

Memorial Fragments, Monumental Silences and Reawakenings in 21st-Century Chile

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This article analyses the commemoration of political violence and its victims in the aftermath of the Chilean dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973–90). We assess the varied political processes involved in commemoration, and we identify those whose struggles to reclaim sites and spaces associated with past human rights violations represent a new political, and in some cases antipolitical, repertoire. We also examine shifts in official stances and action regarding human rights and political commemoration.

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The first part of the article introduces several dilemmas illustrated by the evolving dynamics of a multi-actor commemoration field, where many civil society groups interact with an almost equally varied universe of official bodies in efforts to have memorial projects recognised and realised. A central question is the 'right relationship' between official and private initiatives and publics in the design, construction and interpretation of memorials. Here we explore the pervasive influence of authoritarian

incumbents, the state as a reactive rather than proactive force, and the tensions around memorial design and location. We also venture to ask what constitutes a 'successful' commemorative endeavour.

In the second part of the article, we signal three kinds of commemorative activity in present-day Chile that best capture current trends in this field. The first is civil society-driven human rights commemoration, involving often prolonged and fitful struggles among tremendously varied actors at both the local and national levels.

Secondly, we distinguish political commemoration as conceptually and practically distinct from human rights commemoration. Political commemoration focuses on the political fractures that surrounded and preceded the dictatorship. Such commemorations attempt to reinterpret or repackage particularly contested moments and leaders to fit evolving political preferences and priorities. Here, the main protagonists are government and opposition elites, rather than civil society-based human rights groups.

Finally, we discuss the state-sponsored Museum of Memory to show how the project constitutes not so much strong executive leadership on the human rights issue, as a necessary official response to persistent 'bottom-up' dynamics and experiences in the field of commemoration.

Who Remembers, Who Forgets? Commemoration as an Active Construct

Over the past two decades or more, arguments within the literatures on commemorations and their meanings have shifted from rather glorious celebrations of memorials to assertions, now widely accepted in memory discourse, that monuments and memorials often serve as attempts to relegate away, to erase conflict-ridden, politically traumatic pasts.¹ Indeed, official monuments are typically state symbolic efforts to proclaim historic continuity, to convey national unity and stability, even if

1. A paradigmatic contribution of the latter is Pierre Nora. See 'Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire', *Representations* no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7–25. See also Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), for analysis of states' intent to erase violent pasts, examining instances from First World War memorials to the 11 September 2001 World Trade Center memorial project. For a useful framing of cultural oppositional politics and nationalism through commemoration in the United States, see Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). For her quite distinct, provocative analysis of the US state's rather deliberate tendency to turn memorials of past violence into commodified, kitsch experiences, see Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

such stability hardly represented the reality of the historic moment.² State desires to project consensus and stability through monumental representations are particularly apparent in monuments to dead leaders, though they are often conveyed through the aesthetic uniformity of funerary monuments in towns, villages and cities across a given nation.³

Yet the emphasis in the memorial literature on the instrumentalist character of states in commemoration connotes both a more cohesive and a more proactive commemorative state policy than recent Chilean commemorative processes and projects belie. A vast and often conflicting array of civil society groups are largely demanding the Chilean state recognise its culpability in past atrocities, end state silence and mourn the dead by owning up to the full extent of the violence. Rather than relegate away the past, an increasing number of memorial efforts expose the fissures and invite engagement, challenging, insisting that the state respond.

Memorials in post-conflict societies are all about process – what should the memorial be about, what groups are involved in the memorial's impetus and design, who builds it, who funds it, who controls the outcome, what dialogues does a memorial trigger, who responds to the memorial once established, and to what degree, and how lasting or fleeting in time, does the memorial prove to be?⁴ Almost inevitably, each of these dimensions is fraught with tensions, and each involves unanticipated as well as anticipated political struggles.

Thus one useful way of guarding against a tendency to narrate in the passive voice, to describe what has happened over commemoration as if it were the only possible unfolding of predetermined events, is to keep the varied cast of memory actors firmly in view. This cast involves a great diversity of individuals and groups, state and non-state, old and young, for or against commemoration in its various forms and expressions, sceptical or enthusiastic regarding the role of officialdom and the possibility of meaningful commemoration at all.

Chilean memorial processes also involve a substantial if shrinking bloc of individuals and groups from the political right and the military who are distinctly opposed to the notion of commemoration at all.

2. See Eric Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Daniel Sherman argues that in France erecting monuments has historically occurred 'chiefly in areas (in both the discursive and geographical senses) of political contestation'. D. Sherman, 'Art, Commerce, and the Production of Memory in France after World War I', in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 188.

3. *Ibid.*, 199–203. See also Kirk Savage, 'The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument', in *Commemorations*, ed. Gillis, 127–49.

4. This emphasis on process is particularly apparent in the work of James Young. Among his other works, see *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

In contexts such as this, officially sponsored commemoration can be expected to be a more difficult enterprise than in contexts where outgoing regimes were more thoroughly discredited or exited by collapse. Commemorations have served as alternatives, complements and precursors to more direct demands for more truth and/or more justice, and in this sense have been treated with the caution common to government treatment of all such issues.⁵

All types of human rights commemoration beyond the most essentially personal, private and home-grown involve or aim for some kind of public impact and require the negotiation of permission, space and/or resources from local or national authorities. As the number, diversity and visibility of private initiatives have grown in recent years, so has the perceived need for ad hoc official responses to be consolidated, coordinated and even institutionalised. However, we have found that although in some cases government ministries offered funding as well as considerable logistical support, the official line often seemed to be that civil society's commemorative demands were a potential problem to be contained.

