manera que doliera cada vez más sin dejar huellas duraderas" (71). ("[the torturers] dosed out what they did so that it hurt more every time without leaving lasting marks"). The motive was to leave no trace of evidence of the inhumane acts it that had been carried out. For this reason, when brutal torture sessions left severe physical wounds, prisoners would be kept for an extended period of time before their release so that any visually noticeable wounds would

have time to heal. There were no limits, however, with psychological torture since the resulting scars were not visible.

The fact that the military took efforts to hide the torture shows that they knew what they were doing was wrong. Language was one tool that was used to try to conceal the crimes committed by the state. For example, the military regime attempted to justify the illegal detentions and torture as necessary practices during a "time of war". However, the fact of the matter is that those who were perpetrating the crimes (including the very highest in command) knew that what they were doing was wrong because they attempted to protect themselves by disappearing evidence and with amnesty laws. Also, torturers were taught to use banal language when referencing the practices of torture and state terrorism: "Ustedes no quieren *colaborar* con las autoridades en la *pacificación* del país… Se niegan a proporcionar la información que necesitamos" (pg. 101, my use of italics). ("You guys don't want to collaborate with the authorities in the pacification of the country… you refuse to provide the information that we need") The words colaborar and pacificación are neutral if not positive words; they are free of any sense of violence or pain. If they had thought that their actions were justifiable, there would be no need for the amnesty law or for covering up the reality of the situation with neutral language. Conscious of the fact that what they were doing was wrong, and that some day they may be held accountable for their actions, psychological forms of torture were often employed to ensure that there would be no evidence of the crime:

> El manoseo y la humillación no dejan huellas, y era probable que la hubieran amenazado con violarla realmente si presentaba una denuncia ante los tribunales.

> Cuando no hay violación, es difícil que alguien pueda querellarse por "intento de", o "presunción". De esa manera los torturadores podían simular una violación, aprovechando para aterrorizar a la muchacha y eliminar así una ayudista potencial de la resistencia. (100)
>
> (Groping and humiliation do not leave marks, and they had probably threatened to rape her if she reported them to the courts. When rape has not taken place it is difficult to take legal action for "intent of" or "presumption of" rape. Torturers could simulate a rape, terrorizing the girl and thus eliminating a potential aid to the resistance.)

The threat (fear) of violence proved to be very effective for the military regime because it freed them of the burden of physical evidence yet had lasting effects. The perpetrators took full advantage of the fact that, in the eyes of the court, if there is no evidence then there was no crime.

Also in an effort to increase suffering, the prisoner's own body was used against itself as an instrument of torture. For instance, one form of torture that Abel endured was called "asistencia a la sala," which was one of many banal expressions used to mask the reality of a horrendous treatment. During the "classroom" treatment:

> los tenían veinte horas diarias sentados, inmóviles, sin poder hablar. En las noches volvían extenuados al dormitorio, tan cansados como si hubieran hecho trabajos forzados durante estas veinte horas. Se dejaban caer en las camas, sin ánimo de hablar. Los primeros días estaban únicamente preocupados en medir el tiempo. (107)

(For twenty hours they had them seated, immobile, unable to speak. At night they returned them exhausted to their room, so tired as if they had done hard labor during those twenty hours. They let themselves fall onto their beds, lacking the energy to speak. The first days they were only concerned with measuring time.)

Being made to sit in one position without moving for an extended period of time, prisoners will suffer severe muscular cramps as a result of not being able to ease the discomfort of certain muscles. This tactic also caused them psychological stress since they endured these long periods in silence, not knowing when they would be relieved of the position, or what would happen next. In this regard, Scarry has described how mundane objects and activities can be turned into instruments of torture. In sessions such as the "asistencia a clase" the victim's muscles are converted into weapons of torture, to the end that the torturer need not even touch the victim to cause him pain. Another example in the novel is that even after the electrodes are removed from Abel's body and he is returned to his cell, the torture continues. His organs are writhing in pain, "Lito sentía que le ardía el poto, el ardor se mezclaba con los dolores diversos que iba identificando en distintas zonas del cuerpo: los riñones, el pecho, la nariz, el pene, el culo" (23). (Lito felt a burning sensation in his backside, the burning was mixed with diverse pains identified with distinct zones of his body: his lower back, his chest, his nose, his penis, and his anus). His body has been turned against him, serving as a tool in its own destruction. In addition, this tactic of turning the body against itself is a way to increase the duration of the pain since even after the session has ended and the prisoner is returned to his cell, he continues to suffer.

The novel emphasizes how pain is an isolating experience, one that the victim cannot share with others. For instance, when the narrative voice attempts to describe the pain Abel feels after being tortured he has to make comparisons between the pain and other recognizable things: "el dolor sordo, terriblemente presente que sentía en ciertas partes del cuerpo, que se transformaba en algo así como cuchillazos cuando se movía" (26). ("the dull and terribly present pain that he felt in certain parts of his body transformed into something like a knife slashing when he moved"). In this way, pain is unique due to its "unsharability". According to Scarry, pain resists language, and therefore, we can only speak *about* pain, but cannot *speak pain* itself (4-7). Therefore, there is an insurmountable distance between one who is experiencing pain and those who are not experiencing this pain. While the victim cannot possibly escape the reality of the pain, this same pain cannot possibly be reality for the observer. The pain that is being experienced inside of the victim's body is not part of reality for the observer because it has not visibly manifested itself.

In a similar example where the metaphor is used in an attempt to represent that which eludes representation, the novel represents the disintegration of the self suffered by the detainees through the metaphor of a tree whose branches are snapped off one by one: "Entonces ya nada era real, y sentían que estaban perdiendo pedacitos de ellos mismos con los recuerdos que se borraban, como si fueran un árbol al que le desgajaran lentamente las ramas" (108). ("Nothing was real anymore, and they felt like they were losing pieces of themselves with the memories that were being erased, as if they were a tree that was slowly losing its branches"). Similar to the tree that becomes less and less

whole as it loses its branches, the prisoner becomes more and more fragmented as s/he loses pieces of her/himself through both physical and psychological distress. Once again, the unsharability of pain dominates the scene.

The novel also makes apparent psychological torture in its multiple and varied forms. For example, the fear of the unknown was often manipulated and enhanced by torturers so as to maintain control over the prisoners. Blindfolds or hoods were one way to keep the prisoners both literally and figuratively in the dark with regards to their situation. Another way to increase the unknown and cause discomfort among the prisoners was to rob them of any sense of routine. For example, rather than provide a regular bathroom schedule, guards came at random times and in varying intervals to allow the detainees to use the facilities.

Many detainees express that the worst thing about torture is not the pain, but not knowing what to expect, not knowing if one will be able to endure whatever new form of torture they may administer. In the novel one of the prisoners claims, "Es el suspenso lo que da miedo; no saber lo que van a hacerle a uno" (26). ("It is the suspense that causes fear, not knowing what they are going to do to you"). The night is described as the worst time, a time when silence allows the fear to take over, "Todos le temían a la noche, cuando dejaban de bromear y se oían aquí y allá los ronquidos de algunos compañeros. En ese momento surgía el terror que cada uno había reprimido durante el día, invadiéndoles como un manto viscoso y paralizante" (29). ("They were all scared of the night, when the joking stopped and you could hear your compañeros snoring. In that moment the terror that they had repressed during the day emerged, invading them like a

thick paralyzing cloak"). During the silence of the night they could not stop the questions from invading their consciousness, questions regarding the unknown.

Humiliation and deprivation of dignity were at the very foundations of the prison camps in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship. In the novel, when Abel is introduced into the cell after being tortured for the first time, he awakens to a conversation amongst his cellmates about 'the smell'. He quickly realizes that they are talking about him, that he had defecated during torture, which was most likely the effect of electricity applied to the anus. He is immediately taken over by a sense of shame, and he apologizes to his cellmates. El Guatón tells him not to worry, because it happens to everyone. He explains that during the torture sessions the soldiers laugh hysterically as they attack electrodes to this prisoner's anus, making him defecate against his will. When the soldiers attached the electrodes to the anus, the prisoner can do nothing to control his own body. To push the humiliation even further, they order the inmate to sing, threatening that they will continue to shock him if he does not.

Another form of psychological torture for men was stripping them of their virility, of their identity as masculine subjects. For example, during a torture session, the male prisoners often received repeated blows to their genitalia. This treatment not only threatened the future functionality of the reproductive organs, but initiated a sense of paranoia in the victim as well since he was often told that he would surely remain permanently impotent from the damage suffered by that part of the body:

Sin embargo, más que el dolor que sentía, lo obsesionaba el miedo, porque tenía

> los testículos anormalmente hinchados… Los que lo torturaron le aseguraron que dentro de pocos meses, como consecuencia de los golpes, quedaría impotente de forma definitiva. Para un muchacho joven como el Petiso, la impotencia era peor que una condena perpetua o que la muerte (pp. 100-101).
>
> However, more than the pain he felt, he was obsessed with fear because his testicles were abnormally swollen... His torturers had assured him that within a few months, as a consequence of the blows, he would remain impotent indefinitely. For a young man like Petiso, impotence was worse than life in prison and worse than death.)

The idea that one was no longer a man (and the same could be true for a woman if she were stripped of her identity as woman, for example if she were tortured to the point of not being able to bear children.), is potentially very damaging for one's subjectivity (since gender is often a primary component of our identity). Who is one if not a man? Or a woman? The damage need not be necessarily physical, one could be stripped of one's identity as man or woman via psychological torture if the result is that one feels incapable of behaving as they believe men / women should behave (according to the culturally defined gender roles).

Vásquez' novel shows how psychological torture has the potential to be more destructive than physical torture since the effects can be permanent, and in this way the torture can continue long after the immediate application. Capable of completely destroying the victim's sense of self and relation to the world around him, these forms of torture often leave permanent and life altering scars. Also, with psychological forms of

torture, the body cannot bear witness to the trauma that it suffered, and thus there is no witness to the crime. This puts the victim in a precarious position in terms of future social and legal situations. Many surviving victims are afraid to tell their stories for fear of not being believed by those to whom they entrust their truth. Likewise, in legal settings, the burden of proof lies with the person who makes a claim, which puts victims of psychological torture at an extreme disadvantage.

While the popular belief is that torture is employed in order to produce a confession and gain intelligence, in other words that toture is a means to an end, Vásquez' novel shows that this is not the case. In contrast, interrogation is merely another form of torture, a means to humiliate and punish. While the torturers convince the victim that once he confesses the torture will cease, this is not the case. Scarry agrees when she writes:

> the fact that something is asked *as if* the content of the answer matters does not mean that it matters. It is crucial to see that the interrogation does not stand outside an episode of torture as its motives or justifications: it is internal to the structure of torture, exists there because of its intimate connections to and interactions with the physical pain. (29)

In the novel, when Abel is interrogated about the cache of weapons found in his shop, he tells them the truth, which is that he does not know to whom it belongs. However, Abel explains that this was not what his torturers wanted to hear; instead they wanted the names of people they could arrest and torture, "Bueno, y ahí quedamos, yo con mi historia y ellos insistiendo en que era pura chiva ¿te dai cuenta? Justo cuando uno les

cuenta la verdad no le creen" (69). ("So there we were, me with my story and them insisting that it was pure crap, you know? Just when you tell them the truth they don't believe you"). For his torturers, the value of his confession is not necessarily in the details, but instead in the simple fact that he confessed, since this assures that torturers that they are indeed causing pain and confirms their power over the victim. In this way, interrogation can also serve to prolong torture rather than halt it. When and if the victim gives names, this will only begin a chain of torture that will continue with the new victims (those who were named under torture).

The "interrogatorio a lo amigo", or friendly interrogations, refer to sessions in which officers treat the prisoner as a friend, hoping the prisoner lets down his/her guard and talks. They prey on the fact that the prisoners are starved for social relations, and can be easily tricked by kindness. In the novel, the Captain plays a dangerous mind game with the prisoners by acting as their friend, creating a kind of good cop-bad cop scenario where he is the one who cares about the well-being of the prisoners, disapproving of the actions of the torturers. Given their extremely vulnerable situation combined with a show of tenderness that had previously been absent from the prison, they want to see him as their friend. When the door to their cell opens, the detainees have to come expect either the guards or the Captain on the other side. While the arrival of the guards brings violent images to mind – since they transport the prisoners to and from the torture sessions – the arrival of the Captain means something quite different. When the Captain would come to take away a prisoner, he did not blindfold them as the guards did. Neither did the Captain yell or physically mistreat the prisoners, instead he merely took them

individually to his office for a 'chat', where he offered them coffee and / or cigarettes. The comfortable setting and humane treatment reminded the prisoner of the normal world, and therefore led him to believe that he was chatting with a friend, during which time he may give information because he does not realize he is being interrogated (34-35, 62).

As opposed to other texts that represent weak and hysterical victims of torture, Vásquez shows the strength of the detainees. After realizing that what the torturers wanted when they used the electric prod on the victim's anus was to observe him as he struggled to withold his bodily functions, el Guatón has discovered how to use the torturers' own methods as a means of resistance. Instead of holding back and then feeling ashamed of himself once he finally lost control, El Guatón defecated of his own will with the intention of disgusting the guards, "La primera vez me dio vergüenza como a tí y trataba de aguantarme; ahora me cago con ganas, tratando de salpicar con mierda a los desgraciados.....Por lo menos son pequeñas venganzas que uno puede permitirse" (21). ("The first time I was ashamed like you and I tried to hold back; now I want to shit myself and try to splash the swine with my shit… At least one can permit himself some small forms of vengeance"). In turning defecation into a personal choice, he regained a small bit of control, and in turn took complete control away from his torturers. This belief that the prisoner has some control in his existence is essential for his survival:

> Lo que ayuda a soportar el dolor lacerante, inimaginable para quien no lo ha sufrido, es la estima de sí mismo, la dignidad. Si uno aguanta la tortura un minuto, gana en fuerza para soportar el siguiente. Si ya aguanta dos minutos, que se

> hacen eternos de largos, junto al dolor se siente invadido por una gran alegría: 'me la voy pudiendo ¡me duele pero me aguanto!' (25).
>
> What helps to bear the searing pain, which is unimaginable to one who has not suffered it, is self-esteem, dignity. If one withstands torture for one minute, s/he wins strength to bear the next minute. If one withstands two minutes, which are made to be eternally long, along with the pain, one is invaded by a sense of immense happiness: 'I am doing it. It hurts but I am enduring it!'

While the novel shows the strength of some prisoners, it also shows the weakness of others who are broken by the overwhelming physical and psychological pain.

Vásquez' narrative strongly rejects the notion that one who "breaks" under torture (giving information or names) is a coward and a traitor. In the novel, the torturers detained Petiso's girlfriend as a means to break him. The torture of a loved one (or even the threat of doing so) is often employed to cause severe psychological stress in the victim. The torturers undressed, fondled, and threatened to rape his girlfriend. Therefore, Petiso suffered a "choiceless choice", a term coined by Lawrence Langer, in his article "The Dilemma of Choice in the Death Camps", to characterize the experience of the camps where victims were given no viable options, they were given no real choice, such as a woman who is forced to choose which one of her two children will live and which will die. Petiso was given no real choice; he was guaranteed that someone would suffer, whether it be his girlfriend or his comrade. In this way, Petiso is forced to provide his torturers with future victims. Upon breaking, Petiso returns to the cell devastated, calling himself both a traitor and a coward – before coming to prison, many of them were

made to believe (by their fellow party members) that breaking under torture meant that both of these were true. In this regard, Scarry argues that "There is not only among torturers but even among people appalled by acts of torture and sympathetic to those hurt, a covert disdain for confession" (29). The false belief is that confession is synonymous with betrayal, including betrayal of self, friends, family, country, and cause. El Petiso is obviously convinced of this and he is traumatized; he repeats again and again what they did to him, and what he did in response. These repetitions, however, are less for those around him than for himself, in order to work through everything that had just happened to him because he could not come to terms with the experience. Despite Petiso's negative view of himself, his cellmates attempt to comfort him, but he disagrees:

> No. No. Esto es lo peor. Soy un cobarde, eso es lo que soy. Cuando el tipo me puso la pistola en la sien debía haber dicho no. Me hubiera matado y listo. Pero tuve miedo de todo, de que le hicieran algo a ella, me sentía responsable. En esta huevada me metí solito, no tenía por qué arrastrarla…pero también tenía miedo de morirme ¡puchas que soy poca cosa! ¡Soy un mierda! (58-59).
>
> (No. No. That's the worst. I am a coward, that's what I am. When the guy put the gun to my head I should have said no. He would have killed me and that would be that. But I was scared of everything, that they would do something to her, I would feel responsible. I got myself into this thing, there was no reason to drag her into it… but I was also scared to die. Damn I'm so unworthy! I'm a piece of shit!)

He compares himself to Judas, a Biblical character who was one of the twelve apostles, and was the one responsible for betraying Jesus. He fails to see the difference between

himself and Judas. While Judas – who identified Jesus for a small bit of money – had a choice in the matter, el Petiso had no such choice. He repeats over and over, "Me quebré…me quebré" (57) ("I broke…I broke"), rather than me *quebraron* (*they broke* me). His choice of words reveals much about how he has *interpreted* his role; he wrongly believes that he had an actantial role in the situation, in other words, that he chose to break[23]. Scarry argues that in situations of extreme pain, one is no longer oneself in the absence of his / her conscience:

> It is commonplace that at the moment [of extreme pain], a person sees stars. What is meant by 'seeing stars' is that the contents of the consciousness are, during those moments, obliterated, that the name of one's child, the memory of a friend's face, are all absent. But the nature of this 'absence' is not illuminated by the word 'betrayal.' One cannot betray or be false to something that has ceased to exist. (30)

Petiso's cellmates console him by urging that anyone who has undergone torture would not judge or blame him for having talked: "Mira, Petiso, nadie que haya pasado por la venda te puede despreciar. Cada vez que a uno lo llevan, no sabe si va a poder aguantar o no. Yo, hasta aquí me he aguantado. Pero no estoy seguro si podré aguantar la próxima vez" (59). ("Look, Petiso, nobody that has been here can look down on you. Every time that they take you away, you never know if you are going to be able to withstand it or not. Up to now I have endured it, but I'm not sure if I will be able to endure it the next

[23] Ernst van Alphen "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.

time"). While those who have gone through the experience may not judge Petiso, perhaps he is aware that others (those who have not been through a similar experience and therefore have no way to understand) may not be as forgiving. Attributing this association between confession and betrayal to the great distance that arises between those who have experienced great physical pain and those who have not, Scarry argues that, "this disdain is one of many manifestations of how inaccessible the reality of physical pain is to anyone not immediately experiencing it" (29). Perhaps he judges himself so harshly because he knows that others will do the same on the outside.

It is impossible to discuss disappearance and torture without considering the power structures that make these practices possible. After all, both crimes involve human beings carrying out horrendous acts on other human beings. The question arises: What kind of person is capable of such unimaginable violence against another? In response to the numerous genocides of the twentieth century, many theorists have dedicated their work to answering this question and, contrary to popular belief, many have come to the conclusion that otherwise normal people are capable of abnormal acts. For instance, in her examination of Adolf Eichmann and his role in the Nazi Holocaust Hannah Arendt found that the Nazis were neither sadists nor killers by nature. Likewise, Stanley Milgram has argued that ordinary people can be driven to commit cruel and violent acts if someone who they perceive to be an authority figure orders them to do so. Arendt and Milgram agree that what drives people to carry out terrible acts on other human beings has less to do with individual personality characteristics than with the situation and /or training. In a related study, Mika Haritos-Fatouros and Janice T. Gibson researched the

procedures used to train torturers in Greece during the military regime from 1967 to 1974. In their article "The Education of a Torturer" the authors discuss the details of this training, highlighting the dehumanization of the victim as a key factor in producing the desired behavior in the torturers. To this end victims were referred to not by their names, but by words associated with objects or animals. Also, violence and specific methods of torture were assigned banal names so as to conceal their real nature. For example, when referring to violence acted upon a victim the phrase "crush the worm" may be used, not only dehumanizing the victim but also masking the violence being carried out. These methods of dehumanization created a distance between victim and victimizer, in order to facilitate the latter's harm of the former. This was a means of side-stepping ethical considerations, since it is much easier to eliminate an insect than murder a human being. Together these studies show us that those who carried out disappearance, torture, and murder in Chile during the dictatorship were not necessarily sadistic killers who enjoyed what they were doing, but instead that they were more likely otherwise ordinary individuals whose behavior was manipulated by the workings of a complex system of dehumanization.

Aware of public misconceptions with regard to torture as well as the stigma around those who confess during torture, the detenidos suffered from additional fear and anguish related to their future release. Not only would the perpetrators of the crimes deny the torture, but the victim's own family may also deny their suffering by refusing to characterize their suffering as torture, and in this way minimizing their pain. For many victims, suffering was increased by the thought that they would be completely alone in

their suffering upon leaving because no one would be able to understand what they suffered, or even worse, people may deny their suffering. In the novel, one of Abel's cellmates describes how the general lack of understanding regarding torture has affected victims upon their reintegration into society:

> Si decían "me torturaron" es porque los pusieron en la picana o porque los colgaron, algunos me decían, "a mí no me torturaron, me pegaron, me hicieron fusilamiento falso, pero no me torturaron, o, me amenazaron con mutilarme pero no…"… es que uno no se da cuento de lo que es la tortura. Por ejemplo, si tú sales y dices, "estaba solo, encogido y a oscuras, no veía a nadie," los compadres te van a decir "ah, entonces no te torturaron"… y esta cuestión es mucho peor que la picana." (138)
>
> If [ex-prisoners] would say "they tortured me" it was because they had been electrocuted or hung. Some would say "they did not torture me, they hit me, they used mock execution on me, but they didn't torture me, or they threatened to mutilate me, but no…"… It's that you never realize what torture is. For example, if you get out and you say "I was alone, tied up and in the dark, I couldn't see anyone" your compadres are going to say "ah, then they didn't torture you." … and that is much more painful than the electric prod.

This narrow definition of torture as ropes and electric chairs may mean that their experience would be disregarded and judged as "not that bad" by people who have never experienced what they have experienced. This realization that prisoners may be poorly received when they are released predicts the dismal future of the survivors, condemned to

live amongst people who do not empathize with them. If the victims do not feel like they will be believed, they are much less likely to tell their stories to anyone.

Abel is physically and mentally broken as a result of clandestine detention and torture. This complete breakdown is represented in the text via an increasingly fragmented narrative in the sections that focus on Abel's perception. Released from detention for a short-period of time in order to see his daughter, Abel physically returns home, but is incapable of reconnecting to his life on the outside. Through a brief letter from his partner Carmen, Abel realized that no one on the outside would be capable of comprehending the new Abel, one that was born inside the "venda." Even the simple language used to communicate her love and support, "Estamos orgullosos de ti, tu entereza nos da valor a todos," ("We are proud of you, your integrity gives courage to all of us") made it apparent that they now lived in different worlds, since notions of bravery and pride no longer made any sense to him (169). Amid this realization that an insurmountable barrier had been erected between him and his loved ones, Abel felt defeated, broken. This deterioration ultimately leads to his belief that he will be unable to return to his life outside the prison, unable to pretend as if he were the same person, unable to forget the horrors yet afraid to endure them over and over again in nightmares. This realization leads Abel to focus on a new project, rather than aiming to survive prison, his new goal was to die in captivity. Considering his loved ones, "prefería que supieran que lo asesinaron en la venda antes que lo vieran morir poquito a poco, alcoholizado y completamente huevón" (183) ("he preferred that they find out he was killed in prison rather than seeing him die little by little, an alcoholic and complete

asshole"). Given his project of death, when the opportunity arises to seize the gun of one of his captors, rather than using it to flee, he instead fires at the guards as a means of assisted suicide, "Si hubiera querido, aún podía escapar, el portón estaba abierto. Pero se volvió hacia el grupo más cercano y vació el cargador. – Qué suerte – pensó –. Voy a morir al sol" (185). ("If he would have wanted, he still could have escaped, the door was open. But he turned towards the closest group and fired. – What luck – he thought. I am going to die in the sun.") He is murdered, permanently disappeared, but only we the readers are privy to this knowledge. His family members remain in a suspended state of the unknown. They will never know for sure since the crimes committed against Abel (his detention, torture, and murder) have been disappeared. While rumor spreads of Abel's death, his daughter Montserrat will never have complete closure until his body is found.

The final chapters show what remains for those left behind by a disappeared loved one. There is further erosion of the family. Ramon has been institutionalized in a mental hospital where he is finally abandoned by his wife, Betty. Carmen, Abel's significant other, feels that it is her duty to stay and join the resistance movement. Montserrat, however, has grown disillusioned with political parties after the party that Abel died protecting refused to offer her support. In reaction to the loss of her father and her inability to do anything about it, Montserrat plants a bomb in the Servicentro. Also expecting a child of her own, she decides that she cannot stay in a country where no one did anything in response her father's murder, and goes into exile. In "Las dos caras del relato" Javier Edwards argues that Montserrat is an archetype that represents a new

radicalized generation, one that has been harmed by a political violence that they cannot fully understand (3). While not acting on behalf of any certain political party, Montserrat is none the less radicalized, and directs her violence against the right.

The theme of confinement is what ultimately unites the two perspectives from which the novel is narrated: Abel inside the torture center and Ramon inside the insane asylum. In "¿Historias de la novela o novelas de la historia?" Patricio Rios maintains that the two forms of confinement are: "Social, el de Abel…Mental, el de Ramón;" in addition to being confined by the physical walls of the asylum, Ramon is confined also within his own mind (30). Clearly Ramon suffers a mental breakdown, goes mad, upon realizing that the fragmentation of his family – his son's death and the likely torture and murder endured by his disappeared brother – is a result of his betrayal. What is particularly interesting to consider with regard to the representation of madness in Vásquez' novel is that while Ramón is not the only one to hold responsibility in the disaster, he is the only one that goes mad. Is insanity not the most a reasonable response when one is surrounded by unthinkable and unescapable horrors? Might Ramon's breakdown have been a way to seek refuge from the madness of dictatorial Chile? Could it be that the other characters (those on the outside) are perhaps more insane than Ramón for not fully acknowledging their responsibility in the disappearance and suffering of others?[24]

It is from this foundation provided by Ana Vásquez' Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos, which represents the utterly destructive psychological effects of enforced

[24] The theme of madness with regard to marginality and unjust power structures will be explored further in the final chapter on El padre mío and El infarto del alma. .

disappearance and torture on the victim, that I begin my analysis of Luz Arce's El infierno (1993). Much like Vásquez' novel, El infierno relates the suffering and torture endured by victims of disappearance during the dictatorship. Arce's text however, brings us to the theme of the survivors of disappearance. From the perspective of the post-dictatorship period, Arce addresses the questions: What kind of life remains for survivors of disappearance? What place do these social subjects have in the transition to democracy? To what point can their survival be considered as such?

In her testimony, Arce narrates her experience as a left-wing militant and presidential bodyguard who was detained after the 1973 coup and brutally tortured by the DINA until she "broke" and began to collaborate with the secret police. Following her release, Arce continued to work as a DINA/CNI agent for four years until she finally resigned in 1979. During the early years of the transition to democracy, she wrote her testimony in an attempt to recover her name and tell her side of the story, her truth. In fact, she establishes this in her first words of the text: "Me llamo Luz Arce. Me ha costado mucho recuperar este nombre. Existe sobre mí una suerte de 'leyenda negra', una historia imprecisa, elaborada al tenor de una realidad de horror, humillación y violencia" (19). ("My name is Luz Arce. It has been very difficult for me to recover that name. There is a kind of black legend about me, a vague story created out of a horrific, humiliating, and violent reality, "xix). Arce also writes as a means to contribute to the search for truth and helps to fill in the gaps in historical memory, "Ahora sé que no basta que entregue mi verdad. A ella debe sumarse el testimonio de otros, para que en el futuro se puedan establecer los hechos con rigor y exactitude" (19). ("Now I know that it's not

enough to tell my truth. The testimonies of others should be added to it so that the facts can be established accurately in the future," xix). She accomplishes this by naming some of the accused as well as the disappeared that she encountered during the time she spent as a prisoner and later as a collaborator[25]. Arce clearly communicates a need to tell, both for herself and for others: the disappeared, those who cannot speak. What results, however, is that although Arce can physically speak – she has given her testimony before Chilean courts and truth commissions – and she has documented her story in written form so that it can reach a massive audience, she is still not heard. While she has survived enforced disappearance, her voice remains silenced.

Before delving into an analysis of the text, I would like to begin by considering what this particular text means with regard to the status of the testimonio genre in Chile today. The appearance of testimonies from subjects such as Luz Arce and Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega (Mi verdad: "más allá del horror, yo acuso...", 1993) indicates a new direction in the testimonial genre in Chile. Like earlier testimonies (those published during the dictatorship), one important function of Arce's text is to record her experience, her truth, in written form so that it cannot be denied or erased. One stark difference, however, between earlier testimonies and this one is that Arce's is the first to be narrated from the point of view of a prisoner, turned collaborator, turned DINA/CNI agent. Another difference is that while earlier testimonies were concerned with communicating courage and hope for the future, Arce's testimony recounts a story of defeat. Perhaps it is because the left does not want to admit defeat that this book has been so poorly received.

[25] Arce makes clear from the very beginning that she has withheld the identities of some members of the DINA/CNI "who did not play a repressive role" (xx).

The defeat to which Arce's text testifies concerns breaking under torture and collaborating. The complexity of Arce's situation (mainly, that she continued to work with the DINA/CNI even after her release from prison) urges us to reconsider distinctions that we previously thought clear, such as the line between victim and perpetrator. We are forced to ask ourselves some difficult questions: How can we define collaboration? Which forms of collaboration are considered acceptable (amount of information given and length of time after immediate torture ceases)? Where is the line between collaboration for the sake of survival and joining enemy forces? How can we possibly scrutinize one's allegiance in this type of limit situation? And how can we (as outsiders) judge "reasonable" responses to torture when the situation itself is so far outside of reason? For what is a collaborator ethically and legally responsible?

Testimonies such as Luz Arce's have appeared because there has not yet been a public revelation of the complete truth nor has there been healing from the horrific traumas lived during the dictatorship. If all of the truths revealed by Arce in her testimony were already known, if they had already been revealed in one of the truth commission reports, for example, there would have been no need for her story, it would not have been controversial or shocking or new. The mandate under which the Rettig Commission operated specified not to name the perpetrators, which ultimately made it at least somewhat complicit in the movement to conceal truths and forget Chile's difficult past. It is in this context that testimonies are necessary in order to reconstruct a more inclusive historical narrative, one that includes the experiences of even the most marginal groups. Vidal emphasizes this point when he argues that if institutions are not going aid

in the search for truth and justice, then it is up to the individuals to do so (Política cultural 335-337). For example, while Arce named the officers who tortured her as well as other inmates during her testimony before the Rettig Commission in 1990, to my knowledge, these names do not appear in the Commission's Final Report. What could Arce have thought about this? Why work up the courage to testify, to tell one's story in a public and official space after so many years of living in fear, if next to none of the information that one offered will be of any future use? If one chooses to testify in a legal setting, it is clearly to contribute to the quest for truth and justice. What does one do if her testimony seems to fall on deaf ears?

El infierno contributes to the filling of gaps in the historical narrative. While much is still unknown about those who were disappeared during the dictatorship, Arce contributes to the search for truth by offering details regarding those who crossed her path in detention centers. In addition, while many of the military officers responsible for grave violations of human rights (kidnapping, detention, torture, disappearance, and murder) remain unnamed by official sources and immune for their crimes, Arce names many officers she met either while in detention or while working for the DINA / CNI. The text thus invites us to question: why is it that after two truth commission reports, the trials of numerous military personnel, the passing of two decades since the transition to democracy, and the death of the former dictator, the complete truth is still not easily accessible? Apparently, there is still a great deal of fear on the part of certain subjects to come forward and reveal their identities (fear of reprisals, fear of disbelief, fear of

rejection). In addition, many official narratives have omitted details, including painful memories, deemed inconvenient for projects of consensus and forgetting.

Perhaps Arce felt compelled to write her testimony for fear that her voice was still not being heard (just as it was not heard as a prisoner or as a DINA employee). After all, what had her testimony in the courts accomplished? Perhaps she felt it was a waste of time, since her story fell on deaf ears. Perhaps she felt like her story had not reached people the way she had hoped it would. In book form, Arce's testimony is equally accessible to people all over the world, and no court can decide which details of her story people will hear and which details they will not.

