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Placing Memory: Postdictatorial Documentaries in the Southern Cone

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Film and Media Studies

by

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June 2015

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ABSTRACT

Placing Memory: Postdictatorial Documentaries in the Southern Cone

by

David Winks Gray

My dissertation, *Placing Memory: Postdictatorial Documentaries in the Southern Cone*, examines recent films from Argentina and Chile that take up the dictatorships of the 1970s and '80s in each country. I argue that these documentaries provide a new vantage point from which to consider how spaces in the postdictatorial landscape are mediated, shaped, and reshaped in memory over time, remolded to the demands of each successive generation.

I begin by considering the politics of these recent documentaries in relation with the more militant films of the New Latin American Cinema of the '60s and '70s. This chapter also includes consideration of the different relationships to memory of those who experienced the dictatorship as adults, and the postmemory generation, or those who were children during, or were born after the dictatorship. In the two chapters that follow, I consider films that employ sites with memorial significance: first, official memorial sites, with wide recognition and significance, and second, sites that resonate within individual or smaller-scale memories, whether that of the filmmaker or their subjects. I read these sites through the films and through my own site visits in order to elucidate the

ways in which the films alter the experience of the sites, or function as memorials in their own right. Finally, I examine the networks of distribution and sites of exhibition for these films, including museums that exhibit documentary clips, screenings at memory sites and at schools, and documentary representations of the space of exhibition in a memorial context.

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Introduction

Both Argentina and Chile were marked in the 1970s and 1980s by violent dictatorships that carried out systematic and clandestine campaigns of detention, torture, killing and disappearance. In Chile, the government of Augusto Pinochet, who led the military coup that overthrew Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, ruled from 1973 to 1990, at which point a transition to democracy took place although Pinochet remained the commander-in-chief of the army until 1998. Argentina's Dirty War is associated with the military dictatorship that ruled from 1976 to 1983, with the worst human rights violations having taken place under the rule of Jorge Rafael Videla.¹ However, the government had engaged in repression in the years prior to the military coup of 1976, so that the coup produced an intensification, but also represented a continuation of military violence directed towards those on the left. Both dictatorships were pieces in a continent-wide upheaval that included murderous dictatorships in countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Uruguay, often with the implicit or explicit support of the United States intelligence apparatus and State Department. The application of state terror in Latin America was transnational, through the repressive structure of Operation Condor, under which regimes in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia all collaborated, together with the support of the CIA. In the post-dictatorship period, both Argentina and Chile have gone through tumultuous

¹ Videla ruled until 1981, when he was replaced in quick succession by Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri. The occupation of the Falkland Islands, and defeat of the Argentine Army in the Falklands War was one of the key contributing events leading to the demise of the military government and the return to democracy with the election of Raúl Alfonsín in 1983.

periods of contestation and struggle over whether and how to memorialize the suffering that marked the events of the dictatorships, and the political activism that preceded them.

My dissertation takes up one field of cultural production in which these memorializations have taken place, documentary films and videos either made within Chile or Argentina or in returns from exile. I consider these films in the context of the discursive field they both emerge from and contribute to, and situate them in relation to a wider cultural field that includes various forms of memorialization, particularly memorial sites and spaces. My dissertation, then, defines its scope of study through the triangulation of three discursive fields: (1) the wide field of discourse comprised by cultural productions and practices that engage with post-dictatorship memories, (2) the production of space in sites of memorialization that also appear in documentaries, and (3) the documentary films and videos treated as sites of cultural production themselves. This three-tiered approach allows me to read these films in the context of wider national and transnational conversations, and to posit the formation of various political discourses in and around these films. By considering how these documentaries employ sites with memorial significance and how they occupy and engage space, I argue that the films provide an important vantage point from which to consider how spaces in the postdictatorial landscape are mediated, shaped, and reshaped in memory over time, remolded to the demands of each successive generation.

In looking at documentary representations of the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, I have come to see how cinema, and documentary in particular, has the potential to untether memory from various entanglements, operating through a productive displacement. Memorial culture always struggles in relation to the danger of shunting the

past off from view, or depositing it in memorials that disappear from public view as the stones and markings fade, or museums that partition away memories from their relationship with, and reverberations in, the present. This dissertation argues, through a wide range of particular case studies, that one of documentary's chief functions has been, even as it casts its gaze upon particular places overloaded with memories of social suffering, to untether memory from a fixed location. Similarly, the films untether their viewing public from the necessity of spatial proximity, allowing audiences to tour sites, to be there without being there.

Other scholars have approached many of the films I consider in this dissertation, and contributed valuable analyses of them. This dissertation's novel contribution is not merely in gathering a corpus of documentary films and videos that look back at the dictatorships of Argentina and Chile, but also in the concurrent attention to memorial spaces, spatial practices, and the documentaries' repurposing of these spaces and practices. In doing so, while writing a work that is based in the specificities of the Southern Cone context, I am also proposing a spatial analytic for documentary studies that can fruitfully travel to other contexts. Documentary studies has a long tradition of categorization based on formal and aesthetic characteristics (the Latin Americanist versions of which are summarized below in this introduction) and attempts to fix films within typologies. While respectful of the analytical value of such typologies, the corpus gathered here suggests that there are affinities between films that utilize very different aesthetic and formal strategies and models, affinities to which a too rigid adherence to modes and typologies might make us blind. Here is another instance of untethering: by looking at films whose forms are explicitly anti-realist and which draw from avant-garde

traditions of reflexivity side by side with more conventionally realist testimonial works, I am arguing for another, looser configuration that can offer connections that might be missed by more conventional documentary typologies.

In fall 2012, while conducting research for this dissertation in Santiago, I wandered into a video store in the upscale neighborhood of Providencia. The shelves were stocked with Hollywood and art house European films. When I told the clerk I was looking for documentaries from Chile, she replied, “No, Chilean documentaries don’t exist.”

Chilean documentary certainly doesn’t need me to prove its existence. Alicia Vega’s book *Itinerario del cine documental chileno 1900-1990* (“Itinerary of Chilean Documentary Cinema 1900-1990”) gives dossiers on 259 documentaries produced in Chile in the first 90 years of the 20th Century.² And a quick search on the website *cinechile* gives a list of 146 films (including shorts) produced in 2012 alone.³ Documentary production in Argentina is similarly expansive. And within this field of documentary production, a significant number in both countries are films that explore the events of the dictatorship and their reverberations in the present. Indeed, this dissertation scarcely touches the surface of an explosive production of post-dictatorship documentary. What the above anecdote perhaps illustrates is the marginal status of documentary, and its need to fight for exhibition space in a situation in which even national narrative films are in a subordinate position at the box office. Nonetheless, the

² Alicia Vega, *Itinerario del cine documental chileno 1900-1990* (Santiago: Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2006).

³ See cinechile.cl.

concerns of postdictatorship documentary could not be more important in the face of the urgent pulls of past suffering and present and future possibilities.

Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel write that “violence and the social production of space are inextricably linked and thus influence social memories, imaginaries and practices. This influence extends beyond the places that would be obviously related to state violence, and hence beyond their material remains.”⁴ This dissertation considers the filmic engagement with spaces marked by state violence, but also the way this violence escapes the bounds of those spaces, pervading the urban imaginary and making unhomey homes. Documentaries can show the inhabitations of these spaces, and can enact encounters between present and past, individual and collective, memory and space. In my consideration of documentary alongside spatial practices of memorialization, I am arguing for the value of an approach that brings film studies and documentary studies into contact with spatial studies and memory studies.

In this introduction I will situate my work within wider conversations in the fields of trauma and memory studies, spatial studies, and documentary studies, in each case including an emphasis on work that has been done in the Latin American context. I will then briefly discuss ruins and postmemory, drawing on literary criticism. I close with an outline of the chapters of the dissertation.

Trauma, Memory, Suffering

⁴ Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel, “Introduction: The Multi-Layered Memories of Space,” in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, ed. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.

Cathy Caruth writes in *Unclaimed Experience* of the “belatedness” of an event which is “experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.”⁵ Similar to this notion is Dori Laub’s conception of the Holocaust as an “event without a witness,” because “the inherently incomprehensible *and* deceptive psychological structure of the event precluded its own witnessing, even by its own victims.”⁶ Both Caruth’s and Laub’s conceptions are vitally important for their emphasis on the difficulty of approaching such events, a difficulty that is particularly compounded when survivors’ memories are confronted with juridical frameworks that demand an “objective truth.” Janet Walker has termed this the “traumatic paradox”: “traumatic events can and do produce the very amnesias and mistakes in memory that are generally considered to undermine the legitimacy of a retrospective report about a remembered incident.”⁷

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub also point to the centrality of the Holocaust to academic engagement with trauma. In much scholarship, the Holocaust has come to stand in for both questions of traumatic experience and of representation. The wealth of academic production surrounding the Holocaust is extremely valuable as a base for work in other contexts, but also raises further questions about specificity and the potential problems of letting one historical context become the *ur*-text for all questions of trauma.

⁵ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4.

⁶ Dori Laub, M.D., “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival,” in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D., *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 80. Original emphasis.

⁷ Janet Walker, *Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 4.

While I draw in my analysis from works that consider the Holocaust, I also take lessons from works that have productively questioned the centrality of the Holocaust in the discourse of trauma theory, or have wrestled with how to think about the Holocaust in relation to other historical moments of social suffering.

Michael Rothberg's work is a case of the latter. Working to avoid both the dangers of an insistence on the one hand of the absolute uniqueness of the Holocaust, and on the other of a relativization of the Holocaust that fosters a "memory competition", Rothberg argues instead for what he calls "a concept of multidirectional memory, which recognizes the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during remembrance."⁸ Other scholars, such as those collected in two themed issues of the journals *positions* and *Studies in the Novel*, have argued for the development of a less-Eurocentric model of trauma, a project that this dissertation contributes to.⁹

Another problem encountered by scholars who have researched suffering has been how to account for traumatic events and memory as collective experiences rather than solely individual, as seems to be the focus in early trauma theory. How can trauma be conceived as something which occurs not only in the individual's psyche, but is shared socially? And is trauma the appropriate model for collective experience?

⁸ Michael Rothberg, "Chronicle of a Summer, Cinema Verité, and the Emergence of the Holocaust Survivor," *PMLA* 119, no. 5 (Oct. 2004): 1233-1234.