To date, many commemorative artefacts in Chile have had a funerary function or association. These include the huge wall of names in Santiago's General Cemetery that still represents the only state (rather than private) initiative of its kind. But many see funerary commemorations as reinforcing an association with death still not proven in the case of the remaining disappeared.⁶ In the struggles over memory and memory representations, families reject what Reinhart Kosseleck terms the state's 'horizon of expectations', that is, the state's defining the families' loved ones as dead and thereby conditioning future social or political recourse.⁷ Secondly, funerary memorials keep the focus on the absence of victims – the dead or disappeared – rather than on the presence of survivors or even of perpetrators.

5. See Alexander Wilde, 'Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 31, no. 2 (May 1999): 473–500, Brian Loveman and Elizabeth Lira, *El espejismo de reconciliación política: Chile 1990–2002* (Santiago: LOM Editores, 2002), and, on Chile's cautious and occasionally contradictory transitional justice trajectory since 1990, Cath Collins, 'Prosecuting Pinochet: Late Accountability in Chile and the Role of the "Pinochet Case"', Working Paper no. 5, Human Rights, Global Justice and Democracy Working Paper Series, George Mason University (2009), available at http://cgs.gmu.edu/publications/hjd/hjd_wp_5.pdf, and 'Post-transitional Justice: Human Rights Trials in Chile and El Salvador', Pennsylvania State University Press (forthcoming 2010).

6. The official demand of relatives' associations in Chile and Argentina remains 'aparición con vida'.

7. Reinhart Kosseleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Times* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 272. Cited in Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 4.

Thirdly, funerary representations convey what was done, but not why it was done nor who did it. Official commemorations have evaded representing the machinery's genealogy and agents. Fourth, the artefacts tend to create or reinforce a peripheral geography of commemoration, restricted to certain places that are not part of everyday civic or political routine. Physical relegation lends to the sense of a fragmented Chilean memory landscape, in which the state fails to enact commemorative policies that might engage the public more meaningfully in collective explorations of the past.

To highlight the perceived inadequacies of an exclusive focus on mausoleum-type sites, some Chilean grass-roots actors have embarked on counter-memorial collective actions. Counter-memorials reject what they see as the staid, sedentary and deadening character of conventional monuments and memorials by inviting dynamic, provocative, public interaction.⁸ These particular civil society groups carry out consciously temporal, transitory interventions in public spaces, often with the declared aim of making the dead and disappeared inescapably 'present' again.

Commemorative processes related to sites have generally begun with a campaign group of relatives and survivors who form and lobby to have a site preserved, via national monument status. If successful, the group can press to have sites that are in private hands requisitioned or purchased by the state and handed to the group to administer. Yet none of these steps is either problem- or tension-free. Sites and/or buildings targeted by campaign groups have present-day owners who have to be placated and/or compensated if the sites are to be recovered. Chile's Council for National Monuments, a small and relatively insignificant body with an infinitesimal budget, has found its capacity overwhelmed and has been criticised for drawing on the public purse for what are seen as essentially private demands.

This tension between public and private is particularly strong, and striking, because of a tendency on the part of all actors involved to treat human rights commemoration as a private and moreover a minority interest, rather than a stand-alone public duty or commitment. Is the state's commitment of public funds to private commemorative projects an extension of its previous reparations policy?⁹ Is it a separate, and new, commitment to repudiate past state repression and transmit an official 'never again' message? Or is it rather an even-handed effort to promote democratic dialogue, an undoubtedly defensible yet weak form

8. James Young, 'The Counter-Monument: The Memorial against Itself in Germany Today', *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 267–96.

9. The previous reparations policy involved a relatively complete and well-administered package of financial, medical and other reparations for victims' relatives and returning exiles, complemented in 2004 by modest financial reparation arrangements for survivors of torture and political imprisonment.

of support, which might in theory give equal validity to other versions of, and explanations for, recent political violence?¹⁰

These questions are not so much normative theoretical considerations as immediate policy-related issues that the recent growth in commemorative activity is pressing upon the Chilean state and the particular administrations that have directed it since 1990. A growing view in some official quarters that an articulated policy towards such issues is both practically and ethically necessary is countered in others by the perception that this enterprise is too politically fraught and might even be counter-productive.¹¹ The extent to which civil society initiatives can in this sense serve as policy catalysts, forcing official bodies to define or redefine present responses to past human rights crimes, is further explored below.

What Makes for a Successful Memorial?

In addition to the questions discussed above – suitable spaces for commemoration and what the state's role should or will in practice be – Chile's recent trajectory also raises the question of what can be considered a 'success' in this field. If commemoration is understood as essentially a private activity, designed to meet the personal or emotional needs of survivors and relatives, then their own evaluations of the sufficiency of the process and its outcome are enough. In this scenario, the state's contribution would essentially be an extension of reparations policy, providing public means and resources for the expression and exteriorisation of private grief.

However, the debate is never that simple. Firstly, the expressed aims of many of the private pro-commemoration actors include the desire to force (their term) the state to take a more active role. Here, simple official patronage, in the sense of allowing for or even promoting the telling of a private story or version, is considered insufficient. Instead, say some, 'it's about time that the state told, in its own words, the same story that we've all been telling for years'. Rather than 'uncovering' the genuinely not known,¹² here it seems that at least for some it is important not only that commemoration should be done but that the state should do it.

There is also the perverse sense in which individual stories of men and women tortured, executed or disappeared by their own state have already ceased to be entirely private stories at all. Told and retold as claim and counter claim by regime opponents and officials, their numbers,

10. See discussion below of the Guzmán monument for a particularly striking example of the operation of this neutral arbiter logic regarding the state's role.

11. In the context of the imminent alternation to a right-wing government, which many seem to expect. Interview material, 2007 and 2008.