Since its publication, however, El infierno has by and large not been well received. In Chile, Arce's testimony was met with silence; no one seemed to be paying much attention. Those who did take notice were far from supportive, and her account of a prisoner, turned collaborator, turned DINA/CNI agent was harshly criticized, even by those who claim to be sympathetic to victims as well as the extremity of the situations they endured during detention. Many critics were skeptical of the author's motives and reliability. What many could not seem to come to terms with regarding Arce's case was not that she collaborated (offered information under torture), but that she continued to work as a DINA/CNI agent even after her release from prison. It seems that for these critics, collaboration is acceptable only during the act of torture. If collaboration exists after the immediate pain has ceased, then it is no longer acceptable, it is an act of treason.

While collaboration under torture was common, many people have deemed it unacceptable that Arce continued to collaborate with the DINA/CNI after being released

from prison. This judgment seems to be based on the notion that "detention" consists of being trapped behind physical walls, and "torture" consists of physical and psychological mistreatment that only has an effect at the time it is being practiced on the body and mind. Perhaps Arce remained in (symbolic) detention even after being released from the physical walls of the prison, and perhaps the effects of the torture (fear, loss of identity, insecurity, etc.) continued to plague her long after her "release".

These attacks on Arce are particularly bewildering since the devastating and long-lasting effects of torture are well known by academics, medical professionals, and human rights advocates around the world. Yet she continues to be attacked and judged by people who have no possible way to comprehend the suffering and damage she endured. Moreover, the political left in Chile has been closer than many others to the horrific reality of torture and its incomprehensible effects on the body and mind, yet they have generally branded her as a traitor who is responsible the torture and disappearance.

The discourse surrounding El infierno forces us to as the question: If someone collaborates under torture, does this make him/her a traitor? On the surface, this seems to be an easy question, and many experts agree that the answer is no. The act of "breaking" under torture, according to Beverley, is normal and not at all surprising, whereas it is the stories of heroism that are atypical in situations of torture. In his article "Torture and Human Rights", Beverley clarifies:

> What needs to be said here, of course, is that it is not surprising that people break under torture or yield under the threat of death. Why should we expect otherwise? ... It is impossible to anticipate how any of use might act under similar

> circumstances, but I think it would be fair to say that many of us might also break under torture. (104)

Many of us would agree with Beverley that "breaking" seems like a legitimate response to torture, and that giving information to save one's own life or the life of a loved one is really a choiceless choice. What choice is there when one is forced to elect to save the life of either a loved one (such as a brother or a son, as in Arce's case) or a comrade? So if we accept that it is normal to "break" under torture, then why are victims who resisted collaboration (or at least claimed to have resisted, since knowing whether or not they did would be impossible) placed in a superior position to those who collaborated?

While nearly all those who have written about Arce's account recognize that "breaking" under torture and collaborating are typical responses to extreme pain and/or fear, many of these same people have contradicted themselves by equating collaboration to a failure or a betrayal. For example, in one of the first critical studies of El infierno, "Cuerpos nómadas", Diamela Eltit affirms that "there can be no doubt that confession and even collaboration are within the framework of what might be expected for anyone exposed to such an extreme situation" (45). However, Eltit closes this very same article by referencing the story of three Chilean sisters who commit suicide as a form of resistance against the military regime. Her portrayal of these three women as epic heroes in the conclusion serves as a severe attack on Arce, albeit an indirect one. While done in a much more subtle manner, it is almost as if Eltit asks the same question posed by Vidal: Why did you not just choose to die, Luz Arce?[26]

[26] Along with her criticisms of Arce, Eltit refrains from using the term testimonio in reference to El infierno. In her essay "Cuerpos nómadas", Eltit refers to the text as autobiography, but makes no mention

It seems that Chile still wants its heroes, and for the most part, these are men. Much of the left in Chile has been critical of Arce because it does not want to admit defeat; many want to continue believing in the myth of the heroic martyrs who died without breaking under torture. In Luz Arce: después del infierno (2008) Michael J. Lazzara points out that while collaboration was not uncommon among political prisoners in Chile, it continues to be a taboo in human rights circles (19). According to Lazzarra, some have described Arce, Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega, and María Alicia Uribe Gómez (all women, in contrast to heroic men), as modern day "Malinches", traitors who collaborated with the enemy and contributed to the demise of their people (19). Arce herself elicits this image of the Conquest when she speaks of the "black legend" that surrounded her name in the early years of the transition to democracy. Clearing up the falsities connected with her name, she claims, was a principle reason for writing her book.

Contributing to the criticisms of Arce, Hernán Vidal attributes her collaboration to a failure and a betrayal, frequently naming her responsible for the torture and disappearance of other leftists. What this position ignores is that detention, torture, and disappearance were practiced systematically by the military regime, and that Arce was a *victim* of this machine of terror and death. How can the act of saving one's body and mind make her a traitor? Is this act not a basic human instinct? When her body cried out

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of its further categorization within the testimonio genre. Using the words of Elzbieta Sklodowska, Eltit does not seem to be approaching Arce's text with "testimonio-seeing eyes" ("Spanish American Testimonial Novel: Some Afterthoughts", p. 84). This categorization of Arce's text as autobiography denies certain qualities that I believe the text does indeed possess. These include a denunciation of an injustice, in addition to urgency for redress of wrongs, and the presentation of a voice that has been marginalized, etc.

to be saved, should she have betrayed it for the sake of other bodies? Vidal argues that Arce acted in bad faith when she denied that she had a choice in her situation as a political prisoner (Política cultural, 95). The choice of which Vidal speaks, of course, is that of death. Like a good militant, Arce should have sacrificed herself for the good of the left: "¿por qué no elegiste morir en vez de delatar a compañeros? El escamoteo expone la ausencia de una ética militar en Luz Arce, otro aspecto de su preparación política inadecuada. Si esa ética hubiera estado a la mano, Luz Arce tuvo que haber elegido la muerte" (95) ("why did you not chose to die rather than inform on your comrades? The shirking of responsability reveals the absence of a militant ethic in Luz Arce, another aspect of her inadequate political preparation. If she had possessed this ethics, Luz Arce would have had to choose death"). I see this stance as fundamentally flawed because it dehumanizes the victim, it ignores her value as a human being. Is her life worth less than others' lives? Given that her captors were also threatening the lives of her son and brother, should she also have sacrificed them in service of the left? Are their lives worth less than the lives of her political comrades? Is the life of a political militant worth more than that of a civilian? Does an ethic that teaches one to die in service to their political movement respect individual human lives? Does this ethic stand in opposition to each individual's human right to life and to human rights in general?

Arce stresses that, like many prisoners in her situation, she collaborated, but not completely. She claims that she often gave false information, such as giving names of those she knew to be already detained, dead, out of the country, or those who had played only minor roles in the Socialist Party or other resistance groups (and therefore would not

receive harsh treatment when detained). Arce's claims to have given false information during her collaboration have been used by some as a means to attack her integrity and question the validity of her current testimony.

The fact that Arce collaborated does not necessarily mean that her allegiance changed, that she was on good terms with the officers, that they were equals, or that she was complicit in their plans or actions. On the contrary, Arce's text conveys a constant sense of fear with regard to her personal safety, which she felt both as a collaborator and as a DINA/CNI official. Sure that she would die in prison, Arce recalls thinking: "Nosotros pensamos que se nos iba a matar" (Lazzara, Luz Arce: después del infierno 103). Also, while she acknowledges that she enjoyed a special position in comparison to other prisoners, her precarious position as a prisoner was made clear to her at all times: "los comentarios que generalmente escuchaba de la guardia [eran] tales como 'hay que matarlo," "te vamos a matar," etc. Igualmente lo hicieron con nosotros, por lo que la posibilidad de morir no era algo lejano" (100).

Nelly Richard has questioned why Arce wrote the book when she had already offered her testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (as if one were only allowed to tell their story once, and as if telling one's story once should in some way cure them of the need to tell it again). Did Richard make the same criticism with regard to Manuel Cabieses, whose book Chile: 11807 horas en campos de concentración (1975) is a direct transcription his testimony before a War Crimes Court held in Mexico?[27] It would be difficult to imagine a similar skepticism being brought against Cabieses or any

[27] In his discussion of the testimonial genre in Chile during the dictatorship in the article "Political Code and Literary Code", Ariel Dorfman makes note of Cabieses' testimonio without calling into question his need to write a book in addition to testifying before the Court (142).

other non-collaborating victim who chose to testify in court and then also write their story in a book so that their words reach all parts of the globe rather than just to the members of the courtroom. So why such harsh criticism of Arce? Perhaps the reality is that some are repulsed by Arce's testimony to the point that they cannot stand to hear her story more than once. For these critics, wherease Cabieses' story is that of a hero, Arce's is that of a failure, a collaborator, a traitor.

Richard is skeptical of the extent to which the reader can trust Arce's word. This skepticism is evident when Richard argues that "we never know exactly where the limit of reliability of their repentant word lies, or in which unjudgeable margins of the narrative the testimonial truth of repentance disintegrates" and later questions "If we forget the treason, are we not betraying those who died by being informed on by these now-confessed authors?" (Cultural Residues 35). This skepticism in particular seems to be a blaming the victim mentality, speaking of Arce as a perpetrator rather than as a victim, as if Arce were responsible for the practices of torture and disappearance that were systematized during the dictatorship.

Unconvinced of Arce's sincerity and commitment to the project of redemocratization, Eltit notes how she aligned herself with the Allende government when it was in power, then with the military regime during the dictatorship, and then again with the democratic government after the position. Climbing ladders towards higher social and economic classes, according to Eltit, has consistently been the guiding factor in Arce's adult life. Therefore, Eltit reads Arce's testimony as simply a means to open the door to begin working with the newest government in power. When asked about Eltit's

criticisms, Arce respectfully acknowledges that if Eltit had been in her position that perhaps she would have made different decisions that would have allowed her to leave prison with her dignity and pride. This, of course, is completely hypothetical since Eltit has never had to endure the kind of experience that Arce did. Enduring torture without "breaking", however, was not the case for Arce, who claims that she did what she could to survive each day one at a time (Lazzara, Luz Arce: después del infierno 175).

Many critics have asked the question, "What is the "truth" in Arce's testimony?" Should we pay attention to the facts? On one hand, these are important, because Arce names perpetrators, some of whose identities have undoubtedly been shrouded under many layers of secrecy. In addition, Arce includes countless details referencing the political prisoners she came across in detention. At times the details are very scarce; for example, only the knowledge of a code name and vague date of when the person passed through a detention center. Even these minute details could be the key for some family member searching for a disappeared loved one. However, names and dates are arguably not what is important in Arce's testimony. When we read with "testimonio-seeing eyes", we can see the bigger picture. Arce's text gives a glimpse into what a human being can be brought to do when faced with saving his/her own life (or the life of a loved one). She also testifies to the ever-present fear and sense of powerlessness that was installed in the prisoners by their captors, as well as the seeming impossibility of escaping the vicious circles of torture and collaboration. Finally, while it does so indirectly, El infierno testifies to the persistent disappearance of survivors as social subjects, those who have

been silenced by a variety of forces, including those who do not want to admit defeat and those that prefer to omit painful memories from historical memory.

The critical focus on Arce's testimony seems to me a bit misguided to a certain point. Eltit and Skar have both questioned the credibility of Arce's testimony, inquiring if a woman who admits to having said whatever necessary to save herself in the past can be believed now? I ask, to what extent does it matter if every detail that she proclaims is the absolute truth? When considering the notion of truth in regards to testimony, we must consider the now notorious example regarding the value of testimony where a female survivor of the Nazi extermination camps recounts a number of burning chimneys at Chelmo. While she may have been mistaken in the number of chimneys, the value, the truth of her testimony resides in the fact that the camps existed and that she survived them. While Arce's testimony is much more complicated because she was not only a victim of the dictatorship, but later a collaborator, can we not at the very least value her testimony as an account of extreme suffering and survival? Is it not yet another testimony to the unimaginable suffering lived by victims of the dictatorship?

One of the things about Arce's case that baffles those who try to understand her decisions is that she continued to work as a DINA/CNI agent after her release from prison. Many question why she did not try to escape. The problem with trying to apply logic and reason in an effort to make sense of this case is that everything about this case is so wholly outside of reason. The trauma that Arce suffered during her detention "broke" her, and the fragmentation of the psyche is not something that heals just because the immediate abuse ceases. On the contrary, psychic wounds leave the deepest scars,

and in Arce's case, the sense of fear that was installed in her during her detention continued to have control over her, continued to assault her, for many years.

We can see in Lazzara's interview that Arce remains "broken" in many respects. Regarding political and social problems, it seems that she has little hope that actual change is possible: "Hace un tiempito atrás una amiga en México, que es de izquierda, me preguntó a raíz de un problema social muy puntual, 'Y nosotros, ¿qué podemos hacer?' Y yo la miro y le digo: 'Nada.' 'Ni tú, ni yo…¡nada!'" (Lazzara, Luz Arce: después del infierno 155) "A while back a friend in Mexico, who is a leftist, asked me about a very specific social problem, 'And us, what can we do?' And I looked at her and said 'Nothing.' 'Neither you, nor I… nothing!"). While she claims to hope for a more just and equal society where people respect one other, she also denies association with any political party. Extremely anti-violence, she declares that no one should go through what she did for any reason:

> Hoy miro lo que yo era en esos años, y yo no mandaría a nadie como yo a repetir esa experiencia. ¡Por ningún motivo! *¡Por ningún motivo!* Es más, hice el resto de mi vida tratando que hacer que mis hijos fueran absolutamente lo más pacifistas posible, que se criaran al margen de toda contingencia política, que sean buenas personas, con valores, pero alejados de la vida política. (154)
>
> Today I look back at what I was in those years, and I wouldn't wish on anyone to have to repeat that experience. For any reason! For any reason! What's more, I lived the rest of my life trying to assure that my kids would be as pacifist as

possible, that they were raised far away from any political contingency, that they become good people, with values, but distanced from political life.

I find myself wondering if she would have felt differently if her situation would have ended in anything but utter defeat.

It was precisely this lack of hope, this broken quality, which contributed to Arce's decision not to attempt to flee from the DINA/CNI after being released from prison. The various public displays of violence and power on the part of the military regime had been successful in installing the image of an omnipotent repressive machine in Arce's conscious. For her, resistance was futile if one wanted to live since those who resisted ended up dead. "Yo no me fui de la DINA, no me fugué, no me escondí, porque conocía perfectamente la experiencia de Marco Antonio y de Lucas, los muchachos del MIR" (174) "I did not leave the DINA, I did not escape, I did not hide, because I knew perfectly well the experiences of Marco Antonio and of Lucas, the guys from the MIR"). Here Arce refers to the case of four prisoners who were members of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) were forced to appear on public television in early 1975, declare the defeat of the MIR, and urge the futility of resistance. This case set such a strong example for Arce because she saw herself in a very similar position to these four prisoners. For her, the case of these four prisoners represented her fate were she to resist or try to escape. Like Arce, these four prisoners had been collaborating with the DINA since their release from prison. However, they decided to begin working clandestinely with the MIR, and the DINA eventually found out. Upon their realization that the DINA had discovered their betrayal, the four men contacted the Vicaría de la Solidaridad for

protection. Not knowing where their true allegiance stood, the organization denied them, and they were subsequently detained and murdered. For Arce, this case symbolized the futility of resistance and that finding a different way out was the only option for her: "Fui funcionaria de la DINA/CNI durante cuatro años y cinco meses. Todo ese tiempo estuve buscando la manera de salir. Lo logré el 2 de noviembre de 1979" (175) ("I was a DINA/CNI official for tour years and five months. All that time I was looking for a way to get out. I got it on November 2, 1979").

In his book, Luz Arce: después del infierno (2008), Michael Lazzara includes the transcript of his interviews with the author. The interview is divided into sections, and between each section Lazzara inserts clips of statements made by individuals with varied connections to Arce's case. One of such clips is the denunciation of a woman who alleges that her mother and sister were tortured by Arce. In the segment of the interview that immediately follows this denunciation, Arce makes a statement that seems to contradict the information on the previous page: "no torturá a nadie" (161). On one hand, these two versions of events seem to contradict one another, and could be used to discredit Arce's voice. On the other hand, they reveal the extreme complexity of the situation and they force us to ask some very difficult questions. What is torture? Who is responsible for torture? Does one's mere presence during a torture session make one responsible for the suffering endured by the victim? Is it enough that one is an officer in the Armed Forces during the dictatorship to make him/her responsible for the treatment of political prisoners? In what other ways might people become complicit in the practice of torture? If one participates in torture due to the fear that s/he (or a loved one) will be

tortured or murdered if s/he resists, is this person considered a torturer? In what ways can / should this person be held responsible for his/her actions?

It is well known that the military regime used torture primarily as a means of dismantling the political left by breaking individuals, destroying identities, punishing, and making suffer. Given this situation, Arce was caught in a never-ending trap; her giving of information did not mean that the chain of torture would end. It would move on, either with her or with someone else. If we accept that many people would "break" under torture, that they would give names and information to save their own lives, then where does Arce's blame lie? Do any of us who have not been her situation have the right to judge her actions? Can we possibly say what we would have done? In opposition to the denunciation made by the woman who claims that Arce tortured her mother and sister, Arce does not see herself as a torturer, but rather as someone who had no choice but to obey orders if she wished to live. She describes her responsability as such:

> Quiero precisar que como funcionaria no tengo responsabilidad en muertes ni en detención de personas ni en tortura. Sí entregué información a la DINA, pero bajo tortura. Sí me llevaron en algunos operativos de detención de personas, para que los reconociera o preguntara por ellos, pero estando todavía presa, bajo tortura, sin posibilidad de oponerme. En el periodo como funcionaria no volví a ser llevada a operativos de detención de personas. (162)
>
> I want to make it clear that as an official I do not bear responsibility for deaths, or for the detention or the torture of persons. Yes, I gave information to the DINA,

> but under torture. Yes, they brought me with during some missions to detain people, so that I could recognize them or ask for them, but being still a prisoner, under torture, without the possibility to say no. During the period that I was an officer I was no longer brought along on missions to detain people.

Arce's case is a complex one because while she needs to come to terms with what happened to her as a political prisoner and how she reacted in that situation, she stands firm on the notion that she was not responsible, she did not choose to detain or torture. She gave information that resulted in the detention, torture, and disappearance of others, but she did not do so of her own free will. This brings up another question, however, regarding responsibility. For those soldiers who also felt that they were simply following orders, or felt physically threatened should they choose not to comply, what level of responsibility do they hold?

While Arce's text puts readers in a position to form an opinion about (judge) her actions, there must be an ethics involved in our reaction to her truth. Given the extremity of the situation, how can we (outsiders) possibly judge former prisoners and torture victims? How can we possibly imagine a reality that distant, that horrendous, if we have not lived the experience? While the situation is clearly complex, at the foundation is the fact that we (outsiders) cannot know Luz Arce's truth because the distance between victim and non-victim is insurmountable. The experience of disappearance is so foreign that neither can we possibly comprehend the extent to which she was broken by the trauma of being a detenido desaparecido. Luz Arce is a victim of the dictatorship, and wherever one stands with regard to her truth, her experience was part of this history. For

the sake of both personal and collective healing, Arce's story needs to be heard and accepted as a part of Chile's historical-political reality.

The vanishing of Luz Arce from the public sphere shows us that in neoliberal democratic Chile the power structures behind disappearance have changed. Looking to Butler's contemplations on the forces behind humanization and dehumanization in the Western world, this change becomes more evident. Rather than discourses that actively dehumanize – which were prevalent during the dictatorship and which created a distance between the torturer and the victim allowing the latter to see the former as non-human and thus facilitating practices of torture and murder – there is now either a refusal of discourse or a discourse that seeks to delegitimize (36). In this regard Butler has argued that public discourse plays an important and complicated role in (de)humanization today. Specifically, she argues that the excluding of individuals or groups from public discourse causes them to fall outside of the human (32). This refusal of discourse can be seen in the silence with which her text was met in Chile. Her story was either not discussed or it was criticized by many who attempted to take away her credibility, and thus silence her.

Examinations of Ana Vásquez' Abel Rodríguez y sus hermanos and Luz Arce's El infierno show that disappearance persists in Chile today. While the two texts seem to be different, one about disappearance and the other about survival, when looked at together they offer a unique perspective on the various and interrelated forms of disappearance. The victim in Vásquez' novel is broken by physical and psychological torture and is murdered in the torture center, unbeknownst to his family who will likely continue to search for his body. While Arce has survived enforced disappearance, she

vanishes again. While she attempts to tell her story, her voice is not heard, and in this way she remains silence. These harsh criticisms lead Arce to leave democratic Chile, and today both Arce and her story remain, for the most part, invisible. While human rights groups in Chile have made numerous efforts to give victims back their voice – which is an essential step in the healing process – this ability to speak will mean nothing if they are not also heard[28]. What kind of healing is possible when the traumatic story is told, but not heard? This question regarding healing is significant not only for Arce, but for Chilean society as well.

[28] According to a number of trauma theorists, including Dori Laub and Elaine Scarry, the return of the voice is essential in the healing process since victims must be able to speak their pain, narrate the traumatic experience, and be heard by an empathetic listener.

Chapter 2. Ariel Dorfman's La muerte y la doncella and "A Promise to the Dead": Disappeared in Plain Sight, the Victim Who is Simultaneously Visible and Invisible

In Chile filming his most recent documentary, "A Promise to the Dead" (2007), Ariel Dorfman and his film crew captured varied reactions to the death of ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet on December 10, 2006. Pinochet's death clearly highlighted the intense polarization that continues to dominate Chilean society. Some mourned his death, while others cheered. Among those that had opposed his regime, some saw his death as the possibility of finally being able to begin a new chapter in history, rid of the tyrant that had cast a dark shadow over the country for several decades, while others felt that his death would forever deny the possibility of justice to his many victims[29]. In stark contrast, however, supporters of Pinochet mourned the loss of a fallen hero, one who had saved Chile from communist demise. Many Pinochetistas deny that there was ever a dictatorship in their country, instead glorifying Pinochet with the terms "mi presidente" or "mi general"[30]. These fervent supporters refuse to accept as part of their historical memory the experiences of the victims of the dictatorship. While it is estimated that Pinochetistas make up only some 30% of Chilean society, their voices remain the loudest and most dominant, in part because they are backed by many state institutions that continue to protect the interests of the former military regime[31]. Given this context of

[29] Aleida del Yuro, daughter of disappeared Sergio Leiva, appears in Dorfman's documentary and condemns the death of the former dictator as a hindrance to his being brought to justice.
[30] "I Love Pinochet" (2001), a documentary film directed by Marcela Said, illustrates this phenomenon of Pinochetismo through interviews with his supporters following his 1998 arrest in London. Support for the ex-dictator can even be seen in the various Facebook pages created in order to establish community among lasting Pinochetistas.
[31] In his documentary (2006), Dorfman states that Chilean society is roughly 30% Pinochetista.

denial and motivated forgetting, many victims' stories remain untold. Some have attempted to tell their stories, but they have been silenced, their voices discredited. Others have seen this negative reception of victims and have learned to hide their story, to keep it inside, for fear that they will be rejected or suffer some form of retribution. The timing of Pinochet's death – December 10 is International Human Rights Day – is deserving of philosophical / theoretical / practical consideration about the topic of human rights. What is the status of human rights in Chile (with regard to the former dictatorship) now that two decades have passed since the transition to democracy began in 1990? Where are the victims now?

Through an analysis of Ariel Dorfman's play La muerte y la doncella (1992) and his documentary "A Promise to the Dead" (2007), this chapter will focus on two women who have been disappeared in plain sight. La muerte y la doncella represents a former detenida-desaparecida and torture victim, Paulina Salas, who attempts to testify to the abuses she suffered, but whose voice is not heard. Instead those around her question her sanity, thereby denying her credibility as a witness to her own suffering. "A Promise to the Dead", on the other hand, presents an absence, that of a victim who refuses to reveal her identity as someone who once offered refuge to the politically persecuted[32]. While Dorfman intended to include this woman, who he calls his "Paulina" since he credits her with saving his life, in his documentary, she refused to appear on the film for fear that she would suffer some form of retribution if her family, friends, and community members were aware of her past. Unlike Paulina Salas, the character in Dorfman's play, who

[32] While there is a clear distinction between a work of fiction (theatrical text) with a work of non-fiction (documentary film), I believe that the play, through the representation of the victim of disappearance, makes an important commentary on Chilean society of the transition to democracy.

speaks but is not heard, Dorfman's real-life "Paulina" refuses to speak, and in this way is silenced by fear. This chapter will put Dorfman's play into dialogue with his more recent documentary in order to look at what has changed in the last fifteen years in Chile with respect to the victims of enforced disappearance by engaging questions such as: Where is the victim now? Has the memory of victims' experiences been recuperated and included in the official history? What kind of dialogue exists between victims and the rest of society? What space has been given to surviving victims of disappearance during the transition to democracy?

Before delving into an analysis of the two primary texts studied in this chapter, I would like to briefly comment on how the theme of disappearance is recurrent in Dorfman's oeuvre, appearing for example, in his novel Viudas (1978) and his memoir Desert Memories: Journeys through the Chilean North (2004). Both texts offer representations of enforced disappearance and its effects on those who suffer the loss of a disappeared love one. His memoirs, in particular, offer insight into Dorfman's personal experience of the coup as well as how he has attempted to deal with his traumatic past by putting it into narrative form.

The novel Viudas relates the story of a small village deeply affected by political violence, one in which many women have suffered the disappearance of their husbands, fathers, and sons. The main character, Sofia Angelos, attempts to reclaim her father's body, which was discovered in the river months after his disappearance, so that she may give him a proper burial in accordance with community tradition. Also disappeared were Sofia's husband and two sons. Just as occurred with the body of Sofia's father, one after

another a series of bodies begin to appear in the river. None of the bodies can be easily identified due to the deteriorated physical state in which they are found; they have been made unrecognizable by the torture they received prior to death. In preventing the bodies from being identified by their families, the authorities are able to deny the death of the disappeared individuals, hence guaranteeing their impunity for the crimes. By obscuring the detention and the murder of the desaparecido, the authorities can deny that the person ever entered the legal system. According to the UN Disappearance Convention, this "concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, [places] such a person outside the protection of the law" (Article 2). For example, the women cannot file a writ of habeus corpus, since there is no record of the arrest. Both practices, the original disappearance and the reappearance of a mutilated and murdered body in a public space, have the dual purpose of silencing individuals and terrorizing the community.

Thus the practice of enforced disappearance silences not only the direct victim, those left behind as well who have been instilled with a great amount of fear. Those who do attempt to denounce the enforced disappearance of a loved one were often silenced through other means. In the case of the novel, the authorities attempt to silence the women by delegitimizing their voices. For instance, when they make claims that the bodies are those of their deceased family members, the authorities declare that the women are part of a "collective hysteria." Driven mad by the vanishing of their loved ones, the women are in no state to correctly identify the bodies, "She wants so badly to find her loved one that she ventures to recognize him under confused circumstances" (74). In this way, the authorities attempt to make the living victims vanish as well. In his verbal

attack of a woman who demands the return of a loved one's body, the police captain declares: "And this conversation, this conversation never took place. I'm erasing it just like that. Nobody's going to remember it. Because you people you people don't count. You don't count, understand?" (136). In this case, the expression "you people" refers to those who have been excluded from society, including indigenous peoples or the poor, as well as anyone who dared to speak against the dictatorship. The captain declares that he can discount the demands for the return of bodies because these demands are made by invisible subjects. Because these women have no voice, their demands do not exist.

Several years later, Dorfman returns to the theme of disappearance in Desert Memories, where he relates his journey through the Chilean north in search of the body of his friend, Freddy Taberna, who has been missing since the coup. For Dorfman, the experience was more than the loss of a friend, it was also "the destruction of the country, the pillaging of [his] past" (16). Dominant in many of his writings is a strong sense of responsibility to tell the stories of those who cannot speak for themselves, the dead and disappeared. During his journey, Dorfman visits friends and family of Taberna, in order to remember his life and his legacy. Many of the people he encounters on his journey also speak of those who have been forgotten, disappeared. For example, one man brings him to a cemetery in an abandoned town and explains to him: "These are the people who made Chile rich. And there is no memory of them. The martyrs who were massacred, who died, who built this country. I go to those abandoned oficinas to atone for the sin of amnesia committed against those dead" (103). This particular text testifies not only to those disappeared by the dictatorship, but also to disappeared social subjects, those who

have always been invisible and whose stories do not form part of the nation's collective memory.

As we have seen, the experience of disappearance is represented in several of Dorfman's texts. While Desert Memories relates the author's personal experience of the disappearance of a friend, Viudas offers a fictionalized account of the crime and its effects on the community. Of these two texts, Viudas delves a bit further into the power structures behind enforced disappearance in addition to other forms of vanishing, including the disappearance of marginal social subjects who have always been invisible, in this case poor (and possibly indigenous) women who have never had a voice. For the purposes of this chapter, I would now like to focus on an analysis of two more recent texts that explore more deeply the varying forms of disappearance.

In the early years of Chile's transition to democracy, Ariel Dorfman's La muerte y la doncella emerged as an allegory for a post-dictatorial society where the new democratic government bore the responsibility of reconciling the demands of two very different factions: those desperate to uncover the atrocities committed by the dictatorship and find justice for the victims and those desperate to obscure and forget such atrocities. This new democratic government ultimately betrayed the victims and even played a substantial role in their revictimization by robbing them of their right to justice and denying them a space in which to give their testimonies and have them heard and recognized in an official capacity. Instead victims were forced to live alongside their victimizers and urged to forget the violence they suffered under the military dictatorship. During this time, the State's plan for reconciliation required a sacrifice on the part of the

victims. The transitional government did not pursue trials to hold accountable the perpetrators of violations of human rights and while a truth commission was established, it would only seek a partial truth, investigating only cases that ended in death or the presumption of death. There was no arena in which the surviving victims could publicly and officially tell their stories. No names of the accused would be published for fear that any amount of pressure or tension felt by the armed forces could bring on another coup of the new and unstable democracy. In this climate victims were forced to come to the difficult realization that they would most likely never see the justice that they had yearned for over the years. The trauma represented in Dorfman's play consists not only of individual physical and psychic trauma, such as that suffered by Paulina as a result of her torture and rape[33]. There is also a historical trauma depicted, the change in the structure of society when democracy was replaced by dictatorship[34]. In addition, the transition to democracy, which was founded on pacts of silence and forced (false) consensus and reconciliation, is portrayed as a revictimization, a retraumatization of the victims[35].

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[33] For elaborations on structural trauma and historical trauma, see Dominick LaCapra's Writing History, Writing Trauma (2000), and "Trauma, Absence, Loss" (1999).

[34] Trauma is generally understood as resulting from the individual's limited ability to deal with a stimulus / event that is outside of his / her understanding. When an individual lacks the tools to comprehend and therefore deal with an event / stimulus, then the individual will suffer a trauma, meaning that the event remains outside of his / her experience and memory, and will continue to haunt the individual until s/he is able to deal with it and integrate it into normal memory. See Sigmund Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) and Cathy Caruth's Trauma: Explorations in Memory (1995).

[35] Idelber Avelar, in The Untimely Present, argues that the transitions to democracy perpetuated or even deepened the traumatic wounds caused by the military regimes – when justice was abandoned for reconciliation, democratic governments legitimated the neoliberal economic policies installed by force during the dictatorship, neoliberal policies increased social fragmentation, etc. Likewise, Nelly Richard, in Cultural Residues, has also described the post-dictatorship in Chile as the "loss of something that can no longer be made whole" (19).

La muerte y la doncella, portrays the complex relationship between three main characters: Paulina Salas, Gerardo Escobar, and Roberto Miranda. While it closely resembles the Chilean situation, the author states that it could be any country recently entering into democracy after a long period of dictatorship. Paulina is a woman who, fifteen years after the original event, continues to live haunted by her detention and torture; she desperately wants to regain control of her life and find justice for the wrongs that have been committed against her. Gerardo, her husband, is a lawyer who has accepted a presidential nomination as head of the country's forthcoming truth commission; he has done so against the wishes of his wife, who is upset by the commission's standard of investigating only the cases that resulted in death or the presumption of death, meaning that as a survivor her case will be officially neglected. Roberto Miranda is a doctor and the Good Samaritan who comes to the aid of Gerardo after he suffers a flat tire[36]. Upon the doctor's arrival at the couple's home, Paulina recognizes his voice to be that of the man responsible for torturing her years earlier. She consequently ties him up and demands a full confession of what he has done to her and other victims, fully aware that this chance encounter has provided her with quite possibly the only opportunity to hear his confession and to have her story validated by husband. For his part, Gerardo attempts to mediate this encounter between the victim and her victimizer, but he ultimately ends up betraying his wife by choosing to protect the rights of the accused over the rights of the victim. Both men refer to Paulina as "sick" or "mad"

[36] It is ironic that Dorfman chooses to use the words "Good Samaritan" – alluding to the Christian parable of the passerby who rescues a stranger who had been robbed, beaten and left for dead on the side of the road when no one else would help him – to describe this man who stops to help Gerardo since later in the play Paulina declares him to be the doctor who tortured and raped her. Judeo-Christian thought is a recurrent motif in Dorfman's drama, appearing later in the notion of confession.

on several occasions, discrediting her testimony based on her very victimhood (because she suffered psychological trauma, her memory is therefore not trustworthy and she is an unreliable witness to her own suffering). In this way, the men contribute to Paulina's invisibility, her re-disappearance. While she has survived enforced disappearance, she does so only to vanish once again. The categorization of "madness" becomes the vehicle through which Paulina is discredited, silenced, and in this sense disappeared.