⁹ See Tani Barlow and Brian Hammer, "Introduction: War Capital Trauma" *positions* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 1-10; and Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, "Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels" *Studies in the Novel* 40, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring & Summer 2008): 1-12. See also in this regard, Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Jeffrey Alexander argues that it is, and defines cultural trauma as what “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”¹⁰ In fact, Alexander sees trauma as always culturally constructed, and his model thus addresses the charges leveled at trauma theory elsewhere by Susannah Radstone. Radstone is critical of what she sees as trauma theory’s tendency to employ a conception of “the event rather than the subject...as unpredictable or ungovernable,” and to thereby use trauma as a way of sidestepping the problems of subjectivity raised by poststructuralism, deconstruction and psychoanalysis.¹¹

Whereas scholars like Alexander and Radstone have worked within the model of trauma to address some of its potential deficiencies at a collective level, others have preferred to approach suffering through a model outside of the trauma paradigm. This view is perhaps best exemplified by the trilogy of books edited by Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock and others: *Social Suffering, Violence and Subjectivity*, and *Remaking a World*. The model of social suffering also begins with a critique of the focus on the individual latent in Western trauma theory. Kleinman, Das, and Lock are critical of trauma’s emphasis on issues of representability, and write that “from the perspective of theories of *social* suffering, such a preoccupation with individual certainty and doubt simply seems a less interesting, less important question to ask than that of how such

¹⁰ Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” in Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 1.

¹¹ Susannah Radstone, “Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics” *Paragraph* 30, no. 1(2007): 18.

suffering is produced in societies, and how acknowledgment of pain, as a cultural process, is given or withheld.”¹² These questions, particularly the latter one, guide my work. How do these documentaries contribute to an acknowledgement, or denial, of pain? My work here draws from the insights of both the models of cultural trauma and social suffering.

Elizabeth Jelin’s influential work *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* brings works like those just discussed into dialogue with the suffering and state violence that defined the late 20th Century in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, and the memory struggles that followed.¹³ Jelin finds the identification of processes of collective memory useful, but warns against their reification into a unitary concept that ignores individual difference and conflict. Rather, she favors a conception in which

the “collective” can . . . be construed in the sense of shared memories, layered on each other—as the outcome of multiple interactions structured by social frameworks and power relations. In this vein, the collective aspect of memory is the interweaving of traditions and individual memories in dialogue with others and in a state of constant flux.¹⁴

Adapting a term from sociologist Howard Becker, Jelin develops the concept of “memory entrepreneurs” to theorize the way struggles over the representation of past events transpire, and to emphasize the political stakes involved. These groups and individuals “seek social recognition and political legitimacy of *one* (their own)

¹² Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, “Introduction,” in Kleinman, Das, and Lock, *Social Suffering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): xiii. Original emphasis.

¹³ In addition to this work and others, Jelin has also co-edited a series of important and useful edited collections taking up various aspects of memorialization and memory struggles in both an Argentine and broader Latin American context.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatuvia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 11-12.

interpretation or narrative of the past.”¹⁵ Memory entrepreneurs include such diverse actors as human rights organizations, members of the right and the dictatorship’s apologists, and victims and family members of victims.

Although Jelin uses the term “victim” here, she goes on to problematize it. One of the earliest, and most insidious, frameworks for understanding the events in Argentina was that of the “*dos demonios*,” or “two demons,” which has been discussed by Jelin and many others. According to this popular conception, Argentina in the 1970s and 80s was plagued by the violence of both the right and left, and the majority “innocent” population was caught in-between. This has the effect of both white-washing and excusing the military’s violence, and has its analogue in Chile as well, where many describe the common sensation during the dictatorship of witnessing the arrest or abduction of someone and thinking that the victim must have done something wrong.¹⁶ Jelin argues that the casting of an innocent “silent majority” finds its analogue during the trials of members of the military government in their problematic reliance on the category of victimhood:

This middle ground [between the state and the left] enabled this alleged majority to identify with the notion that ‘*por algo será*’ (there must be a reason for repression)—a position that implicitly justified the repressive acts of the military regime. On the other hand, the accusations against and the judicial prosecution of the former commanders of the armed forces (in the 1985 trial) strengthened the figure of the ‘victim’ of state repression as the central figure of the period, regardless of his or her ideology or actions. A victim is a passive being, harmed by the actions of others. The victim is never an agent, never productive. He or she receives blows but is construed as incapable of provoking or responding.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid, 33-34.

¹⁶ Discussion of this attitude can be found, among many other places, in the BBC documentary *Chile’s Forbidden Dreams* (prod. Edward Goldwyn, 1984), in which members of the Ictus theater group in Santiago discuss this phenomenon.

¹⁷ Jelin, 54.

The figure of the victim certainly made its way into representations of both the Argentinean and Chilean dictatorships, and its centrality was the basis of the most prevalent critiques of early postdictatorship feature films from Argentina such as *The Official Story* (Luis Puenzo, 1985) and *Night of the Pencils* (Héctor Olivera, 1986). These are films that were very important as early opportunities to work through the trauma of the dictatorship at a mass level, but their narratives also relied on a disavowal of any radical poetics or agency in their construction of victimhood.

The documentaries that I examine in this dissertation overwhelmingly take a more complex view of the dictatorship, moving beyond the polar extremes of *dos demonios* and *por algo será* on the one hand, and the excesses of the category of the victim on the other. As we will see, recent years have brought much more nuanced accounts of the activism and militancy of the 1960s and 70s, which includes a criticality toward the mistakes of the left while also refusing any equivalence between them and the mechanisms of state violence.

Spaces of Violence, Spaces of Memorialization, Filmed Spaces

The dictatorships in both Argentina and Chile operated with a logic of absence through clandestinity and erasure, but also of presence, with the creation of fear and docility. Jorge Rafael Videla famously said, “The disappeared are just that, disappeared; they are not alive or dead; they are disappeared.”¹⁸ This statement chills for both its

¹⁸ Quoted in Fabiana Rousseaux and Lía Santa Cruz, “El discurso del poder y ‘la herida siempre abierta’: ‘ni vivos ni muertos, desaparecidos,’” *Página/12* (August 12, 1999) <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/1999/suple/psico/99-08/99-08-12/psico01.htm> (Accessed

brazen acknowledgment of that which usually went unspoken at the highest level (that disappearances were being carried out) and for its simultaneous refusal to grant any claim to reality of the disappeared body. Videla's words, spoken in response to the questions of a journalist, reveal the utility of disappearance for the military government, allowing the creation of a new category that places existence itself under erasure. Kirsten Mahlke writes of disappearance:

Its structure has neither beginning nor end, it is—even in its juridical form—a crime in perpetuity. In contrast to murder, an act of violence towards one or more persons, making someone disappear is an act of violence toward the possibility of subjectivization in general, for it systematically denies or erases all points of orientation in the form of causality, place, and time.¹⁹

This sense in which disappearance is a process that operates by obscuring its spatial and temporal points of reference only heightens the importance of anchoring it to place and time for both the survivors of disappearance and relatives of those who never appear again.

The process of disappearance also involved the confinement of victims in clandestine detention centers that were located in properties owned or seized by the military. Sometimes these sites were in remote locations, as was the case with Chacabuco, in the arid Atacama desert in Northern Chile, or Isla Dawson (Dawson Island) an island in the Strait of Magellan, in the extreme south of Chile. But often the sites were in the heart of urban locations, as in the case of Club Atlético and El Olimpo,

April 12, 2015). This quotation was broadcast on television, and appears in a number of documentaries as well.

¹⁹ Kirsten Mahlke, “‘All Limits Were Exceeded Over There’: The Chronotope of Terror in Modern Warfare and Testimony,” in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, ed. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 115.

among many others in Buenos Aires, and Londres 38, in downtown Santiago. The ESMA [Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada/Navy Mechanics School], in Buenos Aires, was in a well-trafficked area, but was given cover by being within a gated complex of buildings. As Pilar Calveiro writes, the sites in urban locations were an “open secret”:

The concentration camps were secret and so were the bodies interred *Nomen Nomunandum* in the cemeteries. However, in order for the mechanism of disappearance to function, these secrets had to be open; such camps needed to be known about in order to disseminate the terror (...). Secrets which need to be known, albeit remaining unspoken, but which everyone knows.²⁰

The existence of these sites was both known and unknown during the dictatorship. During both the late dictatorship and postdictatorship, after their use as detention centers was complete, there were often attempts to destroy, obscure, or move the buildings and traces of their use. Just a few examples include the destruction of the Club Atlético, a clandestine detention and torture center in Buenos Aires in 1976 and 1977, which was demolished in order to make room for the new 25 de Mayo Freeway in 1979; the demolition of almost all of the buildings at Villa Grimaldi, one of the most notorious detention sites in Chile, in the early postdictatorship; and the attempt to hide Londres 38, also in Santiago, by changing the street address to Londres 40. In the case of the secret burial of bodies of the disappeared, even in the rare cases where those bodies were found during the dictatorship—as was the case in Lonquén, Chile, where in 1978 the bodies of

²⁰ Pilar Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición: los campos de concentración en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2006), 78-79. Quoted in Silvana Mandolessi, “Haunted Houses, Horror Literature and the Space of Memory in Post-Dictatorship Argentine Literature,” in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, ed. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 153. I quote here from Mandolessi’s translation.

15 people who were disappeared in October 1973 were found in an abandoned lime oven—steps were still taken to erase events from the landscape. In 1980, the ovens at Lonquén were destroyed by the mining company that had acquired the site, which had become an important memory space for the relatives of those whose bodies were found there.

Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel ask, with particular reference to Argentina:

How is a repressive method aimed at erasing all traces of the crime to be located and re-inscribed in space? Why does a crime that leaves no apparent material residue still reconfigure the social production and practice of space? How does it haunt places and individuals subsequently?²¹

These questions concern me here, and also concern the makers of the films this dissertation examines. For despite the enormity of the systematic disappearance and erasure of bodies, sites, and events, there have been attempts to re-inscribe their memory back into these spaces from the start, and in the postdictatorship these attempts have only grown in number. Central in this process of rewriting the past into the spaces of the present has been the growing movement to reclaim sites of suffering and convert them into spaces of memorialization.