12. See Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, a Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2001).

significance and even existence debated and refuted in the chamber of the UN and before the UK Law Lords, the stories of Chilean men and women whom commemoration purports to represent have inescapably become public property. Should commemoration seek to represent who these men and women were or are for their families, by their own accounts and/or according to their former political colleagues? Should commemoration specify what the state did to its victims and why? What happens when public and private versions collide or contradict? What is the correct balance between relating very individual, human stories and conveying collective political or moral messages? Is the 'best' memorial one that closely satisfies the aspirations of those who campaigned for it, or one that is highly visible and achieves public notoriety?

In the Chilean case, since the mid-1990s, and as we will detail below, former and current political activists, chief among them ex-detainees, have fought to preserve and reconstruct the notorious former concentration camp Villa Grimaldi. Representing the first such site in the Americas to be recovered and opened to the public,¹³ Villa Grimaldi is considered a 'successful' memorial by most interested parties. It has officially been declared a historic site, local and national government bodies have contributed support, and the Villa has achieved international recognition. Nonetheless, the commemoration process has been fitful and precarious. Administrative responsibility has shifted among state and municipal agencies several times, and an uneasy mix of official and private (external) project-based funding means resources are never secure. Better known and more extensively visited by foreigners than by national groups, Villa Grimaldi has progressed in distinct ways as a representative form of traumatic memory – and most recently as a site of cultural production – and yet it remains comparatively marginal to the Chilean political imaginary.

In fact, few memorial projects to date can claim to have successfully captured the attention and imagination of the Chilean public. If visibility and impact over time, rather than solely the internal value of a commemorative process for its participants, are amongst a project's defined objectives, some even risk being classified as complete failures. Even apparently successful projects such as Villa Grimaldi and Paine (see below) seem relatively little known outside their immediate circles of participants, supporters and human rights activists.¹⁴ We would argue

13. The ESMA (Escuela de Suboficiales de Mecánica de la Armada [in Spanish]), a former navy mechanics school, in Argentina was recovered earlier but its development and opening were delayed.

14. Such claims are necessarily subjective but, as an indication, Villa Grimaldi and Paine were mentioned sporadically in selected national newspapers around the time of their inauguration. They have been covered only rarely, if at all, since. Other active projects involving the sites of the National Stadium, José Domingo Cañas and Londres 38 have not, to the authors' knowledge, been discussed at all in mainstream media outlets or other public fora.

this is due in good part to failures of will among important sectors of the Chilean centre-left political leadership, as well as to the fragmented, diverse and atomised nature of many of the collective memory voices at the grass roots. Nevertheless, as the range and forms the memorials take continue to expand and multiply, so, too, do instances of collaboration and dialogue, whether consensual or conflictive, among civil society actors and between these actors and the state.

Small but vibrant subcultures continue to champion collective memories. Some site campaign groups have strong shared political identities based on past or present militancy. The age profile of participants can also shape discourse, form and outcomes: Chilean youth have brought new life to a range of recent commemorative processes, animating their forms with colour, creating dynamic representations on blogs and web pages, and performing theatrically at the sites. Some consciously aim for a present, ethically minded sensibility, which makes links to other causes or issues.¹⁵ Drawing chiefly from primary documents and voices of the memorials' protagonists, this article accordingly relates a range of Chilean memorial forms and aesthetics to memory's insertion in the contemporary body politic. Taken together, Chile's existing and nascent memorials represent a fragmented political landscape – sometimes nostalgic and mournful, painful, yet also imbued with vibrancy and possibility. It is therefore quite conceivable that 'sooner rather than later' Chile's broader public will more actively engage in a politics of memory.

Human Rights Memorials from the Grass Roots

Villa Grimaldi

The former concentration camp of Villa Grimaldi possesses profound meaning and profound pain, particularly for those who were imprisoned and tortured there. Establishing, or re-elaborating, the form and aesthetics of Villa Grimaldi has constituted a complicated enterprise.¹⁶ The site is located in the Santiago municipality of Peñalolén, on the city outskirts close to the capital's highest Andean mountain range. Built as a 19th-century rural estate, by the mid-20th century Villa Grimaldi had become a meeting place for artists and intellectuals. After the 1973 coup,

15. For instance, the José Domingo Cañas group and one of the existing Londres 38 groups have made particular efforts to link with other social movements, inviting student leaders and striking workers to speak at weekly site vigils and in turn attending events organised by these other groups.

16. For a creative, literary analysis of Villa Grimaldi as a site of memory, see Michael Lazarra, 'Tres recorridos de Villa Grimaldi', in *Monumentos, memoriales y marcas territoriales*, eds Elizabeth Jelin and Victoria Langland (Madrid and Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2003), 127–47.

the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) expropriated the property and transformed Villa Grimaldi into a clandestine torture centre. In the period 1973 to 1978, some 4500 prisoners passed through there, of whom a known 226 were then disappeared and another 18 executed.¹⁷ In the late 1980s, military intelligence sold the Villa on to a front company in anticipation of the imminent end of the military regime. All the buildings were immediately bulldozed, and behind the thick metal gates the sole remains were barren earth, an in-ground swimming pool and several old trees.

Planning applications were submitted to erect condominiums, but local people organised alongside surviving former political prisoners and human rights groups to stop the construction plans and demand that the site be preserved. They eventually managed to have the site expropriated, and in 1993 the housing ministry agreed to invite bids for a commemorative project and to fund construction of the winning design. The activist group, formalised into a non-profit 'corporation', succeeded in having Villa Grimaldi declared a national monument the same year. The Peace Park was finally inaugurated in March 1997. The winning project reshaped the site as a 'park for peace'. Fragments of coloured tile and flooring rescued from the ruins were gathered into sculpted forms, interspersed amongst the bare earth, grass and gravel as beautiful but haunting reminders of the fragments that former prisoners reported having dimly seen through their permanent blindfolds.¹⁸ A conscious feature of this first design was the decision not to reconstruct installations from the site's concentration camp period, preserving instead clean sight lines and an open, light-filled interior.