Through this representation of a disappearance that not only points to her experience as a detainee but also to her impossibility of making visible her experience, La muerte y la doncella achieves a harsh criticism of the transition to democracy in Chile. For years Paulina did not speak due to the pervasive fear that had been installed in her through her torture. Severely traumatized, she could not put her story into words. Like the disappeared, Paulina could not speak, could not name her victimizers or even name herself as a victim. Although she survived enforced disappearance, her story remained invisible. When she finally tells her story, she speaks, but she is not heard. By labeling her insane, Gerardo has discredited Paulina's voice, he has silenced her. While the dictatorship used fear and murder in order to silence its victims, the tactics used to silence have changed since the transition to democracy. Transitional governments either excluded or discredited the voices of many surviving victims in order to create the image of consensus with regard to reconciliation. In this way, Chilean institutions contributed to the re-disappearance of the victims, only this time we could say that the victims are disappeared in plain sight.

Despite the fact that the dramatic action takes place after the transition to democracy, nearly fifteen years after her detention and torture, Paulina continues to suffer repeated returns of the traumatic event; for her the trauma is timeless. She hears her torturer's voice every day: "Todos estos años no ha pasado una hora que no la escuche, acá en mi oreja, acá con su saliva en mi oreja, ¿crees que una se olvida así como así de una voz como ésa?" (Dorfman, La muerte 33) ("During all these years, not an hour has passed that I haven't heard it, that same voice, next to me, next to my ear, that voice mixed with saliva, you think I'd forget a voice like his?" Dorfman, Death 23). For Paulina, the trauma caused by her torture is not something in the past, but instead something that continues to affect her present life. In his well-known text co-written with Shoshana Felman, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing (1992), Dori Laub describes the atemporal nature of trauma in the following way:

> The traumatic event, although real, took place outside the parameters of "normal" reality, such as causality, sequence, place, and time. The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after…Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. (69)

This timeless nature of trauma is also evidenced in the way that Paulina speaks of her continued inability to listen to music by Schubert. While Schubert had once been one of Paulina's favorite composers, she can no longer listen to his music without becoming

physically ill since the doctor would play Schubert during her torture sessions. Paulina describes how her life has been governed by her trauma, and how she often suffers from uncontrollable physiological responses to stimuli that trigger traumatic memories[37]:

> ¿Sabe hace cuánto que no escucho este cuarteto? Trato, por lo menos, de no escucharlo. Si lo ponen en la radio, lo apago, incluso me cuido de salir demasiado, me excuso y Gerardo sale solo. Si algún día lo nombran ministro voy a tener que acompañarlo. Una noche fuimos a cenar a casa de...eran personas importantes, de esas con fotos en las páginas sociales...y la anfitriona puso Schubert, una sonata para piano, y yo pensé me levanto y me voy, pero mi cuerpo decidió por mi, porque me sentí mareada, repentinamente enferma y tuvimos que partir con Gerardo, y ahí se quedaron los demás escuchando a Schubert sin saber lo que había causado mi mal. (30-31)
>
> D'you know how long it's been since I last listened to this quartet? If it's on the radio, I turn it off, I even try not to go out much, though Gerardo has all these social events he's got to attend and if they ever name him minister we're going to live running around shaking hands and smiling at perfect strangers, but I always pray they won't put on Schubert. One night we were dining with – they were extremely important people, and our hostess happened to put Schubert on, a piano sonata, and I thought, do I switch it off or do I leave, but my body decided for me, I felt extremely ill right then and there and Gerardo had to take me home, so we left them there listening to Schubert and nobody knew what had made me ill. (21)

[37] Susan Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self", has stated that the victim has no more control over physiological traces of trauma than one does over blood pressure or heart rate.

Paulina's inability to listen to what had previously been her favorite music also evidences that she is not the same person that she was before her detention[38]. Her former self has been shattered, her identity fragmented. Paulina declares that she is on a quest to recapture her fragmented identity: "Pero siempre me prometí que llegaría un momento para recuperarlo (31). ("But I always promised myself a time would come to recover him [Schubert], bring him back from the grave so to speak, and just sitting here listening to him with you I know that I was right, that I'm – so many things are going to change from now on, right? 21). In the English translation of the play, Paulina mentions a return from the grave, referencing the fact that a part of her died during her experience of torture[39]. Her desire to reclaim her Schubert, is her desire to recapture that lost / dead part of herself, to make herself whole again.

Many trauma theorists, including Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra, have described trauma as a "haunting", one that traps the victim in a cycle of repetitions. This is evident in the first scene of the play when Paulina is terrified by the sound of an unfamiliar vehicle approaching her house, the place where she generally feels most safe.

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[38]Robert Jay Lifton, "Interview with Robery Jay Lifton." In: Trauma: Explorations in Memory, comments on the creation of a second self as a result of trauma: "in extreme involvements, as in extreme trauma, one's sense of self is radically altered. And there is a traumatized self that is created. Of course it's not a totally new self, it's what one brought into the trauma as affected significantly and painfully, confusedly, but in a very primal way, by the trauma. And recovery from post traumatic effects, or from survivor conflicts, cannot really occur until that traumatized self is reintegrated. It's a form of doubling in the traumatized person. And in doubling, as I came to identify it, there have to be elements that are at odds in the two selves, including ethical contradictions." (Caruth 137) In the same volume Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony", also commented on the relationship between trauma and the self: "This loss of the capacity to be a witness to oneself and thus to witness from the inside is perhaps the true meaning of annihilation, for when one's history is abolished, one's identity ceases to exist as well" (Caruth 67).

[39] Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony" In: Trauma: Explorations in Memory, who has taken part in the process of recording the testimonies of many Holocaust survivors, has said that survivors often make comments referencing their death in the concentration camps, "I died in Auschwitz". ? Susan Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self", mentions a similar statement: "One can be alive after Sobibor without having survived Sobibor" (39).

While she had been relaxing in an open room, upon hearing the sound of an approaching car, she seeks shelter behind a wall only after retrieving a gun from her bedroom. Her house has become her safe-zone, and she confines herself to her home much like she was confined to her cell during her incarceration. The sound of someone approaching her house / cell, for Paulina, is a stimulus that brings a return of the traumatic experience. Since during her detention she came to associate the arrival of someone at her cell with an impending torture session, this stimulus causes in Paulina a heightened state of arousal. Even after she hears her husband's voice, she continues to hide behind the curtains until he comes into the house and finds her. Later that night, the sounds of an approaching car awake the couple from sleep, and again Paulina becomes terrified even though Gerardo is there with her[40]. The fact that Paulina continues to be afraid even in the presence of her husband shows that she is unsure that he can or will protect her.

The film adaptation of Dorfman's text, "Death and the Maiden" (1994), further emphasizes Paulina's need to retreat to confined spaces. While home alone at night, rather than eating in the dining room, Paulina retreats to her bedroom closet where she eats her dinner on the floor. These behaviors are the result of learned reaction to stimuli that are reminiscent of the original traumatic experience; the closet is the place where she feels most comfortable because she equates the small confined space with that of her prison cell. During her detention, since she was always taken to another room to be tortured, her cell was the only place she had learned to associate with being safe. In his essay, "Trauma and Memory", Bessel A. van der Kolk explains state-dependent memory

[40] The film version of Dorfman's text shows Paulina sitting awake and alone in the living room, apparently suffering from insomnia, while Gerardo is sound asleep in bed. Her insomnia could of course be a symptom of the PTSD that she clearly suffers as a result of her detention and torture.

retrieval and how a stimulus can bring a patient back to the traumatic experience. When this happens, individuals often describe the return as feeling "exactly" like the original experience did. When anxious or when exposed to certain stimuli, an individual who suffers from post-traumatic stress may revert to what s/he knew or did in the past. Referencing a study conducted on mice, van der Kolk states that "during states of high arousal, [the subjects] avoid novelty and revert to what is familiar, regardless of the outcome[41]. [The researchers] found that mice that had been locked in a box in which they were exposed to electric shocks, and then released, returned to those boxes when they were subsequently stressed" (292). This representation of the perpetual return of the traumatic event and the associated fear that paralyzes the victim obliges the reader to ask: how long will this trauma continue to haunt the victim? What will it take in order for the victim to free herself from this terror?

Paulina has hidden her story for many years, never telling anyone what happened during her detention, presumably out of fear that she will not be heard, that her story will not be validated by her loved ones or by society in general. According to Dori Laub, however, victims need to tell their stories. There are many reasons to tell one's story, argues Laub, including as a way to honor those who did not survive, and as a way to preserve the memory of what happened (especially in cases where that memory is in danger of being erased). The most important reason to tell one's story, however, is that the very act of narrating is vital to the victim's personal healing. According to Laub, victims must undergo:

[41] Due to the extreme nature of this area of research (traumatic stress and its effect on the individual), there are obvious ethical concerns regarding subjecting human subjects to experiments, hence the use of animals in many cases.

> a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing a history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event*… This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside of oneself and then take it back again, inside. (69)

This act of telling, however, cannot take place in just any circumstance, but rather it must be done in an environment in which the victim feels safe, and one in which s/he feels that his/her story is heard and accepted. In other words, the role of the listener is crucial. In this regard, Laub continues,

> For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other* – in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to somebody; to somebody they have been waiting for a long time. (70-71)

This importance placed on the role of the listener is widely agreed upon among trauma psychologists. For example, Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane reverberate this sentiment in their book Traumatic Stress (1996), stating that "External validation about the reality of a traumatic experience in a safe and supportive context is a vital aspect of preventing and treating posttraumatic stress" (25). Clearly, Paulina needs to feel that her story is heard, that her listener both believes and empathizes with her. However, while Gerardo is the head of a Commission that is supposedly searching for truth and reconciliation, he has not been an empathetic listener for his own wife. At one point Paulina says to him, "But as usual, you don't believe me" (Dorfman 34). Later Gerardo asks, "What does it matter if I believe you?" to which Paulina responds that it

matters to her; she needs a sympathetic listener to bear witness to her testimony. Like many victims, telling her story is not enough; she needs to feel like her voice is heard. After neither Gerardo nor Roberto are willing to validate Paulina's experience as a surviving victim of disappearance, we are left to wonder if she will ever trust anyone enough to tell her story again or if she will remain fearful of further rejections. The reader also questions, if she does not succeed in finding this listener, will she ever be able to heal? What kind of life remains for her if she cannot?

In relation to the reception of the victim's testimony, but thinking on a larger scale, in Trauma and Recovery (1992) Judith Herman elaborates on the importance of the community's response in the victim's recovery:

> The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends, first, upon public acknowledgement of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of community actions. Once it has been publicly recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury. (70)

In stark contrast to what Herman maintains as an important part in healing from trauma, in transitional Chile there was little public acknowledgement of the crimes committed or of the victims' (continued) suffering. Neither were any community actions taken on behalf of the victims, since the Rettig Commission was created around the denial of surviving victims; and even in the cases of the victims who had died or been disappeared, the transitional government was unwilling to assign responsibility for their deaths.

This lack of ethical community response to victims is mirrored in the relationship between Paulina and Gerardo. After having kept her story inside for nearly two decades, Paulina finally tells her story to Gerardo. Upon doing so, her worst fears come true, he does not validate her story, instead he expresses disbelief and implies that she is mentally ill, calling her "enferma" (37) ("sick" 23) on various occasions and indicating her irrationality "te ruego, Paulina, que seamos razonables" (39) ("Please, Paulina, could we start being reasonable" 25). He also speaks to her as if she were a child and thus incapable of serious and rational thought: "Paulineta linda… Paulineta linda" (40) (Oh, my baby, my baby" 26). Gerardo betrayed Paulina during the dictatorship (by sleeping with another woman while she was being tortured) and he betrays her again after the transition by invalidating her voice by insinuating that she is mentally ill. Regarding the invalidation of the victim's voice, in "Five Theses on Torture," Idelber Avelar argues that that the imagined spectator, like Gerardo, is incapable of believing Paulina's testimony and that, for this spectator, the truth only emerges when it comes from the mouth of the torturer (265). Since the play was written in the context of the early years of the transition to democracy and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it was unknown how victims would be received in the future. A reader at the time of the play's initial publication may have wondered: Would future governments and commissions be more inclusive of victims? Would their stories one day be incorporated into the official history? A reading from today's perspective, however, offers new insight into these questions, which I will delve into in the second half of this chapter.

Paulina also needs to tell her story so that the victims' experiences are not lost to denial and oblivion. Paulina struggles against the official versions of events told by the male characters in the play (which exclude the experiences of marginal subjects) in order to make her subverted version of events heard. In this way, each character can be seen as representing a different "text", a different version of history. Roberto represents the "text" written by the military regime, one that claimed the need to save the country from a Marxist cancer. Gerardo, as a member of the truth commission, will take part in the writing of a new "text", one that will investigate the atrocities carried out by the military dictatorship, but one that will exclude the stories of those who survived. In a society that continues to attempt to silence her voice, Paulina takes matters into her own hands and demands that her story is heard. Carolyn Pinet, in "Retrieving the Disappeared Text: Women, Chaos, and Change in Argentina and Chile after the Dirty Wars," discusses women's refusal to be passive victims, describing how many have struggled to "retrieve the disappeared text[s]", texts that challenge the "master narratives" and call attention to their ficticity (89-90). The focus on the female in Dorfman's play as the retriever of disappeared texts ties into other forms of marginality beyond political persecution during the dictatorship in Chile, inviting the reader to consider the unjust power structures at play behind the invisibility of social subjects such as women, the poor, and ethnic minorities.

The spectator (considering the theatrical production of the text) becomes a witness to Paulina's trauma and to her testimony. While the play is a work of fiction, Paulina's story represents the experiences and suffering of countless victims, and in some

way she puts into words what many may not be able to do – either because they remain too traumatized to speak about their experience, because they fear that others will disbelieve them, because they fear they will be mistreated if their identity as a victim is revealed, because they have been made to feel that forgetting and "moving on" is the best choice for the well-being of society as a whole – and perhaps some of these voiceless victims will recognize themselves in Paulina and gain some strength or catharsis through her testimony. When the text is performed on stage, and in this way brought to life in a way, the audience witnesses the victim in flesh-and-blood on stage, and she has a voice to physically speak her testimony and to name her torturer. While this testimony does not take place in an official space (such as a courtroom), it does take place in a public space (the theater), which is important since many victims' testimonies have been confined to private spaces such as their homes or even their own bodies.

In addition to her need to tell her story, Paulina believes that she needs a confession from the doctor in order to heal. This theme of confession seems very fitting for a text about the struggles faced by post-dictatorial societies such as Chile in the 1990s since confession plays a vital role in moral cleansing and moral discipline. There are three confessions in the play: Gerardo confesses that he has been unfaithful; Roberto confesses that he has tortured Paulina, and Paulina confesses the details of her torture (while this is not confession in the sense that Paulina has committed a wrong, it is confession in the sense that she discloses something that is found deep within herself that would be otherwise inaccessible to the other). Paulina confessed nothing to the authorities while in prison because she knew that the torture would not stop with her

confession, but instead it would continue either with her or with someone else. When finally deciding to tell her story to her husband, her greatest fears are realized when he not only denies her truth, but he uses her testimony against her, just as her torturers would have, by feeding the details to the doctor so that he may create a confession that is congruent with the experience as she remembers it.

The victim's need for confession raises a series of questions: Why is confession so important? In other words, when someone has wronged us, why do we feel that we need a confession of his wrongs? What does this confession do for us? [42] What is the relationship between confession and reconciliation[43]? If the victim is not granted a confession, an admission of wrong from the one who caused her harm, will she ever be able to heal? As Paulina herself declared in her statement that she wants to reclaim her Schubert, she is on a quest to recapture her fragmented identity. Forced to reinvent her subjectivity that was shattered under the extreme conditions of her torture, Paulina must repeat her experience in detention. By taking the doctor captive, she reclaims her agency, forcing the doctor to reenact what she was forced to do as a victim.

When speaking of confession, it is important to make the distinction between the way confession is used by the Church and the way confession is often (mis)used by the State. Annual confession has long been required by the Church which requires that believers speak their sins to a priest (a higher spiritual authority), after which they are

[42] Brooks also says that "Confession of wrongdoing is considered fundamental to morality because it constitutes a verbal act of self-recognition as wrongdoer and hence provides the basis for rehabilitation" (2)
[43] Peter Brooks, Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature, says that: "[Confession] works both to console and to police. It offers articulation of hidden acts and thoughts in a form that reveals – perhaps in a sense creates – the inwardness of the person confessing, and allows the person's punishment, absolution, rehabilitation, reintegration" (2).

offered absolution for said sins. Also important in the Church is that the act of confession must remain private; the confession must remain with the confessor alone[44]. On the contrary, the State often forces confession from the accused not as a means for absolution but as a means for punishment and by no means does the confession remain with the confessor alone.

An example of the way confession is (mis)used by the State can be seen in Paulina's detention. Paulina is arrested, detained and tortured because of her relationship with Gerardo, who is affiliated with a supposed subversive group. Her victimizers tell her that she is being tortured as a means of extracting a confession, the admission of Gerardo's identity. However, despite the torture she is forced to endure, she refuses to give them what they are looking for, names of future victims, specifically Gerardo's name. Paulina conceals this information because she realizes that the torture will not stop with her, but instead that it will continue on with Gerardo, and later with the person whose name he gives up during torture. In other words, she was conscious of the military's perverse use of confession; rather than being used as a means to pardon the confessant, it is used as yet another form of torture[45]. Unlike the religious use of

[44] Brooks says that "the act of confession must be considered private, protected, sacramental because it is so potent. It carries a potential use value which, in the Christian religious tradition, is carefully policed…The seal, *sigillum*, images a letter sealed with wax, a communication that exists but is not to be opened." He even comments on the sharp differences between the way the confession is used by the Church and the way it is used by the State: The confessional statement is what the law would call – in contexts other than the suspect's confession – a "privileged communication" (89).

[45] Elaine Scarry, The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, discusses in depth the relationship between pain and interrogation, saying that while torture is said to be used as a means of extracting confession, in reality it has nothing to do with confession, but is instead just another form of torture; "what masquerades as the motive for torture is a fiction…It is crucial to see that the interrogation does not stand outside an episode of torture as its motive or justification: it is internal to the structure of torture, exists there because of its intimate connections to and interactions with the physical pain" (28-29).

confession that promises absolution in exchange for the confession, the State uses confession as a means to punish.

The demand for confession – Paulina's demand of Roberto and the military's previous demand of Paulina – represents the power struggle at play between victims and victimizers. While struggling to get her life back, and regain the power over her traumatic past, Paulina demands a confession of Roberto, and in this way demands that he relinquish his power over her. Claiming that she will not use Roberto's confession to punishment him, and she will not send a copy of his confession to the authorities in search of legal remedy, Paulina maintains that she will keep his confession with her. Given that confession implies an admission of guilt to a higher power, in the confessant–confessor dynamic between Paulina and the doctor, Paulina is playing the part of the higher moral authority to which the doctor both admits his guilt and asks for forgiveness. As opposed to her detention where she had absolutely no power, Paulina now has the power in her relationship with her victimizer. The exchange of secret information during the confession gives power to the person receiving the confession. Paulina does not need to do anything with the confession because what has satisfied her is that she again feels in control of her life. Even in the case that the doctor is not Paulina's torturer, and his confession is somewhat of a fiction, he is still guilty, but of something else. While it may not be the guilt of having actively tortured her, his confession shows that he is aware of her torture and becomes an accomplice of some sort as he has stood by but did nothing. He is guilty in his lack of action, his refusal to act to protect the innocence of this woman. Nor in Gerardo's confession of infidelity to Paulina does she intend to use his confession

to punish him. She simply needs to hear him say it, because his saying it out loud will assure her that he has recognized his betrayal. Knowing that she may never see her perpetrator brought to trial in the real world, Paulina has decided to take matters into her own hands and put the doctor on trial in her home with herself acting as both judge and jury (with Gerardo acting as the public who is witness to the confession and punishment of the accused).

The notion of confession is intrinsically linked to the pursuits of truth and justice. While there has long been a debate among political scientists on the effectiveness of trials or truth commissions in transitional societies, in the case of Chile neither option was pursued in its entirety. When confined by severe limitations on the amount of truth it can seek, at what point is a truth commission no longer such? The idea behind truth commissions is that truth telling has cathartic effects and can aid in both individual and societal healing. With this being the case, an organization that presents itself as a truth commission is held to certain expectations on the part of those in desperate need of healing. Therefore, a so-called truth commission that seeks only a partial truth will only serve to revictimize an already traumatized number of people.

Given the secretive nature of repression during the dictatorship followed by the transitional governments' refusal to reveal complete truths, the perpetrators' identities were (and continue to be in many cases) unknown in an official capacity. Through a reading of this text, several questions arise including: What effects does this ambiguity of perpetrators' identities have on victims? How does it affect the possibility of healing? How does it affect the possibility of attaining justice? In the text, the only certainty of

Roberto Miranda's identity resides in Paulina. The reader cannot avoid becoming involved in this complex relationship in that s/he is forced to decide whether or not to believe the victim. Will the reader, like the justice system, discredit Paulina's claim for lack of physical proof? Or will the reader align with the victim and offer solidarity by recognizing that by definition the crime of disappearance leaves nor witnesses nor evidence. In some sense, whether or not Miranda committed torture or not does not matter, because for Paulina the outcome remains unchanged: given the manner in which the transitional government chose (not) to deal with past atrocities, she and other victims have no choice but to live amongst their victimizers and to have their identities and experiences as victims denied. The fact that Paulina was blindfolded during her torture allows her torturer's identity to remain unknown. Paulina's identity as a victim is also masked; the only people who know about her torture are her victimizer and Gerardo, the first of whom will never admit to knowing her, given the circumstances, and the latter whom she has asked to keep her secret,

> Paulina: Y le dijiste eso al Presidente, que tu mujer podría tener problemas con…
>
> (*Pausa*)
>
> Gerardo: El no sabe. Nadie sabe. Ni tu madre sabe.
>
> Paulina: Hay gente que sabe. (15)
>
> Paulina: And that's what you told the president, that your wife might have problems with…
>
> Gerardo: He doesn't know. Nobody knows. Not even your mother knows.

Paulina: There are people who know. (9)

As shown in the textual example, the circumstances in Chile following the dictatorship allowed for a certain amount of identity negotiation. In a community in which the torturers and the tortured were forced to live side by side, and the newly elected democratic government refused to even publish the names of the perpetrators, there was no way to know for certain who were the victims and who were the victimizers. Neither does it matter whether or not he actively tortured her because there can be no innocence in a society that trampled on human rights on such a massive scale. The lack of answers in the text as to the identity of Dr. Miranda is in line with the reality of the time in which the play was written. The question then remains: does the reader believe the victim in her identification of her abuser? Will the abuser's identity ever be known with any degree of certainty? What hope remains for justice if the perpetrators' identities are never uncovered? What role might this lack of justice play in the possibility of victims' healing?

As previously mentioned, the systematic use of torture was employed not only as a means of extracting a confession, but also as a way to punish political prisoners and destroy their human dignity and sense of self. During her disappearance, Paulina suffered various forms of torture at the hands of military agents as well as a doctor whose role was supposedly to monitor the prisoners' health[46]. For example, she was forced to

[46] Torture has been defined by the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as: "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on

drink her own urine, her head was forced into a bucket of urine and excrement, and she received electric shocks (La muerte 44, 54) (Death 31, 40). Also, blindfolding (also known as hooding) served to further isolate and disorient, in this way adding to the uncertainty of her situation and inducing additional psychological distress. In contrast to male prisoners, Paulina suffered forms of sexual torture that were uniquely suffered by female victims.

In her article, "Surviving beyond Fear", Ximena Bunster documents several methods of torture that were systematically practiced on female prisoners in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, and she argues that these forms of torture are designed specifically to attack female identity. Bunster asserts that Latin American women are socialized to model their role as women after the Virgin Mary, who was both nurturing mother and chaste wife (100). It is with this ideal in mind, that certain methods of torture have been developed. According to Bunster, nearly all female political prisoners whose testimonies the author either read or hear reported that they were raped during their detention. In some cases, these included gang rapes, involving up to 27 men (113). In one of the cases documented in her article, a woman describes the aftermath of a massive rape as "waking up soiled", which Bunster understands to mean that she felt impure, having been violently stripped of her chastity, "What she describes as 'waking up' is the realization that the culturally-defined dignity of her womanhood had been shattered" (115). As a means of psychological torture, women were threatened with, and in some cases forced to witness, the torture or murder of their children, or they were forced to choose between

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discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity"

saving their children or their husband (116, 119). The film version of Dorfman's play engages this issue of the female victim's shattered sense of womanhood by presenting the strained sexual relationship between Paulina and Gerardo and by suggesting her possible inability to bear children.

While Paulina suffered various forms of torture during her disappearance, there is a decided emphasis on the forms of sexual torture that she suffered[47]. These ranged from the use of demeaning language of a sexual connotation meant to objectify women, "Cómo una hembra así, con una raja tan rica, cómo vai a estar sin un hombre…Si alguien tiene que estar tirándosela, señorita" (42, edicion siete cuentos) "With that twat, little lady, don't tell you haven't got someone to fuck you, huh? Come on, just tell us who's been fucking you, little lady" (30), to verbal threats of sexual abuse, "Yo te voy a dar de comer m'hijita rica, yo te voy a dar algo sustancioso y bien grande para que te olvidís del hambre" (41-42, edición Siete cuentos) "I'll give you something to eat, sweet cunt, I'll give you something big and filling so you can forget you're hungry" (29), to violent sexual attacks on her body and destruction of her female sexual identity. As was often the case with female prisoners, Paulina's torture sessions included rape at the hands of a state torturer. In Paulina's case, her rape was actually carried out by a medical professional, which brings up a much larger issue not developed in this essay[48].

[47] For a description on the unique design of torture practices on female prisoners in the Southern Cone countries of Chile, Argentine, and Uruguay during the dictatorships of the 1970's and 1980's see Ximena Bunster's article "Surviving Beyond Fear: Women and Torture in Latin America" in Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children, and Human Rights in Latin America, edited by Marjorie Agosín.

[48] See Robert Jay Lifton's elaboration on the history of the collaboration of medical professionals in acts of torture and mass murder in The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide.

Gerardo's flat tire can be read as a metaphor for Paulina's rape in that they are both violations, both violations are unmendable and both prohibit the victim from moving forward[49]. Considering the various meanings of the term violation: entry to another's property without right or permission; the crime of forcing a woman to submit to sexual intercourse against her will (www.dictionary.com), the first relates to the nail's entry into the space of the tire, and the latter, of course, relates to the rape of Paulina by the doctor. Like the flat tire that inhibits the car from allowing Gerardo to reach his desired destination, Paulina too is unable to move forward. This notion of violation invites questions with regard to the possibility of reintegration, or healing, after suffering a violation that caused a disintegration. In this way, the metaphor of the flat tire makes apparent, or appears, the issues surrounding disintegration and reintegration of the self.

Exploring this metaphor of the flat tire and its meaning with regard to fragmentation will allow us to better understand notions of healing. Once the tire has been violated, a patch could possibly be applied so that it can be used again. However, the patch is just a superficial fix, similar to the way a Band-Aid covers a wound. While it can regain its functionality, the violated tire can never be whole again; reintegration is impossible. What are the implications of this metaphor for the possibility of healing for individual victims and for society? What can we understand healing to mean? Regarding this topic, in her study "[To be] Just in the Threshold of Memory" Aurea María Sotomayor emphasizes the impossibility of Paulina's reintegration: "What remains unmendable here is the woman's sexual violation" (26). If the situation remains

[49] Of course I in no way intend to equate the two experiences, however I would like to explore the notion of violation with regard to both experiences.

"unmendable," what remains for the victim? What does healing mean if returning to the same state that existed prior to the traumatic event is impossible?

The three main characters can be seen in a struggle for power, for agency. When Paulina has it, Gerardo does not, and vice versa. Paulina, having been denied the status as subject during her torture, repeats the experience of her detention but this time assuming a subjective / actantial role[50]. Paulina arms herself with a gun, not in an attempt to protect herself, but in an attempt to overcome her powerlessness.

> Gerardo: While you point it at me, there is no possible dialogue.
>
> Paulina: On the contrary, as soon as I stop pointing it at you, all dialogue will automatically terminate. If I put it down you'll use your strength to win the argument. (24)

According to Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane, the loss of control is at the heart of traumatic experiences. Victims, as well as bystanders, may deal with a sense of powerlessness, and they may struggle to regain this sense of control.

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[50] Ernst Van Alphen, "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma" In: Acts of Memory, describes how a severely traumatic experience affects subjectivity. He notes that sometimes traumatic experience causes the individual to question their actantial role, their subjectivity. He offers as an example the story of a woman who was being taken to a concentration camp that hid her infant child in her coat after hearing that babies would be killed. When her baby began to cry, the woman held him closer to keep him quiet, which resulted in his suffocation. The woman never spoke of the incident, or even having a child, for many decades because she was unsure of what her actantial role was in the whole situation. Was she the subject that was responsible for her child's death? Or was she the victim (object) in the situation? Van Alphen also notes that traumatic experience can also cause the individual to not only question their subjectivity, but be stripped of it. When the individual is robbed of their ability to act (playing no actantial role whatsoever in the situation), the individual is robbed of their subjectivity. This, he says, is because an individual forms his subjectivity through consciously chosen behavior, and in concentration camps individuals were not able to make the kinds of conscious decisions they would make in the outside world: such as interfering when another is being tortured. The consequence is that the individual becomes disinterested; the relation between subjectivity and ethical norms coupled with the individual's inability to act would cause him to feel that he is no longer a subject. In order to feel like a subject at least some of the time, the individual may become disinterested in, or choose to be blind to what is going on around him.

> [they] are likely to perpetuate the trauma in the interpersonal realm, which is dichotomized in terms of dominance and submission. After the breakdown of a healthy balance between collaboration and self-protective reserve, the resulting polarities assure that one person or group will be seen as powerful and the other as helpless. The trauma will this continue to be played out between helplessness supplicants / victims / caregivers and predators / manipulators / oppressors. (33)

Throughout the play we observe Paulina's struggle to overcome a sense of powerlessness. However, by the end of the play she has been again robbed of her ability to act, forced to concede to her husband's wishes and let the doctor go free. Readers are left to question whether Paulina will regain the power at some point in the future.

While Roberto victimized Paulina during her detention (during a period of dictatorship), Gerardo –her husband who is also a lawyer working on a human rights commission – victimizes her in the present (during a period of democracy). Gerardo's character can be seen as representative of several groups: as a husband he represents social relationships, as a lawyer he represents the legal system, as a member of the commission he represents the efforts of the new democratic government. Therefore, through the character of Gerardo, Dorfman's play represents various betrayals: a husband's betrayal of his wife, society's betrayal of victims by not listening to their stories or validating their experiences, a legal system's betrayal of those who were wronged (which is also a betrayal of justice itself), and finally, the democratic government's betrayal of the victims and violation of their rights. In The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Art (1981), Fredric Jameson contends

that, whether conscious or not, narratives always bear the marks of politics. Following Jameson's theory, the politics buried in this play can be uncovered via a reading of the woman as a representation of the nation. Therefore, what we find represented in Dorfman's play is a nation that was violated by both the dictatorship and the democratic governments that followed. In a related thread, in Foundational Fictions (1991) Doris Sommer argues that, in regards to nineteenth century Latin American novels, sex and nation are not separate. Building off the work of Sommer, but in reference novels of the dictatorships in the Southern Cone, Latin American writers and scholars such as Luisa Valenzuela and Mary Beth Tierney-Tello, have noted that many narratives during this period focused on both politics and sexuality, and highlighted the gender-based nature of authoritarianism. Dorfman's play participates in this dialogue on the relationship between gender and authoritarian culture (with regard to both the dictatorship and the postdictatorship in Chile).