Pierre Nora's study of *lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory, has been extremely influential in the humanities. Originally published as seven volumes in France, then translated and edited into the three-volume *Fields of Memory* in English, Nora's work suggests that there has been an "acceleration of history" in the 20th Century (or earlier),

²¹ Pamela Colombo and Estela Schindel, "Introduction: The Multi-Layered Memories of Space," in *Space and the Memories of Violence: Landscapes of Erasure, Disappearance and Exception*, ed. Estela Schindel and Pamela Colombo (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 9.

stemming from the decline of previous methods and institutions that passed on memories, values, and ideologies.²² This acceleration of history has caused a definitive split between history and memory, and has meant that “memory has been torn—but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.”²³ All this has led *lieux de mémoire* to replace *milieux de mémoire*, “real environments of memory.”²⁴ The emphasis on “sites” of memory suggests a spatial approach, although *lieux* has alternatively been translated as “realms”, and the *lieux de mémoire*—while including physical places like museums, monuments, archives, and cemeteries—also includes books, dates, generations, pilgrimages, and national flags. *Lieux de mémoire* have a fundamentally substitutive function, they are the “ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it.”²⁵ Or, as James Young puts it, building on Nora in his study of Holocaust monuments,

there seems to be an inverse proportion between the memorialization of the past and its contemplation and study. For once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember. In shouldering the memory-work, monuments may relieve viewers of the memory burden.²⁶

For Nora, the modern form of memory, the memory that has replaced the “true” memory proper to *milieux de mémoire* is distinguished by three aspects: 1) it is archival, relying on material objects, images, and traces; 2) it is pursued out of a sense of duty or

²² Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁶ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 5.

obligation, which further leads to a proliferation of individual memories rather than social or collective memory; and 3) it perceives itself as approaching its object from a great distance, and develops its fascination from this same fact; no longer felt to be on a continuum with the past it becomes all the more enthralled by it.

Nora's work has a powerful explanatory power, and in certain cases his analysis of *lieux de mémoire* would seem to be applicable to the ways memorials and museums take shape. However, I am inclined to agree with Steve Stern's critique, which finds Nora's distinctions too strict and Manichean. "[Nora's] framework is deeply flawed. It sets up too rigid a dichotomy between the ambience of living memory (his *milieux de mémoire*) and the sites that gain meaning as a repository precisely because living memory has died (his *lieux de mémoire*)."²⁷ Furthermore, and especially important for my purposes, he finds Nora's work particularly ill-suited in the context of the Southern Cone:

Nora's dichotomy is especially problematic for a theme such as memory of recent violent military dictatorships, in countries such as Chile and Argentina, between the 1970s and 1990s. For this specific memory theme, an environment of living remembrance—more accurately, an ambience of contentiousness about memory and forgetting, and of dialogue between personal (“testimonial”) remembrance and collective remembrance—has greatly defined the political and cultural experiences of at least two living generations.²⁸

So, while I find Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* useful as a cautionary tale, and descriptive to a point of the dangers that come with memorialization and museification, the events of dictatorship in Argentina and Chile are still too bound up in living memory,

²⁷ Steve Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 199. This critique is located entirely within a very lengthy endnote in Chapter Four, “From Loose Memory to Emblematic Memory.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

and contested between various memory entrepreneurs, to properly be cast as *lieux de mémoire*.

From Henri Lefebvre, we know that space is socially produced, and thus can never be taken as a given. Lefebvre writes that space produced socially

also serves as a tool of thought and of action; that, in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely; the very agency that has forced spatial reality towards a sort of uncontrollable autonomy now strives to run it into the ground, then shackle and enslave it.²⁹

State terror in Argentina and Chile in the 1970s and 1980s relied on spatial control, and operated through the conversion of public space into a space of danger and fear, where some lived clandestinely, unsure of who they could trust, and some would walk by people they knew on the streets and not acknowledge each other out of fear. In many respects, activist and political life moved into the private spaces of the home, though these spaces were not safe either given that many of the disappearances carried out by the dictatorships involved abducting people from their houses, often in the middle of the night.

At the same time, and in keeping with Lefebvre's hypothesis, public spaces were utilized for protest and were turned against state power in actions that were all the more remarkable given the threat of violence that permeated daily life. The most famous example of this is that of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, mothers of the disappeared in Argentina who, beginning in April 1977, demonstrated in front of the Casa Rosada, the

²⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991 [1972]), 26.

seat of national government in Buenos Aires, displaying photographs of their disappeared children and demanding their return. Another example (among many) is that of the *siluetazo*, a mass protest and artistic intervention carried out in Buenos Aires on September 21, 1983. The streets were filled with thousands of life-size tracings of human figures meant to represent the disappeared, and created by tracing the actual bodies of ordinary members of the public who participated in the protest.³⁰

At around the same time, also in 1983, the Chilean artist collective CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte/Art Actions Collective) initiated the No+ campaign, a political art action in which members of the collective and others left graffiti around Santiago that read “No+” (no más/no more), and which was then filled in with various social demands (No+ torture, No+ disappearance, No+ guns, No+ dictatorship, etc.). 1983 was the year that popular resistance in Chile overcame fear of the state at a mass level, and massive street protests began taking place with regularity, reclaiming city streets in celebratory protests. In 1985 the group Mujeres por la Vida (Women for Life) organized a rally under the banner of “Somos+” (somos más/we are more), in which a group of women marched and sang in downtown Santiago. This action, along with the violent police suppression that followed, were captured in Pedro Salas’ short documentary *Somos +* (1985). Mujeres por la Vida also organized a Chilean version of the *siluetazo* in 1988, an event documented in Tatiana Gaviola’s video *No me olvides* (“Don’t Forget Me,” 1988).³¹

³⁰ On the *siluetazo*, see Ana Longoni and Gustavo Bruzzone, eds., *El Siluetazo* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2008).

³¹ For more on *No me olvides*, see Antonio Traverso and Germán Liñero, “Chilean Political Documentary Video of the 1980s,” in *New Documentaries in Latin America*,

These few examples demonstrate some of the ways in which urban spaces were contested during the dictatorship (and this contestation also predated the dictatorship in both Chile and Argentina, which both had robust traditions of protest). In the postdictatorship, spaces remained contested, and the documentary films that I consider here speak to that contestation, and enact the repossession of space through the bodily movements of their makers and subjects, whether returning to the spaces of detention and terror, or reinscribing memory into the urban spaces of Buenos Aires and Santiago.

Documentary

My work here draws on, and enters into conversation with, scholarly work on documentary in a Chilean and Argentinean context, as well as works that take a continental scope.

There are only a handful of book-length treatments of documentary in Latin America at a continental level. Julianne Burton's landmark 1990 edited collection, *The Social Documentary in Latin America* looks at the use of documentary in the New Latin American Cinema (NLAC) of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. One of the central concerns in this work is to create typologies of cinematic modes or approaches, which the book does in its opening chapters. Michael Chanan categorizes Latin American documentary into nine categories: "*cine didáctico*"—didactic films; "*cine celebrativo*"—celebrational cinema; *cine de combate*—the combat film; *cine denuncia*—the protest film; *cine encuesta*—investigative documentary; *cine ensayo*—the film essay; *cine reportaje*—reportage"; "*cine rescate*"—films that 'rescue' aspects of national or regional history or

ed. Vinicius Navarro and Juan Carlos Rodríguez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 175-178.

culture”; and “*cine testimonio*—the testimonial film.”³² This typology complements the modes of filmmaking developed by Julianne Burton in another essay on the social documentary in the NLAC: expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive, along with “mixed modes,” which characterizes any film that uses two or more of the modes.³³ Burton’s modes are described using examples from both the NLAC and films from outside Latin America, demonstrating a universal application rather than contextual specificity, as does the further development of these modes in Bill Nichols’ work.³⁴ Michael Chanan’s model is clearly intended more for a contextual use in the NLAC. Most of the films that I consider in this dissertation could be said to “mix modes” in Burton’s terms, and while many of the films can be mapped onto one or more of Chanan’s categories, again the most common position is to mix elements. Both typologies offer useful categorizations of the formal and conventional choices available to filmmakers, but as mentioned above they do not play a significant role in the creation of the corpus of films I examine here, and do not provide the organizing framework for how I conceptualize these films. Instead, my dissertation allows for the possibility that films with very different formal and aesthetic approaches can still be making comparable spatial interventions.

³² Michael Chanan, “Rediscovering Documentary: Cultural Context and Intentionality,” in *New Latin American Cinema, Vol. One: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 206.

³³ Julianne Burton, “Toward a History of Social Documentary in Latin America,” in *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 4-6.

³⁴ Bill Nichols, “Documentary Modes of Representation,” in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 32-75. The modes were later expanded, with the addition of the “poetic” and “performative” modes, as well as the renaming of the interactive mode as “participatory.” See Bill Nichols, “What Types of Documentary Are There?” in *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 99-138.

Burton's collection features essays on national documentary cinemas, particular filmmakers, and films. Recent years have seen more activity in this area, including several book-length collections. Paulo Antonio Paranaguá's edited collection *Cine documental en América Latina* "has only one antecedent,"³⁵ Julianne Burton's collection. Paranaguá's introduction traces a history of Latin American documentary, and the rest of the book, aside from a few essays considering Latin American documentary from an external context, is broken into sections on filmmakers, films, and original documents and manifestoes written by the filmmakers.

The final section of *The Social Documentary in Latin America* is entitled "Beyond the Documentary/Fiction Dichotomy", and another recent edited collection builds on the four chapters in this section. Miriam Haddu and Joanna Page's *Visual Synergies in Fiction and Documentary Film from Latin America* approaches the overlapping areas of documentary and fiction production in two ways:

first, by identifying some of the important contributions made by Latin American filmmakers to cross-genre experimentation of this kind, and second, by bringing to the fore the implications of these experiments, and of the theoretical paradigms developed by Latin American(ist)s working on film, for continued debates concerning the nature of the cinematic image and its relationship with the real.³⁶

Another edited collection, *New Documentaries in Latin America*, edited by Vinicius Navarro and Juan Carlos Rodríguez, approaches trends in the last 30 years of documentary filmmaking in Latin America, and does so through three general themes: formal and aesthetic developments, including the trend toward first-person filmmaking;

³⁵ Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, "Orígenes, evolución y problemas," in *Cine documental en América Latina* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), 13. My translation.

³⁶ Joanna Page, "Introduction: Fiction, Documentary, and Cultural Change in Latin America," in *Visual Synergies in Fiction and Documentary Film from Latin America*, ed. Miriam Haddu and Joanna Page (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4.

indigenous and community media-making; and dialogues among the local, national, and transnational.³⁷

There have also been volumes published on documentary in Chile and Argentina, including Javier Campo's *Cine documental argentino: Entre el arte, la cultura y la política* (Argentine Documentary Cinema: Between Art, Culture and Politics), and Jacqueline Mouesca's *El documental chileno* (Chilean Documentary), both of which offer surveys of the entire history of documentary production in each country. The edited collection *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino* (Images of the Real: The Representation of the Political in Argentine Documentary), edited by Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival, covers films from the New Latin American Cinema as well as more recent documentaries, and is organized around questions of politicization, the limits of the term "political documentary", and first-person documentary.³⁸ Antonio Traverso and Tomás Crowder-Taraborrelli edited a recent special issue of *Latin American Perspectives* entitled "Political Documentary Cinema in the Southern Cone," and focused on films from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Much scholarship has also been published in recent years through online journals such as *Cine Documental*, edited out of Argentina, which has published 11 issues since 2010, including scholarship on Argentinean, Latin American, and global documentary, as well as translation into Spanish of works of documentary theory.³⁹

³⁷ Vinicius Navarro and Juan Carlos Rodríguez, "Introduction," in *New Documentaries in Latin America*, ed. Vinicius Navarro and Juan Carlos Rodríguez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-21.