Nevertheless, as Chile's longest-established single site-focused group, the Corporación Villa Grimaldi is therefore perhaps naturally one of those where discrepancies and negotiations over form, function and the need to reshape and redefine commemoration over time are most in evidence. The ongoing relationship between the site and the group, which now administers it, accordingly led to almost immediate, and ongoing, reversals of these original design decisions, a dynamic also observable in other groups and site projects.

Proposals to reconstruct parts of the original buildings, reversing the regime's attempt to erase the site's past through demolition, provoked the most heated early debates. Some felt the reconstruction impulse ran against historical authenticity, and might even risk falling into the trap of 'theme-park' bad taste. Eventually, a wooden water tower that had been used as a cell was rebuilt. Initially conceived of as a permanent

17. Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, Ministerio de Educación, Gobierno de Chile, *Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi* brochure (undated). See also www.villagrimaldicorp.cl

18. *Ibid.*

reminder from all vantage points of the park's sinister past, the tower was nevertheless soon obscured from view by construction of a roofed stage for public events and concerts.

Previously focused almost exclusively on what the site should look like, and what should go into it, experience after inauguration led the group to focus more precisely on what should now happen and be done there. Finally deciding it was more important to attract new visitors in order to be able to engage them with the site's message, the group consciously opted to abandon the original aesthetic in pursuit of a functional, outreach goal.

These developments have certainly allowed for expansion of the scope and nature of the activities that take place at and around the Villa. An educational programme trains teachers and develops curricula for different age groups about the site and related issues. Visitor numbers have grown each year, and the existence of the roofed stage has allowed for events as diverse as theatre, poetry recitals and even album launches by local musicians. Villa Grimaldi has accordingly begun to appear as both setting and protagonist in other kinds of memory narration and enactment: in 2005, the son of a disappeared former prisoner held his wedding ceremony at the site, and Villa Grimaldi is increasingly written about and referred to in other kinds of memory literature.¹⁹

The formalisation and institutionalisation of the space have also allowed the Villa to acquire projection on the international stage, participating in civil society networks and coalitions,²⁰ and often consulted by groups interested in initiating similar projects. This increasing international profile has brought the project to the notice of central government. After an official visit to the site made by Michelle Bachelet in 2006 during her first months as President, the Villa has become a regular stopping-off point for overseas dignitaries on official visits to Chile. Nonetheless, securing resources to provide for the site's daily upkeep is an ongoing struggle. While the government seems interested in presenting Villa Grimaldi to international visitors as testament to state support for memorialisation, there is less evidence of sustained official commitment to the space as an active domestic educational and historical site.

This absence, together with the site's physical location on the outskirts of the city, perhaps contribute to a lingering difficult-to-enter element for outsiders, not solely due to the fact that Villa Grimaldi represents a former site of terror. Villa Grimaldi can feel somewhat insular, a space recreated for victims who were detained, tortured, disappeared and/or

19. Mónica Echeverría, *Krassnoff: Arrastrado por Su Destino* (Santiago: Catalonia, 2008); Jelin and Langland, eds, *Monumentos*; Michael Lazarra, *Prismas de la Memoria: Narración y Trauma en la Transición Chilena* (Santiago: Cuarto Propio, 2008).

20. Such as the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, www.sitesofconscience.org

murdered by and for those who were also detained and tortured but survived. Few Chileans outside immediate human rights-related circles know the park, and there is no sign outside Villa Grimaldi's gates to announce what is inside.

*Memorial of Paine*²¹

In a very different vein, a memorial in the rural community of Paine, 20 miles from Santiago, represents another volatile collaboration between the state and victims' families. The relatively cohesive and consensual nature of this process, with relatives represented throughout by a single group,²² is remarkable given the history of the site. Paine is a relatively stable and geographically bounded community where survivors and relatives still coexist with known perpetrators.

Paine's history of hacienda estates, with a local landowning elite locked in to essentially feudal relationships with bonded labourers or tenant farmers, made it a target for major agrarian reform activity between the mid-1960s and 1973. The military coup brought swift, concerted and deadly retaliation. Civilian landowners collaborated closely with the security forces in the disappearance of at least 70 local grass-roots leaders. According to Chile's official truth commission report, the 1991 'Rettig Report', Paine enjoys the tragic distinction of having suffered the highest per capita rate of disappearance of any Chilean settlement during the dictatorship.

Here, as with Villa Grimaldi, the site's design includes both symbolic/conceptual and functional, daily-use elements. The Paine memorial consists of a timber 'forest' composed of 1000 individual logs, minus 70. The missing 70 represent Paine's disappeared or executed, while each of the remaining logs stands for a surviving family member. The memorial deliberately emphasises life, '*una memoria viva*', living memory, with the layout contemplating space for events and regular meetings. This last came about through the insistence of the local relatives' group, who also rejected certain initial design features as 'too funeral'. Fully three generations of Paine citizens actively participated not only in the design but also in the physical creation of the memorial:

21. See Juan René Maureira, 'La importancia de nuestras historias para una memorial social', and Gabriela Zúñiga F. and Juan René Maureira, 'Con el alma sin cicatrizar: Consecuencias transgeneracionales de la desaparición forzada', in *Sexto Congreso de Salud Mental y DDHH* (Asociación de Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires, Argentina) for two young protagonists' reflective first-hand accounts and analyses of the Paine community's history and experiences of the memorialisation process. For the stories of several of the survivors and widows of Paine, see Patricia Verdugo, *Tiempos de días claros: Los desaparecidos* (Santiago: CESOC, 1990), and Ruby Weitzel, *El callejón de las viudas* (Santiago: Planeta, 2001).