Paulina continues to question Gerardo's fidelity due to the fact that, upon being released from prison, she went immediately to his apartment and found him in bed with another woman. This sense of betrayal that Paulina continues to feel shows the historical trauma suffered by the Chilean community in the change from democracy to dictatorship (both are feminine in Spanish: *la democracia* and *la dictadura*, which can be seen in the play as Gerardo's transition between women. When his history with Paulina / democracy is ruptured by her disappearance, he acquiesces in her disappearance by immediately becoming involved with the "other woman": the dictatorship). Paulina cannot forgive Gerardo's betrayal at a time of intense suffering on her part, a time when she needed him

the most. This infidelity goes to infringe on the authenticity of human relationships. The trauma surrounding Paulina's experience in prison has perhaps shattered the structure of human relations. Paulina gave up everything to save him – she was taken in only as a means of getting to Gerardo. Despite being tortured, she never gave information regarding her lover. Because she surrendered a piece of herself to protect Gerardo, this makes his infidelity now unforgivable. This represents a change in the structure of Chilean society caused by the dictatorship.

Paulina's anger regarding Gerardo's betrayal can be seen in the argument about the missing tire jack – Paulina lent it to her mother, leaving Gerardo stranded on the road without a jack to fix his flat tire. During her illegal detention, a form of captivity that is by definition disappearance, Paulina was tortured most likely as a means of getting information about Gerardo. However, despite the amount of torture inflicted on her, she refused to give his name to the authorities. While Paulina endured the unimaginable to protect Gerardo, he was never forced to make the same decision. Not only that, but he could not even manage to be faithful to her during her sacrifice. For Gerardo the argument is only about the jack, but for Paulina it is about much more since Gerardo (the new democratic government) is blind to the injustice suffered by Paulina (the victims). From her point of view, she was was kidnapped and tortured because of her association with Gerardo, who was able to avoid persecution because she kept his name secret. For this reason, Paulina is easily irritated when her husband tries to make her feel guilty for taking the jack; Gerardo is bothered by the fact that Paulina left him vulnerable on the side of the road for forty-five minutes, while she is thinking about the fact that he left her

vulnerable fifteen years ago when she was arbitrarily arrested and tortured and he continues to leave her vulnerable today in his decision to participate with the truth commission that will never bring her justice and only serve to victimize her yet again.

Again, looking at the text as a national allegory, where the man can be read as the political project (acting upon the woman-nation), Gerardo's infidelity represents society's betrayal of the victims during the dictatorship; while the victims suffered at the hands of the military regime, society stood by and did nothing to stop it, and in this way became complicit to violence and repression. The anger and betrayal that Paulina (the victim) feels towards her husband (the bystander who did not protect her and now contributes to her continued invisibility and lack of justice) is something that must be discussed, but has not been addressed due to the intensity of feelings surrounding the issue:

Gerardo: I don't like to talk about this, Paulina.

Paulina: I don't like to talk about it either.

Gerardo: But we'll have to talk about it, won't we, you and I? (9)

Dorfman's text urges the global community to begin asking the questions and having discussions related to truth and justice.

Gerardo lies about needing Paulina's consent before accepting the position with the commission. Well aware that, as a surviving victim, she does not agree with the Commission's limited nature, he accepts the nomination before conversing with her. Rather than worrying about the psychological well-being of the victim, Gerardo seems to

be more concerned with the idea that she may somehow embarrass him as head of the commission if her victimhood were to become somehow invonvenient to him:

Gerardo: Porque primero tengo que…tú tienes que decirme que sí.

Paulina: Entonces: sí.

Gerardo: No es el sí que necesito.

Paulina: Es el único sí que tengo.

Gerardo: Yo te he escuchado otros. (Breve pausa) En el caso de que acepte, tengo que saber que cuento contigo, que no sientes que esto puede crearte ningún tipo de...No sé, podría ser duro para ti tener que...Una recaída tuya me dejaría...

Paulina: Vulnerable. Paralizado. Tendrías que cuidarme de nuevo, ¿no? (14)

Gerardo: Because first – first you have to say yes.

Paulina: Well then: yes.

Gerardo: That's not the yes I need.

Paulina: It's the only yes I've got.

Gerardo: I've heard others. *Brief Pause* If I were to accept, I must know I can count on you, that you don't feel…if you were to have a relapse, it could leave me…

Paulina: Vulnerable, yes, it could leave you vulnerable. Stripped. You'd have to take care of me all over again. (8)

While Gerardo asks for Paulina's consent to proceed with the commission, his need for her approval is only a gesture of good manners and she is fully aware of this having heard of his acceptance on the radio hours before his arrival home. Both Paulina and Gerardo know that he would have moved forward with the commission regardless of her opinion. Despite his previous acceptance, Gerardo continues to press for Paulina's consent. One wonders if this forced consent will later be used against her in some way.

Despite Gerardo's accolades of the commission, Paulina views it as a "white wash" a "betrayal". Seeing the separation of truth and justice on which the commission is founded and the limited nature of its investigations, Paulina believes that the project is merely a façade. The exclusion of surviving victims such as herself communicates to her that her experience was insignificant, and that her story will be forgotten. Also, the commission will not publish the names of the perpetrators, since they are protected under the amnesty that the regime put in place to protect itself after democracy was restored. With full amnesty and their names protected by the commission, the perpetrators guilty of even the most heinous of crimes would be able to live out their lives free of persecution. Gerardo claims he can bring justice to Paulina through the commission, he says that all he needs is time to make her happy, to bring things back to normal. Gerardo repeats notions of time, "Give us time", and the idea that time will heal. The question that arises is: can the mere passing of time bring healing? Or is the real hope that the passing of time will bring forgetting? This representation of the Commission reveals a State whose actions do not serve the victims in the process of healing, but instead serve towards a willful forgetting.

Despite Paulina's criticisms, Gerardo continues to defend the Commission, as if he is deaf to the voice of the surviving victims. Regarding its limited investigative powers, he says that the Commission will only investigate the cases that are "irreparables" (15) "beyond repair" (9). In the statement that he makes so effortlessly, Gerardo says to her that murder is a worse crime than torture; his statement belittles the trauma that she continues to suffer. He also tries to convince Paulina that there will be justice in that the Commission will reveal gross human rights violations and turn their findings over to the courts. Conscious of the fact that the current judges are the same judges that sat quiet during the dictatorship, even covering up the military's role in the violence, Paulina foresees no justice resulting from the commission's efforts. The counter argument, which maintains that (partial) truth is a viable substation for justice, is that while the names of the accused will remain obscured (left out of the Commission's final report), these names will be known amongst the people when they begin to discuss their personal experiences of the dictatorship. In "Death and the Maiden: Challenging Trauma with Feminine Judgment and Justice" a chapter of his book Framed: Women in Law and Literature, Omar Karit argues that Dorfman's play presents a gendered conception of law, and furthermore, that through this presentation, makes a critique of the state of the legal system by revealing the harm that it can have on the victim, even acting as a source of revictimization. Karit states specifically that the "explicit association of a formalistic, positivistic notion of law with a male character, while linking a more compassionate, humanistic notion with a female character, clearly genders these two

concepts along familiar lines, invoking a jurisprudence featuring a feminist ethics of compassion and care" (193).

Much of the transitional government's official discourse can be seen in statements made by the two male characters. While neither man was victimized by the dictatorship, both believe that they have the best understanding of what the country needs in order to heal. Agreeing that the commission is carrying out important work, neither even considers asking Paulina (the victim) what she needs or desires. Roberto Miranda commends Gerardo for his work with the commission, saying that the commission will allow the country to "cerrar un capítulo tan doloroso de nuestra historia" (21) "this commission is going to help us close an exceptionally painful chapter in our history" (14). This imagery of cutting off the past from the present by "closing a door" is interesting because one wonders who wants to shut the door and why? It would more than likely be the perpetrators that would want to forget the past, not the victims[51]. Gerardo, representing a transitional government that hopes to shut the door on the past for fear of reprisals by the ex-dictator and his followers wants to close the door to the past not for the benefit of the victim, his wife, but for his own benefit, because it is unpleasant for him to hear about the past. Gerardo also speaks of his work with the commission as "removiendo las heridas del pasado" (23) "opening *old* wounds" (16, my emphasis), he speaks of the victimization as something of the *past* when it seems clear that such

[51] Susan Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self", describes society's eagerness to forget unpleasant events. Herself a victim of a brutal attack, she speaks publicly about her experience and describes the reaction from her audience. A woman once came up to her and said that she hoped that she could put everything behind her – forget. Brison says that such well wishes seem to be less about the survivor and more about those who do not wish to hear unpleasant things, adding that "attempting to limit traumatic memories does not make them go away; the signs and symptoms of trauma remain, caused by a source more virulent for being driven underground" (49).

wounds are quite fresh for victims such as his wife. Again I wonder: old wounds for whom? It seems clear that the victims would not consider them old wounds, but current wounds. Both men discuss the wellbeing of the country with complete ignorance and disregard for the victims' needs, which is representative of the new democratic government that never asked what the victims wanted or needed before it proceeded with the commission, never considering the harm / suffering it might cause the victims. Hernan Vidal, in Política cultural de la memoria histórica, has critiqued the Rettig Commission for the way in which it proposed to pursue truth without justice. While the official claim was that the Commission was formed in line with the Concertación government's notion of "political realism" at the time of the transition to democracy, which took into account the continued power (and, thus, threat) of the military, Vidal reveals this reasoning behind the separation of truth and justice to be a façade based on the fact that there have been relatively few trials to this day (13). In addition to denying justice, the Commission actually functioned to obscure the truth by limiting the knowledge of human rights violations (it marginalized surviving victims and excluded perpetrators' identities, for example). In response to the Concertación government's slogan, "La alegría ya viene" ("Happiness is on its way), Vidal poses the question: happiness for whom? (48-49). The play's critique of the complete dismissal of surviving victims during the early years of the transition to democracy causes the reader to question: What space will be given to victims in the later stages of the transition to democracy? Will future governments and / or Commissions recognize victims, listen to their testimonies and include their stories in the official history? What remains for

victims if they continue to be denied? How will this affect Chilean society as a whole? Some of the answers to these questions are answered in Dorfman's documentary "A Promise to the Dead," which will be analyzed in the second half of this chapter.

Repeatedly demanding a sacrifice on Paulina's part, Gerardo is completely out of touch with the victims' experiences and needs. The text emphasizes the absurdity of the lack of empathy with regard to victims' experiences through Gerardo's relationship with and demands of his wife. Unable to take action when he got a flat tire, Gerardo feels victimized for a very short period, and he simply cannot stand it. Stranded on the side of the road for forty-five minutes as cars rushed by without stopping to help, he felt as if he were invisible: "Pasaban los autos como si no me vieran. Cuando la gente parte a la playa por el fin de semana es como si perdiera todo sentido cívico de...Empecé a mover los brazos como molino de viento a ver si con eso...igual no me paró ni un alma. Se nos ha olvidado lo que es la solidaridad en este país, eso es lo que pasa" (13). ("The cars passed by as if I didn't exist. You know what I began to do? I began to move my arms around like a windmill to see if that way – we've forgotten what solidarity is in this country?" 7). Gerardo waves his arms madly in the air in order to attract attention to himself as a victim, just as Paulina pleas with Gerardo to help her seek justice. While Gerardo is picked up on the side of the road, no one responds to Paulina's pleas for help. Ironically, it is Gerardo who brings up the lack of a sense of civic duty (while he is a member of a national truth commission, this commission will ignore the voices of the surviving victims and represent a state that in many ways revictimizes these victims). It seems absurd that Gerardo is at all surprised by the lack of solidarity; what kind of solidarity

could possibly exist in a country as Chile in the early years of the transition to democracy? Will true solidarity ever be possible in a country where victims are not only neglected by revictimized?

Regarding the shortcomings of the truth commission, what are the ethics of a project that denies the existence of surviving victims, one that requires yet another sacrifice on the part of the most vulnerable? This betrayal is demonstrated in the text through Gerardo's selfishness and hypocrisy, asking of Paulina things that he has not done (and will not do) for her. Although he has never been there for Paulina to tell her story, once appointed to the commission he expects her to be there for him to unload all the horrible things he has heard while taking testimonies. Paulina has not spoken of her experience since the night she was released, "Gerardo: I only know what you told me that first night" (37). While she told him some details, she did not tell him everything because finding him in bed with another woman caused her to lose trust in him. During the fifteen years since her detention, Gerardo does not ask Paulina to tell her story for fear that she will bring up his infidelity. In order to protect himself, he neglects his duties to support, nuture, and respect his wife. Gerardo even goes so far as to blame the victim. He tells Paulina that she has ruined his opportunity with the commission; regardless if anyone finds out about her kidnapping the doctor he will have to step down because he values the truth and he will know that he did something unjust.

Paulina: You'd have to resign if no one knew about this?

Gerardo: Yes.

Paulina: Because of your mad wife, who was mad because she stayed silent and is now mad because she can speak?

Gerardo: Among other reasons, yes, that's so, if the truth still matters to you. (37)

Gerardo makes Paulina feel like the truth doesn't matter to her, when he is the one heading up a commission that in no way values the truth, but instead is a puppet to the dictatorship that originally victimized Paulina.

It seems clear that Paulina, the victim, makes both Gerardo and Roberto (bystander and victimizer) feel uncomfortable because she demands things of both of men. According to Van der Kolk and McFarlane, victims make us uncomfortable because they challenge many of the notions we had about life that we took for granted, such as the illusions that we have control over our destinies, that good things happen to good people and vice versa with bad people, that people are inherently good, etc. (573). The denial of victims, therefore, allows us to continue pretending that such notions are indeed true. Victims, such as Paulina, who refuse to be quiet are often met with resistance.

The new democratic government's upholding of the amnesty laws is not only a betrayal of the victims, but a source of further pain for them as well. In this vein, Sabine Schlickers, in her article "Tortura, amnesia y amnistía: La muerte y la doncella de Ariel Dorfman," argues that amnesty laws are a source of retraumatization for the victims: "Sin embargo, las víctimas sólo pueden conciliarse con lo pasado si los victimarios son juzgados – la amnistía y el indulto son factores patogénicos, retraumatizadores para las víctimas" (56). Similarly, in his article "Memoria, muerte y reconciliación nacional,"

Euisuk Kim maintains that Gerardo's discussion with fellow concertgoers at the end of the play is representative of the new government's betrayal of the people: "al igual que el régimen totalitario… que atormenta al pueblo con la excusa de la necesidad del progreso histórico y social, lo que muestra el discurso de Gerardo… implica que el nuevo gobierno también engaña a la población repitiendo el mismo razonamiento de la dictadura, pero con una máscara de democracia" (180). Following the work of several other academics before him – most notably Tomás Moulian and Idelber Avelar – Kim exposes the fictionality of the transition to democracy by showing how similar power structures governed both the military dictatorship and the democratic governments that followed it.

Gerardo (representing various groups, including the new democratic government, the legal system, and all those supportive of the consensus of forgetting) has discounted Paulina as a credible witness, invalidating her story based on the very nature of the trauma from which she suffers. When she tells Gerardo that his Good Samaritan is the doctor that tortured her, Gerardo says that she can't be sure because she didn't *see* him: "A vague memory of someone's voice is not proof of anything, Paulina, it is not incontrovertible" (23), for Gerardo proof is only what is seen with the eyes. This declaration on the part of Gerardo robs the victim of the chance to identify the victimizer since the use of blindfolds was a common practice during torture. Victims are often called upon to deliver specific details of their experience in order to prove their victimization when such details are both irrelevant and often impossible to remember given the circumstances of their experience. According to Van der Kolk and McFarlane, court rooms favor the accused when there is lack of proof since:

> in the courtroom, attention to the plight of the victims often conflicts directly with the need to protect the rights of the wrongly accused. Our cultures are inevitably based on the notion that when there is doubt, the rights of the accused take precedence over those of victims who seek redress. Hence the issue in the courtroom has been to promote doubt about the accuracy of the victims' testimony… Ironically, although the problems of suggestibility and memory distortions have been vehemently argued in regard to the alleged victims in these cases, scant attention has been paid to the budding scientific literature indicating that perpetrators of crimes are prone to suffer from dissociative amnesias as well. (567-568)

While Paulina declares that she also remembers his skin, his smell, certain phrases he repeats, his quoting of Nietzsche, and his taste in music, none of this is satisfactory for Gerardo. He calls her sick, reminding her the many times in the past she thought she had found him, implying that she is crazy and her memory cannot be trusted. Gerardo negates Paulina as a witness to her own experience, leaving only the victimizer as a possible witness. The State's decision to create a Truth Commission that investigates only the cases resulting in death or disappearance denies a voice to the survivors who *can* speak. Paulina, the victim, is put in a lose-lose situation in that the only witnesses to her torture are herself and her victimizer, the latter of course will never admit to participating, and now she is denied the opportunity to bear witness, leaving her case as one to which there are no witnesses. For this reason Paulina calls the Commission a betrayal and a whitewash:

> But the members of the Commission only deal with the dead, with those who can't speak. And I can speak – it's been years since I murmured even a word, I haven't opened my mouth to even whisper a breath of what I'm thinking, years living in terror of my own…but I'm not dead, I thought I was but I'm not and I can speak, damn it – so for God's sake let me have my say. (37)

Paulina knows that this mock trial she has planned for the doctor is her one chance to have her say, outside of her house this trial will never take place. The denial of her voice by the State is the denial of her subjectivity[52]. Having been discredited by the State, Paulina's only option to regain her subjectivity is by taking matters into her own hands, reenacting the original experience but this time playing an actantial role.

Although Gerardo once promised Paulina that he would find justice for the victims, he is not taking steps to fulfill his promise even though he is currently in a position to do so (as a human rights lawyer who has been elected as a member of the truth commission). Paulina reminds him of the promise that he made long ago: "Algún día, mi amor, vamos a juzgar a todos estos hijos de puta. Vas a poder pasear tus ojos… por la cara de cada uno de ellos mientras escuchan tus acusaciones. Te lo juro" (49). In fact, Gerardo is more concerned with the rights of the accused (right to fair trial) than the rights of the victims (right to justice), in that he is constantly trying to persuade Paulina to let Roberto go, knowing full well that the new government has no intentions of using the commission as a way to bring justice to the victims.

[52] Ernst van Alphen, "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma", discusses the relationship between subjectivity and language, "Subjects are constituted discursively, experience is a linguistic event" (Bal 25).

The State's notion of reconciliation is yet another betrayal of the victims. Dorfman's play allows one to see the faults of this project by urging the reader to ask him/herself the following questions: What is reconciliation? Reconciliation for whom? Many countries, upon exiting a period of dictatorship or other form of institutionalized violence and repression, throw around this term "reconciliation", but the problem with this term is that it has a variety of meanings. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines reconciliation as: "the state of being reconciled", and defines this verb reconcile to mean: "1) to restore to friendship or harmony; 2) to make consistent or congruous (as in to reconcile an ideal with reality); 3) to cause to submit to or accept something unpleasant". Therefore, when a country utilizes this term, I ask, whose definition are they using? Will reconciliation bring healing, or will healing bring reconciliation … or neither? Is total reconciliation ever possible? What does reconciliation mean for Chile? In the final scene of the play, when Paulina asks why it always has to be people like her, victims, who have to sacrifice, it is clear that in the case of Chile reconciliation has meant a sacrifice made on behalf of the victims who were silenced and forced to let go of any hope of justice so that the rest of society could forget the past and move on as if none of it ever happened.

These numerous deceptions and betrayals show that Gerardo's participation with the commission has more to do with his career advancement than with a true commitment to supporting the victims. As a member of the commission, he feigns a search for the truth in an attempt to pacify the victims and forget about the past. His role in the commission is not about the victims, but instead is quite selfish. While he is making a

career out of listening to testimonies, he has never asked his wife the details of her torture. Likewise, while he has never volunteered himself as a sympathetic listener to his wife, he is quick to point out that *he* will need someone to talk to after his long days of listening to horrific stories of persecution by the dictatorship: "Pero tendremos que hablar, ¿no? Voy a pasarme meses recogiendo testimonios que… Y cada vez que vuelva a casa…, yo te voy a… supongo que tu querrás que yo te cuente…Y si tú no lo puedes tolerar, si tú…Si tú…" (15) ("If I'm going to spend the next few months listening to the evidence, relatives and eyewitnesses and survivors – and each time I come back home I – and you wouldn't want me to keep all that to myself" 9). Hernán Vidal also emphasizes the absurdity of the fact that Gerardo has never brought Paulina's case before the authorities:

> Contradice la experiencia histórica del movimiento de Derechos Humanos en Chile que uno de sus abogados – precisamente un abogado – haya mantenido este secreto y quiera prolongarlo para no perjudicar su carrera. La estrategia fundamental y permanente del movimiento fue hacer pública la verdad que la represión y la desinformación de los militares quería clausurar en los espacios de lo íntimo y de lo privado. (Política cultural 294-295)

Gerardo goes so far as to complain about how much Paulina's past is hurting *him* (as if he were somehow a victim in the situation), making her feel pressure to sacrifice her needs for the good of them as a couple. This situation is representative of the implied request made by Chilean society to the victims of the dictatorship for them to be quiet and forget what had happened to them, so that everyone could move on without dealing with the

issues, as if it never happened. While Gerardo once promised Paulina that he would find those responsible for torturing her and hold them accountable, when it comes down to taking action, he has no intentions of keeping his promise. When Paulina criticizes the State's feeble attempt at finding justice, saying that the judges are the same judges that never denounced the dictatorship, Gerardo calls her "tontita" "silly girl", infantilizing her, or making her sound crazy, like she is overreacting. He seems to ignore the reality of his country, and the needs of the victims. Gerardo's idea of moving on requires a sacrifice on behalf of the victims; Paulina alludes to this in her final monologue: "Y por qué tengo que ser yo la que se sacrifica ¿eh?, yo la que tengo que morderme la lengua, siempre nosotros los que hacemos las concesiones cuando hay que conceder, ¿por qué, por qué?" (77) "And why does it always have to be people like me who have to sacrifice, why are we always that ones who have to make concessions when something has to be conceded, why always me who has to bite her tongue, why?" (66). So while Gerardo may seem to be the bystander in the victim – victimizer – bystander dynamic, in the end he is really another victimizer as he forces Paulina to be victimized once again during the process of the truth commission.

What Gerardo seemingly fails to recognize is that his identity as commission member depends on Paulina's identity as victim; he would not have the opportunity to work on the commission if there were not victims. His opportunity for personal success and individual gain depends on their suffering and loss. Also, he may owe his life to Paulina never having given his name during her torture sessions:

> Paulina: …Pero yo nunca solté el nombre de Gerardo. Lo que son las cosas. Si yo menciono a Gerardo… él no estaría nombrado a esa comisión investigadora sino que otro abogado estaría investigando su caso. Y yo iría a declarar a esa comisión y contaría que a Gerardo lo conocí asilando gente...metiéndolos a las embajadas, a eso me dediqué yo en los días después del golpe. (40)

> Paulina: …But I never gave them Gerardo's name. Strange how things turn out. If I had mentioned Gerardo, he wouldn't have been named to any Investigating Commission, but would have been one of the names that some other lawyer was investigating. And I would be in front of that Commission to tell them how I met Gerardo. (30)

Paulina implies that had she given up Gerardo's name, he surely would have been killed and she would now be giving her testimony to the commission in its investigation of Gerardo's death or disappearance. Gerardo also makes Paulina feel guilty for the fact that he had to take care of her on account of the trauma she suffered as a result of her torture, while she suffered only as a result of his subversive activities. He views himself as the strong husband who takes care of his weak wife, but this identity he has constructed for himself would not exist were it not for Paulina's victimization. Therefore, Gerardo's identity as member of the commission and as caretaking husband would not exist were it not for Paulina's victimization.

As previously stated, Gerardo becomes a second victimizer to Paulina, but what is more, his victimization of her might even be worse than that of Roberto being that

Gerardo is supposed to be the one that loves and protects her, as husband, but also as a representative of the legal system and the new democratic government. Euisuk Kim, in his article "Memoria, muerte y reconciliación", points out these consistencies between the dictatorship and the new democratic government with regard to victimization. Kim argues that through an imposed reconciliation "el gobierno democrático adopta la misma estructura de poder de la dictadura militar, en la cual el máximo apoyo al poder político proviene de la traición del pueblo" (181). While Pércio B. de Castro argues that Gerardo is merely a passive victimizer: "Así, su pasividad, sea a causa de la falta de comprensión del personaje acerca de las heridas y sufrimientos de su compañera, o sea a causa de sus creencias y personalidad, le convierte, aunque indirectamente, en el verdugo pasivo de Paulina Salas" (65-66), I would have to disagree with this interpretation, based on the notion that choosing to protect the rights of the accused at the expense of the rights of the victim is not a passive decision, but an active and conscious one.

Just as the military regime had done in the past, the new democratic government objectified / dehumanized the victims. Gerardo (like Paulina's first victimizer) fails to recognize Paulina as a person, instead seeing her as an object. Morality, in traditional Judeo-Christian thought, is based on the existence of the other; one must choose his actions according to what will be least harmful to the other. In other words, the recognition of the Other implies an ethical response, a response-ability[53]. Having failed to recognize Paulina as a person, Gerardo feels no responsibility in how his actions may affect her. This failure on Gerardo's behalf is an example of the historical trauma

[53] See Emmanuel Levinas' discussion of ethics and the face in Totality and Infinity.

suffered by Chilean society as a result of the dictatorship; the military rule produced a non-recognition of the Other. Dehumanization facilitated the elimination, the murder, of the Other, which was seen as an object rather than a human being. Under the military rule, justice disappeared, and even after the return to democracy, the transitional government (Gerardo) failed to restore it.

The final scene of Dorfman's text offers no definite answers to the question of Paulina's healing. While the reader/ spectator may assume that she has achieved some sort of healing due to the fact that she has finally told her story, the final scenes of the play are so ambiguous that they refuse to answer the question. The reader / spectator is left to wonder if Paulina did or did not kill doctor Miranda, and in the final scene, Paulina attends a concert where she sees doctor Miranda, who the author states may be real or may be simply a figment of her imagination, part of yet another return of the traumatic event. This scene at the concert takes place after the Commission's publication of its final report, an accomplishment that Gerardo is very pleased with as he converses with another concertgoer about the Commission's role in the process of healing. Gerardo ceases his conversation regarding the Commission as soon as Paulina approaches, and she makes no comment on the topic, leaving the reader / spectator wondering what Paulina would think about her husband's self proclaimed role in community healing. Dorfman's text poses the question: What does healing mean? What does healing mean for a victim that is forced to live alongside a victimizer that will never be punished for what he did? What does healing mean for a victim who feels betrayed by her loved ones who stood by and did nothing while she was tortured? What we do know is that

regardless of the scar she carries around with her Paulina has made the decision to attend the concert, to reclaim her Schubert.

Ultimately, it does not matter if Roberto is alive or dead, if he is physically present at the concert in the final scene of the play or if he is a figment of Paulina's imagination, because the trauma that Paulina suffers may actually be worse than the reality. The real tragedy of this play is that there seems to be little possibility for Paulina to heal and lead a healthy life: no one wants to hear her story, and when she does finally speak, no one believes her (not even her husband), her government has declared her an unfit witness, unable to speak the truth, she will find no justice, but instead she will be forced to live alongside her victimizers indefinitely. What can possibly change for Paulina if no one even attempts to understand what happened to her? Or if no one puts forth an effort to understand her needs? With regard to this impossible situation in which the victim finds herself, Sabine Schlickers contends that, "En un sentido figurado no importa, entonces, si Roberto sobrevive o si es sólo una imaginación de Paulina: el trauma puede ser peor que la realidad, y Gerardo es uno de los muchos que no lo han comprendido y no lo comprenderán nunca" (61). One of the many things that Gerardo (and perhaps the reader / spectator) fails to comprehend is that in some sense the identity of Paulina's torturer does not matter, but instead what actually matters is the fact of the occurrence: that she was tortured[54].

[54] This preoccupation with the Roberto's identity is reminiscent of the well-known case of the Holocaust survivor who testified to the exploding chimneys during the Auschwitz uprising. While the woman testified to having seen four chimneys burning, historians claimed that this number was not accurate, since only one chimney had been blown up. This discrepancy caused much debate in that some wanted to discredit her entire testimony for the sake of remaining historically accurate. Laub stood up in defense of the woman, claiming that: "'The woman was testifying,' [I] insisted, 'not to the number of the chimneys

In order to consider the possibility of Paulina's healing (reintegration), one must first contemplate the very notion of healing. What exactly does healing mean? What steps are necessary in order for healing to begin? Is total healing ever possible? What does the victim need from others in order to heal?

As we know, the play La muerte y la doncella was written during the early years of the transition to democracy and it presents a very strong critique of the way in which the Concertación governments chose to negotiate this transition. As seen in the play, surviving victims of disappearance were denied a space in the transition, their voices and experiences were essentially disappeared in order to create the (false) image of a homogenous whole, one that was devoid of any inconvenient and messy memories of the past. What the play cannot show is how these victims were treated in the later stages of the post-dictatorship. Will their testimonies finally presented and validated in an official setting, such as before a Commission? How will society respond to victims? Will society believe them? Respect them? Will victims continue to be dismissed as "mad" individuals lacking in value (as human beings)? Will they remain invisible or will they (re)appear in Chilean society?

In the documentary film "A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman" (2007), filmmaker Peter Raymont follows Dorfman to Chile in late 2006 as the author recounts his experience of the military coup in 1973, which ultimately led to his exile. While Dorfman's memoir Heading South, Looking North (1998) served as its

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blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was the historical truth" (60)

basis, the film inevitably provides a more current perspective. "A Promise to the Dead" draws haunting parallels between the Chile of today and that of the dictatorship.

Moving from a work of theater to a documentary film, it is essential to spend a moment considering these two genres. How do they differ and what do they have in common? Among the many differences between these two genres is the basic fact that film, today, can reach a much larger audience than theater. On the other hand, regarding similarities, both theater and film are visual representations made with the intent of achieving a certain response in the spectator. Through the use of varying techniques, both forms of visual representation aim to cause the spectator to connect with and care deeply about the characters and their plights. Both Dorfman's play and his documentary bear characteristics of the testimonio genre. Both works communicate a sense of urgency and a denunciation with regard to an unjust situation. As Robert Rosenstone has noted in History on Film / Film on History, film presents the opportunity to see / hear voices of the silenced (5). As opposed to *reading* this multiplicity (at which time they exist only in the mind of the reader), the voices become more real when they are spoken aloud. The spectator becomes witness to these voices, and in this way, becomes a part of what is presented.

Originally, in Heading South, Looking North, Dorfman recounted his experience being jolted between safe houses in the days following the September 11 coup d'etat. One of the individuals he encountered was a woman, whom he had never met, that drove him to his next refuge, the home of a family he had never met. All parties involved are part of an informal network that resists the inhumanity of the military regime by aiding

complete strangers to find safety. Regarding this woman who risked her life to protect his, Dorfman writes: "I will not know her name – better not to know anything about her – but years later, when I am writing Death and the Maiden, I will have my protagonist, Paulina, do something similar in the months after the coup" (Heading South 141). Since the publication of the play, Dorfman has often referred to this woman as his "Paulina," due to this absolutely selfless gesture, risking one's own life for the sake of another human being.

One of the Dorfman's primary goals with the documentary was to reunite with his "Paulina," and to document this encounter as a part of his "exile journey". While he did indeed find this woman, she does not appear in his film because she refused to do so. While sixteen years had passed since the transition to democracy, this woman is still too afraid to admit publicly that she had taken actions to protect victims of the military regime. She explains to Dorfman that she fears the reactions from her friends and family (some of whom have ties to the military or are generally supportive of the former military regime) were they to find out her true identity.

The film documents a continued presence of fear; in Dorfman's words, fear "continues to contaminate far too many lives" in Chile today (www.salon.com). Upon visiting the Salvador Allende Foundation, a building that once housed the Centro Nacional de Información (CNI), Dorfman is shown to the basement, the only part of the building preserved by the foundation, which was home to a wiretapping operation during the dictatorship. Bundles of exposed wires still remain. Dorfman suspects that they left the wires when they left so as to say, we can come back, this could happen again. These

wires are a shadow of the regime, and the culture of fear that it created after the coup. Dorfman notes upon seeing the wires that he imagines the voices of the victims that were heard from these wires, as well as those who sat at desks listening, and plotting torture and disappearance in that very basement.

The lack of legal justice has allowed for an environment in which there is little official recognition of the atrocities carried out by the military dictatorship[55]. Authorities continue to deny participation in or even knowledge of the atrocities carried out during the military dictatorship. Dorfman is shown appearing on the television program "El Termometro" where he participates in a debate on whether or not Pinochet should be given a state funeral. When Dorfman presses his opponent, Patricio Melero (representative of the conservative political party, la Unión Demócrata Independiente, UDI), to answer when he first became aware that the regime was torturing people, Melero claims that he only found out towards the end of the military government. While Dorfman argues that the ex-dictator should not receive a military funeral due to the fact that he did not respect the basic rule of military conduct of returning the bodies of the deceased, Melero contends that since respect has been paid to Allende, the same respect should be paid to Pinochet. While he is clearly speaking in defense of Pinochet, he must recognize the ex-dictator's crimes, because he attempts to put the two leaders on the same ground by bringing the once president down to the level of the dictator, naming the supposed crimes of Allende, saying that the ousted president had limited freedom of press and attempted to install a Marxist dictatorship in Chile.