³⁸ See Silvina Rival, "Revisiones," in *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino*, eds. Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival (Buenos Aires: Librería, 2007), 9-20.

³⁹ <http://revista.cinedocumental.com.ar/>

Another notable example is the Chilean online journal *La Fuga*, which publishes much work on documentary, though that is not its sole focus.⁴⁰ My dissertation draws on this extensive and growing body of scholarship, and also contributes to it, particularly through my focus on the intersections of memory and space in Chilean and Argentinean documentary.

Ruins and Allegory

Idelber Avelar considers, in his book *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction and the Task of Mourning*, the place of literature in offering a response to the events of military dictatorship and to “the new present ushered in by the military regimes: a global market in which every corner of social life has been commodified.”⁴¹ In both Chile and Argentina, just as in other Latin American nations, the central rationale of the military’s project was to quickly clear a path for neoliberalism by brutally eliminating any voices of dissent. In this way, the neoliberal, modern-day, commodified spaces of Argentina and Chile can be seen broadly as entwined with the state violence that gave birth to them, or hastened them along.

As Jean Franco writes: “States of exception and states of siege not only justified the suppression of groups deemed subversive or alien to modernity but also created an environment in which cruelty was enabled in the name of state security.”⁴² In the wake of these violent purges, literature and other art forms were faced with the task of representing that which was often experienced as a void, and with states that had been

⁴⁰ <http://www.lafuga.cl/>

⁴¹ Idelber Avelar, *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction and the Task of Mourning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 1.

⁴² Jean Franco, *Cruel Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 2.

careful to remove all vestiges of violence through practices like disappearance, clandestine burials, and even the digging up and reburial of corpses.

If the dictatorships have resignified every corner of the city, if the catastrophe is blocked from public memory by the absence of monuments to the dead, postdictatorial literature depicts the urban space as an allegorical ruin. It is through these ruins that postcatastrophe literature reactivates the hope of providing an entrance into a traumatic experience that has seemingly been condemned to silence and oblivion.⁴³

Indeed, many critics have found in the figure of the ruin a productive entry point for reading the wound left by catastrophic violence and the ways in which survivors, artists, and activists have responded.⁴⁴

Here, for instance, is Chilean critic Nelly Richard, writing of the postdictatorship urban landscape in Santiago:

The experience of wandering through the city past the facades of sites that the military dictatorship once used as detention and torture centers seems to tell us that, in the present, almost no eloquent sign forcefully denounces that condemnable past. What has transpired between the cruel and tormenting past being cited by these dramatic sites and the forgetful everyday malaise of neighborhoods trusting that anonymity will dissipate guilt?⁴⁵

It will be my argument that part of what postdictatorship documentaries do is to try to inscribe this “eloquent sign” into the space by other means, while challenging the forgetful malaise, the anonymity and dissipation of guilt promised by ruins.

But the ruin that Avelar speaks of is an allegorical ruin, and it is in allegory that Avelar locates the agency of postdictatorship literature, and its “untimely” quality.⁴⁶

⁴³ Avelar, 10.

⁴⁴ For example, see the edited volume: Michael J. Lazzara and Vicky Unruh, eds., *Telling Ruins in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁴⁵ Nelly Richard, “Sites of Memory, Emptying Remembrance,” in Lazzara and Unruh, *Telling Ruins*, 175.

⁴⁶ “Ruins are the raw material that allegory possesses at its disposal.” Avelar, 69.

Avelar references the belatedness proper to traumatic events, and argues that allegory as a form is particularly bound up with mourning and death.⁴⁷ Allegory exists in post-dictatorship documentary as well, as can be seen in the film *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos* (Bettina Perut and Iván Osnovikoff, 2004), in which allegory becomes a surreal children's performance.⁴⁸ However, ruins can also be approached in other ways. In the introduction to their edited volume, *Telling Ruins in Latin America*, Michael Lazzara and Vicky Unruh lay out two conceptions of ruins that guide their collection:

A central premise [of the book] is that the ruin—as a merger of past, present, and future, and as a material embodiment of change—offers a fertile locale for competing cultural stories about historical events, political projects, and the constitution of communities. Equally important is the idea that what a human group does with its ruins—maintain them in disarray, restore them, transport them to alternative sites, linger on them with pause, or banish them from view—unleashes compelling social, ethical, or political consequences for the present and the future.⁴⁹

Both of these conceptions of the ruins of dictatorship are central to the post-dictatorship documentaries I will examine here. The question of what to do with these sites, and how films intervene in that question, will be of particular importance here, particularly in Chapters Two and Three.

Chapter Outline

⁴⁷ On the belatedness of trauma, see Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), esp. "Introduction: The Wound and the Voice", 1-9.

⁴⁸ See Chapter One.

⁴⁹ Michael J. Lazzara and Vicky Unruh, "Introduction: Telling Ruins," in Lazzara and Unruh, *Telling Ruins*, 1-2.

Chapter One, “Postmemory and Politics Across the Rupture,” looks at the ways in which postdictatorship documentaries, while less apparently political than the films of the 1960s and 1970s that preceded the dictatorships in each country, nonetheless are political, and in ways that at once are resonant with the politics of the New Latin American Cinema (NLAC), and critical of them. The chapter opens with discussion of two of the most celebrated figures in Chilean and Argentinean documentary, Patricio Guzmán and Fernando Solanas, whose work is particularly useful for my purposes because they both made films that were central and defining works of the NLAC, but have also both (after years spent in exile) continued making works into the postdictatorship, works that, to varying degrees, address the years of the dictatorship (Guzmán’s are more singlemindedly focused on this period than Solanas’). In this comparison, I argue that both filmmakers, while creating perceptive and important filmic responses to dictatorship that are at once concerned with the past, and how to draw from it in the making of the future, privilege figures from the activist generation of the 1970s in their understanding of the present moment.

This discussion is followed by an examination of three films that challenge, to different extents and in various ways, the privileging of the earlier generation, and show different ways in which the postmemory generation engages with both the events of the dictatorship and with the concerns and actions of the previous generation. In looking at *Los rubios* (Albertina Carri, 2003) from Argentina, and *El edificio de los chilenos* (Macarena Aguiló, 2010) and *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos* (2004) from Chile, I argue that these films show the importance of the voice of postmemory generations in the struggle around how to define the memory of the utopian

politics of the 70s and the rupture of dictatorship, and how to position memory in the shaping of a future.

In Chapter Two, “‘What to Do Starting From this Place’: Documentary Production and Official Memorialization,” I turn to the spatial concerns that characterize my approach, and that I argue are a significant and defining feature in Chilean and Argentinean postdictatorship documentary. In this chapter I examine a number of films, all of which share the use of footage captured at spaces that served as clandestine detention centers or concentration camps during the dictatorships. I begin with some thoughts drawn from my own site visit to Londres 38, the detention center and torture site in Santiago that has been recently recovered by a human rights group and converted into a memorial space. My own visit, and an account of the guided tours given at the site, is coupled with discussion of a film, *El Mocito* (Marcela Said and Jean de Certeau, 2011), that uses Londres 38 as the location for scenes of documentary reenactment, but a reenactment in which Londres 38 does not play itself, instead representing another clandestine space of torture, this one unavailable to the filmmakers. The chapter continues with a discussion of a number of films: *Reinalda del Carmen, mi mamá y yo* (Lorena Giachino Torrén, Chile, 2006), *El predio* (Jonathan Perel, Argentina, 2010), *Tabula rasa* (Jonathan Perel, Argentina, 2013), *M* (Nicolás Prividera, Argentina, 2007), and *Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi* (Quique Cruz and Marilyn Mulford, Chile/USA, 2008). Each of these films stages encounters with recognizable spaces from the memory landscape, spaces that existed as sites of suffering, and now serve as memorial spaces that craft their own narrative together with those who visit them. In reading the spaces themselves, drawing on my own site visits as well as critical writings

on memory spaces, alongside their filmic representation, I argue that as a whole, this body of films performs work that resists the calcification of memory into one particular narrative, and engages the spaces from different critical perspectives that resist the fixity or oblivion that are sometimes associated with the musealization of memorial spaces.

While Chapter Two considers those spaces that have collective significance and in the postdictatorship have become official memorial spaces, the following chapter examines the use of spaces that are charged with individual memory, or that remain unrecognized as official memorial spaces. Chapter Three, “Unofficial and Individual Memory Sites,” opens with an account of “trespass” obstinately recorded as such in the 1994 film *La flaca Alejandra* (Carmen Castillo and Guy Girard, Chile). I present this scene as emblematic of the ways in which many of the films considered in this chapter approach spaces as contested sites. This chapter also locates documentary in relation to spatial acts of protest, specifically those of *escrache* (in Argentina) and *funa* (in Chile), carnivalesque outings of repressors carried out in the early years of democracy by groups of children of the disappeared. I connect these spatial interventions to the documentary *Special Circumstances* (Héctor Salgado and Marianne Teleki, US/Chile, 2006), which operates using a similar logic of confrontation.

Photographs of the disappeared, both candid family photographs and photos taken for identity cards, were important objects for family members, both as memory objects, and as indexical proof of the disappeared family member’s existence. In this chapter, I examine the work of Argentinean photographer Gustavo Germano, and two films, *(h) historias cotidianas* (Andrés Habegger, Argentina, 2001), and *La ciudad de los fotógrafos* (Sebastián Moreno, Chile, 2006), all of which stage returns to the site of

photographs in order to search for their resonance and their continued absence in the present.

I close the chapter with a consideration of a film that traffics in highly charged personal encounters between the filmmaker and her own memory spaces. *Calle Santa Fe* (Carmen Castillo, Chile/France/Belgium, 2007) follows the filmmaker's own return from living in exile, and draws on the impulse to revisit or even restore the spaces in which she lived before exile. For Castillo, the widow of Manuel Enríquez, the assassinated leader of the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario/Left Wing Revolutionary Movement), the space in which she lived also has wider collective significance among members of the militant left in Chile.