22. This is not to say, of course, that the Association is immune to internal disagreements and conflict.

replacing each missing pine is a family mosaic, made by relatives themselves. Over the course of a year or more, government-financed artists worked with the Paine families on the production of the mosaics.

The inter-generational transmission of stories and experiences stimulated by the mosaic-making process was in some cases completely new and occasionally difficult. Various younger participants reported their perception that continuing fear and anger seemed prevalent amongst older family members, while their own generation was often excited and moved by this first opportunity really to know and depict the personal qualities of the individual they had never had the chance to meet. Collaboration between government-sponsored experts and family members also initially proved rocky. The winning project had emphasised the need for 'psychological accompaniment' of family members, which in practice meant a group of young psychology students was deputed to lead group therapy sessions. The sessions seemed to many family members like a complete waste of time, with one participant recounting how families often ended up having to console the crying psychologists. Ultimately, the family members sent the psychologists away, preferring to continue work with the artists whose input they valued more. The results of the project have included the sharing of previously silenced family histories and also the birth of new forms of commemorative activity.

Grandchildren of the Paine dead and disappeared formed a group known as 'The Third Generation'. The group is quite active, organising a range of events to support the memorial, speaking in high school and university classrooms and forums, and forming its own youth orchestra. For the grandparents, memories of their loved ones tend to emphasise their deaths and disappearances, while The Third Generation urges the recovery of the memories of their loved ones' lived experiences in order to get to know them. The intermediate, parents' generation was seemingly more comfortable focusing on the logistical and practical aspects of the Paine memorial project, playing a central role in securing state financing and support.

The Paine memorial project coincided with growing official recognition that involvement in commemoration could potentially bring some positive political benefit. Chilean president Ricardo Lagos (2000–6) became so engaged in the Paine project discussions that he invited Association representatives to the presidential palace, La Moneda, for a personally guided tour. Lagos chose to make an official visit to Paine the main event of his last day in office, taking a helicopter to the local soccer stadium before travelling on to the memorial site to be shown the latest developments. Official desire to be associated with successful endeavours may also give rise or give way to a desire to co-opt them: the Association's then-president subsequently joined Lagos's political party, the Party for Democracy (PPD),²³ while in 2008 then-President Michelle Bachelet presided over the memorial's official inauguration.

23. Juan Leonardo Maureira was recently elected to the Paine town council.

Nevertheless, as successful as this commemoration appears to be, the Association of Families of the Detained-Disappeared continues to struggle to secure the basic fiscal support necessary to maintain the site.²⁴ Rather than implement the group's original design for an ample meeting place and cultural centre, government officials recently installed a shipping container – a trailer-like rectangular structure that conveys a temporary and precarious feel. It is both ironic and telling that a memorial publicly celebrated by two consecutive Chilean presidents cannot be sure of funding to maintain its upkeep, and that a planned space for meetings, cultural gatherings and events has been reduced to a shipping container.

Counter-Memorial Mobilising

The sometimes marginal or inaccessible location of memorial sites has also led to the emergence of actors who reject what they see as an unduly museological approach to commemoration. One, the 'Colectivo 119', carried larger than life-size cardboard cut-outs of disappeared comrades or relatives through the streets of Santiago and then installed them in the main square in front of the presidential palace, where pedestrians were forced to walk amidst them. The location of this action in temporary, but shared and decidedly public, space was a deliberate act. It reflected the group's view that the recovery of political commitments, and renewed survivor activism in the present day, constitute the most authentic homage that can be paid to victims.²⁵

The 'FUNA' is a direct action group, mainly composed of young people, that has mobilised as many as several hundred people at a time for public denunciations of former perpetrators at their homes or workplaces. This group raises questions about the conventional focus on 'absent' – dead or disappeared – victims, considering it more important to turn the memorial gaze from the victim to the perpetrator. Consciously modelled on the *escraches*, a similar movement of earlier origin in Argentina, the FUNA has an essentially confrontational, mobile, resolutely anti-institutional character.

Counter-memorial mobilisation is perhaps predictably the furthest removed from its museological counterpart.²⁶ These groups define and

24. K. Hite's visit to Paine and meeting with the Association, 7 January 2009. Some 35 members attended the Association's monthly meeting.

25. Although the group went on to campaign around the 'permanent' site of Londres 38, tellingly, they were amongst those whose plans for its use caused concern amongst government officials.

26. For a thoughtful discussion of counter-memorialising and a range of alternative examples in Chile, see Lessie Jo Frazier, "'Subverted Memories': Countermourning as Political Action in Chile', in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, eds Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 1999), 105–19.

assess their own success using terms such as authenticity (*consecuencia*), in contrast to the emphasis on visitor numbers or infrastructural developments that site-focused groups often display. This is not to say that counter-memorial groups do not think in terms of impact: however, they define this as the reaching of indifferent or even hostile publics who would be most unlikely to approach or acknowledge a fixed site or static memorial. They are also more completely, and consistently, opposed to cooperating with the state, whether to demand financial support or to request permission for their activities.²⁷

Political Commemoration – Salvador Allende and Jaime Guzmán

Political commemoration often re-presents or reinterprets particularly controversial figures for the new moment. Nowhere is this dynamic better observed in Chile than in the post-transition construction of monuments dedicated to two diametrically opposed figures: deposed Socialist president Salvador Allende and right-wing military regime ideologue Jaime Guzmán. The Allende monument has served as both an official notice of the former president's 'rehabilitation' and a magnet for present-day progressive activism. The other may yet come to play a pivotal role in the political right's rewriting of dictatorship-era history, one which looks for a more acceptable, and ideally civilian, face to represent the positive legacy of the Pinochet years. The two monuments are, moreover, inextricably linked from their very origins. Although separated by almost a decade in their actual construction, the inter-elite bargaining to approve the two monuments involved an explicit tit-for-tat trading of legislative support between the left and right.