[55] As discussed in the Introduction, relatively few perpetrators of human rights violations during the dictatorship have been brought to trial.

How has the military regime's discourse of denial affected society's reactions to victims? In addition, how has official discourse since the transition to democracy, which as often excluded inconvenient subjects and memories, continued to affect collective memory of the dictatorship and thus treatment of surviving victims? In his essay "Literatura, testimonio, cine y derechos humanos en los tiempos del neoliberalismo global," Javier F. Campos uses a statement made by then Home Secretary of England, Jack Straw, regarding the mental health of Augusto Pinochet in the year 2000 to create a metaphor in which the ex-dictator's "amnesia" or "loss of memory" symbolizes the mental health of Chile:

> El haber "perdido la memoria" el ex-dictador, según esos exámenes médicos que le hicieron, y antes de ser extraditado a España para que compadeciera ante un juicio por sus crímenes durante la dictadura militar, parece simbolizar que Chile todavía necesita mucho más tiempo para que el olvido no sea una estatua del pasado, del presente y del futuro. (32)

What power and effect would an ex-dictator's confession to his responsibility for others' suffering have on a people? Would it be enough to have a public condemnation of his actions, or would a confession on his part be necessary for collective healing? Unfortunately, Chileans will never hear a confession on the part of Pinochet, but it is never too late for a public condemnation, or some form of symbolic trial.

Pinochet's death – the ex-dictator coincidentally suffered a heart attack and died during the filming of the documentary, and perhaps even more intriguing is the fact that his death occurred on International Human Rights Day – deeply affects Dorfman and

forever alters Chilean society. Upon hearing the news of Pinochet's heart attack on the radio, Dorfman states that he does not desire the death of anyone, and that what he wants instead is judgment. He wants the former despot to face what he has done, and to suffer the pain of what he has done for all of eternity (if such a thing is possible). In many ways, then, Pinochet's death seems more like a final victory on his part because in it he denies the possibility for justice to the individual victims and society as a whole.

There is still a very palpable tension between Pinochetistas and those who are anti-Pinochet. Dorfman claims that a good 30% of Chileans still view Pinochet as a heroic figure who saved their country from Marxist demise. Upon his arrival at the military hospital where the ex-dictator is being treated, Dorfman encounters a group of local news reporters who ask him if he has come to see Pinochet. To their question Dorfman replies that he has actually spent many years hoping to never again see Pinochet. A female passerby, whose voice can scarcely be heard in the background, calls Dorfman a "dirty communist". This scene is emblematic of the memory struggles in Chile today, where those who support the ex-dictator are less afraid to speak their opinions aloud than those who were victims of the dictatorship.

Various film crews gather outside of the military hospital upon the news of the ex-dictator's heart attack to document the varied responses, ranging from mourning to celebration. Many people publicly mourn Pinochet, apparently perceiving his death as an enormous loss for the country. Among a group of Pinochetistas, one woman sobs hysterically while thanking Pinochet for "saving the country", and calling him "padre de la patria". She also cries out "gracias a él estamos en paz". She not only mourns the ex-

dictator's health, but she feels the need to use the moment as a time to emphasize the social divide, scorning those who are anti-Pinochet by calling out "traicioneros, malagradecidos, mala memoria". One cannot help but wonder how people such as this woman reconcile their memory of a hero with the magnitude of human suffering and loss of life that was carried out by his orders.

The film documents how the death of the former dictator proves simultaneously his absence and his presence. Pinochet's shadow is still present in Chile, his death reveals the hold that he maintains over the country. Since he was never brought to trial, there was never any public declaration of his guilt, of his role in the torture and murder of thousands. The true story was never told in a public / official space, and guilt was never admitted. Would things have changed if he had been brought to trial before his death? If he had been forced to face his crimes in the public eye? Would this hysterical woman still view Pinochet as her savior? Dorfman comments that only a public condemnation would have brought about a real exorcism of Pinochet, and that in many ways it may be more difficult to get rid of a ghost than an actual human being.

Besides the fact that there was never a public condemnation of those responsible, Dorfman blames the continued presence of the dictatorship on a weak government and people that do not put sufficient and continued efforts into publicly condemning the dictatorship, seeking justice, or even recuperating the memory of the dictatorship. While Bachellet seems to be a polar opposite of Pinochet – her father was murdered by the military regime, and her and her mother were detained and then sent into exile – she has done little to condemn the actions of the dictatorship or reconcile with the past. Many

have criticized her for her decision to send a member of her staff to attend the funeral of Pinochet. Despite some of her criticisms Bachellet's greatest achievement with regard to the memory of the dictatorship was her creation of the Museo de Memoria y Derechos Humanos (Memory and Human Rights Museum) in Santiago. The recent election of conservative president Sebastian Piñera, however, suggests that many Chileans are more interested in pursuing economic success than memory or human rights.

Returning to the central question of this paper, where are the victims amidst this continued presence of fear, denial, intolerance, and this lack of justice? While Dorfman's crew does present various individuals who lost loved ones, it does not show victims who suffered directly at the hands of the dictatorship. First, I will discuss those who speak on behalf of their disappeared / assassinated loved ones, and then I will consider the absent victims.

Perhaps the most touching of the documentary's encounters is with Aleida del Yuro, the daughter of Sergio Leiva, who was assassinated in the Argentine Embassy in Chile in 1974. Aleida says that she continues to suffer daily from fear and loss, emphasizing amidst tears that the loss of her father marked her life forever. She describes how, when her son asks her about the details of his grandfather's death, she cannot tell him, because his death is like a black hole for her, like a blurry spot in her past that she does not know or understand. Aleida suffers not only from the loss of her father, but from the fact that his assassination has been erased from the collective consciousness. The police continue to deny that Leiva was ever in the embassy, claiming instead that he was outside of the embassy, trying to get in when he was shot, which would make him

another one of the many disappeared. Sergio's daughter has pleaded publicly for anyone that witnessed her father in the embassy before his death to come forward and give testimony. Dorfman agreed to testify in court that he indeed saw Sergio in the embassy before he was murdered in hopes that some day Leiva's story will be officially recognized.

Dorfman also pays a visit to his friend, Susana, who was one of many friends who offered him refuge in her home while he was fleeing from authorities after the coup. Susana, who remained in Chile during the dictatorship, describes how she lived in constant fear, and how she became afraid of everyone. Due to this intense fear, she says that she "began to go inside," in other words, she retreated to a place inside of herself. Upon speaking of those friends who were tortured and disappeared, she says that the losses have become a part of her, that she will carry them forever. Susana describes her loss as "a sorrow that stays with one forever", as her voice fades and she is brought to tears.

Another friend of Dorfman's, Queno, who worked for 16 years at the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, becomes visibly upset, his wounds become apparent, when he speaks of a friend and colleague, José Manuel Parada, who was violently murdered and left in a ditch. During a conversation about his experience working at the Vicaria, Queno describes how he used to observe people being beaten by police just outside his window, and how he once played tug of war with the police for a woman who was attempting to enter the Vicaria. Strong enough to return to these painful memories, he only becomes visibly upset when speaking of his friend. At this point, he stops talking, and seems lost

in thought, or in a trance, he is silent. At that moment he turns and walks away, as if he needs to escape the camera's eye, which will bring his suffering into the public realm. Like many victims, he feels compelled to keep this suffering confined to private spaces. Despite the number of years that has passed since this traumatic past, Queno continues to suffer. For him, this pain is not a part of the past, something that can be shut in a metaphorical closet and sealed behind a heavy door. Instead this pain is part of the present, part of his present reality. This scene makes apparent the notion that the dictatorship is not a part of the past, but instead that the torture, murder, and disappearance it carried out are the foundations on which the present has been built. Since the suffering cannot be undone, it is not of the preterite, but instead it continues to affect the present.

Dorfman also meets with a group of women who give testimony before the film crew to the disappearance of their loved ones. They show photos and recite the names of their loved ones as well as the dates of disappearance. Later, they perform the cueca sola, a modification from the traditional Chilean dance, the cueca, which is a partner dance. The cueca sola is danced by a single woman (a widow), emphasizing the absence of the male partner.

While the stories told by loved ones of desaparecidos that Dorfman and the film crew document are important, the complete absence of the victims themselves (those who suffered directly) is quite odd. Where are the victims who were tortured? Why do they not appear to tell their stories? Their absence suggests that perhaps the Chilean community as a whole is not quite ready to speak openly about their painful past. There

is clearly still a culture of fear and the community continues to be polarized. Perhaps the victims today are those who continue to conceal their identities, afraid to be who they are in public for fear of reprisal. If victims do not speak, and official documents do not speak of victims, what are the effects of this absence of discourse with regard to victims?

One absence from the film is that of the woman who Dorfman credits with saving his life, his "Paulina". While the author specifically sought her out to include her in his documentary, she refused to appear on camera for fear that, "if her identity surfaced on a screen… there would be drastic consequences to pay" (www.salon.com). She tells Dorfman that the right-wing members of her family, which include some of her children, have no idea that she helped those fleeing certain death after the coup, saving at least one life, and more likely several lives. This woman's absence in the film speaks to the presence of fear and intolerance in Chile today, nearly two decades since the transition to democracy began.

Considering that both the play and the film revolve around an invisible woman, I would like to consider what this invisibility communicates about progress made (or lack thereof) since the transition to democracy with regard to the position of victims and the memory of the dictatorship. In order to initiate this discussion, I would like to return briefly to Dorfman's play. La muerte y la doncella represents how surviving victims of disappearance were given no space in the transition to democracy. Instead, they were excluded from the official narrative, they were in effect re-disappeared. Paulina, an ex-political prisoner, remained silent for many years, in part because she was too traumatized to put her experience into words, and in part due to the intense fear of

speaking against the military regime. She never told her story, never spoke of the torture and rape she endured during her disappearance. However, when she is finally able to speak, and decides to tell her story, she is not heard. She lacks an empathetic listener, one who not only listens but really hears what she has to say, one who validates her experience. Rather than witness her suffering, this listener focuses on the facts of her story (as if the details were the most important part of her testimony), and tells her that she cannot possibly remember correctly. Since she lacks evidence to support her story (in a context when nearly all the evidence of years of crimes was erased), she is discredited as a witness to her own suffering. Instead of validating her, this listener labels her as "sick" and "insane," making her situation even worse than it was holding her secret inside. Because her story is inconvenient for the reconciliation imposed by the state, she is silenced. Surviving victims of disappearance, based on their very survival and, hence, ability to speak, were excluded from the official historical narrative (Rettig report). In this way she is made invisible, she is disappeared.

While it is the victim who is labeled insane (perhaps because it is easier to disregard her story), the real insanity of the situation seems to be that the new democratic government (which is supposed to ensure the rights of its people, rather than violate them) requires victims to provide evidence for a crime whose very nature is disappearance (disappearance of persons, but also disappearance of the crimes themselves). What is worse, this evidence was demanded not only in the pursuit of justice, but it was also required in order for society to even validate the victim's suffering.

Moving beyond the transition to democracy, or simply further into the transition depending on one's definition of the term, "A Promise to the Dead" presents a more recent image of Chilean society with regard to the position of victims and the memory of the dictatorship. Even in a post-Pinochet context, intense polarization and a strong denial of victims' experiences remain. Amid this rejection of victims, the denial of their stories, Dorfman's "Pauilna" fears retribution should she come forward and tell her story. While she herself was not a victim of disappearance during the dictatorship, she fears that her friends and family know about her actions to help victims after the coup hence her decision to self-censor her identity. Surely having witnessed how the coup permanently fragmented many families – not only those torn apart by enforced disappearance or murder, but those divided by political disputes as well – perhaps she fears that her secret will break up her family as well. This intense fear and a persistent hatred of the other contribute to "Paulina's" disappearance.

What does it say about society when a person is afraid to come forward as someone who potentially saved the life of another human being? Is there no room in Chile for conservatives who perhaps supported the coup but at the same time condemned the violence against other human beings? What is it exactly that this woman fears? Is it rejection? Judgment? Other forms of retribution? Will her secret identity die with her? How many others like her are in a similar situation?

From the "hysterical" woman whose voice is discredited and excluded from the transition to democracy, to the woman who continues to hide (self-censor) the fact that she once aided the politically persecuted, there is a persistent disappearance of marginal

subjects in Chile regardless of the fact that over two decades have passed since the transition to democracy. It seems that the passing of time alone (as many have urged and continue to urge) is not enough to heal the wounds of the past. While surviving victims' stories may be inconvenient for the kind of reconciliation sought by transitional governments, denying these stories and willfully forgetting them may indeed cause more damage than acknowledging their validity and getting them out into the open (integrating them into the historical narrative).

Bearing in mind Laub's argument that, in order to begin the healing process, the victim needs to tell his/her story and needs for said story to be heard and validated by a compassionate listener, what have Dorfman's texts shown about the status of the victims and the possibility of healing in Chile? Both texts represent victims whose stories remain obscured. Both lack an empathetic listener. While Paulina Salas attempted to tell her story, but was not heard, Dorfman's real-life "Paulina" (most likely affected by the rejection and denial of victims on an institutional level) remains silent, fearful of how her story will be received. Will these victims ever be able to tell their stories? Will they ever be heard by an empathetic listener? What remains for victims who lack such a listener? How does this (and will this continue to) affect Chilean society? Has the trauma been integrated? If it is not narrated, told openly in public places and validated by official institutions, how will this trauma continue to haunt the Chilean people? What will these repetitions of trauma manifest themselves in Chilean society?

Chapter 3. Roberto Bolaño's Estrella distante: The Impossibility of Narrating Disappearance

As I have emphasized in previous chapters, the so-called transition to democracy in Chile has been widely criticized by artists and intellectuals alike for its exclusionary nature. Democratic governments since the transition began in 1990 have downplayed the violence of the military regime by excluding victims' testimonies from official documents, such as the reports of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (1991) and the Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (2004, 2005). Adhering to a "politics of consensus and reconciliation," the democratic governments aimed to avoid social conflict by marginalizing any voice that was inconvenient to this homogenizing project. By eliminating many victims' stories from the official narratives, what resulted was a disappearance, a forgetting, of certain experiences and histories during the military regime. Regarding this exclusion, Carolina Ramírez Alvarez writes:

> Hubo un sector importante de la llamada "Transición democrática" que pretendió *desaparecer*, del gran relato histórico, la época de represión militar. Bajo las premisas del consenso, bienestar económico y estabilidad política se propagaba el silencio como forma de un acuerdo tácito que tenía como fin ahogar cualquier voz heterogénea y disidente que hiciera tambalear la aparente unidad fabricada por los sectores políticos, interesados en continuar el plan de crecimiento económico impulsado por el gobierno de Pinochet. (39-40)

> There was an important sector of the so-called "Transition to democracy" that attempted to *disappear*, from the historical narrative, the period of military repression. Under the premises of consensus, economic well-being, and political stability silence was propagated as a form of tacit agreement which aimed to stifle any heterogeneous and dissident voice that shook the apparent unity that had been fabricated by the political sector, which was interested in continuing the plan of economic growth promoted by the Pinochet government.

Many artists and writers have dedicated their work to interrupting the comfortable flow of official narratives. These texts, by providing a space for marginal voices and attempting to represent the traumatic experiences lived by victims, have attempted to tell the stories that have been excluded from official versions of events. Roberto Bolaño's Estrella distante (1996) forms part of this corpus of art and literature dedicated to disrupting official narratives. Like other works of art and literature, Bolano's text stands in stark contrast to the exclusion of unpleasant and inconvenient memories by depicting the horrors that were lived during Chile's most recent military regime. However, what is unique in this particular novel is that, rather than attempt to recuperate these histories, it illustrates the impossibility of filling these holes in the archive.

Estrella distante presents a series of interweaving fragmented narratives, each of which is united by a violent encounter with the enigmatic assassin-poet, Carlos Wieder[56]. Following the 1973 coup d'état, the narrator, a university student, supporter of the

[56] Estrella distante is the continuation and development of the final segment of Bolaño's La literature nazi en America (1996). The latter, a fictional encyclopedia of fascist writers in North and South America, presents the story of the assassin-pilot Carlos Ramírez-Hoffman. The name of this murderous poet is changed, of course, to Carlos Wieder in Estrella distante.

Allende government, and poet, was detained and later exiled in Spain. Many of the narrator's friends were disappeared, including Verónica and Angélica Garmendia, as well as the leaders of the workshops, Juan Stein and Diego Soto. The search for disappeared persons and the attempt to narrate this period in history serve as the foundation for this detective novel. Alberto Ruiz-Tagle, a mysterious member of the poetry workshop who once claimed that he would revolutionize Chilean poetry, is later revealed to be Carlos Wieder, a FACH (Chilean Air Force) pilot who writes poems in the sky and is later investigated for his connection to cases of torture, disappearance, and murder. In an effort to understand his past and find the man responsible for the disappearance of his friends, the narrator attempts to reconstruct the identity of Carlos Wieder. The narrator follows the nearly invisible trail of the enigmatic assassin-poet and attempts to piece together a coherent narrative about the past using a combination of his own recollections, stories he has heard from others, as well as his conjectures about events to which no one can testify. Years later (and after the return to democracy in Chile), exiled in Spain, the narrator is approached by a private detective who solicits his help in tracking down Wieder. After an exhaustive search of the archive (newspaper clippings, library documents, magazines, film, and literature), the two detectives finally locate the suspect. However, rejecting both vengeance and justice, the narrator chooses instead to walk away from the man responsible for unthinkable horrors.

In a bleak, and perhaps pessimistic, outlook on postdictatorial Chilean society, Bolaño's novel shows us that there is a still a need for the detective (whose role is to investigate truth and assure that justice will be served). There remains a hole in the

historical narrative, and the truth must be investigated in order to fill this gap. In addition, the representation of the private detective suggests a lack of confidence in state authorities. Since the state is doing very little to investigate truth, and perhaps is even doing more to obscure the truth, one must rely on the private sector. Ultimately however, even the private investigation in Bolaño's novel fails to yield a coherent and logical narrative about the past. Since the disappeared cannot tell their stories, only conjecture exists, these gaps in the historical narrative cannot be filled. Although the detective attempts to reconstruct the story / history of those who have been disappeared, he ultimately fails because their disappearance has left a void in history, a story that cannot be told. Therefore, only a fragmented narrative is possible. This impossibility of telling a story about the past, combined with the lack of justice, elicit a representation of hopelessness with regard to postdictatorial Chile.

In the following pages of this chapter I will discuss various forms of disappearance and the related effects as they are represented in Estrella distante. First I will explore enforced disappearance, highlighting how the novel shows that disappearance is a never-ending crime; rather than an occurrence in the past, it is ongoing, part of the present. Related to enforced disappearance is the absence, the impossibility of the narrative. Since there is no witness to disappearance, no one can tell the story of disappearance; on the contrary, it remains a void in the historical narrative[57]. From this point of departure the novel explores the effects of disappearance on representation. The impossibility of narrating the past complicates the process of writing

[57] Both Dori Laub, in Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (1992), and Giorgio Agamben, in Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive (1999), have commented extensively on the impossibilities of bearing witness to and of speaking the disaster.

a historical narrative, of course, but the artistic representation of this period as well. From here the question arises: if telling or purging this experience through artistic means is a way for victims to overcome trauma, then in what way can they move towards healing if the disaster eludes narrative form? In addition to healing, the novel questions the very possibility of justice in cases of disappearance, which are characterized by the absence of a witness and the impossibility of narrating the crime. Bolaño uses the format of the noir genre in order to approach the question of how to tell the story of disappearance, only this time using the figure of the detective in order to show that searches for both truth and justice fail after disappearance.

While clearly a work of fiction, Estrella distante bears several characteristics of the testimonial genre. For example, similar to many testimonios, the prologue presents the author as transcriber of a story told to him by another, "esta historia me la contó mi compatriota Arturo B" (11) ("I heard this story from a fellow Chilean, Arturo B") who expressed a desire to have the story recorded (we can assume, therefore, that Arturo B is the novel's narrator). Rather than relate the experiences of one individual, however, the novel presents fragments of stories of several individuals, many of whom could not speak in order to tell their stories, leaving narrator (who is presumably Arturo B.) with the responsibility of rescuing these fragments from oblivion. In addition, there are repeated references to a specific historical moment: the Chilean dictatorship and postdictatorship. These allusions to the testimonial format and the dictatorship in Chile let the reader know that, even in this work of fiction, there reside real accusations. The primary indictments present in Bolaño's novel, in my opinion, are that genocide continues to occur again and

again even amid global declarations that it will never be repeated; many of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity continue to live free from prosecution; and perhaps the most devastating of all is that often times the original violation as well as the lack of justice and healing are met by the near complete indifference of those not directly affected. An essential counterpart to history, the testimonio tells the stories that have been excluded from the official story. Playing with this relationship between literature and history, Bolaño's novel is both a fictional testimony and a testimony against fiction, testifying against the historical narratives that, excluding so many stories, are fictional as well. At the same time, however, the novel questions the very possibility of testimony in a traumatic situation that not only eludes narration but where many do not (want to) hear the stories that are put into words. After all, in order for it to be a testimony, it must be heard.

The relationship between history and literature is explored in depth in Estrella distante. The novel is clearly tied to a specific historical time and place: the coup, dictatorship, and post-dictatorship periods in Chile. However, these serve only as backdrop to the plot. While there are sporadic references to historical events, such as Allende's government and the coup d'état, these are made only in passing and appear as brief interludes in the plot. Rather than narrating these historical events in depth, the novel invites the reader to participate in the construction of history, to fill in the gaps with his/her own interpretation of the past. In "El envés de la historia" José de Piérola argues that Bolaño's text is "una propuesta a la reflexión... sobre los procesos de (re)construcción de la historia" (248) ("a proposal for reflection... about the processes of

(re)construction of history"). The novel, therefore, requires an active reader. For Piérola, Estrella provides the outline, the basic information from which to begin constructing the text, "La novela es un índice para que un lector de la generación de Bolaño, en especial si es chileno, reconstruya esa parte de la historia" (249) ("The novel is a table of contents, so that the reader from Bolaño's generation, especially if s/he is Chilean, can reconstruct that part of history"). While knowing and telling histories from that period in Chile's past had been forbidden for so many years (during the dictatorship and even in the postdictatorship where many are eager to forget), Bolaño's novel invites the reader to begin this process.

The invitation to readers is to reflect on history as well as on the present reality that was born from the past. In this regard Piérola, who examines Estrella distante as an historical novel, argues that Bolaño's new hybrid version, "en lugar de contribuir a un proyecto de (re)construcción de la identidad nacional, plantea un reexamen crítico del pasado, así como de los mecanismos de escritura de la Historia. Para lograrlo, en lugar de sintetizar un momento histórico, lo explora, pero sin pretender llegar a una verdad única" (243) ("rather than contribute to a project of (re)construction of national identity, the text proposes a critical reexamination of the past as well as the writing mechanisms of History. In order to achieve this, instead of synthesizing an historical moment, the text explores it, but without intending to arrive at a singular truth"). This suspicion regarding a single and definitive truth characteristic of novels such as Bolaño's causes Piérola to redefine his understanding of the historical novel in order to include this new self-reflective quality; he refers to this new version as the *novela histórica reflexiva*. The new

reflectful historical novel achieves two things: "abre un espacio de reflexión sobre el momento desde el que se (re)construye la historia" and "cuestiona los criterios estéticos de su época, ya que considera que ciertas formas de escribir ficción implican ciertas formas de pensar" (245) ("opens a space of reflection about the moment from which the history/story is (re)constructed" and "it questions the aesthetic criteria of the period, in that it considers that certain forms of fictional writing imply certain ways of thinking").

Like many historical novels, through several references to the archive – including letters, newspaper clippings, library documents, and magazines – the novel proposes an examination of history. However, unlike historical novels that suggest that a review of the archive will necessarily lead to the truth, Bolaño's novel suggests that the opposite is in fact true: no definitive truth is possible. In this same vein, Horacio Simunovic Díaz, in "Estrella distante: crimen y poesía," argues that Bolaño's novel diverges from the traditional novela negra in that even after the detective's investigation, the reconstruction of knowing is not possible. The reader is left with no definitive answers, no certainty, and no other option than to attempt to construct his/her own sense of meaning from the fragments of information offered in the text (9).

To this examination of the relationship between history and literature, the novel invites us to question memory as part of the equation. As previously discussed, literature has often come to the aid of history, since the latter does not necessarily chronicle all historical events in its archive. Especially during times of extreme repression, such as the dictatorship, when marginal stories are obscured from the official history, literature has rescued these stories from oblivion. In this way, literature (fiction) calls into question the

very discipline of history, revealing its fictionality as well. Here is where memory enters into the equation. Like literature, with which it shares a unique and intimate relationship, memory is the guardian of marginalized experiences. Individual memories are the foundations of literature, which then functions to preserve this memory and transform collective memory as well. For example, in a society where the memory of the dictatorship has been repressed, literature can play a role in (re)membering these lost experiences, telling the stories excluded by history so that they can be incorporated into the collective memory. Estrella distante examines this relationship between history, memory (and forgetting), and literature, and invites the reader to question his/her established notions regarding this relationship.

Specifically in the novel, we are presented the narrator-protagonist's recollections regarding a series of encounters – some much more disastrous than others – with the assassin-poet Carlos Wieder in Chile following the 1973 coup d'état. It is during his exile in Spain during the mid 1990s that the narrator recounts how he and his friends were affected by the violence of this period. What we have, then, is the narrator's memories regarding events that took place more than two decades in the past. While these memories are not always clear, for a variety of reasons, he has found it imperative to attempt to piece together this story.

In order to piece together a narrative about the past, the narrator relies on his own memories, the memories of others, and in some cases, on pure conjecture, where there are no memories because there is no possible narrative (in cases of enforced disappearance, for example). In "La memoria de lo terrible" Jorge Dávila-Vásquez argues that Bolaño's

novel shows that memory is both subjective and relative. For Bolaño, memory is an act of the present[58]. Memory is an act that takes place in the present, so how we remember things is dependent on our current circumstances. The narrator, who writes these recollections from a space that is both geographically and temporally distant from the original events, remembers Ruiz-Tagle / Wieder as strange and different than the other members of the poetry workshops. In his descriptions, the narrator consistently but subtly reminds the reader that his interpretations of the enigmatic young autodidact are subject to what he currently knows. For example, when the other workshop members would criticize Ruiz-Tagle's work the narrator recalls "nos escuchaba, cuando le hablábamos, con algo que hoy no me atrevería jamás a llamar atención pero que entonces nos lo parecía" (16). Also, Bibiano writes letters to the narrator years later when the latter is in exile in Spain, and in these letters Bibiano recounts his experience in Ruiz-Tagle's apartment. We are reminded again, that Bibiano's perception of the past depends on the present, "En la casa de Ruiz-Tagle lo que faltaba era algo innombrable (o que Bibiano, años después y ya al tanto de la historia o de buena parte de la historia, consideró innombrable, pero presente, tangible)" (17). Looking back, he believes that he should have known something was wrong with the whole situation. However, his memory is dependent, of course, on what he presently knows about the assassin-poet. This notion that memory is subjective can be a powerful thought, however, since that means that memory is ever changing, we can continue to shape it from the present. The

[58] The essays presented in Acts of Memory: cultural Recall in the Present, edited by Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, and Leo Spitzer, also view memory as an act of the present.

focus on conjecture and the subjectivity of memory also invites the reader to examine and question his/her own memory.

With crime and the quest to solve an enigma as central themes, Estrella distante can be read as a detective novel. While clearly informed by hard-boiled and noir traditions, Bolaño's novel does not adhere strictly to the conventions of the genre. In order to understand where this novel stands in relation to other more traditional forms, I will briefly discuss some characteristics of Latin American detective fiction as well as the presence of the genre in Chilean literature. Then I will locate Estrella distante with regard to these traditions.

The latter half of the twentieth century in Latin America witnessed a proliferation of detective fiction. In particular, the *novela negra* (hard-boiled) became popular in the Southern Cone in response to the institutionalized crime of the dictatorships of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s[59]. Many writers turned to the genre in order to express their concerns regarding the investigation of crimes and the search for justice. According to Rodrigo Cánovas, the detective novel became the privileged genre in order to "rescatar el pasado" ("rescue the past") in societies where truth was among the many victims of authoritarian regimes (41). The evolution of the genre, to coincide with the rapidly changing socio-political realities, has produced several sub-genres and more experimental adaptations. More recently, the genre has provided a space to explore periods of redemocratization and globalization, as well as the crimes associated with these transitions.

[59] Some notable writers in this genre include Ricardo Piglia, Rodolfo Walsh, Manuel Puig, Osvaldo Soriano, Mempo Giardinelli, and Paco Ignacio Taibo II.

More specifically, the detective genre emerged as a response to the secretive nature with which the dictatorships wrought violence on the community. Since the disappeared and murdered, in addition to those silence through other means, could not tell their stories, there remained a tremendous number of gaps in the historical narrative. Since the enforced disappearance of persons is accompanied by the absence of the narrative, the detective serves as the reconstructor of the (narrative of the) crime. Piecing together traces of evidence, the detective attempts to fill these gaps created by disappearance.

Detective fiction became an apt response to the state-sponsored violence of the dictatorships and the climate of increased vulnerability to the other. In this vein, Ricardo Piglia has characterized the detective genre as "ficción paranoica" based on two primary elements: the threat of the other and what Piglia refers to as interpretative delirium. The genre has its origins in the birth of modern society, the society of the masses, in which we live alongside the unknown other, the other that could be a criminal. According to Piglia, the detective genre is a response to this anxiety, this paranoia, regarding the threat of the unknown other. The second element that defines "ficción paranoica" is an interpretative delirium, an interpretation "que trata de borrar el azar, considerar que no existe el azar, que todo obedece a una causa que puede estar oculta, que hay una suerte de mensaje cifrado que 'me está dirigido'" (5) ("that attempts to erase chance, to consider that chance does not exist, that everything obeys a cause that can be hidden, that there is a kina of encoded message that 'is directed at me'"). It is this paranoid consciousness, which is

threatened by the other and is constantly searching for the clues that are sure to unlock the answers of the world, which narrates the detective novel.

The emergence of the *private* detective (as opposed to one employed by the State), can be read as a critique of the failure of the legal and justice system. After all, it has been the private sector, the mothers of the disappeared and human rights organizations, that has filled the role of the detective in postdictatorial Chile, by searching for the disappeared. Regarding the Argentine case, Piglia has argued that, "El detective viene a decir que esa institución, en la cual el Estado ha delegado la problemática de la verdad y de la ley, no sirve" (4). Since the State has proven to be less concerned with truth or justice than with economic success, anyone seeking truth or justice must do so via the private sector. In this way the detective shows us that there are other forms of intervention into matters of truth and justice that exist in a non-institutional space (4). This is precisely what we see in Bolaño's novel – a private detective accompanied by a literary detective, who search for truth and justice in a society where, even after the transition to democracy, state insitutions continue to hinder these processes.

Regarding the presence of detective fiction in Chile, in "Private Detectives, Private Lives" Kate Quinn describes a boom in the genre in the decade following the transition to democracy (in the 1990s), which produced what Quinn refers to as the *nueva novela negra latinoamericana* (new Latin American hard-boiled) (162). Quinn argues that in the first years of the transition, the hard-boiled variant was popular. Through hard-boiled crime fiction, writers explored the legacies of dictatorship, and the

investigation of the crimes in these novels lead to a larger discussion regarding socio-political problems. These early novels present a world in which truth can be uncovered and justice is not only possible, but typically attained. In the later 1990s, however, a very different, more experimental variant emerged. In this new style of crime fiction, truth had become more problematic and was often presented as something much more complex than the resolution of the original crime. For example, there may be multiple detectives and multiple perspectives, or the criminal's identity and/or motives may be obscure. In these more experimental novels, experience is represented as something ambiguous, fragmentary, and subjective. In stark contrast to earlier variants, there is often little or no resolution of the enigma and justice is not served. The reader, in these more recent detective novels, is denied of conventional closure.

As previously mentioned, Bolaño's novel represents a more experimental variant of the detective genre, more in line with the novels that emerged during the late 1990s as described by Kate Quinn[60]. While it possesses the basic element of the genre: the quest to solve an enigma, Estrella distante pushes the boundaries of the genre by presenting an investigation that ultimately yields no truth and no justice.