The final chapter, Chapter Four, "Exhibition Site as Memorial Space" examines the spaces of exhibition of postdictatorship documentary, as well as how sites of exhibition are represented within documentaries. In doing so, I begin with a return to a few films that have been discussed in previous chapters, including *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Argentina, 1968), *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (Patricio Guzmán, Chile/Canada/France, 1997), *El predio*, and *M*. I look at these films through the lens of what they reveal about the screening space as a space of encounter, political mobilization, and/or memorialization.

I close by looking at three different exhibition scenes in Chile for the screening of activist video documentaries from the 1980s. These videos were created by collectives, produced clandestinely, and screened clandestinely during the dictatorship in poblaciones (shantytowns), universities, and other settings. I begin with the screening of Ignacio Agüero's *Como me da la gana* (1985) for a group of children participating in a

cinema workshop conducted by Alicia Vega in a población near Santiago, and captured in Agüero's film *Cien niños esperando un tren* (1988). From here, I jump ahead into the postdictatorship, and write about the use of 1980s video documentary in the permanent exhibition at the Museo de la Memoria y Derechos Humanos (The Museum of Memory and Human Rights) in Santiago. Finally, I look at a lesson plan developed for the use of the documentary *Por la vida* (Pedro Chaskel and Pablo Salas, 1987) in educational settings.

Chapter One: Postmemory and Politics Across the Rupture

State repression in both Argentina and Chile, in all its Cold War logic, targeted systematically any activity considered “subversive” and used the climate of fear created by disappearances and torture as powerful dissuasion against any resistant activity. In this regard, filmmakers who had made political films prior to the dictatorships were at risk, as were other cultural producers, and many of them fled the country into exile. Others, such as Raymundo Gleyzer in Argentina and Jorge Muller Silva in Chile, were not so lucky, and were disappeared and killed by the military government.

Notwithstanding the films of political solidarity created by filmmakers in exile and the work of clandestine filmmakers during the dictatorship (like the films and videos produced by Teleanalisis and Ictus in Chile), the military dictatorships can be seen to mark a clear rupture in filmmaking activity, and a gulf on either side of which are the militant films of the New Latin American Cinema (NLAC), and the postdictatorship films I consider here. If, as I argue here, these later films (more backward-looking by definition as attempts to work through the trauma of the dictatorships) are political, then their politics is nevertheless clearly of a different kind than that of the NLAC. In this chapter I will sketch out some of the different forms of being political that can be identified in postdictatorial documentary production, which vary with the different demands of generations. This chapter first examines the two highest-profile documentary filmmakers in Argentina and Chile, whose careers span from the period of the NLAC to the present day, Fernando Solanas and Patricio Guzmán. Brief examinations of Solanas’ and Guzmán’s foundational works, as well as postdictatorship works, establish that the very different bodies of work of these filmmakers each have a continuity of political

concerns and formal tactics from the NLAC to the present, as well as key differences spurred by the very different political landscape of the postdictatorship. The second half of this chapter analyzes three important postmemory documentaries, *Los rubios* from Argentina and *El edificio de los chilenos* and *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la moneda de los cerdos* from Chile. In my discussion of these three postmemory films, I am mindful of Beatriz Sarlo's critique of "postmemory" as theorized by Marianne Hirsch and James Young. Sarlo writes that:

Characterized by lacuna, the mediated, the resistant to totalization and its own impossibility, the unique discourse of "postmemory" always finds what it searches for and, consequentially, becomes monotonous in its programmatic neglect for the differences between accounts. If we address the way in which children process the history of their parents where there were important fractures, it is not sufficient to identify only one invariable form.¹

In this respect, I have chosen three films that engage with postmemory and generational differences in very different ways, but that nonetheless are illustrative of the utility of a concept of postmemory for thinking through the generational differences in how filmmakers in Argentina and Chile approach the events of military dictatorship.

Two additional lenses help to bring the generational differences of postmemory filmmaking into focus: the relations and imaginings of the family seen in these films, and issues of realism. The disappearances that marked both the Argentinean and Chilean dictatorships destroyed families, and left them with gaping holes that could not be filled. The family also structured activism against the dictatorships; the most iconic images of the Argentinean dictatorship are of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, marching in a circle around the Plaza bearing photographs of their disappeared children. The films that

¹ Beatriz Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado: Cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo. Una discusión* (Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 2005), 142. My translation.

I will analyze in this chapter, and in the dissertation overall, offer examples of reimaginings and creative enactments of families that respond to these absences. Additionally, these films are illustrative of the challenge posed to ideas of realism that were often linked to the NLAC.

In order to contextualize both these later films, and my discussion of Solanas and Guzmán that precedes them, a very brief consideration of the NLAC, focusing on the centrality of ideas of realism, is in order. Most histories of the movement trace the name of the “New Latin American Cinema” to a meeting of many of the filmmakers at the 1967 Viña del Mar Festival, which John King describes as “a first step towards the elusive goal of Pan-American solidarity.”² However, this was neither the first nor last pan-Latin American meeting of filmmakers. Zuzana Pick cites a meeting as early as 1958 in Montevideo, at the International Festival of Documentary and Experimental Film, where a number of filmmakers including Nelson Pereira dos Santos, and Fernando Birri met.³ After the 1967 meeting at Viña del Mar, filmmakers met again in Mérida, Venezuela in 1968. Ana López quotes from the definition of the NLAC proposed at this meeting:

A cinema committed to national reality: a cinema which rejects all evasive and deformative formulas and indifference and ignorance, in order to confront the problematic of the sociological, political, economic,

² John King, *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1990), 71. Michael Chanan explicitly credits the meeting of filmmakers at this festival with “the designation of this movement as *el nuevo cine latinoamericano*.” *The Politics of Documentary* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 195.

³ Zuzana Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 16. Ana López points out that John Grierson was a guest of honor at this festival. López, “An ‘Other’ History: The New Latin American Cinema,” in *New Latin American Cinema, Vol. One: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 146-147.

and cultural processes which each country, according to its particular situation and characteristics, is living through; a cinema which creates works permeated by realism, whether they be fictional or documentary, simple testimonies, profound analyses, or agitational tools.⁴

Here we can see how the filmmakers defined the movement under the banner of the NLAC, but it is important to remember that this was just one of many designations available for describing the films of the movement at the time, and would only become the dominant term retroactively. In the same 1988 essay, López wrote that “fifteen years ago we could speak of a ‘Third Cinema,’ an ‘Imperfect Cinema’ or a ‘Cinema of Hunger,’ but today these terms have become practically obsolete and are subsumed under the far more powerful and empowering ‘New Latin American Cinema.’”⁵ The naming of the NLAC signals a Third Worldist, pan-Latin American emphasis that overrides the differences between individual films and their national contexts and highlights the shared character of being “openly critical and questioning of the established order.”⁶ Nonetheless, as Zuzana Pick points out, a large part of this categorization has been retrospective: “it is precisely in the written histories of the New Latin American Cinema that the convergence between national considerations and pan-continental solidarity has been established.”⁷

As is clear in the definition proposed in Mérida quoted above, the question of realism was central to the New Latin American Cinema, although there were very different realisms in each national and historical context (and in some cases, as in the

⁴ “Editorial: El Desafío del Nuevo Cine,” *Cine al Día* 6 (1968), 2. Quoted in López, “An ‘Other’ History,” 149.

⁵ López, “An ‘Other’ History,” 138.

⁶ Isaac León Frías, *El nuevo cine latinoamericano de los años sesenta: Entre el mito político y la modernidad filmica* (Lima: Universidad de Lima Fondo Editorial, 2013), 18.

⁷ Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema*, 15.

“Aesthetic of Hunger” proposed by Glauber Rocha, or Julio Garcia Espinosa’s “Imperfect Cinema”, realism is not the most important term). In Fernando Birri’s manifesto “Cinema and Underdevelopment” (written in 1962), the Argentine filmmaker proposes that revolutionary documentary cinema must provide the “real image” of society to counter the “false image” presented by dominant cinemas.

How can documentary provide this image? By showing how reality *is*, and in no other way. This is the revolutionary function of social documentary and realist, critical and popular cinema in Latin America. By testifying, critically, to this reality—to this sub-reality, this misery—cinema refuses it. It rejects it. It denounces, judges, criticizes and deconstructs it.⁸

Ana López sees in manifestos like this, as well as some of the early films of the NLAC, “a naïve belief in the camera’s ability to record ‘truths’—to capture a national reality or essence without any mediation—as if a simple inversion of the dominant colonized culture were sufficient to negate that culture and institute a truly national one.”⁹ Here López is constructing a model of the early NLAC against which to counter the docu-fiction hybrids she considers in the same essay, and which themselves constitute another side of the NLAC. Michael Chanan provides a more favorable reading of the same idea of realism, which he links to Paulo Freire’s concept of *concientización*, from a writing of 1970, eight years after Birri’s manifesto.

Documentary, in this perspective, is not the simple reflection of reality, but an act of reflection upon it, first by the film-maker and then by the audience. As long as it remains dialogically oriented, it thereby contributes to the burgeoning of political self-awareness which Freire

⁸ Birri, “Cinema and Underdevelopment,” in *New Latin American Cinema, Vol. One: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 93-94. Emphasis in original.

⁹ Ana M. López, “At the Limits of Documentary: Hypertextual Transformation and the New Latin American Cinema,” in *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 407.

calls *concientización*, a term roughly equivalent to consciousness-raising in English, which comes about ‘because human consciousness, although conditioned, can recognize that it is conditioned’.¹⁰

This theorization of the NLAC resonates with two of the most famous films of the NLAC, both documentary epics in three parts, which came out of Argentina and Chile, respectively: *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, 1968), and *The Battle of Chile* (Patricio Guzmán, 1975-79). Solanas and Guzmán are also particularly interesting filmmakers to consider for our purposes, as they both went into exile and returned to make films in the postdictatorship. Nonetheless, their films, both pre- and post-dictatorship, are very different from one another.

Solanas

The Hour of the Furnaces, the first film produced by the collective Grupo Cine Liberación (Film Liberation Group), has been called by Clara Kriger “the most significant political documentary from Latin America, as much for its innovative capacity and militant effectiveness as for its international significance.”¹¹ This combination of political and formal innovation is characterized by Robert Stam as a fusing of the two avant-gardes, “the formal and the theoretico-political,”¹² and results in the film’s startling openness, an openness of a kind that we are not accustomed to seeing in cinema:

¹⁰ Chanan, *Politics*, 196.