*Allende*²⁸

In 1991 legislators from Allende's Socialist Party and the centre-left PPD first proposed legislation to erect monuments to Allende (1970–3). The approval process dragged on for four years,²⁹ with no guarantee that

27. The FUNA, in particular, has a combative relationship with authorities. Many of its larger scale demonstrations have ended in confrontation, falling foul of a continuing Chilean practice of notoriously heavy-handed policing of public space.

28. For a detailed account and analysis of the Allende monument, see Katherine Hite, 'El monumento a Salvador Allende en el debate político chileno', in *Monumentos*, eds Jelin and Langland, 19–56.

29. In marked contrast to similar earlier procedures – over monuments to late presidents Alessandri (1958–64) and Frei Montalva (1964–70) – which took a mere three months from start to finish.

the eventual outcome would be favourable. The congressional debates struck at the core of bitter, polarised historical memories of victims and perpetrators. Ultimately, congressional approval required a Faustian bargain: a monument for Allende, a memorial for Guzmán.

The most notable feature of the whole approval process was its exclusive nature. In contrast to the human rights movement-affiliated grassroots actors behind Villa Grimaldi, Paine and Londres 38, the monument to Allende was a top-down effort. Crucial episodes of the battle to pass legislation, select a location and approve a design took place behind closed doors. This insularity was itself evidence of one more legacy of Chilean authoritarianism: a broader disjuncture between the Chilean state and civil society. The resulting marked absence of public engagement with politics was characteristic of the 1990s.³⁰

Approval was followed by another contentious debate over location. The proposed site was Santiago's Plaza de la Constitución, a space charged with immense symbolism. The plaza is located immediately behind the presidential palace, the site of Allende's death in the military coup of 1973. Adjudication of the final design of the piece was no less controversial, and the outcome similarly seemed to bear all the hallmarks of forced compromise: the jury selected a rightist sculptor and rejected his first proposal to depict Allende 'among the people'. In its final form, the statue deliberately draws parallels between Allende and President Balmaceda, the late 19th-century liberal leader who killed himself in the aftermath of Chile's civil war, and to whom Allende repeatedly compared himself in the last months of his government. Sculptor Arturo Hevia chose to drape Allende in the Chilean flag, evoking the statue of Balmaceda that stands in a park a few miles away. The effect is to give both monuments a ghost-like quality, notably unlike the nearby image of President Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964–70) that Hevia also sculpted.

The monument was inaugurated on 26 June 2000. The Socialist Party had generally preferred to keep its distance from imagery of Allende during the 1990s. By 2003, however, the statue had become a focal point for commemorative activities carried out by then-president Ricardo Lagos on the 30th anniversary of the Chilean coup. As the first Socialist president since Allende, Lagos's actions that day represented the belated taking on of a symbolic mantle he had previously preferred to downplay. They also confirmed a notable new official current seeking to elevate Allende's status from that of a failed leader, rarely mentioned, to that of a democrat tragically undone by his times.

30. See Katherine Hite and Leonardo Morlino, 'Problematising Authoritarian Legacies and Good Democracy', in *Authoritarian Legacies and Good Democracy: Latin America and Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective*, eds K. Hite and Paola Cesarini (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

Thus the Allende monument has now become a site for dialectical memory work, for both 'acting out' and 'working through'.³¹ Those who have struggled actively to assert a heroic memory of Allende as a socialist, patriot and father of the country now embrace his monument in the Plaza. The protagonists are no longer restricted to the elites who debated and placed the monument. Unofficial and informal groups also embrace the monument in the Plaza, which has now become a magnet for all kinds of progressive political mobilisation.³² The location of the monument to Allende can accordingly be seen as establishing a shift from a kind of civic 'space' to a social 'place' on the plaza. The monument has therefore become, in ways probably unanticipated and unintended by its elite creators, a site of contested meanings, discourse and collective action.³³ Allende, and with him the more than 3000 Chilean citizens who were murdered and disappeared by the dictatorship, are the ghosts who defy those who would have them erased from memory.³⁴

Jaime Guzmán

Mindful of the proliferation of memorials that in their view commemorate the left, the Chilean right began to mobilise for memorials of its own. A civilian, rather than a military, man, a deeply formally religious figure in a country where conservative Catholicism is undergoing a visible revival and, crucially, himself a victim of political violence, Guzmán has long been the standby figure to whom the unrepentant right refers whenever human rights violations are publicly discussed. Guzmán served as perhaps Pinochet's closest civilian adviser during the dictatorship, playing a central role in drafting the 1980 Constitution whose 'protected' model of democracy owes much to Guzmán's corporatist formation and views. In 1983 Guzmán founded the Independent Democratic Union (UDI), the newer and more reliably *Pinochetista* of Chile's two mainstream right-wing parties.³⁵ Elected as a senator in the first transitional democratic elections of the late 1980s,³⁶ Guzmán served only a short time before

31. For a thoughtful and provocative discussion of 'acting out' and 'working through' as 'labors of memory', see Jelin, *State Repression*, 5–7.

32. On conceptualising struggles over appropriations or 'ownership' of memory, see Jelin, *State Repression*, especially chapter 3, 'Political Struggles for Memory', 26–45.

33. Elizabeth Jelin and Victoria Langland, 'Introducción', in *Monumentos*, eds Jelin and Langland.

34. This borrows from Jacques Derrida's ethical conceptualisation of the spectre. Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

35. For a very useful analysis of Jaime Guzmán and the rise of his movement-to-party, see Carlos Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 225–70.

being assassinated on 1 April 1991 by armed leftists of the FPMR (Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front).