Following the disappearance of his friends, the narrator embarks (along with his friend Bibiano O'Ryan, and later, alongside Abel Romero) on a quest to uncover the mystery of their disappearance (reconstruct their stories) and locate the enigmatic assassin responsible for the crimes. In this way, the novel combines two types of

[60] Bolaño has produced several novels informed by the traditions of the detective novel, including La pista de hielo (1993), Los detectives salvajes (1998), Monsieur Pain (1999), and 2666 (2004).

investigation: a literary investigation and a detective investigation. As noted by Horacio Simunovic Diaz, in the novel the later is posited as dependent on the first.

Through this writer-detective relationship the following questions arise: What is the connection between the writer and the detective? Between literature and truth? Literature and justice? Especially during times of severe repression, artists have taken on the task of rescuing from oblivion victims' experiences. Writers have documented historical events in both fiction and nonfiction texts. Some have said that such literary works make a call for justice. In this way, then, the writer is like the detective in that s/he is a figure that attempts to make known that which is unknown, attempts to fill a gap in historical memory, and according to some, works towards the quest of justice.

Characteristic of the novela negra, the narrative is territorialized; the plot is clearly set in Chile during a specific historical period: the Pinochet military dictatorship (including the years just before the coup as well as the transition to democracy). Violence pervades the description of the crimes, which, rather than committed by a few misguided individuals, are represented as a part of society. Due to a corruption of State forces, the detective must act as judge (acting outside the law to carry out his own form of justice), otherwise the criminal will surely go free. The detectives (one professional and one non-professional) are also themselves both victims. They are broken individuals who seek the truth. Finally, the novel presents more of a reflection on society and its ethical deterioration – people get bored of pursuing criminals and soon forget about them, the narrator has no plan to turn Wieder over to the police – than on the crime itself.

While it is informed by the novela negra, Estrella distante at the same time pushes the boundaries of the genre by presenting non-typical characteristics. For example, the detective (narrator) is not strong, invincible, or morally sound. He is so broken by the end of his search that he chooses to let the criminal (Wieder) go free. He seems caught in a moral grey zone, where he has lost the capacity to act in an ethical manner (by turning Wieder over to the authorities). As there are no witnesses to the crime, the criminal's identity is never known with any certainty. Only conjecture exists with regard to both the crimes and the criminal. There are various absent or semi-absent characters, and these are both victims: Juan Stein and Diego Soto, and victimizers: Wieder. These characters never speak or act directly in the plot (although they have important roles in the novel). The reader only knows these characters based on what other characters say about them. Again, conjecture adds to sense of uncertainty. Finally, there is no rational solution to problem – crime; there are no answers and no justice is found. The reading of the novel does not bring to reader to a revelation of the truth. Instead the truth remains obscure, it remains disappeared. Bolaño employs the character of the detective in his narrative about post-coup Chile to show that finding the truth, filling the gaps in (historical) memory, tracking down "the bad guy" and attaining justice are not possible. Keeping in mind that the detective uses reason to try and find the truth, Bolaño shows how this becomes a problem in this particular case: reason cannot be applied to this period in time because that which occurred was outside of reason.

The investigation in Bolaño's novel does not yield any singular or definitive truth. All attempts to (re)appear crime and criminal are unsuccessful, and this part of history

remains a mystery (since only conjecture exists regarding those who disappeared). Bolaño presents the impossibility of finding the truth, there are many voices in this novel, the narrator tells the story, but much of what he says is an indirect testimony from someone else, something he heard from Bibiano or someone else. Even after piecing together fragments of the story that he collects from those he encounters (he tries to construct the narrative using bits and pieces that the community recollects, he tries to construct a collective memory), he is unable to create a coherent or definitive narrative. Telling the story is impossible. Therefore the novel, like the actual history itself, denies the reader (witness) of any certainty regarding interpretation, which complicates the ability to form a coherent narrative about the novel (experience).

Disappearance and its vast effects on society is a main theme of Estrella distante. While enforced disappearance is the point of departure, there are many other forms that follow. Several of the narrator's friends fall victim to enforced disappearance, including Verónica and Angélica Garmendia, Juan Stein, and Diego Soto. Here the novel makes apparent (appears) another form of disappearance that accompanies enforced disappearance: the absence of a narrative. Along with the victim, the narrative of the crime disappears as well. No one remains that is able to tell the story. Only fragments of the story remain, and only conjecture can fill the gaps. The reader is constantly reminded of this void in the narrative. When the narrator attempts to piece together a narrative about the Garmendia sisters' disappearance, for example, he says: "A partir de aquí mi relato se nutrirá basicamente de conjeturas" (29) ("From here on, my story is mainly conjecture," 19). By emphasizing that what he offers is pure speculation, he signals the

holes that exist in Chile's historical narrative. This is a story that cannot be told, an impossible story, and there is no way to fill this void. However, in an attempt to resist the complete erasure of the crime and the very existence of the disappeared, the narrator faces the impossibility of telling this story and attempts to piece together narratives of their disappearances. This attempt at speaking the unspeakable, narrating the unnarratable is essential because in doing so the narrator takes power away from the event.

Verónica and Angélica Garmendia are the first among the group of student poets to disappear. In order to escape the post-coup chaos of the city, the sisters had decided to take refuge in their family's country home. The disappearance of the Garmendia sisters coincides with another major event in the narrative: the moment when Alberto Ruiz-Tagle, the mysterious autodidact and aspiring poet, transitions into Carlos Wieder, the sadistic pilot-assassin. The coup d'état that forcefully and violently transitioned Chile from a long-standing period of democracy into one of authoritarian rule is marked in the novel by this violent transition from Alberto Ruiz-Tagle into Carlos Wieder. The narrator makes clear that the narrative he has put together regarding the disappearance of the Garmendia sisters is pure conjecture, since he has no way of knowing the details of the occurrence (there were no surviving witnesses who tell the story). As the story goes, one afternoon Ruiz-Tagle appears at the house in the country, and the Garmendia sisters invite him to dinner and stay the night. What follows is a brutal scene representing the violence carried out by State institutions during the dictatorship. Wieder swiftly and silently moves about the house during the dark cover of night, stalking his victims. After

slitting the aunt's throat with a single stroke of his curved knife, he lets in the men who have silently approached the house, giving them a nod as they enter. The men (presumably members of the DINA) complete their task, not without error, however, since the body of Angelica Garmendia reappears one day in the future.

Also disappeared are Juan Stein and Diego Soto, the leaders of the poetry workshops. The two chapters that are dedicated entirely to the stories of Stein and Soto function as internal narratives. The opening statements of each chapter name the disappeared and link their disappearance to a specific historical moment: Chile of the dictatorship: "La historia de Juan Stein, el director de nuestro taller de literatura, es desmesurada como el Chile de aquellos años" and "También desapareció en los últimos días de 1973 o en los primeros de 1974 Diego Soto, el gran amigo y rival de Juan Stein" (56, 74) ("Like the story of Chile itself in those years, the story of Juan Stein, who ran our poetry workshop, is larger than life" and "At the end of 1973 or the beginning of 1974, Diego Soto, Juan Stein's best friend and rival, also disappeared," 47, 65). These opening declarations make the reader aware of what follows: the (re)writing of the story of a desaparecido. As Carolina Ramírez Alvarez has noted, the novel contributes to a critical revision of the past by offering multiple interpretations of events, including the perspectives of those who cannot speak, the disappeared (39). Since nothing official is known regarding the whereabouts of Stein and Soto, the narrator relies on bits and pieces of conjecture that he has gathered from various sources. What results is a fragmented narrative which offers no definite answers and leaves the reader in a state of confusion.

The chapter on Juan Stein relates a portion of the Stein family history as well as the unanswered search for his whereabouts. Beginning with the description of a photograph that hung in Juan Stein's apartment of a General in the Soviet Army during World War II, the narrator traces a piece of the Stein family history that reveals past generations' encounters with fascism via Nazi Germany. As Juan Stein once told his friends, Iván Cherniakovsky, the only person of Jewish heritage to rise to the position of general, was a blood relative (Stein's maternal grandfather was brother to Cherniakovsky's father). When Stein left home for the university, his mother gifted him the photograph with no explanation of its significance for that particular moment in Juan's life. Stein could not know at the time that he would suffer a violent fate similar to that of his ancestors: severe repression and either death or exile at the behest of fascist forces. Could it be that the ghost of Naziism reappeared in Chile and victimized Stein just as it had Cherniakovsky?

Following his disappearance, there were many rumors regarding Juan Stein's whereabouts. According to the narrator Stein "aparecía y desaparecía como un fantasma en todos los lugares donde había pelea, en todos los lugares en donde los latinoamericanos, desesperados, generosos, enloquecidos, valientes, aborrecibles, destruían y reconstruían y volvían a destruir la realidad en un intento último abocado al fracaso" (66). Perhaps due to a common knowledge of his obsession with traveling, some said that Stein had escaped the country, and that he had been spotted fighting alongside of revolutionary forces in various parts of Central America and Africa. In response to speculation of Stein's death during an armed struggle, Bibiano traveled to

Puerto Montt in order to notify the family of the deceased. Once again his search produces no definite answers when he is informed that Juan Stein died of cancer several years prior (never having left the country) and is buried in the local cemetery. However, upon visiting the cemetery he is unable to locate the gravestone. The fate of the disappeared Juan Stein remains obscured.

As opposed to the heroic and revered Juan Stein, Diego Soto was not beloved. When he disappeared no one grieved him, and in fact, "a muchos les hubiera alegrado su muerte" (75) ("Many would have been glad to hear of his death," 66). An extremely intelligent translator of French poetry, who was and at the same time pretentious and lacking in modesty, Soto angered many people who wondered: "¿Cómo era posible que ese indio pequeño y feo tradujera y se carteara con Alain Jouffroy, Denis Roche, Marcelin Playnet?" (74) ("How could that ugly little Indian presume to translate and correspond with Alain Jouffroy, Denis Roche, Marcelin Playnet?," 65). Perhaps what most angered some was that it was a short dark man (whose features suggested indigenous heritage) who was more intelligent than them.

According to rumors, Soto reappeared in exile in France, where he was supposedly married, with two children, and working as a professor of literature. However, the narrator reminds the reader that there is no degree of certainty in the narrative that follows since, "más de la mitad de las historias [sobre los exiliados] están falseadas o son sólo la sombra de la historia real" (75) "[the] stories [about exiles] as often as not, are fabrications or pale copies of what really happened," 66). It is said that Soto was murdered by a group of Neonazis at the Perpignan Station on his return trip

from a conference in Spain. Supposedly Soto, who had inadvertently discovered the group as they beat and kicked a vagrant woman, was stabbed when he intervened to aid an anonymous victim. Once again, this ghost (traumatic return) of Naziism reappears to cause utter destruction. The reader is obliged to ask him/herself: What, if anything, can be done to cease this traumatic return? In what ways will this trauma manifest itself if it is not properly dealt with?

The novel resists certainty, and it shows how the very act of knowing (saber) was fractured (disappeared) after the coup. With enigma at the very foundation of the novel, the narrative style deprives the reader of certainty at every turn. As noted by Horacio Simunovic Diaz, "las voces narrativas quisieran asegurarse de que el lector no tome nada como absolutamente cierto o seguro" (21) ("the narrative voices would like to assure that the reader does not take anything as absolutely certain"). What is achieved is the representation of a dark mysterious cloud that resists a logical and ordered analysis of the novel. Like traumatic experience, this novel too resists a coherent narrative. The reader is repeatedly reminded of this uncertainty, this impossibility of knowing, throughout the course of the novel beginning with the opening sentence: "La primera vez que vi a Carlos Wieder fue en 1971 o tal vez en 1972, cuando Salvador Allende era presidente de Chile" (13) ("I saw Carlos Wieder for the first time in 1971, or perhaps in 1972, when Salvador Allende was President of Chile," Distant Star 3). The narrator, who attempts to reconstruct a series of encounters with Ruiz-Tagle / Wieder based on his own fragmented memories as well as the memories of others, cannot pinpoint the moment that he first saw the assassin-poet-pilot. Similarly, even the physical image of this enigmatic character

resists definition: “No pretendo decir que fuera elegante – aunque a su manera sí lo era – ni que vistiera de una manera determinada; sus gustos eran eclécticos: a veces aparecía con terno y corbata, otras veces con prendas deportivas, no desdeñaba los blue-jeans ni las camisetas. Pero fuera cual fuera el vestido de Ruiz-Tagle siempre llevaba ropas caras, de marca. En una palabra, Ruiz-Tagle era elegante” (14). The narrator contradicts himself in his description of Ruiz-Tagle / Wieder, first stating that he is not classifying him as elegant, but then later saying that the one word he would use to describe him would be elegant. This contradiction shows that the narrator himself is trying to understand this enigmatic character and that there are not words sufficient to describe him.

The character Carlos Wieder is a metaphor for fascist violence in Chile, and through the development of his character we can read the violent history of Chile that was linked to the Pinochet dictatorship. Wieder presumably infiltrated the poetry workshops in the early 1970s using the name Alberto Ruiz-Tagle in order to hide his true identity. The narrator first meets Ruiz-Tagle / Wieder in 1970 or 1971 (during the Allende government), at which time the former was a university student and the later a self-proclaimed autodidact who attended weekly poetry workshops that are also frequented by the narrator and his friends. From his first encounters with the enigmatic Ruiz-Tagle, it is clear that the strange young poet has little in common with the other student-poets. Ruiz-Tagle often presents awkward poems that seem inauthentic to the other participants, poems that do not present his own voice. Claiming that he would revolutionize Chilean poetry, Ruiz-Tagle presented a foreshadowing of the violence to

come, but this was not recognized by the other members of the workshops. Scarcely speaking to the male participants, the autodidact befriends only women, and the narrator admits to being jealous of Ruiz-Tagle's relationship with one of the Garmendia twins, because he also has romantic intentions for her. In 1973, just a week after the coup the Garmendia sisters disappear (and the narrator describes the way in which he supposes they are attacked and murdered), and it is at this point that Ruiz-Tagle transforms into Carlos Wieder. During this same year, many others disappear (including both directors of the poetry workshops: Juan Stein and Diego Soto), the narrator is detained as a political prisoner, and Wieder, a FACH pilot, performs his first sky writing using the exhaust from his plane to sketch poems in the sky over Santiago, one of which includes the names of the Garmendia sisters as well as other disappeared women. In 1974 (the first years of the dictatorship have been categorized as the most violent), commissioned by the military regime to perform a project that would show the regime's interest in vanguard art, Wieder carries out his biggest project: a sky poem about death followed by a photographic exhibition that displayed tortured and mutilated bodies, thus evidencing the violent tactics of the dictatorship to those who read the photos according to the socio-historical context in which they were presented. Once presented directly to the public, who are finally forced to come face to face with his aesthetics of violence and death, Wieder's work is met with shock and disgust. Due to the poor reception of this performance, the assassin-poet disappears. In 1990 (Chile's transition to democracy, although it is never mentioned as such in the novel) Wieder's father, who is presumably the only person who knows of Wieder's whereabouts, dies. By 1992 Wieder's name

appears in various documents naming perpetrators of torture and disappearance. He is called to appear in court. There are various attempts to bring him to trial but they all fail, and before long, with a long list of other problems that are labeled as more urgent than the search of a single serial killer, Chile forgets about Wieder. At some point after the Transition the narrator, exiled in Spain and forgotten by Chile as well, is approached by Abel Romero, a private detective (an ex-police official who had achieved fame and success under the Allende government, but who after the coup was arrested and detained for several years, after which time he fled the country and was soon forgotten) who enlists the narrator in the search for Carlos Wieder. After much effort, the narrator finds traces of what he believes to be the voice of the assassin-poet in works printed in several European magazines, only at this time he is writing under the name Jules Defoe. When Romero tracks down Jules Defoe he makes the narrator come with to identify him. Although he expected to find a monster, the narrator is confronted with an old man. Asking Romero not to kill him, the narrator argues that it will do no good (because it was not this one man, but an entire system that conducted such terror in Chile after the coup). Despite this protest, Romero presumably kills Wieder, after which the two men part ways.

Through the character of Weider, the novel gives a face to (appears) the often anonymous evil of the dictatorship, although at the same time this elusive and shadowy figure is difficult to identify, to comprehend. Wieder is an enigma, nothing is really known with any certainty about him, and despite the narrator's best efforts to identify Wieder, to understand him, he remains a mystery. Through the representation of this

character, the novel appears (makes apparent) the violence and destruction that were hidden by the dictatorship. Ironically, it is by appearing evil that Bolaño reveals the very impossibility of pinpointing evil, or eradicating evil. Evil is not an individual (or a group of individuals) that can be hunted down and eliminated, but an entire system, a way of living.

It is through the character Wieder that the novel explores the relationship between literature (art) and evil. The assassin-poet's work, especially his poem "La muerte es amistad" and the following photographic exhibit that displayed mutilated and murdered bodies bring to mind Walter Benjamin's famous declaration, "There is no document of culture that is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (Seventh thesis). Regarding this relationship between literature and barbarism in Estrella distante, Ignacio López-Vicuña, in "Malestar en la literatura," argues that "Bolaño sugiere que la escritura -y la cultura en general- está profundamente marcada por la barbarie del presente: no puede escapar de ella, no puede desmarcarse ni constituirse en un espacio privilegiado, seguro o civilizado" (202).

Ina Jennerjahn also examines how Bolaño's text problematizes the distinction between good and evil. In "Escritos en los cielos y fotografías del infierno" Jennerjahn argues that the text can be read as a form of critical self-reflection regarding the role of art and of the intellectual in society. One way that the novel blurs the distinction between good and evil, according to Jennerjahn, is by presenting the two main characters – the narrator and Wieder – as negative doubles. In this interdependent relationship, Wieder is the exact opposite of the narrator: when the narrator suffers (the loss of his friends),

Wieder is exultant (for the joy of having mutilated and murdered them); when the narrator is incarcerated (arrested after the coup), Wieder is freer than ever (he is finally able to live according to his violent desires). Yet another way that the novel makes us question good versus evil is through the seemingly contradictory character Wieder, who is both artist and murderer. Ironically, Wieder's "poesía aérea" (aerial poems) closely resemble the "acciones de arte" (art actions) performed by Chilean poet Raúl Zurita and the members of the group of artists known as CADA . This reference to Zurita, a neovanguard poet who dedicated his work to resisting the violence of the dictatorship, made through the character a fascist murderer and member of the military regime, who clearly has the exact opposite motives as Zurita, causes the reader to question the role of art and literature in society. While there is an immense difference between Zurita, whose neovanguard work resisted a facile interpretation, and Wieder, whose work was incomprehensible because the author needed to hide his true intentions for violence, Bolaño forces a comparison in order to invite readers to question the role of art in society. Does art have an ethical responsibility? Is art inherently good and beautiful? Are the beauty and meaning of art completely subjective? Can violence and death be beautiful? During a two-part performance, Wieder writes a cryptic message about death in the sky over Santiago. This aerial poem is followed by a photographic exposition, where Wieder presents photographs of mutilated and murdered female bodies. From this two-part "art action" it is clear that Wieder has an aesthetics of violence and death.

The various references to Nazi Germany imply that Carlos Wieder represents a traumatic return of fascism, having spread from Europe to Chile. The very surname

itself, Wieder, is explored in the novel by Bibiano and is found to have various meanings depending on how far back into its origins one looks. In German it means "otra vez", "por segunda vez" ("again", "for the second time"), which calls to mind a second coming of fascism, brought by the German Wieder to Chile. Other references to fascist Germany include the plane that Wieder flies during his first air performance, which the narrator observed from the yard of the detention center where he was being held as a political prisoner. A fellow inmate tells the narrator that the plane flying about is a Messerschidtt, one used during WWII, and that it signals the second coming of the War (only this time in Chile). Also, Juan Stein's distant cousin Iván Cherniakovski, who was a Soviet army general of Jewish descent who died in the war against Germany. Through these references to fascism, the novel invites the reader to question the legacies of authoritarianism that persist in post-dictatorial Chile.

The novel achieves a harsh critique of the so-called transition to democracy in Chile by representing the democracy as a continuation of the dictatorship. While the novel does reference historical events related to the dictatorship, such as the end of Allende's presidency and the coup d'état, there is no mention of the transition to democracy. There is only the slow disappearance of Wieder, who seems to have ceased writing his poetry. After the height of his poetics of violence (the photographic exhibit) he disappears, but his ghost continues to haunt Chile. Both present and absent, Wieder "desaparece, aunque su ausencia física (de hecho, siempre ha sido una figura ausente) no pone fin a las especulaciones, a las lecturas encontradas y apasionadas que su obra suscita" (112-113). ("He disappeared, but his physical absence (in fact he had always

been an absent figure) did not put an end to the speculations, the passionate and contradictory readings to which his work gave rise," 104). Chile is not completely free of Wieder, but instead the meaning of his work continues to be felt. Although his work is highly contestable, and completely violates the ethical for (his notion of) the aesthetic, he has loyal followers that attempt to bring him back to Chile.

This simultaneous presence and absence of Wieder represents the fictionality of the transition to democracy in Chile. The replacement of the military regime with a democratic government marked no real change. While Pinochet was no longer acting as head of state, he remained commander and chief of the army and senator for life. Also, while this novel precedes Pinochet's death, this was a moment that served to further highlight the presence of the former dictator when thousands of Pinochetistas publicly mourned his death. It became evident that he lived on in his followers in addition to the policies he had put into place which remain in force today (such as the 1980 Constitution, the 1978 Amnesty Law, and the neoliberal economic order). Regarding this presence of the dictatorship in the democracy, López-Vicuña argues that Bolaño's novel shows us is that fascism is not simply a political ideology, but a way of life, and it is from this dark and violent past that present-day Chile was born (214).

While the military regime violated human rights, so does the democratic government by not respecting the victims' right to judicial remedy for the violations of their rights. The democratic governments continue to validate the 1978 Amnesty Law, which assures protection to the perpetrators of crimes committed before 1978. Although Wieder is implicated in a number of crimes (including the murder of Angélica Garmendia

and the disappearance of her sister Verónica), no amount of justice is ultimately served, "Ninguno de los juicios prospera. Muchos son los problemas del país como para interesarse en la figura cada vez más borrosa de un asesino múltiple desaparecido hace mucho tiempo. Chile lo olvida" (120). ("None of the cases made much headway. The country had too many problems to concern itself for long with the fading figure of a serial killer who had disappeared years ago. Chile forgot him," 111). Since enforced disappearance is considered an ongoing crime, it continues to be committed in the democracy until the body is located.

The use of the name Ruiz-Tagle can also be read as another possible critique of the transition to democracy. A prominent surname in Chile, Ruiz-Tagle denotes an upper-middle class upbringing, which is certainly how Alberto presented himself to the other members of the poetry workshops: an elegant young man who wore expensive, name-brand clothes, whose father owned a large estate, where he supposedly became an expert horseman, and a self-proclaimed autodidact who dropped out of school at the age of fifteen to work on his family's land and dedicate himself to reading the books in his father's library. The name also belongs to Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, who was the President of Chile from 1994-2000 (after the transition to democracy was supposed to have ended). During his presidency, Frei Ruiz-Tagle, did little to continue the democratic reforms initiated by the Aylwin government, and in this way turned his back on victims, opting instead for the continued protection of the deposed dictatorship. While it is a common surname among the elite in Chile, when taking into consideration the socio-historical context in which the novel was written, one cannot ignore that the name also

refers to the transition to democracy and the possible significance in terms of human rights.

What are the implications of using the name of a post-transition president for the character of a fascist perpetrator of crimes during the dictatorship? At the very least, the use of this name establishes a connection between the dictatorship and the democracy. There are several ways that this connection can be interpreted. First, since Alberto Ruiz-Tagle is the seed of fascism that will later take full force during the dictatorship, the repetition of this name both before and after the dictatorship suggests that the trace of fascism remains even after the transition to democracy, as a system that is ever-present. Secondly, the name could suggest a similarity between the goals of the dictatorship and those of the new democratic government: to protect the identities of perpetrators, silence victims, obscure the truth, and further neoliberal reforms. Finally, the repetition of the name could suggest that the trauma of the coup will continue to rear its head again and again in the present, and a mere legal transition of governments can do nothing to stop it. The trauma will continue to reappear until it has been properly dealt with, mourned.

The novel shows how the new reality in democratic Chile is founded on the neoliberal reforms that were installed forcefully by the dictatorship. This new reality is one in which nearly every aspect of life, both public and private, is controlled by economic gain and the market. In the text, when Romero (the private detective) first approaches the narrator in Spain, he initiates the discussion regarding the search for Wieder not in the name of justice but in the name of economic profit, "Hay dinero de por medio, dijo Romero, si me ayuda a encontrarlo. Cuando dijo eso miraba mi casa como si

calibrara la cantidad exacta con la que podía comprarme" (126) ("There's money in it, said Romero, if you help me find him. And he looked around the flat as if he were calculating my price," 117). Later, when narrator inquires about Romero's client, the detective responds only that he was hired by a Chilean, one who is not lacking in money. The two men talk about the prospects for economic gain in post-dictatorship Chile: "Apparently quite a few people are getting rich in Chile these days. So I've heard, I said in what was meant to be a sarcastic tone of voice, but it probably just sounded sad" (137).

He himself a victim of the dictatorship, Romero speaks of returning to Chile not in hopes to returning to life as it was before the dictatorship, not even to seek justice for the wrongs committed against him and other victims, but instead he speaks of returning to Chile in order to capitalize on the new Chilean reality. Romero says that he plans to use the money he earns from his search for Wieder to move back to Chile and start a business, specifically a funeral home. He will be an ex-police officer turned business man. Upon hearing his plans, the narrator is dismayed, "¿Y qué plan es ése?, pregunté. Un negocio, dijo. Voy a poner mi propio negocio. Me quedé callado. Todos volvían con la idea del negocio" (145) ("And what's your plan? I asked. A business, he said. I'm going to set up my own business. I didn't react. Every exiled Chilean was planning to go back and set up a business," 137). This new market-minded mentality is a reference to the economic structure of Chile installed by Pinochet. As a funeral home director, Romero plans to capitalize on death and mourning.

The critique in Bolaño's novel goes beyond that of state institutions to critique Chilean society as well, which was not only complicit in the violations of human rights

during the dictatorship, but also indifferent to victims after the transition to democracy. With regard to the responsibility of the Chilean people, in "El resplandor de la sombra" Daniuska González argues that in addition to the violence carried out by the military regime, there were other less apparent forms of evil. First she condemns the complicity of Chilean society, stating that "en la indiferencia frente al terror, habita el mal" (40). Secondly, she condemns the indifference of society even when confronted face to face with the violence, stating that "El mal está más en el hastío social que en su propia naturaleza hórrida" (41). While González's statements are very strong, it is important to consider one's role in society, especially since the limits between good and evil have become so blurred in the numerous man-made disasters of the twentieth century. There are many instances in which evil (violence, war, genocide) has been used in the name of achieving something good. This "good" is often associated with economic gain of some kind. One example of this would be the Chilean military regime's use of illegal detentions, torture, and murder in order to transition from a State to a Market economy. After so many of these genocides, "Never again" has been triumphantly repeated and yet humans continue to slaughter their fellow men and women while the whole world stands by and observes.

In the novel we see this (self)critique of Chilean society when the narrator describes a dream in which he is on a sinking ship. As the ship submerges, the passengers are left adrift in the sea, clinging to items in the water in an attempt to stay afloat. When he notices that the man grasping onto a barrel next to him in the water is Carlos Wieder, the narrator comes to the realization that "Wieder y yo habíamos viajado

en el *mismo* barco, sólo que él había contribuido a hundirlo y yo había hecho poco o nada por evitarlo" (131) ("Wieder and I had been traveling on the *same boat*; he may have conspired to sink it, but I had done little or nothing to stop it going down," 122). Bolaño's text is very reflectful in this way, inviting the reader to rethink history and to question his/her role in these events.

The last two chapters of the novel present the height of the narrator's disillusionment and hopelessness. As Jorge Dávila Vazquez has observed, "El desencanto de la generación chilena mutilada por la dictadura va más allá de lo político y se extiende peligrosamente a todas las áreas de la vida" (153). Through his encounters with Wieder, the narrator discovers that literature is complicit with evil, and he becomes disillusioned, "Esta es mi última transmisión desde el planeta de los monstruos. No me sumergiré nunca más en el mar de mierda de la literatura" (138). Not only is he disenchanted with literature, but with humanity as well. The narrator has observed that Chile has forgotten about the exiles as well as the perpetrators. Very few trials have succeeded in finding justice and much of the country has moved on as if neither victims in Chile nor exiles existed. Upon finally locating Wieder in Spain, the narrator advocates against a vengeance killing, stating that "es innecesario, ese tipo ya no le va a hacer daño a nadie" (155). While this statement is clearly a refusal to perpetuate violence, it can also be read as the choice to do nothing. The narrator never presents the notion of turning Wieder over to the authorities in order to achieve justice through legal means. While he protests, he does so mildly, ultimately allowing Romero to conduct the business that he came to Spain to carry out (presumably the murder of Wieder); he does not seem to care

very much what happens (whether the assassin responsible for his friends' suffering lives, dies, or gets brought to justice).

After the narrator identifies Wieder (who has been publishing under the name Jules Defoe) in a European magazine, he and Romero travel to Blanes where Defoe is said to live. Romero leads them to a café where he says that Defoe has coffee every day, leaving the narrator to sit and wait. After a while, Wieder enters the bar, and the narrator is certain it is him. For years he had imagined this man to be an evil monster, but upon seeing him in the bar, years later, he realized that he was just a man, and an old man at that. At the end of the day when Romero returns, the narrator tells him he is sure. The two are walking to Defoe's / Wieder's apartment when the narrator suddenly realizes that Romero is going to kill him. The narrator pleads the detective not to do it, he keeps saying that it is over and that he doesn't want anyone to get hurt.

Romero enters the apartment while the narrator waits for him outside. When Romero returns, he looks the same as he did before (seemingly unaffected by what he just did), and he is carrying a bulging green folder (presumably things of Wieder's to show his client as proof that he found him). The two men scarcely talk on the train home. Finally, the narrator asks him how it was, and he says "difficult".

The narrator's plea to Romero not to kill Wieder could be read as indifference, but it actually represents the hopelessness felt by the victims. Bolaño also represents a sort of senselessness with regards to going after perpetrator (narrator does not want the detective to kill Wieder because this will not get friends back, killing one man will not

put an end to the system), and a hopelessness with regards to justice (there can be no justice, Wieder is just a man, the system remains even after his death).

The novel offers a pessimistic view of postdictatorial Chile (or perhaps a realistic view). The question remains: Does Romero kill Wieder? While there are certainly suggestions that he does, there is no certainty. Either way, the narrator does not much care. While he argues against killing Wieder, saying that he does not want to be on the same level with the murderer, he has no plans to go to the authorities with information regarding the whereabouts of the assassin. Ultimately, the encounter, rather than provoking intense emotions and painful memories in the narrator, is very anticlimactic because he seems to feel nothing. Rather than opening the possibility that justice can finally be served, the encounter seems to illustrate the exact opposite, that there is no hope that the situation of truth and justice will change in Chile. Confronted with a peaceful looking old man, the narrator believes that Wieder will not harm anyone else. While this may be true, what does this statement mean regarding the narrator's belief in justice? Although no actions (not a vengeance killing, and not even justice) could bring back his disappeared friends, could undo their torture, suffering, and death, does this mean that justice is worth nothing? Is there not eternal reason for justice?[61] The novel leaves little or no sense of hope.

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[61] Although these advancements with regard to justice have been painfully slow (too slow for the many victims who died waiting for this justice that they deserved and to which they had a right), they will hopefully continue in the future. With regard to the notion of justice yet to come, Jacques Derrida, in Specters of Marx (1994) argues that justice has a life beyond the present and that spirits too are due justice. Derrida writes "To whom, finally, would an obligation of justice ever entail a commitment, one will say, and even be it beyond law and beyond the norm, to whom and to what if not to the life of a living being? Is there ever justice, commitment of justice, or responsibility in general which has to answer for itself (for the living self) before anything other, in the last resort, than the life of a living being, whether one means by that natural life or the life of the spirit? Indeed. The objection seems irrefutable. But the irrefutable itself

Offering an optimistic view of the redemptive role of literature in post-conflict societies such as Chile where both truth and justice are severely lacking, in "Trauma, memoria y olvido en un espacio ficcional" Carolina Ramírez-Alvarez argues that Bolaño's text offers a rewriting of history through fiction. While little has been done in the realm of official legal justice, "Es en la historia literaria, en la ficción donde el verdugo es cazado. Estrella distante aparenta dar una solución simbólica que no existe ni existió en la realidad: el castigo de los responsables del régimen militar" (49). It is this symbolic justice, she argues, that may help the victims to overcome the trauma of the past, "Y, mejor aún, les da una solución, una posible muerte al causante del horror" (49). This textual justice, of which Ramírez-Alvarez speaks, in my opinion, is an acceptance of the existing state of affairs: the lack of legal justice. In my opinion, this acceptance of the lack of justice is very simply unacceptable. While I do not share this optimism regarding symbolic justice, I do believe that these are issues that need to be explored in literature. What is justice? How can post-conflict societies navigate situations in which complete justice is not possible (when there are too many perpetrators or not enough evidence, for example)?