¹¹ Clara Kriger, “*La hora de los hornos*,” in *Cine documental en América Latina*, ed. Paulo Antonio Paranaguá (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), 320.

¹² Robert Stam, “The Two Avant-gardes: Solanas and Getino’s *The Hour of the Furnaces*,” in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, eds. Barry Keith Grant and Jeannette Sloniowski (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 254.

But whereas “openness” in art usually evokes plurisignification, polysemy, the authorization of a plurality of equally legitimate readings, the Solanas-Getino film is not open in this sense: its messages are stridently unequivocal; its ambiguities, such as they are, derive more from the vicissitudes of history than from the intentions of its authors.¹³

Stam locates this openness in two areas: the production process of the film, in which Solanas and Getino’s own political ideas moved toward a left Peronist viewpoint, and (more apparent in the experience of the film) the openness of the film’s structure, famously marked in certain instances where the film’s projection is meant to be stopped so that the viewers can discuss and debate what they’ve seen, before the film continues. I will return to this second aspect of the film, its rejection of spectacle and attempt to catalyze the space of exhibition (which was clandestine) as the site for a political act, in Chapter Four.

There is one more sense in which to think of the openness of *The Hour of the Furnaces*, not discussed by Stam, which I wish to discuss before moving to some of Solanas’ more recent films. This is the way in which Solanas’ film uses other filmic images captured in particular locations (whether Argentine or not), and inserts them into a broader, tri-continental argument typical of the Third Cinema that Solanas and Getino propose.¹⁴ As an example, I will look at the use of one particular scene from Fernando Birri’s short film *Tire Dié* (1960), itself one of the foundational films of the NLAC. *Tire Dié* documents extreme poverty in the outskirts of Santa Fe, Argentina, and the film’s final sequence shows children running across a narrow-trestle bridge alongside

¹³ Ibid., 256.

¹⁴ See Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,” in *New Latin American Cinema, Vol. One: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 33-58.

passenger trains, their arms outstretched, calling out “*Tire dié, tire dié!*” (“Toss a dime!”) Solanas and Getino employ footage from this scene in a short segment of *The Hour of the Furnaces* entitled “Everyday Violence”. After a short series of shots of factory windows accompanied by a low drone, and images of people running and biking down the street (presumably on their way to work), the segment proceeds with images of Argentine factory workers accompanied by voice-over in which the workers describe their poor working conditions, under the constant threat of state violence. Industrial noises mount rhythmically, and graphic titles are intercut (e.g. “In order to dominate man it is no longer necessary to use napalm or poison gases”), until the soundtrack builds to a noisy cacophony. From these scenes of urban poverty, the film transitions to rural poverty, while a man’s and woman’s voice alternately read statistics about poverty in Argentina, other Latin American countries, and continent-wide. At the close of the sequence, a minute-long sequence from the end of *Tire Dié* is shown. Here, an example of suburban Argentinean poverty from Birri’s localized film becomes instead a typification of Latin American poverty. Birri’s film is also opened up into a wider context through the transition into the next segment of Solanas and Getino’s film, “The Port City”. A shot from *Tire Dié* of a young boy running along the thin rail, arm outstretched, and looking up into the camera is crosscut, twice, with a shot looking up from the base of a large downtown Buenos Aires skyscraper. Through an eyeline match, the poverty depicted in *Tire Dié* becomes associated in *The Hour of the Furnaces* with the petit-bourgeoisie that the next segment of the film scathingly critiques. But in opening out the earlier film into a wider context, Solanas removes the other aspect of openness, polysemy, from *Tire Dié*’s images. Emilio Bernini writes:

The grupo Cine Liberación recognizes in *Tire dié* an antecedent worthy of citation, but the fragment of this film that is included in the first part of *La hora de los hornos* loses its deliberate laconism upon being inserted into a context of images that give a strong sense of univocality. Only one reading is thus possible of the fragment . . . the polysemy proper to the image is incessantly reduced in accord with the objective that the filmmakers had laid out beforehand.¹⁵

In a move metonymic for the formation of the NLAC, *The Hour of the Furnaces* takes the local critique of *Tire Dié* and through montage, makes it speak to a pan-Latin American context, even if it comes at the cost of a violence to the original image's intent. Similar appropriations and resignifications of footage from other films take place throughout *The Hour of the Furnaces*, and it is a characteristic of the work of other NLAC and Third Cinema filmmakers as well, perhaps most notable in Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez's newsreel films.

Solanas made several other documentaries during the years prior to the military coup of 1976, as well as the notable narrative film *Los Hijos de Fierro* (*The Children of Fierro*, 1972). After going into exile in France, Solanas turned primarily to fiction filmmaking, tackling the experience of exile and return, and the abuses of the dictatorship in films like *Tangos: The Exile of Gardel* (1985) and *Sur* (*South*, 1988). The work of Solanas with Grupo Cine Liberación had carried the banner for a Third Cinema, supported by the manifesto "Towards a Third Cinema." Hayden White writes that "the manifesto is a radical genre. It presupposes a time of crisis and that, moreover, the crisis is manifest, plain for all to see. And it usually calls for action . . . to overcome or

¹⁵ Emilio Bernini, "El documental político argentino: Una lectura," in *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino*, eds. Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival (Buenos Aires: Librería, 2007), 24.

ameliorate the situation at hand.”¹⁶ As a result, it is perhaps not surprising that it was another time of crisis, the financial collapse suffered by Argentina in 2001, that spurred Solanas back to documentary filmmaking in the mode of *The Hour of the Furnaces*.

Solanas began a series of films he calls a “fresco on contemporary Argentina”, currently six in number, which progress from outrage over the corruption and economic policies responsible for the economic crisis [*Memoria del saqueo (Social Genocide, 2004)*], to accounts of the resourceful responses of ordinary citizens [*La dignidad de los nadies (Dignity of the Nobodies, 2005)*], to tracing a history of national industrial and technological innovation, privatization, and stagnation, and laying out a vision for a different future [*Argentina latente (Latent Argentina, 2007)*], and finally to detailed treatments of three national industries: the railroads, mining, and petroleum [*La proxima estación (The Next Station, 2008)*, *Tierra sublevada: Oro impuro (Land in Revolt: Impure Gold, 2009)*, and *Tierra sublevada: Oro negro (Land in Revolt: Black Gold, 2011)*]. As Pablo Piedras points out, the politics of these films cannot be separated from the resurrection of Solanas’ own activity as a Peronist politician, having previously served as a representative from 1993 to 1997, and returning to political life as a representative in 2009, under the banner of his Proyecto Sur (Project South) party.

The problems and central concepts of his political platform are addressed in his documentaries and the distribution of the documentaries is, perhaps, the most effective tool for the communication of Solanas’ politics. In one motion, [the various questions tackled in these films] are examined in the films in a way that is synchronous with the social debates that Solanas motivates as a public celebrity.¹⁷

¹⁶ Hayden White, “Afterword: Manifesto Time,” in *Manifestos for History*, eds. Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan and Alun Munslow (London: Routledge, 2007), 220.

¹⁷ Pablo Piedras, “Fernando Solanas: esplendor y decadencia de un sueño político,” in *Una historia del cine político y social en Argentina: Formas, estilos y registros (1969-*

In this way, as was the case with *The Hour of the Furnaces*, but in a very different form, the exhibition of the film becomes extremely important as a site for political mobilization. Whereas in the earlier film, the screenings were clandestine and politically charged from the start by virtue of existing outside the state's permissible range of activities, in his later documentaries Solanas uses the films as a support for his politics, which while oppositional, nonetheless enjoy state legitimacy.¹⁸ Solanas' *Proyecto Sur* also seems to have derived its name from a political party in his fictional film *Sur*, the *Proyecto Nacional Sur*.

Indeed, Piedras sees a Peronist thread running through all of Solanas' work following two feature-length interviews with Perón filmed in the early 1970s during the leader's exile.

The dream that in some time there exists a moment of splendor—an emancipated nation, the establishment of a national, popular project for the country, the liberation from the economic and political ties with the First World—emerges again and again in his filmography after [the Perón films] as utopia and decadence, desire and deception.¹⁹

This dream, in all of its contradictory senses, appears throughout Solanas' late fresco, though I will only briefly discuss the first two films here: *Memoria del saqueo* and *La dignidad de los nadies*.

2009), eds. Ana Laura Lusnich and Pablo Piedras (Buenos Aires: Nueva Librería, 2011), 664.

¹⁸ Although, as Solanas' personal history shows, political life after the dictatorship is not free of repression and the threat of violence. In May 1991, after having criticized President Carlos Menem in various published interviews, Solanas was shot six times in the legs in an attempted assassination. Eventually, three former intelligence agents confessed to the shooting. Jessica Stites Mor, *Transition Cinema: Political Filmmaking and the Argentine Left since 1968* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 125-126.

¹⁹Piedras, 653.

Memoria del saqueo, which Solanas filmed using a mini-DV camera, is the most explicitly linked to the politics and form of *The Hour of the Furnaces*, as Tamara Falicov points out. Falicov notes the film's frequent use of

the contrast editing technique whereby a roving camera with a wide-angle lens spans corridors of power (such as the marbled floors and chandeliers of various state office buildings, including the Presidential Casa Rosada) and then there are cuts to poor *villas miserias* (shantytowns) in Matanzas, an area outside of Buenos Aires city limits.²⁰

This technique is reminiscent, both formally and ideologically, of the sequence cited above in which footage from *Tire Dié* was juxtaposed with shots of downtown Buenos Aires. *Memoria del saqueo* also shares much in common with the movement of *cine piquetero*, named after the *piqueteros*, protesters who blocked roadways to draw attention to the plight of unemployed workers. Drawing from the activist example of groups like Raymundo Gleyzer's *grupo Cine de la Base* and Solanas and Getino's *grupo Cine Liberación*, a number of collectives have formed in the last two decades in Argentina, quickly producing works that address the crisis, the takeover of factories by workers, the violence of the dictatorship, state repression in the present, and other political issues, and which are often released without an authorial signature.²¹ Silvina Rival describes the 2001 crisis as having “produced, beyond the social and economic shock, the reappearance and circulation—outside the commercial circuit—of images

²⁰ Tamara Falicov, *The Cinematic Tango: Contemporary Argentine Film* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007), 146.