In late 2008 the UDI completed the Guzmán memorial. Reminiscent for many of the famous Mies van der Rohe Pavilion at the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition, the installation is clearly conceived on an epic scale. It consists of an underground meeting and archive room topped by a large ground-level water pool, out of which rises a row of sculpted human forms.³⁷ The memorial sculpture contains no direct reference to Guzmán, and ironically passers-by could be heard speculating that the row of figures represented the disappeared. The memorial's design and final location are indicative of the central and revered place that regime figures continue to enjoy among the Chilean elite. One leading expert on Chilean and Argentine transitional human rights dynamics was moved to remark that, for all the strides in memorialisation that Chile had made in recent years, higher levels of social repudiation in Argentina would make it inconceivable that, as in Chile, 'the most visible of all the memorials is now to the brains behind the dictatorship'.³⁸

The memorial's location, in a wealthy uptown neighbourhood at the foot of Santiago's gleaming and determinedly futuristic Millennium Towers building, can be read as a straightforward sign of the concentration of support for the former regime amongst the 'new rich' who benefited most. However, the locating and relocating of the Guzmán memorial site show that in fact the process, like that of the statue to Allende, was quite contested, and it produced an unexpected outcome. The first proposed site was the Plaza Italia, a prominent city thoroughfare that separates Santiago's uptown and downtown districts. Undoubtedly more visible than its current location, the Plaza is also a standard destination for political marches, popular cultural and musical events and even occasional spontaneous celebrations of national soccer victories. The announcement of plans to site the Guzmán memorial there drew an immediate popular outcry from frequent Plaza Italia-goers and from residents in the square's two tower blocks. Opponents managed to organise themselves into a significant and resourceful campaign group that succeeded in having the plans shifted to a non-residential site in a sector of the city where Guzmán clearly enjoyed more sympathy.

36. Despite trailing in third place in the ballot, Chile's idiosyncratic binomial electoral system, which Guzmán himself had helped design, ensured his election.

37. See plans, photographs and discussions on the architect's blog at <http://www.plataformarquitectura.cl/2008/02/29/en-construccion-memorial-jaime-guzman-nicolas-lipthay/> (Spanish only, last consulted November 2008).

38. Martín Abregú, remarks at the conference 'El Efecto Pinochet: A Una Década de Londres 1998', held at the Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile, 8–10 October 2008.

No state funds were sought or committed to the actual construction of the memorial, which was financed by the UDI and the Jaime Guzmán Foundation set up to oversee the archive and ongoing activities at the site. Nonetheless, and apparently after a personal visit from UDI senator Pablo Longueira, it was announced in the Chilean press that President Bachelet had accepted an invitation to take part in, perhaps even preside over, the eventual inauguration of the still-unfinished memorial. The announcement was greeted with equanimity by some and with unabashed and incredulous dismay by others. Some claimed that the symbolic gesture exemplified the meaning of reconciliation: the right invoked the notion that this act would show that former political prisoner and exile Bachelet was 'the president of all Chileans'.³⁹ Ultimately, the ceremony went ahead in late 2008 without Bachelet's attendance, and her decision not to be present also received a good deal of press attention. The Chilean right declared itself 'disappointed' by her absence.

It is perhaps too soon to tell whether the Guzmán memorial, and the associated Foundation, will eventually become the same kind of magnet for right-wing activity as has the Allende memorial for other constituencies. It is, however, almost certainly a safe bet that under a future right-wing government the Guzmán Foundation stands more chance of becoming an officially sanctioned referent than does the Pinochet Foundation, perhaps the stronger candidate in former times. The 'acting out and working through', which have already gone on over the site's construction and inauguration, have been about the repositioning of left with regard to right, but perhaps even more about the right's desire to reinvent itself with a slightly less Pinochet-heavy past, as well as future.

Action or Reaction: What Has Commemoration Meant to the Chilean State?

We have seen how, in political commemoration, elite actors from all parts of the ideological spectrum are coming to accept the inevitability of the continued unearthing of traumatic pasts. Indeed, they are viewing it as politically strategic to take the offensive when it comes to symbolic representations of those pasts. President Lagos and his successor Bachelet have at times also visibly allied themselves with successful memorialisation initiatives. Continuing the trend of rehabilitation of the figure of Allende begun by Lagos, in 2008, on the 35th anniversary of the coup, Bachelet inaugurated a restoration of Allende's study and reception room in the presidential palace. Within her first few months in office, Bachelet also made a series of high-profile memorial visits, beginning

39. The obvious reference was to Allende, who once notoriously declared, in the context of a grilling about his more radical reforms and the actions of saboteurs opposed to them, that he was 'not the President of all Chileans'.

with Villa Grimaldi, where she and her mother were briefly imprisoned. Relatives' organisations and site campaign groups in general report a sense of greater personal closeness and receptivity from the current president than from any previous Concertación leader. Nonetheless, the overall sensation is that these occasional forays into leadership mask a reluctance to take an unequivocal stand, particularly over the 'harder' areas of transitional justice policy, such as support for criminal investigation and prosecution.

Many political figures seem to regard, as do many citizens, the whole realm of political and human rights commemoration as potentially toxic, best downplayed if it cannot be completely avoided. This reluctance is historically more explicable on the part of the right, particularly as gradual revelations have rendered the dictatorship's rights record less and less defensible. However, ambivalence from the centre-left Concertación on the memory issue is more difficult to explain or justify and more difficult, indeed, for relatives and survivors to accept. It can lead to activist groups expressing more overt resentment and hostility towards present-day authorities than towards the political right or the military. Accordingly, the almost exclusively privately driven memorial initiatives tend to make great play of their independent character. Some deploy a strong anti-state discourse and loudly complain that the state has done nothing.

On closer inspection, however, almost all have had direct or indirect state assistance in securing sites and funding interventions. The Chilean state is channelling public resources into the design and building of new memorials. Does this amount to a concerted effort on the part of the government to appropriate symbolic arenas? It seems unlikely, as the process does not seem to respond to any cohesive central design. Much less can one find evidence of any state intent to be unequivocally identified with a single, bold memory statement or narrative. There remains an apparent official desire to be seen as 'even-handed'.