While Estrella distante offers a grim perspective with regard to the possibility of truth and justice in Chile, we must also keep in mind that the context in which the novel was published: in 1996, two years before the arrest of Pinochet in London. This arrest

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supposes that this justice carries life beyond present life or its actual being-there, its empirical or ontological actuality: not toward death but toward a living-on [sur-vie], namely, a trace of which life and death would themselves be but traces and traces of traces, a survival whose possibility in advance comes to disjoin or dis-adjust the identity to itself of the living present as well as of any effectivity. There is then some spirit. Spirits. And one must reckon with them. One cannot not have to, one must not not be able to reckon with them, which are more than one: the more than one / no more than one [le plus d'un]. (xx)

marked a turning point in the global perspective on the possibility of attaining justice in cases of crimes against humanity. For the first time foreign judges, through the application of universal jurisdiction, were able to bypass local amnesty laws in order to hold former heads of state accountable for crimes against humanity. Also, 1996 was four years prior to the former dictator's return to Chile where he was ultimately stripped of his immunity and charged with many counts of kidnapping, disappearance, torture, and murder in several cases, including the Caravan of Death, Operation Colombo, and Villa Grimaldi cases[62]. While Pinochet was never convicted of these crimes, as his death prevented the completion of the trials, there were important successes achieved in Chile with regard to justice for human rights abuses after the publication of Bolano's novel.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, art and literature have played an important role in disrupting official narratives of consensus and forgetting by preserving (albeit in fragments) the stories that have been marginalized from the official history of the dictatorship. Estrella distante certainly interrupts this comfortable flow of neat and clean narratives about the past that seek to put an unresolved traumatic history in a box as if forgetting and moving on free of its haunting were an option. However, rather than solve the mysteries of the past, this particular detective novel shows us that no coherent and complete narrative about the crime of disappearance can be told. Only the fragment remains. While Bolano's novel shows us that it is not possible to recuperate this history and that the trauma of disappearance eludes narrative representation, artists, writers, and

[62] At the time of his death, Pinochet was implicated in over 300 criminal cases. In addition to crimes against humanity, the former dictator was also charged with tax fraud, embezzlement, and passport forgery. For a timeline on the struggles to being Pinochet to trial from his arrest to London to the final efforts before his 2006 death, see BBC News at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1209914.stm

intellectuals continue in their attempt to represent, to purge this traumatic past even if only via fragments, broken language, and metaphors.

Chapter 4. Diamela Eltit's El padre mío and Diamela Eltit and Paz Errazuriz's El infarto del alma: The Vanishing of Unsightly and Nonproductive Bodies

Avant-garde writer and performer Diamela Eltit has produced many artistic projects during both the dictatorship and the postdictatorship in Chile. Much of her work focuses on the representation of marginal subjects as well as the interrogation of the unjust power structures that are responsible for their marginalization. In addition, she often employs an aesthetic of the fragment as a means of disrupting the ordered logic of power systems. Eltit's work, which is aesthetically rich and at the same time committed to social and political concerns, belies the notion that the artist must choose between the two.

This chapter will examine two of Eltit's texts: El padre mío (1989) and El infarto del alma (1994), exploring specifically how the texts use the representation of madness in order to achieve a harsh critique of neoliberal Chile (during the dictatorship as well as after the transition to democracy). Both texts represent marginal subjects as residuals, left-overs, garbage in order to reveal the exclusionary practices of neoliberal economic policies. Regarding this project Nelly Richard claims:

> The urban popular is one of those holdover dialects that the compulsive modernization of the Chilean Transition seeks to make uniform at all costs, so that its heterogeneous encrustations and transplants of stirred-up memories should not spoil the shiny geometry that urbanizes the city in such a way that, between shop

windows and neon signs, there is nothing without brilliance or sparkle, nothing that is shamefully dirty, nothing disastrously poor. (8)

Specifically, Eltit has chosen to represent one of society's most marginal groups, the insane, as one who does not "fit" with the homogenizing ideals described above by Richard. These non-productive subjects, whose only intrinsic value to the neoliberal order is their capacity for economic production, have been cast aside like non-human garbage. Whether they are relegated to wander the streets or are locked away in asylums, they are invisible.

Disappearance and resistance to the unjust power structures responsible for marginalization and disappearance have been recurring themes in Eltit's work. Eltit was part of a post-coup artistic movement named by Nelly Richard as the *escena de avanzada*, which marked a radical change in Chilean art. In 1979 Eltit became a member of a group of artists known as CADA (an acronym which stood for Colectivo de Acciones de Arte, or Collective for Art Actions). Between 1979 and 1982 the members of CADA, which included poet Raúl Zurita, visual artists Juan Castillo and Lotty Rosenfeld, and sociologist Fernando Balcells, performed a series of artistic actions in Santiago in order to reoccupy the city, which had been violently taken from the people by the repressive military regime[63]. For the members of CADA, art and politics were inextricable. Rather than creating art installations that would be displayed in museums (dead art), CADA carried out "art actions" in the city streets (live art). The group was interested in the city as a space to enact their art, and they converted the city into a metaphor for the nation. Whether the artists passed out powdered milk or dropped

[63] For a detailed documentation of CADA's art actions, see Robert Neustadt's CADA DIA.

pamphlets in poor neighborhoods, their art actions always involved the participation of the other. The urban subject ceased to be a mere viewer of art, becoming instead an active participant in the creation of its meaning. In this way the artists were able to fuse art and everyday life.

In addition to many art actions carried out by CADA, Eltit, Rosenfeld, and Paz Errázuriz collaborated on a project known as "Viuda" ("Widow") in 1985. The artists rented advertising space in magazines such as Apsi, Cauce, and the newspaper La Epoca, this time publishing a photo of a sad looking woman with a sign that read "Viuda". This photo was often times accompanied by the following text:

> Traemos entonces a comparecer una cara
> anónima, cuya fuerza de identidad es ser
> portadora del drama de seguir habitando
> un territorio donde sus rostros más
> queridos han cesado.
> Mirar su gesto extremo y popular. Prestar
> atención a su viudez y sobrevivencia.
> Entender a un pueblo. (Neustadt 37)

This text, however, was not necessary in order to discern the situation of the woman shown in the photograph. Simply looking at a widow calls to mind her absent husband. Neustadt observes the image of the woman as sign, using Derrida's deconstruction of language to explain this project, "Como mostró Derrida en su desconstrucción del lenguaje, un signo solamente significa al señalar la huella de otro signo, en este caso, la

huella del marido muerto" (38) ("As Derrida showed in his deconstruction of language, a sign only has meaning by indicating the absence of another sign, in this case, the absence of the dead husband").

The photograph had often been used to display the images of the disappeared, and in this project CADA turned this tactic on its head by showing the widow of a disappeared husband rather than showing the disappeared individual. In this way, CADA's critique was twofold: it condemned the regime's violent actions at the same time that it criticized the perpetual focus on the disappeared rather than those who were left behind, who were most often women. The intention, then, was to shift the focus on to those who had been left behind. By *appearing* this widow, the other forms of disappearance behind the enforced disappearance of a person also become visible. This art action intervened in the system of mass communications in order to inspire the public to rethink their perception of what was happening in their country: violence was not only being acted out on the disappeared, but also on those who were left behind to continue suffering indefinitely.

El infarto del alma bears an obvious resemblance to this earlier project carried out by Eltit and Errázuriz. The hybrid text, El infarto, also incorporates the photograph as a means to change the way the reader / viewer sees the world. In this new project, the photographs reveal individual who have been robbed of their citizenship and discarded by the State in order to change the focus on Transitional Chile from crimes perpetrated during the dictatorship and on to those committed under the so-called democracy.

Since CADA's art actions, Eltit has continued to produce work that is very much connected to the belief that united the members of the Colectivo: that art and politics are inextricable. Eltit perceives her role as writer, artist, and intellectual to be intricately linked to the political and the social and for this reason she uses her work in order to criticize unjust political and social realities. She has produced numerous works that represent the marginalized subject, bringing him / her into the institution of literature with the intention of rehumanizing him / her.

In one of her many explorations of marginality, El padre mío (1989), Eltit presents the transcriptions of the ramblings of a schizophrenic homeless man that were recorded during her three encounters with him in 1983, 1984, and 1985. Upon listening to his testimony, Eltit realized that this *loco* – who spoke incessantly of violence, political corruption, and the economy, but whose discourse was so fragmented that no comprehensible truth could be discerned from it – was a metaphor for Chile during the dictatorship. This marginal subject reflects a horrific image of neoliberal Chile, where those who do not fit with the ideals of ordered productivity are cast aside like trash. In this way, Eltit presents a new kind of desaparecido. As opposed to the detenidos desaparecidos, whose physical whereabouts remain obscured, this homeless madman has been disappeared in plain sight. While he resides in the streets of Santiago (a public space) he is invisible. While he rambles incessantly and is eager to find an interlocutor, he is not heard.

As detailed in her prologue to El padre mío, Eltit first encountered the vagabond who she would later identify as padre mío during a project aimed at exploring the

marginal spaces of the city and the marginal subjects that inhabited these spaces. Accompanied by visual artist Lotty Rosenfeld, Eltit searched the city's margins in hopes of finding a photographic negative, a subject who could reflect something about the exclusionary power structures of Chilean society of the dictatorship (11). Many of Eltit's encounters with marginal subjects were captured on film by Rosenfeld, and each of these demonstrates, according to Michael J. Lazzara, an interest in "understanding how each marginalized city dweller perceives him or herself in relation to Chilean society and to broader power structures" ("Poetics" 108). Upon meeting El padre mío, Eltit noted how he stood in stark contrast to many of the official narratives (order, healing, the "Chilean Miracle" of economic success) projected by the dictatorship. The dirtiness of his clothes and body, his position outside of the system of economic production, his rejection of the institution of the asylum, his refusal to remain quiet regarding political corruption and violence, and his utterly fragmented discourse were of great intrigue to the artist.

As observed by Eltit during each of her encounters with him, El padre mío was consistently in a state of total delirium. There was no doubt that he was insane, his mind inhabiting some space wholly outside of the symbolic order. However, he refused to be institutionalized in an asylum, and was therefore homeless. Through El padre mío we are reminded of the exclusionary practices on which the Neoliberal order is founded. As a non-productive citizen, this man has been excluded from the center, relegated to the margins of society. While society has excluded this subject who does not "fit", at the same it could be considered that he excludes himself. Perhaps he witnessed the darkest corners of dictatorial Chile, and chose to flee. Perhaps he is a rebel who rejects the

repressive and violent powers that control his country. That Eltit does not offer us transparency regarding this subject contributes to the aesthetic richness of her text.

El padre mío, which reads like many postmodern narratives due to its fragmentation and its interrogation of meaning itself, invites us to question the boundaries between normality and insanity. Eltit utilizes the "mad" subjectivity of a schizophrenic vagabond as a representation of social outcasts, the invisible, the abject. Given the context in which the text was produced, however, the representation of madness could also be used to question the society that would leave murderers free to wander the streets, failing in its duties to respect the rights of its citizens (which includes meeting basic needs and finding justice for those who have been wronged). By naming this madman El padre mío, Eltit communicates that the nation's symbolic father, Pinochet, is insane.

Due to his infected psyche, the recurring themes of violence and political corruption of which he speaks, and his inability to form a coherent narrative, Eltit identifies him as a metaphor for Chile of the dictatorship. In her prologue she frames this metaphor for the reader:

> Es Chile pensé.
>
> Chile entero y a pedazos en la enfermedad de este hombre; jirones de diarios, fragmentos de exterminio, sílabas de muerte, pausas de mentira, frases comerciales, nombres de difuntos. Es una honda crisis del lenguaje, una infección en la memoria, una desarticulación de todas las ideologías. Es una pena, pensé. (17)

This utter breakdown of language can be read as a symptom of traumatic experience of the dictatorship. At the same time, however, El padre mío's fragmented and confusing language can be read as an allusion to the discourse of the military regime. In fact, Mary Louise Pratt has referred to El padre mío as a "parody of the dictatorship's monologue" (154). In her discussion of the connections between the discourses of El padre mío and the national father Pinochet, Pratt argues that, "El padre mío parodies in particular the abstraction of the regime's rhetoric, which created an unbridgeable, tectonic gap between what the regime said and what its citizens experience" (155).

El padre mío presents the reappearance of a disappeared voice, one that has been disappeared in another way. This particular voice is that of one of society's most marginalized subjects: a schizophrenic homeless vagabond. Eltit recuperates his voice from the margins and incorporates it into the institution of literature. The intention, however, is not to argue that the distance between the reader and this marginal subject can be eradicated. Nor is the intention to make this subject transparent. Nor is it to extract some documentary truth from the vagabond's testimony. The intention seems to be nothing more than to recuperate his disappeared voice and to allow it to interrupt the ordered logic of Neoliberal Chile. Rather than present the marginal subject as someone deserving of our pity, Eltit presents him as a hero in his own way, as someone with his own voice and dignity, who is worthy of our respect. As Mary Beth Tierney-Tello has argued:

> What Eltit seems to strive for is a solidarity *through* the aesthetic, a solidarity that comes about not through pity or a false identity politics but through a recognition

> that the subject is a producer of culture, of a haunting, disturbingly powerful language that gestures at the psychopathology wreaked by the political violence of authoritarian culture. (84-85)

Clearly dedicated to the political cause of reappearing disappeared marginal subjects, but doing so in an aesthetically rich work of high-culture, Eltit belies the notion that the artist must choose between the two.

During the artists' encounters with him, el padre mío declared, "Pero debería server de testimonio yo", expressing an eagerness to denounce the corruption and injustices that he has witnessed (57). He speaks of violence, political corruption, and totalitarian power, "A mí me intentaron matar antes por él… mataron a mis familiares. Se deshizo de ellos porque a él no les convenía, ya que ellos fueron elegidos para despistar, porque él subsiste de ingresos bancarios ilegales, pero él es el que da las ordenes aquí en el país" (26), claiming that he had at one time collaborated with the powerful and corrupt men, but now these same men are trying to silence him (as they do with anyone who speaks against them). In his ramblings, he spews forth strings of names and accusations of secret plots and murder. However, as Jacqueline Loss has indicated, the value of El padre mío's testimony lies not in the factual details he provides. Loss argues, "the content is not as important to understanding Eltit's project as is the erratic style of El padre míos speech" (33). Eltit asks that her readers approach this testimony in a different way. The larger message that we should glean from this erratic discourse is precisely the impossibility of forming a cohesive narrative, the impossibility of speaking the violence and trauma that was wrought on Chile by the coup (and later by the transition to

democracy as well). This violence and trauma is not limited to torture, murder, and enforced disappearances. Instead, it extends also to the power structures that exclude and "disappear" those who do not "fit" with the neoliberal ideals of economic productivity. In this way, the text invites us to question the relationship between homelessness and madness.

We must ask ourselves what, if any, truth can be taken from this discourse. Is it possible that this madman is speaking truths regarding Chile of the dictatorship? We read the schizophrenic man's testimony and we want to disregard his ramblings as nonsense, but eerily, he speaks truths regarding power structures in dictatorial Chile. In an interview with Michael J. Lazzara Eltit affiirmed in regards to El padre mío that, "Maravillosamente, su verdad enferma, digamos, estaba muy cerca de la verdad histórica" (25). Government corruption, secret plots, the economy, violence, and paranoia are at the foundations of his discourse. In addition, as Michael Lazzara argues, "Eltit turns the very incomprehensibility of the madman's trauma into the text's ultimate truth claim," highlighting "the impossibility of bearing witness to the dictatorship in rational terms" ("Poetics" 109, 117).

What then is the value of this testimony? As is true for many of Eltit's works, El padre mío presents the aesthetic of the fragment and the representation of a marginal subject in order to reflect on contemporary Chilean society as well as to interrogate unjust power structures and to interrupt the ordered logic of neoliberalism that values only economic productivity. Nelly Richard claims that this text is "contrary to neoliberal realities that are technically oriented toward economic capitalization of that which is

'useful'" (59). The fragmented language of a homeless madman serves to interrupt the ordered logic of the neoliberal democracy, and in this way, challenges its power.

Similar to Eltit's previous explorations into the unjust power structures responsible for marginalization, Paz Errázuriz has also previously worked on projects that (re)appear groups and individuals that live at the margins of society and therefore in some sense have been disappeared. Los nómadas del mar (1996), for example, is a collection of photographs that expose the exclusion and (impending) extinction of indigenous groups. Her photos show members of the Alacaluf indigenous tribe in Chile. In another text, La manzana de Adán (1990), Errázuriz displays photographs of male prostitutes and transvestites, forcing the reader to look at those individuals to whom we normally turn a blind eye.

In El infarto del alma (1994), Diamela Eltit and Paz Errazuriz (the co-authors) focus on one of society's most marginalized groups, the mentally insane, presenting mental illness as a metaphor for alterity. The text plays with the sane – insane binary opposition. Initially, that which is insane is thought to be inside the asylum. However, as the text progresses, this notion is turned upside down. While behind the hospital walls patients love and care for one another, *outside* of them, perpetrators live free of prosecution for crimes against humanity. Thus those who are excluded from society begin to seem more human and more sane than those who have chosen to remain part of the Chilean society of the postdictatorship.

It is through this representation of the "mad" subject that the authors propose a rethinking of human rights in neoliberal democratic Chile. Many scholars and human

rights advocates have studied the correlation between democracy and human rights[64]. In fact much of the current discourse on human rights in Chile continues to focus on the search for truth and justice regarding the grave violations of human rights that were perpetrated on a massive scale during the dictatorship. However, El infarto shifts the focus off of the violations committed during the military dictatorship, and on to on to the unjust power structures that continue to marginalize people and violate human rights in the current democracy.

El infarto achieves a strong critique of the neoliberal model, which treats human beings as mere instruments of production, thus assigning no value to those who do not form part of the labor force. Eltit and Errázuriz' representation of the mentally ill as waste points to an indictment of a society in which the Other is negated, suggesting that the neoliberal State is not compatible with the protection of human rights[65]. In order to achieve this critique, the text represents the dehumanization and disappearance of the marginal subject, one that is not productive in the capitalist sense and therefore does not fit within the image of the homogeneous whole desired by the State[66]. As such, they are

[64] A series of papers on this topic were presented at the "Seminar on the interdependence between democracy and human rights," a conference sponsored by the UN High Commissioner's office, and are available on-line at: http://www.unhchr.ch/democracy/seminar.htm

[65] In Latin America after Neoliberalism Eric Hershberg and Fred Rosen discuss the failure of the neoliberal system in regards to equally meeting people's needs. They also suggest that a complete democracy cannot exist under a neoliberal system since its nature is to exclude people: "Above all, policy makers must abandon a fundamentalist faith in markets and in the desirability of economic growth as the be-all and end-all of economic development. Economic policies must be implemented that meet people's needs. This is as urgent as it is straightforward. Second, and not unrelated, development must be understood as inextricably linked to the construction of democratic societies in which people's needs and preferences are recognized as essential underpinnings of sound public policy" (12)

[66] David William Foster, in his article "Love, Passion, Metropolitan Outcasts, and Solidarity at Putaendo: Diamela Eltit and Paz Errázuriz's El infarto del alma", skillfully presents the notion of dehumanization with regards to the mentally ill, as well as the rehumanization achieved through their loving relationships. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on dehumanization and rehumanization specifically as human rights issues.

excluded from society, disappeared behind tall cement walls, and dehumanized, so that the rest of society can forget that they exist and not have to confront our role in a system that expels people as if they were excrement.

Eltit's representation of the mental patients is double, revealing their exclusion as well as their great humanity (in contrast to the inhumane world around them). Her representation reminds us that we are all united by love, and that this basic need and basic happiness exists wholly outside of the realm of reason. In Cultural Residues Nelly Richard argues that love is a form of resistance against a dehumanizing neoliberal order:

> That insistence on 'loving' as something personally untransferable because it is structured by its own laws (to love, yes; for no good reason) is what most radically opposes – as metaphor for a passionate enigma, of a secret carrying out of desire – the indifference of a regime of total economic interchangeability in which the capitalist marketplace makes each sign of value exchangeable for another without anything disturbing making a difference between one sign and another. (11)

Representing the mentally ill as lovers, El infarto rehumanizes these marginal subjects. Through her photographs, Errázuriz dignifies them, conveys their importance, indicating that they are worthy of being photographed. For her part, Eltit brings them in to the institution of literature where they speak for themselves, demanding the recognition of their aesthetic capability. Both authors work together to transform the mentally ill into lovers, so the reader can see their humanity. Much like those who displayed photographs of the disappeared , during the dictatorship, and recited their names in public in order to

rehumanize them, to save them from becoming a simple statistic, Eltit and Errazuriz make those individuals reappear, reminding us of their humanity. At the same time they reveal the workings of a system responsible for violations of fundamental human rights.

El infarto del alma consists of photographs taken by Paz Errázuriz of patients of a Chilean state mental hospital and written text by Diamela Eltit. In this hybrid text, Eltit's fragmented narrative – a mixture of genres including real and invented testimonies – is further disrupted by the reproduction of Paz Errazuriz's photographs (another form of testimony) of the patients of a Chilean state mental hospital. The written text is divided into sections. The sections titled "El infarto del alma" (Soul's Infarct) are formatted like a letter in which a female voice describes the absent lover (who is not there to satisfy her needs, such as protection, nourishment, etc.). The segment titled "Diario de viaje" (Travel diary) is formatted like a journal entry in which Eltit documents her visit to the mental hospital and her encounter with the patients. The fragments titled "La falta" (Want) are poetic verses in which a voice speaks of deprivation. In the section titled "El otro mi otro" (The other, my other) there are two separate narratives; one is interrupted by another in bold print; the first deals with the notion of the Other, while the second describes a mother giving birth. "El sueño imposible" (Impossible dream), another segment, is the transcription of a dream as described by one of the patients, Juana, to Paz Errázuriz. In the following section, "Juana la loca", the narrator questions Juana's insanity, describes her as a rebel and contemplates the notion that maybe she has elected (rather than been forced to) to live inside the hospital's walls. Finally, "El amor a la enfermedad" (Love of illness), like "El otro mi otro," consists of two separate narratives

which can be distinguished according to their print type; the first makes a romantic interpretation of illness, comparing the sick body with the body in love, while the second presents the voice of a woman dying from tuberculosis who yearns for her lover, thus closing the cycle opened by the first segment.

This text addresses the difficulty in the representation of the other, the subaltern, or the illegitimate. The artists use this text to experiment with the representation / interpretation of the other. The photographs show couples who are at the same time patients of a state mental hospital. Does the reader / viewer first notice these photographed subjects as mentally ill or as couples in love? The reader is forced to confront and question the way s/he views the other. Does he notice first similarity (people capable of love) or difference (mental illness) from himself when he views the other? And if he first notices the difference, what does this mean about him?

While photographs are often accompanied by a written text that serves to contextualize the visual image, Eltit's narrative does not intend to offer a conclusive explanation of the pictures. One may read parts of the written text as a context for the images presented in the photographs, or one may read them as two separate texts, one written and one visual. The photographs offer a view of the patients as seen by the eyes of Paz Errázuriz, while the written text offers a different perspective, that of Diamela Eltit. Eltit's refusal to offer a conclusive narrative comments on the representation of marginal subjects. Eltit's fragmented narrative stands in opposition to other testimonial works that represent the marginal subject as transparent, no enigma actualized.

El infarto del alma is a text that is both politically and aesthetically committed. Included in a mixture of literary genres are both real and invented testimonials – Eltit's testimonial describing her visit to the state mental hospital and her encounter with its inhabitants, a testimonial given by one of the patients (which was tape recorded by Errázuriz and later transcribed for the book), as well as several others, including the photographs taken by Errázuriz (which will be discussed in more depth later). In this text the artists insert the testimonio into an avant-garde, post-modern, and high-culture project in order to reject the notion that the testimonio is necessarily "against literature" (Beverley).

Eltit's mixture of high-culture and popular culture extends beyond the insertion of the testimonio into a work of art. At the same time, she introduces the popular subject into the institution of literature. With regard to Eltit's representation of the popular Francine Masiello has said that, "In each work, she emphasizes the aesthetic capability of popular subjects, not simply the aesthetic possibilities that these subjects might offer to a highbrow author who wishes to represent them in fiction" (208). By incorporating the testimonies of marginal subjects into a work of high-culture, the author defies a radical separation of discursive rank. She recognizes the inherent dignity of these subjects, reminding us of their humanity.

While some critics maintain that the testimonio aims to bring the margin into the center, Eltit's project does not seem to have this intention. The author has chosen to explore the space of the insane asylum and represent its patients because in the mental hospital the patients are each their own center, as they cannot distinguish between the

inside and the outside. Rather than attempting to place the margin where the center is, Eltit is saying that there is no center, but instead there are multiple centers. In this same vein, but in relation to photography (which is an important element of this text, presumably in part for this reason), John Berger has said: "[Before the camera] every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world. The camera – and more particularly the movie camera – demonstrated that there was no centre" (18).

In a sense, the patients have been disappeared, removed from society in order to create the image of a homogenous whole. To be sure that they are disappeared, a series of layers hide the mentally ill from public view: besides the hospital walls, there is a barred gate and a security station, in addition there are foothills and mountains, as well as at least two hours that separate the mentally ill from the city center.

The first photograph in the text presents a couple, standing arm in arm on a cement sidewalk in front of a cement building. The windows on either side of them appear to be painted or blocked, so that it is difficult to see in or out of them. While windows generally serve as holes enabling us to see through the walls that block our view, these windows become a continuation of the wall. The blocked panes prevent the gaze of the passerby from connecting with that of the patients. Unable to see the individuals that reside behind these walls, to the public the patients become a large anonymous group, a statistic, and one is much less capable of caring about a number than a group of human beings.

Figure 1. Paz Errázuriz. El infarto del alma.

Through Eltit's reflections on the history of this particular hospital, we learn that it has long been a space to house those who do not "fit" in society. Originally built in the 1940s, the hospital was used as a treatment center for tuberculosis patients. When the widespread production of the tuberculosis vaccine made the need for such a hospital obsolete, it was converted into a state mental hospital accepting patients from various parts of the country[67]. Eltit's description of the birth of the state mental hospital in Putaendo, Chile is reminiscent of Foucault's description of the birth of the insane asylum in Europe. In Madness and Civilization (1973) Foucault illustrates how, with the disappearance of leprosy, society was left looking for a new scapegoat and the mentally insane soon replaced the leper as that which must be excluded from the center of the civilized society. According to Foucault, while the figure of the leper had disappeared, the values responsible for his disappearance remained unchanged (6). He later suggests that this need to exclude the "fearful figure" has everything to do with the birth of capitalist ideology. Eltit makes a similar observation, "Con el desprendimiento del cuerpo tuberculoso del escenario social, adviene un insaciable apego al cuerpo productive, a los sentimientos regulados, al complete sedentarismo del deseo" ("With the detachment of the tubercular body from the social scene, there arrives an insatiable attachement to the productive body, to the regulated emotions, to the complete sedimentariness of desire", 68). Today's inmates are those who are not productive in the capitalist sense, and therefore are of no use, and must be expelled.

[67] Among the paupers tuberculosis continues to be a scourge, be it recognized by the health establishment or not.

Following the lines of non productive people in a capitalist society, El infarto suggests that the asylum is dumping grounds for undesirable bodies, including the homeless. Perhaps the State decided to use the physical space left by the disappearance of lepers to usurp and confine a new group of bodies:

> Es posible suponer que el sanatorio del pueblo de Putaendo actuara sólo como un espacio intermedio para producir el recambio de cuerpos bajo la tutela del Estado. Una maniobra fiscal para alcanzar la propiedad sobre los otros cuerpos ya del todo públicos por su falla mayor ante el salario, por su indigencia ante el consumo.
>
> It might be supposed that the sanitarium in the town of Putaendo acted only as an intermediate space for effecting the refitting of bodies under state guardianship. A fiscal maneuver to gain proprietorship over the other bodies already totally in the public domain by reason of their great want with regard to salary, their indigence with regard to consumption. (68-69)

In this way, a link is established between the former and the current inhabitants of the hospital: illness and non-productivity. With the disappearance of leprosy on a massive scale, the State simply scooped up another group of non-productive, and therefore undesirable for society, bodies. In addition, the segment referred to as "Juana la loca" presents the possibility that one of the asylum's patients is actually a sane woman who finds herself in the asylum due to her indigence, or that she was perhaps driven mad by her circumstances of extreme poverty[68]. She describes Juana's past, her arrival as a

[68] The section's title, "Juana la loca", makes a connection between this mental patient and Juana of Castile, the 16th century Spanish queen who was infamously given the same name. There has long been debate

young girl with her father to a hospital in Valparaiso where he later died, leaving her alone and homeless. She bounced around from hospital to hospital, needing a place to stay, finally ending up at the asylum in Putaendo. Did homelessness / extreme poverty cause her madness? Eltit ponders: "Quizás su padre y ella enloquecieron de indigencia juntos" ("Perhaps her father and she went crazy together from their poverty", Soul's Infarct 56)[69]. Has she adopted the hospital as her home for lack of other options? Or has the asylum become a social institution used to hide a variety of homeless societal rejects from public view? Can it be a coincidence that the majority of these mentally ill patients are also indigents? Maybe the real insanity of the situation lies in the fact that extreme poverty still exists in a country that supposedly experienced an "economic miracle"[70]. In this particular project, Eltit questions if an unregulated neoliberal system is compatible with the full enjoyment of human rights. According to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), States have a responsibility to take care of their people to the best of their ability:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of

---

surrounding Juana of Castile's so-called insanity. Some believe that, while she did suffer from a disorder such as depression or even schizophrenia, her mental health was aggravated by involuntary confinement. The question posed then about both women is: was their insanity perhaps a *symptom* (rather than the *cause*) of their exclusion from society or their forced confinement?

[69] El infarto del alma (the original Spanish language version) does not have page numbers. The organization of the text itself can be read as a rebellion against the norm in the institution of literature. The English translation, Soul's Infarct, however, does have page numbers, which I will continue to quote.

[70] A term coined by U.S. economist Milton Friedman and used by supporters of the neoliberal reforms during the dictatorship.

> unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The reader is challenged to question, is the asylum being used as a place to hide away the unpleasant sight of extreme poverty? Does this story of Juana represent a symptom of a system that is either unwilling or unable to foster economic and social equality?

People who live in a country that has ratified the UDHR come to expect that these fundamental rights will be observed and protected by the State. However, various segments of the text present voices that describe these needs not being met. In each of the five sections titled "El infarto del alma" (Soul's Infarct) Eltit offers imagined streams of consciousness of an asylum patient. The voice in these sections seems to speak of the State metaphorically as an absent or treacherous lover, in terms of abandonment and betrayal. This lover does not nourish, protect, or fulfill: "No vienes. No estás para liberar mis sufrimientos." ("You don't come. You're not here to liberate my sufferings", 48). The narrative repeats itself: "te dice que no serás, que no serás, que no serás amada" ("telling you that you won't, you won't, no, you won't ever be loved", 6), a sign of the trauma of the abandonment[71]. At other times the voice ruminates on the betrayal of a lover: "¿Cuál fue el instante que escogiste para traicionarme?. Ah, la traición. La noticia me llegó en una tarde pacífica. Mi anillo cayó al piso dejándome un dedo sangrante" (Which was the instant you chose to betray me? Ah, betrayal. Word reached me one peaceful afternoon. My ring fell to the floor, leaving my finger bloody. The wound caused by the fallen ring was less than the burden of mockery", 26).

[71] Trauma theory points to repetition as a sign of trauma. See Cathy Caruth. Trauma: Explorations in Memory.

Similarly, the fragments labeled "La falta" present a poetic voice that calls out in a state of deprivation, lamenting both physical and spiritual deprivation. In these sections (there are four throughout the book) the state of deprivation becomes increasingly more desperate with the passing of time, possibly alluding to the failures of the so-called transition to democracy. While the transitional government promised the fulfillment of certain needs, many of these promises remain unfulfilled. While the neoliberal model ushered in by the military regime brought substantial economic growth to Chile, this growth did not trickle down to the people. Instead, people continue to suffer the deprivation of basic needs in a country that should otherwise be able to meet the basic needs of the people. The voice presented in these sections continues to cry out with increasing urgency in order to suggest that these needs have not been met, but more importantly, that they have not been forgotten and that those who continue to suffer from deprivation will not be quiet.