²¹ These collectives include *Grupo Alavío*, *Asociación de Documentalistas (ADOC)*, *Grupo de Boedo Films*, *Grupo Cine Insurgente*, *Grupo Contraimagen*, and *Grupo Ojo Obrero*, among others. For more on political filmmaking collectives see Gabriela Bustos, *Audiovisuales de combate: Acerca del videoactivismo contemporáneo* (Buenos Aires: La Crujía, 2006).

embedded in a counterhegemonic ideological discourse.”²² In this respect, it is not surprising that *Memoria del saqueo* is the film most reminiscent stylistically of *La hora de los hornos* in Solanas’ post-dictatorship filmography.

As the films in the fresco continue, the critique of neoliberal policies and state privatization remains present, but even as the films are politically of a piece, formally they start to move away from the montage-based, intertitle-heavy aesthetics of *La hora de los hornos*, and toward a more interview-based, essayistic style, in which Solanas appears in the frame as a character in dialogue with his subjects with increasing frequency. Solanas’ own voice also becomes more and more prevalent in the films as the decade progresses. *La hora de los hornos* contains a voiceover but it is not Solanas’ voice, whereas Solanas’ voice is a central element in each of his documentaries in the fresco.

La dignidad de los nadies begins in a similar mode to *Memoria del saqueo*, with a montage sequence that quickly moves through the events of the financial crisis, and the protests and political turmoil that followed, alternating archival footage and graphic intertitles that move toward the viewer from the back of the frame. Following this introduction, however, the pace of the film slows, and settles into a series of individual portraits of “los nadies,” the various everyday Argentines that Solanas profiles, who each function as “archetypes or stereotypes,”²³ showing some form of political resistance or nationalist fortitude. The first two of these characters, linked together by a police shooting, demonstrate a vision of cross-generational cooperation that connects the

²² Silvina Rival, “Revisiones,” in *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino*, eds. Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival (Buenos Aires: Librería, 2007), 12.

²³ Piedras, 669.

financial crisis and the state's response to it to the military dictatorship of the 1970s and 80s. Each character in the film is introduced by an intertitle, and after the opening montage sequence we meet "Martín, the motorcyclist writer." Martín Galli, a young man, is a motorcycle courier who speeds through his daily shifts in order to find the time to read and assemble a self-produced literary magazine. "Toba, the teacher," the second character profiled in the film, is Héctor García, nicknamed "el Toba" because of his mother's Toba ancestry. El Toba lives in a villa miseria, or shantytown, in Ezeiza, where he and his family operate a soup kitchen every weekend, because many of the children in the neighborhood only get regular meals at school, and were going hungry during the weekends. "The state doesn't exist here," he says, and therefore the residents have had to provide for the community themselves, growing vegetables in a garden, soliciting donations, and piecing together each meal with what is at hand. El Toba describes himself in an interview given on his long, daily walk to the train station, and its duration in screen time makes tangible this piece of his 2 ½ hour commute to the professional training school in Liniers where he teaches.

The link between Martín and el Toba comes near the end of the first section, when Martín describes coming home from his shift as a courier to see images of the police clubbing members of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, in the midst of a mass protest. Martín describes himself as not being political, but being "part of a common feeling," and rather than return to work, Martín goes to the heart of Buenos Aires to join the protests. While marching along the Avenida 9 de Julio, Martín is shot in the head by a police officer, and el Toba, who happens to be nearby, comes to his aid, giving him artificial respiration on the sidewalk and on the taxi ride to the hospital. Solanas edits

together interviews of each man describing the shooting, footage captured on that day, and footage taken later at the site of the shooting, where Martín and el Toba describe the events as another protest march files past the camera.

The film presents this act as one of intergenerational camaraderie, and el Toba's descriptions of the event hearken back to his days of militancy during the dictatorship. He reveals that he lost many friends who were disappeared in the 1970s, and describes thinking "I'm not going to let the enemy take another one of us" at the moment he encounters Martín. Martín and el Toba have become friends since this event, and meet up again periodically; "he's like a brother to me," Martín says. Solanas presents these two men as archetypes of national character, reserve, and resistance to neoliberalism. They are symbolic of a resistance that spans generations, and links up to the political activism of the 60s and 70s. As Solanas' films of the contemporary Argentina fresco continue, these archetypes will recur again and again, increasingly linked to national reserves of educational, industrial, and technological innovation that are laid out like platforms of Proyecto Sur's campaigns.

Guzmán

Patricio Guzmán's trajectory, which also includes exile, and a return to filmmaking in Chile after the dictatorship, is nonetheless quite different than Solanas'. Guzmán's landmark work of the 1970s, *The Battle of Chile* documents the contestations that began under Allende's presidency, and ultimately culminated in the coup of September 11, 1973. *The Battle of Chile* is comprised of three parts ("The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie," "The Coup d'Etat," and "The Power of the People"), and the

footage was smuggled outside of Chile after the coup, and edited in exile at ICAIC, the Cuban National Film Institute in Havana. Filmed in the year before the coup, the film documents in *cinema verité* style the various attempts to undermine Allende's government, from Christian Democrat resistance in the congress, to mining and bus transit strikes organized by the opposition (and supported by the CIA), to the unsuccessful coup attempt of June 29, 1973; as well as the various popular movements in support of, or under the banner of Popular Unity (UP, the party of Salvador Allende's government). Ana López writes that Guzmán and his team "wanted to avoid the agitational or denunciatory style of documentary they all considered typical of the New Latin American Cinema; they sought to produce what they termed an *analytical* documentary, more like an essay than explicit agitprop."²⁴ The result is a fascinating four-hour film that gives the viewer the sense of witnessing history unfolding, but which also constantly carries the retrospective knowledge of the military coup to come. This retrospective aspect is particularly evident in the film's voiceover, narrated by Guzmán,²⁵ which adds a critical element to the film, elucidating moments at which the coup is foreshadowed, or highlighting obstacles to UP's ability to carry out reforms. López writes:

²⁴ Ana M. López, "The Battle of Chile: Documentary, Political Process, and Representation," in *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 274.

²⁵ As Guzmán points out, there are two versions prior to the one with his own voice on the soundtrack. His version was not recorded until 1998, in Santiago, but is his preferred version because "my voice reflects the events with more force, since narrating the images that oneself has filmed allows to recapture the energy of the past moment." The soundtrack that accompanied the original version was recorded at ICAIC by a Cuban news broadcaster. Patricio Guzmán, "The Battle of Chile and Chile, *Obstinate Memory*" booklet accompanying DVD release, Icarus Films Home Video, 2009.

While the images often seem to position the spectator as a direct observer-participant in the events filmed, the voice-over distances the spectator from emotional identification and encourages a “knowing” stance. The textual operations of *Battle* position the spectator as a knowing subject—one who knows both the outcome of the struggles the film documents and the film’s status as an irreplaceable document of those struggles.²⁶

For instance, in Part Two, the film shows the resolution of the attempted coup, as Minister of Defense José Tohá (who was later tortured repeatedly and killed by the military regime) arrives at La Moneda and defuses the situation.²⁷ The voiceover relates that several generals worked with Tohá to suppress the coup attempt, but also notes that “other commanders merely wait expectantly, as spectators.” Here the film freezes on an image of General Augusto Pinochet. “Such is the case with Augusto Pinochet, later the head of the military government, who now joins in with the loyal forces.” The film resumes, and the camera tracks out, revealing that Pinochet is walking alongside Tohá. The voiceover mediates the images, and reveals that the film, despite the urgent present-tense of its images and voice-over, is very much a post-coup film, here just as in many other sequences of the film in which the voiceover critiques the reality documented on the image-track, analyzing the successes and failures of the Popular Unity movement from its position of hindsight. But of course, the coup is also not only foreseen in the film by the voiceover, and the film also captures the widespread feeling in the weeks preceding September 11, 1973 that the coup was coming.

²⁶ López, “*The Battle of Chile*,” 280.

²⁷ José Tohá’s daughter, Carolina Tohá would later enter politics, and was elected Mayor of Santiago in 2012. She is also one of the subjects of the documentary *Volver a vernos* (*Come Back to See Us*, Paula Rodríguez, 2001), which profiles her and two young men, all of whom were students during the dictatorship, and have been politically active in the democratic transition.

The Battle of Chile also shows the year prior to the coup as a period of bitter contestation between popular movements in support of Allende, and those opposed to his presidency. These struggles play out memorably in the occupation of urban space in Santiago, and repeatedly throughout the film's three parts we see masses marching through the streets, gathering in huge throngs, and leaping up and down in support of Allende. The film crew also infiltrates right-wing manifestations, and captures memorable and vitriolic denunciations of the Chilean president. Finally, there are moments when a different occupation of space becomes clear, one which gives another foreshadowing of the spatial control that would mark the dictatorship, none more arresting than the famous scene in which an Argentine cameraman, Leonardo Henrichson, films his own death. During the coup attempt, we see a police officer pointing toward the camera, then firing shots in its direction, after which the camera drops toward the ground and shuts off.²⁸

The temporal gap in *The Battle of Chile* between the filmmaker's voice, captured in voice-over after exile, and the events of 1973 documented in the film, is widened immensely when Guzmán returns to Chile in 1996, with copies of *The Battle of Chile*, and with equipment to make a new film, *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (1997). Jorge Ruffinelli describes the original plan for this film:

The documentary would function as a rereading of *The Battle of Chile*, and at the same time as an opportunity to relive those happy, violent, and ill-omened days, in order to have captured in this new work (which would come to be the "fourth part" of *The Battle of Chile*) the transformations that not only time, but the experience of the dictatorship, had provoked in the *characters*.²⁹

²⁸ For more on Leonardo Henrichson, see Andrés Habbeger's documentary *Imagen Final* (*Final Image*, 2008).

²⁹ Jorge Ruffinelli, *Patricio Guzmán* (Madrid: Cátedra/Filmoteca Española, 2001), 283.

The emphasis is Ruffinelli's, and suggests that, through the "*fixation* of the image," the social actors represented in the earlier film trilogy have become characters in the narrative of Chile's history, and that one of the goals of this newer film would be to confront these characters with their images from the temporal distance of two decades.³⁰ In the opening minutes of *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, Juan Osses, one of 36 soldiers who stayed in La Moneda, the national palace, during the coup to defend Salvador Allende, returns to the site for the first time since, disguised as a member of Guzmán's film crew. Intercut with Juan and Patricio Guzmán's reminiscences as they wander through the palace are the following elements: footage from *The Battle of Chile*; photographs taken during the coup and at other times; talking head interviews including Professor Ernesto Malbran, and Ignacio Valenzuela, Guzmán's uncle, both of whom will appear later in the film as significant characters; and footage of a painting being made from one of the photographs, a famous image of Allende's bodyguards being forced to lie on the ground in front of the wheels of a tank. On the audio track, the sounds also range widely, from the sounds of planes bombing La Moneda, accompanying footage from *The Battle of Chile*, to the sound of a hesitant piano solo of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Furthering this web of temporalities and media, the footage from *The Battle of Chile* works in several different ways, employed alternately for exposition, as a representation of Osses' or Guzmán's memory, and as incitant for the camerawork of the newer film, in which role it could be said to act as the newer film's memory.