This reluctance to take strong positions of repudiation or blame is in stark contrast to the actions of recent Argentine presidents in the same arena.⁴⁰ In 2006, for example, President Nestor Kirchner (2003–7) mandated that the introduction to *Nunca más*, the official truth commission report on the human rights atrocities of 1976–83, be rewritten to remove the implication that there was some kind of equivalency between the state and non-state perpetrators of the massive human rights violations. The new introduction clarifies that the Argentine military juntas shoulder the blame and must be held as historically accountable. Kirchner also moved early in his administration to provide significant state support

40. Including the forcible removal of portraits of Junta members from the Military Academy's honour gallery in 2004. See comments by Martín Abregú reported in Sebastian Brett, 'The Pinochet Effect: Ten Years On', Universidad Portales, Santiago, Chile, 2009.

for turning the former navy mechanics school (ESMA), a major centre of clandestine torture and disappearance, into a memory museum to be designed and administered chiefly by the major human rights groups.

President Kirchner's moves have contributed to public debate regarding historical memories of the atrocities, including the notion of 'two demons', as well as the question of societal culpability, 'the silent majority' and the 'beneficiaries' of the extremely violent shutting down of the political chaos. Historical memory debates regarding these questions and others in Argentina are comparatively vibrant and ongoing, fuelled by high-profile prosecutions, commemorations and executive leadership.

Active commemoration policy in practice generates new kinds of tensions. Shortly after her 2006 inauguration, Bachelet gave the go-ahead for a national Museum of Memory. First mentioned in 2003 as part of Lagos's major human rights policy announcement, the proposal has gone through so many subsequent modifications as to be virtually unrecognisable. Despite almost three years of planning work and the awarding of a building contract, when the first stone was officially laid by Bachelet, on International Human Rights Day in late 2008,⁴¹ the most notable feature of the proposed development was the continuing uncertainty over its precise aims and content. In this regard there is a sense even among the three-person committee currently working on the official project of a certain unseemly haste, caused by the fact that Bachelet wants to inaugurate the Museum before she leaves office and has therefore set early 2010 as a deadline.⁴² The Museum was accordingly announced and the construction contract awarded before its content or any type of ongoing consultative process had been defined.

The backstory of the museum's origin helps to explain why this haste caused particular tension with civil society actors. Bachelet's 2006 resurrection of the museum idea cut across existing negotiations between a consortium of human rights NGOs and government agents. The former was looking to negotiate state funding for a 'Casa de la Memoria', a 'House of Memory', proposal whose major difference from the eventual state announcement was that the NGOs themselves were to design, staff and run the project. It was conceived of as a way to secure the future of Chile's valuable and extensive civil society human rights archives, at risk from the declining funding base and uncertain future of at least

41. The ceremony was itself an instance of the peculiar indeterminacy that has surrounded the initiative: hand-picked invitees watched Bachelet dig a symbolic shovelful of earth before announcing, to the apparent surprise of all present, an agreement with the Israeli ambassador for the construction of a Chilean memorial to victims of the Holocaust.

42. C. Collins's conversations with NGO representatives and two members of the committee.

some of the country's historic human rights NGOs. Believing they had basically reached an accord with the Lagos government, the groups were astounded when the incoming administration announced independently, through the press, plans for a government Memory Museum with the same objectives. The NGOs were informed that their role would be limited to handing over their records to form part of the Museum's collection, complementing official archives from the 1991 Rettig truth commission and 2003 Valech commission on torture. Resulting tensions led to the withdrawal of various NGOs,⁴³ and the future of the archive section of the museum project is as yet unclear. These difficulties bode ill for the larger task still to come of defining the permanent and/or rotating content for the Museum itself, a challenge likely to be left to Bachelet's successor. It will be interesting to see what happens if, as seems likely, her successor is from the political right, since in this new space the state will finally have to grasp the nettle of what to say on its own behalf, rather than solely determining what other voices it is prepared to support or legitimate.

The state's apparent desire to keep a certain distance from private initiatives, holding some sway at the stage of their design and finance but exercising relatively little influence over their subsequent use, has a range of possible readings. It may allow for a healthy diversity in the range of acceptable views that can be expressed through and by sites and other memorials. It may, on the other hand, simply represent the path of least resistance, in treating the spaces created or reclaimed as sites of private conversation between like-minded individuals. Anyone, in this model, is equally entitled to say or claim anything at all, and there would be nothing to stop former perpetrators claiming that they, too, are entitled to state support for a place in which to tell their own story.

The practical impact, however, is that throughout Santiago, and, indeed, throughout the country, memorials are taking a range of forms that deny closure. Young architects are working with former political prisoners of the National Stadium to design dynamic spaces throughout the Stadium grounds. Theatre groups are performing in ever-increasing numbers in Villa Grimaldi. The Paine memorial contains, at relatives' insistence, a community meeting space that at least aspires to be used by a wide range of groups, rather than solely by the families of those commemorated. It is therefore not necessarily instructive to imagine commemoration processes as inevitably generating a dynamic of state-versus-society, or group-versus-group, as this reading reduces the complexity, the fragile but concentric dimensions, of memorialising. Like the Paine mosaics, memorials constitute memory fragments. Memorials can invite a tremendous range of engagement, from the intimately private

43. Including the archive of the Vicariate of Solidarity, Chile's most complete and most professionally run human rights collection.

identification that may emanate from victims and their families, to the less direct, less intense, but nonetheless evocative, contemplative and perhaps empathetic response a memorial might catalyse for a host of wider publics. Memorials can also, of course, provoke hostility or rejection.

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