While El infarto represents the asylum as a dumping ground for those who do not fit, it simultaneously suggests the hospital as a possible refuge for those who have rebelliously refused to integrate into society. For example, in the section "Juana la loca" Juana, a female patient at the asylum, is presented as a possible rebel. The intention is not to question the patient's insanity, but instead, to contemplate madness as a form of rebellion against an order which has enabled so much insanity (the Pinochet regime, for example, presented as one of its primary goals the restoration of order to Chilean society). Among her musings on the pairings of lovers she has encountered in the asylum Eltit ponders: "¿O acaso se negaron a participar en la forma de un mundo que que les

pareció poco sensible?" ("Or maybe they have refused to participate in the order of a world that hardly seemed sensible to them?", 40) Could it be that madness is a society that has left perpetrators who are responsible for the horrific violence and crimes against humanity of the dictatorship free from any punishment for their wrongs? In this light, the mental hospital takes on the appearance of a place of refuge for those who found the world outside to be insane. And while this work refers to Chilean situation, the nearly anonymous subjects in the text could be from any country organized by the same economic principles.

The authors achieve a disturbing representation of human beings as waste, unused materials deemed as worthless. Eltit's careful word choice reveals how these individuals have been dehumanized. She uses the word "catalogados"(catalogued) to represent how these human beings have been reduced to categories, like animals or objects, and "residuales" (residual) to represent these individuals as unused and unwanted material that can simply be discarded at will. Nelly Richard has also used the term residual to refer to that which was excluded from the transition to democracy, including memories and social subjects that were deemed invonvenient for the false image of consensus projected by transitional governments (Cultural Residues 15). Richard argues that anything or anyone that was considered unsightly or disastrously poor was hidden in the attempt to create the image of a beautiful, clean, and economically successful democracy (8). It is precisely amid this triumphant discourse of the Chilean "economic miracle" that Eltit posits her text, reminding us of that which has been excluded and making us question what else may have been left out. In order to cement this image of human

beings as waste, the final photograph in El infarto shows several patients, alone in the hospital's decaying hallways, one of them strewn on the floor like a discarded piece of garbage.

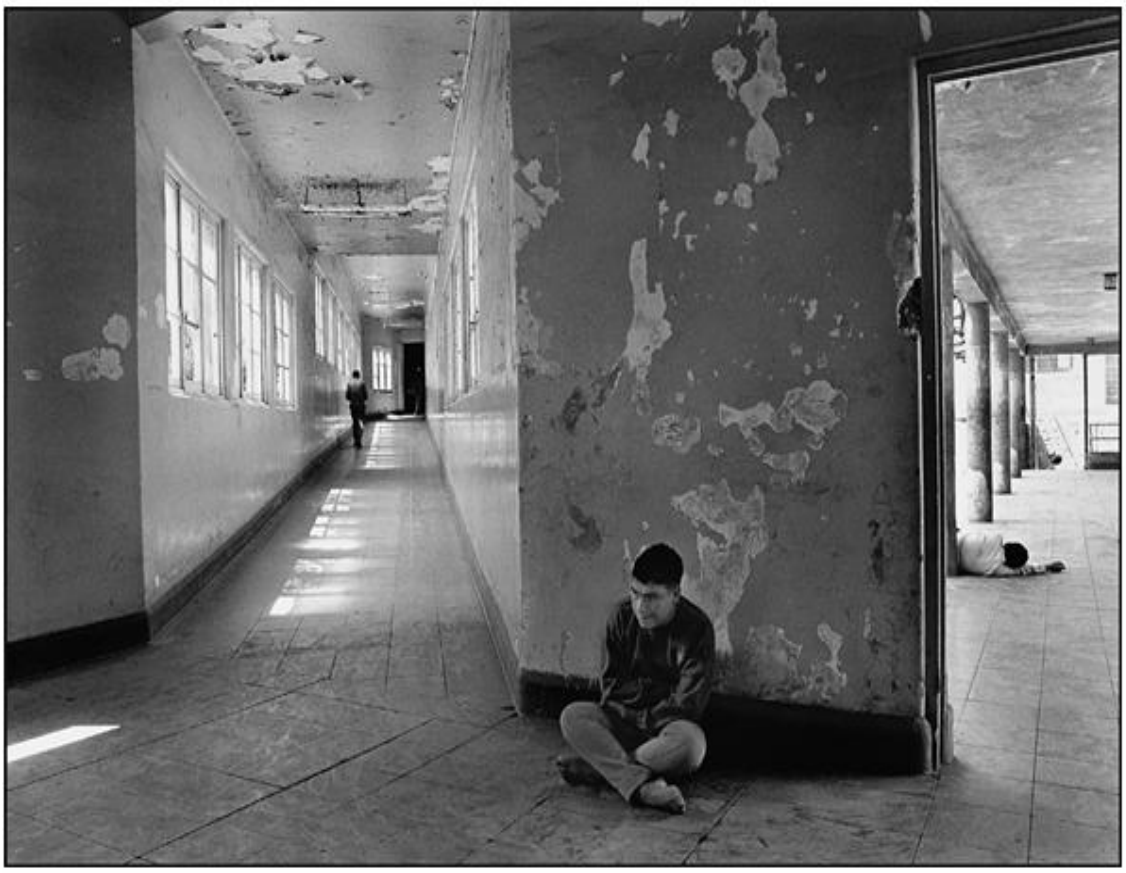

Figure 2. Paz Errázuriz. El infarto del alma.

This representation of humans as disposable objects serves a means of exposing the brutal nature of the neoliberal model, which values individuals only as instruments of production. Due to the fact that the mentally ill are incapable of being productive citizens, ones who can generate profit for the State, they are excluded from society. This

conceptualization of the human being as instruments of production sounds eerily similar to Tzvetan Todorov's description of totalitarian ideology, "Totalitarian ideology sees the individual as an instrument, as a means by which to realize a political or even a cosmic project" (158). Deemed as worthless excess material, the nation has eliminated them from its body, much like the human body purges wastes such as vomit, urine, or excrement.

Eltit describes the patients as "enfermos residuales, en su mayoría indigentes, algunos de ellos sin identificación civil, catalogados como N.N." ("The remaining patients, most of them indigent, some without civilian identification, catalogued as n.n.", 10). Stripped of their names, "that cardinal sign of human individuality" the patients become part of an anonymous, insignificant mass (Todorov 160). The patients have been reduced to nameless files in the hospital's registration system. Continuing with this idea of anonymity, Eltit refers to a few patients by name, although even in these cases it is only a first name that is used. Stripping them of their names opens the door to the violation of several of their rights. For example, Article 6, which states that "Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law". Without legal names, they are no longer persons before the law. The patients have been purged from the nation's body. Without names or the proper legal identification, their nationality is nonexistent, which violates the right described in Article 15: Everyone has the right to a nationality", and also the right described in Article 21: "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country", since without identification of citizenship they will be unable to vote. Stripped of their legal identities, the patients are placed in an

extremely precarious position. Regarding this vulnerability Judith Butler has argued that certain social subjects have "fallen outside of the human" as a result of being excluded from the forces that humanize in the public sphere (32). As opposed to the discourses utilized during the dictatorship that actively worked to dehumanize, Butler argues that today there is a, "refusal of discourse that produces dehumanization as a result" (36). While much less apparent, this new form of dehumanization continues to threaten marginal subjects. As for the patients, Eltit describes them as "Chilenos, olvidados de la mano de Dios, entregados a la caridad rígida del Estado" ("Chileans, forsaken by the hand of God, delivered unto the State's strict charity", 16). These patients are left in the care of a State that does not recognize many of them as citizens, but instead as a mass of insignificant left-overs, as an abject excess.

David Weissbrodt has argued that the problem of statelessness, "the condition of having no legal or effective citizenship", is a critical human rights issue due to the fact that "many states only allow their own nationals to exercise full civil, political, economic, and social rights within their territories" (246, 248)[72]. Some human rights advocates even characterize the right to a nationality as the foundation on which all other rights are based. This vast importance placed on nationality, of course, contradicts the principles on which human rights are based: that one has human rights simply because one is a human being, and while Weissbrodt names several human rights instruments that aim

[72] Weissbrodt summarizes two distinct forms of statelessness, *de jure* and *de facto*, with the first being the simple designation of having a nationality or not, while the second is a more complicated notion of statelessness, one in which the individual may technically have a nationality, but is unable to enjoy the rights associated with this status (251). Regarding *de facto* statelessness, Weissbrodt notes that "sometimes governments commit what is known as administrative ethnic cleansing, or erasure" of undesirable groups (264). While what is shown in El infarto del alma is not an ethnic-based cleansing, it is certainly an administrative erasure of an undesirable group.

specifically to preclude statelessness from determining one's enjoyment of rights, in practice, this has not always been the case.

The text's representation of the mentally ill as disposable raises the questions: Who is human? Is humanity a state that can be given and taken away? Some have questioned whether the language of the very Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has contributed to the mentally ill being excluded from the human category. Article 1 states that "all human beings…are endowed with reason and conscience", which leaves out the mentally ill as well as children, suggesting that they are not humans, and therefore have no rights[73].

Other human rights violations made possible by the dehumanization of the patients include several forms of State control over bodies. The patients are incarcerated, violated of their fundamental right to freedom, which is described in several Articles of the UDHR: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1), "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" (Article 3), "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile" (Article 9), "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (Article 13).

One patient's body bears witness to the inscription of the State's power. This patient reveals a scar just above her naval, communicating to her visitors that she had

[73] Jacqueline Bhaba pointed out the language as exclusionary in her article "The Child: What Sort of Human?". In a related argument, Samera Esmeir has called attention to a problematic relationship between humanity and law, one in which humanity has been converted into a juridical status. According to Esmeir, international human rights law "aspires to name, define, call into being, redeem the human" (1544), setting up a situation where there are those recognized as humans who have such rights and those who are "humans-to-be" who await recognition as such by the law and the rights that come with this status. She also indicts the humanities and human rights organizations for reproducing the notion, albeit with good intentions, that humanity is a status that can be given and taken away.

been pregnant, "gorda… de dos, de ocho meses" ("big…two, eight months", 18). Her scar is a sign of her sterility, the absence of her uterus, as she was victim of a forced abortion and hysterectomy. The State has forbidden her the natural ability to procreate, with the intent of reducing the number of future unproductive citizens, and in doing so it has violated her right to found a family as guaranteed in Article 16 of the UDHR, "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family… The family is the natural and fundamental group unity of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State". In this case, the state not only did not protect her right to a family, but it was the agent that robbed her of the right to do so. Related to this inability to produce a family, the section titled "El sueño imposible" ("The impossible dream"), presents the transcription of the patient Juana's dream as she described it to Paz Errázuriz. In her dream Juana has a baby with her partner José as well as a home of her own. In her dream, she is married to José, and she is happy. This, of course, it just a dream because none of this is possible for Juana, a patient at the state mental hospital. Juana's dream represents a break with Chilean 19th century nation building narratives, in which the family and the house were metaphors for the nation. Instead, as Gisela Norat asserts, El infarto represents homelessness and fragmentation of the family as the new metaphors for the nation.

Since El infarto is a work containing both written text and photographs (and the former is not merely an explanation of the latter, but instead each can be read independently of the other), it is important to do not only a textual analysis, but a photographic analysis as well. The inclusion of photographs is essential to this project

because the photograph is the zero degree of the testimonial. In this vein, Barthes states that "in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*", and in regard to the role of the photographer he says that, "Photography's inimitable feature (its *noeme*) is that someone has seen the referent (even if it is a matter of objects) in *flesh and blood*, or again *in person*" (76, 79). Susan Sontag and René Jara have described the photograph and the testimonio in similar terms: Sontag's assertion that the photograph is more than an "interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask" coincides with Jara's description of the testimonio as "una huella de lo real" (a trace of the real) (Sontag, 154; Jara, 2). As such, Errázuriz's photographs prove that she was witness to what she has captured with her lens, and consequently that which she photographed either does or has existed.

Errázuriz uses the photograph as a form of resistance against the neocapitalist society that depends on this very thing (images) as a tool used to create an endless desire for market goods. Susan Sontag has also commented on the uses of the camera to incorporate the individual in the fetishized world of late capitalism, stating that:

> The production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by a change in images. The freedom to consume a plurality of images and good is equated with freedom itself. The narrowing of free political choice to free economic consumption requires the unlimited production and consumption of images. (178)

Interestingly, Errázuriz achieves a critique of Neoliberal society using its most important tool against itself. Using photographs, she uncovers the hidden truths about such a society.

The photographs prove the existence of these subjects and they become the medium through which the viewer can recognize them as individuals, as humans, rather than statistics. They awaken the conscience of the reader / viewer. The photographed subjects stare out from the page at the viewer, directly addressing him / her, demanding his / her attention. Their eyes seem to say, "I see you, therefore I exist, and you see me, thus both of us exist in the same place, the asylum." The photographs facilitate this eye contact between the reader and those she has been ashamed to his face, and this face-to-face encounter demands and ethical response[74]. The fixed stares of the photographed subjects also cause the reader to question her role in this encounter: who is the observer and who is the observed?

Eltit herself comments on the vital role of the photographs in the artists' attempt to represent these marginal subjects, "¿Que sería describir con palabras la visualidad muda de esas figures deformadas por los fármacos, sus difíciles manías corporales, el brillo ávido de esos ojos que nos miran, nos traspasan y dejan entrever unas pupilas cuyo horizonte está bifurcado?" ("What would it be, putting into words the mute visuality of these figures deformed by medication, their bodies' difficult manias, the eager gleam of those eyes looking at us, piercing us, and permitting the glimpse of pupils whose horizon forks off?", 10). In this regard, John Berger has said that seeing comes before words,

[74] Lévinas articulates his theory of the face and posits the face-to-face encounter as the foundation for ethics in Totality and Infinity.

which means that an image may be able to convey something that words are inadequate to represent. The photograph is not a symbol, like language, which is separated from its referent. Instead of seeing the photograph (or the words), we see the referent directly.

The majority of the photographs show patients who are posing for the camera, clearly aware of the fact that they are being photographed. They pose in full-frontal positions, communicating their willingness to be photographed as well as their personal agency. This position clearly communicates that they are conscious of a future reader, and even addressing this reader. Diane Arbus, who photographed so-called "freaks" to show that humanity is not one, also encouraged her subjects to pose, making evident their awareness of the photographic session. Arbus looked at people we do not want to look at. She not only photographed them, but she did so in such a way that her subjects stared back at the viewer making it impossible to avoid meeting their gaze. Similarly, Errázuriz's subjects are not submissive; they dare to look the reader directly in the eye. The viewer can no longer avoid connecting with these subjects and is forced to look at the abject figure, the one we have been trying so hard to ignore and forget. Like Arbus, Errázuriz reminds us that civilization is not unified; on the contrary, those who are different, those who do not fit, are excluded.

Errazuriz' photographs show individuals that we normally do not see, in order to reveal the system that has made them invisible, taken away their human status by labeling them insane. The photograph becomes the vehicle through which the patients can impose themselves on society's gaze. As previously mentioned (and displayed in figure 1), the first photograph shows a couple posing for the camera on a cement walkway in front of a

cement building with windows that have been painted shut. While these walls and painted windows normally serve to block the gaze of the outsider from connecting with that of the patient, for the purposes of the photograph, we are now obliged to look directly at the couple who stares out at us from the page. This is a figuration of imprisonment, a visualization of that which is not supposed to be seen. In a similar regard, the voice in some of Eltit's narrative speaks out to the reader, "Te escribo: ¿Has visto mi rostro en algunos de tus sueños." ("I write you: Have you seen my face in any of your dreams?", 6). Both the images and the narrative voice direct themselves to the reader, demanding his/her attention and recognition.

Much like individuals who were disappeared under the dictatorship, the people presented in this text have also been disappeared in a fashion, only this time under a democracy. The photograph is used to remind us of those individuals who have been excluded from society. In this regard, Sandra Lorenzano has said: "Las fotos de desaparecidos le dicen al estado que los que ahora no están, existieron. Las fotos de Paz Errázuriz son las de nuestros aparecidos; rompiendo un tácito pacto de silencio, nos muestran a aquellos que hablan el lenguaje excluido de la locura" (95) (The photographs of the disappeared say to the State that those who are not here now, did exist. The photos of Paz Errázuriz are of our appeared; they break a tacit pact of silence, they show us those who speak the excluded language of madness). The photographs taken by Errázuriz (re)appear these individuals, obliging us to look at them and reminding us that they exist.

One of the goals of the Eltit and Errázuriz project was to restore dignity – in the sense of human dignity, which is a fundamental part of human rights – to these subjects.

This dignity is, for Elit and Errázuriz, restored through the artistic practice; as Sontag has said that, "to photograph is to confer importance" (28). In her encounters with the patients, Errázuriz treats them with the same respect and dignity that she would treat the most important personality. The patients recognize this respect on the part of the photographer and they invite her into their family. Eltit comments in her travel log that the patients called Errázuriz: "la tia que les toma fotografías que prueban, aun frente a ellos mismos, que están vivos, que después de todo conservan un pedacito de ser, aunque habiten como enfermos crónicos en el hospital mas legendario de Chile, el manicomio del pueblo de Putaendo" ("The aunt who takes their pictures, which prove, even to them, that they are alive, that after all they preserve a small piece of humanity, even though they dwell as the chronically ill in Chile's most legendary hospital, the insane asylum in the town of Putaendo, now called Philippe Pinel", 12). By taking their picture, Paz Errázuriz is able to confirm their images to them, to prove that they exist. The photographs confirm the humanity of the patients, both to the patients themselves as well as to the reader.

Nelly Richard has commented on Errázuriz' interaction with even the most marginal subjects, noting how the photographer treats them with the same respect and dignity that she would a professional model. In doing so, Richard contends, she restores some level of power to these subjects (163,166). Richard is optimistic that Errázuriz's attempt to restore dignity is successful, that she is able to "make up for the effects of social disdain" (163).

Also, in his analysis of several of the text's photographs, David William Foster points out that the couple appearing on the patio in front of the clothes line is posing for a semi-formal portrait. The couple is dressed in a dignified fashion; both the man and the woman wear formal attire, and most notably the man wears a hat and the woman carries a purse (167). Through their formal dress and pose, the portrait captures the couple's dignity.

For her part, Eltit attempts to restore the dignity of these marginal subjects by bringing them into the institution of literature. With regard to Eltit's representation of the popular subject Francine Masiello has said that, "In each work, she emphasizes the aesthetic capability of popular subjects, not simply the aesthetic possibilities that these subjects might offer to a highbrow author who wishes to represent them in fiction" (208). By inserting the testimonies of marginal subjects into a work of high-culture, the author defies a radical separation of discursive rank. Eltit recognizes the inherent dignity of these subjects, and reminds the reader of their humanity.

Errázuriz' lens and Eltit's text capture the existence of love and passion within the asylum walls, and it is through their focus on love that the authors transform these subjects from mental patients into lovers (Forcinito 7). Witnessing the love of the mental patients reminds us of their humanity. The photographs capture sacred moments shared between these lovers, while the written text incorporates their voices and their testimonies of love. One couple describes the simple nature of their amorous relationship, "Él me da té y pan con mantequilla. La cuido yo" ("He gives me tea with bread 'n' butter. I take care of her", 16). While they may not know how to perform

simple tasks based upon reason such as telling time or reading, they do know how to love and care for one another. Through love, these mental patients deny the solitude condemned to them via incarceration. While the State has denied their subjectivity (many lack legal names or identification), they recuperate this through finding a partner, in a sense they look for and find themselves in a partner. Their companion becomes their home, gives them an identity as well as their only link to a world that has turned its back on them. Although society has rejected them and the living conditions are perhaps not ideal, inside these people can love more deeply having escaped the ordered insanity of the outside world. Through the representation of these couples, the text shows that inside the asylum great humanity exists even in the absence of human rights.

Figure 3. Paz Errázuriz. El infarto del alma.

The text explores the relationship between love and insanity, presenting reflections such as: “Después de todo los seres humanos se enamoran como locos. Como locos” (“When all’s said and done, human beings fall in love like lunatics. Like lunatics”, 19). Eltit and Errázuriz suggest that amorous passion is more intense for those living behind the hospital walls. The patients live free from society’s “insane” amount of reason. Their amorous pairings break with established models, la belleza aliada a la fealdad, la vejez anexada a la juventud, la relación paradójica del cojo con la tuerta, de la letrada con el iletrado” (“beauty allied with ugliness, age annexed to youth, the paradoxical relationship of the lamed with the one-eyed, of the literate with the illiterate”, 19). Perhaps they are more able to live according to their basic desires because they never entered into the symbolic order. On the contrary, for those who live outside the walls, neoliberal economic policies have caused desire to be monopolized by a want for consumer goods and a need to be productive because in order to benefit the capitalist system one must aspire only to work, to become a machine of production.

The section titled “El otro mi otro” deals with love for the Other. Through the representation of a pregnant mother, the primary focus is on pregnancy as a state which is characterized by the inability to separate self from other. Both the structure and the content of this section call to mind Julia Kristeva’s essay “Stabat Mater,” in which the author articulates her desire for a new ethics, one that is grounded in motherhood, one that she designates “herethics.” Kristeva calls attention to the pregnant mother as one who permits herself to be inhabited by the Other. The pregnant woman gives up her flesh for the sake of her child; she realizes that she not only has an obligation to herself but to

the Other as well. As Kristeva points out, it is because of this that the pregnant woman is uniquely capable of loving the other. Like the pregnant woman, the mentally ill see no distinction between inside and outside, self and Other, which may make them capable of a deeper form of love. In her contemplation of the unique pairings of romantic lovers, Eltit notes that "La forma de la locura es su tendencia a fundirse, a confundirse con el otro. La ausencia de límites es la falta, la gran falta que marca el contorno de la enfermedad" ("The form of lunacy is its tendency to fuse, to confuse itself with the other. The absence of boundaries is the want, the great fault that marks the illness's contour", 36-38). Just as Kristeva does in "Stabat Mater", Eltit and Errázuriz propose a new ethics in neoliberal democratic Chile, one based on love and caring for the Other. Eltit observed this ethics inside the asylum's walls, "buscan disminuir su mal al perderse en otra cara que les reafiirma, pese a todo, su profunda humanidad" ("they seek to diminish their malady by losing themselves in another face that reaffirms for them, in spite of all else, their profound humanity", 74). The lesson that can and should be learned from these insane individuals, these social outcasts, is that love is what unites us all, it is at the foundations of being human.

El padre mío and El infarto del alma use the representation of madness to make a disturbing critique of democratic neoliberal Chile. Both texts propose a reconsideration of dehumanization and disappearance, focusing on the exclusionary practices of post-coup power structures (namely, the neoliberal order, which was installed by the dictatorship and legitimized by every subsequent democratic government). As can be expected with an Eltit text, the reader is made to feel uncomfortable and unsettled, and

she is left with several questions such as: What is the function of the mental institution? Is humanity a condition that can be given and taken away? Who is human? And who gets to decide who is human? What is the connection between poverty and madness, or alterity and madness? What role do we play in the exclusion (disappearance) of these and other marginal subjects?

Conclusions

This dissertation has shown that the practice of disappearance is not confined to the dictatorship period. On the contrary, many forms of vanishing continue in neoliberal democratic Chile. First, enforced disappearance is a crime that is ongoing in the present, one that will continue until the body is discovered. In addition, new forms of exclusion and silencing have transformed since the transition to democracy. For example, both social subjects (such as surviving victims) and memories that were deemed inconvenient for the projects of consensus and reconciliation have been made invisible. Many sites of memory have also been voided of their historical significance, making them simultaneously present and absent. The most recent desaparecidos are those who have been made invisible by the dehumanizing force of the unregulated market economy, which values individuals based only on their production value. The texts studied herein, therefore, allow for a broader understanding of disappearance, one that invites us to contemplate forms of exclusion and silencing that occur not only the Chilean postdictatorship, but neoliberal democracies in general.

The disappearance of social subjects, marginal histories, and sites of memory from the official history has contributed to denial and forgetting in Chilean society. Due in small or in large part to this lack of historical narrative, some remain staunch supporters of the former dictator, remembering Pinochet as a national hero who saved the country from Marxist ruin. On the opposite side of the spectrum, there are those who remember Pinochet as a tyrant, a violent dictator who carried out a brutal transition from

State to Market economy in Chile at the expense of massive human suffering and violation of human rights. There are also a wide variety of perspectives that reside between these two ends of the spectrum, but what is certain is that there is no consensus with regard to the memory of the Pinochet dictatorship or the effect it continues to have in Chile today.

During a recent trip to Chile I was faced with the magnitude of this divide with regard to memory. In the days surrounding the anniversary of September 11, I witnessed a group of individuals hanging Salvador Allende posters in the streets of Valparaiso in order to announce a public commemoration of the former president to take place on September 10, the eve of the anniversary of the coup. Shortly after these posters were hung, a second group followed that swiftly and violently tore down the posters, making sure to get every last shred of Allende's face off the public wall where it had been displayed. This tearing down of the posters, for me, was a metaphor for Chile today: memory versus forced forgetting via the erasure of undesirable images of the past. The question for me became, how did these contrasting memories come about? What were/are the forces that caused these divergent memories? And finally, is there any hope that at least some of these erased histories will be (re)membered again at some point in the future?

Focused more on economic success – and perhaps blinded by the market's illusion of an eternal present – rather than human rights, democratic governments since the transition have failed to recover the history of the dictatorship; or perhaps rather than a failure it is an achievement in disappearing certain histories from the official version of

events. Political forces since the transition have manipulated the memory of the dictatorship via official narratives that downplayed the violence of the past and obscured many victims' stories. Dedicating themselves to a politics of consensus, transitional governments silenced any voice that did not fit within the (forced and false) image of a homogenous and neatly reconciled whole. As Richard has observed, the Transition sought to homogenize and beautify so as to avoid stirring up any undesirable images of the past, hence the exclusion of subjects, truths, conflicts, and memories that were inconvenient to this project.

Following the government's lead, a notable portion of the Chilean public remains extremely reluctant to think about, remember, return to the past, preferring instead to "live in the present" (as if the present was somehow completely detached from, unmarked by the past). Many Chileans would rather ignore this dark history and instead focus on the "good" achieved by Pinochet. This "good" was nearly always equated with some form of economic success. One woman I met argued that while she did not condone the violence used by the regime, it was thanks to Pinochet that she is now able to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle (with a large house in an affluent neighborhood of Viña del Mar, several maids, and a brand new SUV). I wondered if she would have said the same thing had she been forced to personally witness the torture of even one of the thousands of victims. For this woman (and for many others like her), the massive and grave human rights violations carried out by the military regime are viewed an acceptable cost to pay for the economic success felt by the middle and upper classes. While it is difficult to believe that human beings are willing to offer up the pain and suffering of another in

order for them to have more *things*, Elaine Scarry illuminates the issue through her observations regarding the insurmountable distance between the one who is in pain and the one who is not. In a similar vein, Hernán Vidal, in Poética de la tortura política, has argued that until these violations (such as torture) are directly felt by the middle class, they will continue to down play them.

This reluctance to truly confront the past could be due in part to the fact that the truth was manipulated for such an extensive period of time (not only during the dictatorship, but after the transition as well, when official reports such as that of the Truth Commission, continued to obscure many parts of the story) that it is now hard to believe the opposite of what they were convinced of for so long. Or perhaps the truth is too painful for many to accept. Perhaps it is easier to go on believing that nothing bad happened in Chile, that neighbors and relatives and coworkers could have possibly been responsible for violations of human rights. Perhaps it is too unbearable to comprehend one's own complicity in the violence and suffering. Perhaps they feel threatened by the past because they know nothing can be done to change the events, to undo the suffering, to take back the torture, or bring back from the dead the thousands who have been disappeared or murdered.

While many may not want to remember the past for a variety of reasons, in order to truly heal, Chileans must confront their traumatic past; they must come to know and tell these histories. A collective forgetting of the past, or amnesia, will only allow the trauma to repeat itself again in the future. Some may be telling themselves that they have moved on and no longer need to deal with the past, this is simply not true. While these

traumatic repetitions may not take the exact same form, they will continue to manifest themselves, as was seen in the repetitions of disappearance evidenced in the previous chapters. Therefore, in order to be truly free from the return of the past, Chileans, whether they want to or not, must confront the traumatic events of the dictatorship.

In the midst of this climate of forgetting, artists and intellectuals alike have pondered: what is the role of literature? Do art and literature have an ethical responsibility? How do texts struggle against not only the horrors committed by the dictatorship, but also the silence that is currently serving as its accomplice? The answer offered by the texts examined in this dissertation as well as myself is that yes, literature does have an ethical responsibility in society. Art and literature can (and should) play an important role in preserving marginal voices and histories, while at the same time allowing us to empathize with the plight of our fellow human being. Through the use of literary devices, texts can also make apparent (appear) the forms of injustice that may be otherwise difficult to see, while also inviting us to question our role in the situation.

Literature, specifically testimonial literature, is perhaps best capable of capturing a "huella de lo real," a trace of a reality that is otherwise unrepresentable and hence insurmountably distant from the one who has not lived it (Jara 2). While language cannot possibly capture the actual experience, there is still a vital importance that lies in the attempt to do so. According to Jara testimonial writing can, "*re-presentar* aquello que por su lejanía – geográfica, histórica, corporal – amenaza con volverse inaccesible. Substituto de la memoria el testimonio puede *inventar* – en el sentido latino de in-venire – la memoria" (2) ("re-presenting that which, due to its distance – geographical,

historical, corporeal – threatens to become inaccesible. A substitute for memory, the testimonio can invent – in the Latin sense of in-venire – memory"). Testimonial literature, therefore, is crucial in that it brings the reader closer than would otherwise be possible to the experience of the Other. Once privy to the suffering of another, the reader if faced with a decision: to continue life the way it was in ignorance of this reality, or to change, to react to what one has learned. Regarding the ethical function of testimonial writing, Jara has asserted, "lo que el testimonio comunica no es sólo una evidencia del pasado sino también una manera diferente de vivir el ahora (3) ("what the testimonio communicates is not only evidence of the past but instead a different way to live the present as well"). This different way to live the future that is proposed by the texts examined in this dissertation is a more inclusive democracy, one based on the value of human life over the value of marketable goods.

The texts explored in this dissertation struggle to undo the silence propagated by the neoliberal consensus by making apparent (appearing) the exclusion of social subjects and their truths from official historical narratives. An examination of these texts shows that the magnitude of the historical trauma is much deeper than was perhaps initially thought. In addition to the thousands of victims of illegal detention, torture, disappearance, and murder during the dictatorship, surviving victims have been silenced and denied a space in the transition to democracy since their truths challenge the image of consensus and a neatly reconciled whole. Furthermore, the most recent desaparecidos in neoliberal democratic Chile are those who are cast aside like abject excess due to their perceived uselessness. According to the brutal rules of the market – which value human

beings only as tools of production – those who do not produce have no worth. Like trash, human beings can be discarded, as humanity seems to have become a status granted only to productive citizens.

By insisting on the recognition of invisible subjects and the inclusion of marginalized histories, these texts call for a more inclusive and just democracy. Likewise, resisting the image of the eternal present created by the neoliberal model, these texts not only remind us of the past, but they reveal tensions between the past and the present as well. Despite this call for a more complete democracy, there is much work to be done in the realms of truth and justice.

One hopeful turn of events that suggests that things may possibly change in Chile, is the recent opening of the country's first museum dedicated to the memory of the victims of the dictatorship. As one of her last acts in office, President Michelle Bachelet officially inaugurated the Museo de Memoria y Derechos Humanos (Memory and Human Rights Museum) on January 11, 2010 in Santiago. Despite the fact that its opening occurred alongside (within the same week) the election of right-wing Piñera, Katherine Hite and Peter Kornbluh have argued that to the museum could be a great turning point for Chile[75]. The Museum, which offers free admission to all visitors and guided tours upon request, offers a variety of permanent installations, including documentary film footage taken during the 1970s and 1980s, documents recovered from the DINA containing names of victims and torture methods, newspaper clippings on illegal detentions, disappearances and murders, letters from the children of disappeared parents and grandparents, and interviews with victims and victims' families to name only a few

[75] See Hite and Kornbluh's article "Chile's Turning Point" in The Nation on January 17, 2010.

fixtures in the massive collection. These videos with victims are arguably one of the most important elements of the museum because they present us with the victim. We see their faces and hear their voices and, looking into their eyes, we cannot deny that they are real. The Museum is also home to a "Centro de Documentación" (document archive), which is a space where the public can come to view archives in a variety of formats in order to learn more about this period in Chile's history. Possibly in response to those Chileans who argue that Chile should "move on" because nothing can be done about the past, Michelle Bachelet declared in her inaugural speech at the museum, "All that remains for us is to learn from what we have lived. This is our responsibility and our challenge" (Kornbluh and Hite). While this museum does not guarantee a collective recognition of the subjects, histories and memories that had been previously excluded from the transition, it may offer an initial step towards the elaboration of a more inclusive historical narrative.

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