³⁰ Ibid.

As Jeffrey Skoller observes, Guzmán is “obsessively interested in the experience of returning to the exact locations of past events.”³¹ The film opens with footage from *The Battle of Chile* of planes dropping bombs on the palace, then cuts to Juan, stating that on September 11, 1973, he was scheduled to get married, but had to call his fiancée from the bombed building to tell her that their wedding would be postponed. From Juan, the film cuts to footage of La Moneda’s walls burning during the attack, an image immediately followed by footage of the same building at the time of filming (1996), the damage repaired. The ensuing scene is an example of what Janet Walker terms “situated testimony.”

By figuring the relationship among the body of the individual, the ground from which s/he speaks, and the past events that transpired of a time, but are, at the same time, brought into being by the testimonial act, situated testimony realizes the materiality of testimony in the power of place.³²

Soldiers march by the front of the palace, and Juan stands outside the threshold holding a tripod and a box of film equipment, part of the ruse that he is a member of a film crew, and suggesting that he would not be allowed in if his identity and purpose were known. Guzmán states in voiceover, “Neither he nor I want to talk very much. Juan’s best friends died here,” and Guzmán’s camera follows Juan as he silently proceeds through the building, allowing the site to speak through archival images, and the expression of Juan’s face, affected by the return to the palace. A point-of-view shot of Juan looking out a second floor window finds its reverse in a photograph of soldiers laying siege to

³¹ Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in Avant-Garde Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 151.

³² Janet Walker, “Rights and Return: Perils and Fantasies of Situated Testimony after Katrina,” in *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*, ed. Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker (New York: Routledge, 2010), 85. I will return to the concept of “situated testimony” in Chapter Two.

the palace from the street below in 1973. Shortly afterward, the camera follows a strange, parabolic arc over the sparsely populated courtyard outside the palace, ending its movement on the railing of a balcony, while Guzmán's voiceover states, "Within these very walls, 23 years ago, the fate of a popular movement was decided. We filmed it for a year, often not knowing what we were doing." At the conclusion of the camera movement, Guzmán cuts to a shot from *The Battle of Chile*; here, the camera traces the same movement, but over a mass of jumping bodies, assembled in support of the Popular Unity (UP) party.

In the first of these two scenes, the still photograph stands in for Juan's memory, and its use is prompted by the effect the site has in triggering this memory. The still photograph serves an illustrative function, whereas in the balcony shots, the newer footage exists only to call up the old. The pan over the vacant courtyard is an attempt at exorcism, to bring out in the present the traces of the past, and once we see the pan from *The Battle of Chile* that follows, the earlier (diegetically, not chronologically) pan becomes retrospectively charged with the spectral presence of possibility represented by the masses crowded below. As James Cisneros writes, "*La Batalla* records a dream whose broken pieces enter *Memoria* as anachronistic dream images. . . .the fragments of its Allende epic show an alternate temporal register whose discontinuous visual language indicates the rupture of the historiographic continuity it once held."³³ This is the memory of the film itself as well as the rupture that haunts the memory of each of the subjects to follow in the film—a possibility represented by UP and Allende's brief rule, seemingly wiped out by 17 years of terror.

³³ James Cisneros, "The Figure of Memory in Chilean Cinema: Patricio Guzmán and Raúl Ruiz." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (March 2006): 69.

The events of the past, as represented in the earlier film, are reenacted or enacted in the present repeatedly in *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, and their uncanny presence in the present is produced by precisely situated enactments. In one scene, Guzmán hires a marching band to walk through a public square in Santiago, playing “Venceremos”, the anthem of the UP, which had not been heard in public in years. The camera records the reactions on the faces of people walking by, alternately moved, angered, and enthused, but always surprised as this aural fragment brings the past back to them. In another scene, Guzmán intercuts images of a group of Allende’s bodyguards identifying themselves in footage from *The Battle of Chile* on a television monitor with images of the bodyguards reenacting the action that we see unfold on the screen. They walk alongside a car down an empty road, their hands on the vehicle, reenacting their positions in the image from the earlier film, where they were escorting a vehicle carrying Allende through throngs of people. As Bill Nichols writes, this reenactment “gratifies a personal desire, it makes possible the enjoyment of going through the motions of guarding, as it were, when guarding itself remains squarely lodged in the past.”³⁴ Nichols continues by stating that the fantasmatic relationship of the images function for the bodyguards and for the viewers of the film, but that “above all . . . the filmmaker is the one caught up in the sequence of images; it is his or her fantasy that these images embody.”³⁵

In another scene, Guzmán returns to the National Stadium, which was converted into a prison, interrogation site, and execution field under Pinochet. “23 years later, I

³⁴ Bill Nichols, “Documentary Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject,” *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 1 (Autumn 2008): 77.

³⁵ Ibid.

went back to the Stadium with Alvaro, a doctor friend who treated the prisoners. He also carried messages to the outside world,” states Guzmán in voiceover, before again ceding his own memories to another, as Alvaro Undarraga’s voiceover begins. The doctor describes encountering Guzmán among the prisoners. Guzmán asks from off-camera whether he was scared when Undarraga encountered him, and the doctor answers “No,” but recalls that Guzmán asked him to send a message to his family. The shot pans across the empty stadium in the present, with Guzmán standing in front of the camera looking out, and then the film cuts to a shot of the stadium full of prisoners in the 1970s. What follows is an extraordinary montage in which policemen donning riot gear and preparing to step out into the loud, booming stadium, are intercut with footage and photographs of policemen wearing the same uniforms from *The Battle of Chile*. Whereas the policemen in the older footage are presumably preparing to suppress large crowds of protesters, when the policemen in the film’s present step out into the stadium it is revealed that they are being posted around the stadium to manage crowds at a soccer game. The effect, as with the playing of “Venceremos,” or the bodyguards’ reenactment, is to bring the past forcefully into the present, while also insisting that its traces are already there, hiding in plain sight.

The tone of Guzmán’s film is elegiac and nostalgic, and shows the Chile of 1996 to be bitterly divided around what Steve Stern calls competing “memory frames,” which comes through most forcefully in a scene in which Guzmán films a group of female students who have just watched *The Battle of Chile*. These students, all too young to have been alive in 1973, argue passionately about whether the coup was justified. Their argument becomes more and more heated, without moving toward a resolution of any

kind, until Guzmán cuts away from the scene and slowly fades down the sound of the clamoring voices. The edit seems to suggest that there is no solution to this argument but to abandon it, at least until Guzmán cuts back to the scene several minutes later. The argument continues until the teacher, seated to the side of the students, begins to speak, and when she does, the students stop arguing and listen:

It's very moving for me to see these images. I was a student at the time. I wasn't really on the right, but I thought that something had to happen in Chile. Things had to change. I was wrong. I now think differently. It's hard admitting your mistakes, especially knowing the cost of this *coup d'état*. On that morning, I was very happy because I did not understand the consequences it would have. Two days later, my opinion was already very different, and is even more so as time passes.

The voice of a teacher, of someone who was alive to witness the events of Chile's September 11th, pedagogically invokes the powers of memory to speak to those who do not have this memory.

Taking this scene, and looking at it alongside the scene from Solanas' *La dignidad de los nadies* described above, we can see that in both of these visions of cross-generational encounter, the dominant voice is that of the elder, the one who was there to experience the events of the coup and the dictatorship. Guzmán deploys this voice as authority, a voice that silences the uninformed younger generation, and quiets debate. In *La dignidad de los nadies*, Solanas uses the elder voice to invite the younger into political activism, but on the terms of the activism of the generation of the 60s and 70s.

Nevertheless, over time, in both Chile and Argentina, the voices of those who were present have had to contend more and more, and to share authority with, the voices of those who were not, but who nonetheless have experienced the wake of the trauma of dictatorial violence and the suppression of perspectives that did not suit the neoliberal,

dictatorial regimes. In the remainder of this chapter, I will be considering films made by members of the “postmemory” generation, who grew up during or after the dictatorships.

Los rubios (2003)

The concept of “postmemory” was theorized by Marianne Hirsch in the context of the Holocaust as a tool for understanding the different forms of memory that manifest generationally, particularly for children of survivors and victims, whose own memories are dominated by the traumatic events that often preceded their birth. Hirsch writes that postmemory “is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection,” and that its power derives from the fact that “its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation.”³⁶ Albertina Carri’s film *Los rubios* (2003) is a postmemory film, and explores the different ways in which an absence of memory forces the postmemorial acts of imaginative investment and creation described by Hirsch. The film also became the object of a fierce debate between its detractors and supporters, a debate that has often, but not always, broken along generational lines.

Carri’s film is a meditation on the disappearance of the director’s parents at the hands of the military, which occurred when she was only four years old. *Los rubios* employs numerous distancing devices to tell its story. Unlike a number of other postdictatorial Argentinean documentaries, Carri’s film is less interested in rescuing her parents’ history from *its* disappearance by unearthing the facts of their political involvement, than in exploring the conflicting and uncertain narratives that surround

³⁶ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.

them, keeping a measured distance and making their absence itself, and her experience of that absence, the theme of the film. Joanna Page writes:

At the heart of all representation in *Los rubios* is an absence that presents an insurmountable obstacle to representation. Carri states that the film's utter failure to reveal anything of any significance about her parents represents a conscious refusal to indulge the expectations of the viewer. We cannot come to "know" her parents through the film because, simply and crucially, *they are not there*.³⁷

Hence the various distancing devices in the film. "Reenactments" of events in the life of Carri's family using stop-motion animation of children's Playmobil toys are interspersed throughout the film, and near the end of the film the disappearance is reenacted using the toys, although rather than military soldiers it is a flying saucer that descends from the sky to kidnap the parents.

In an early scene in the film, Albertina Carri returns to the neighborhood where her family once lived, and conducts an impromptu interview with an elderly neighbor, who peers out from behind her window at the film crew standing across the patio on the other end of a locked gate. The woman appears to recognize Carri, but then proceeds to speak about her in the third-person, stating that she can't be sure that it is really the same little girl who used to come play in her house now standing with a camera outside her door. Following this scene, and a short series of intertitles which relate the facts of Carri's parents' disappearance, another woman, who bears a passing resemblance to Carri, stands in front of the camera, and says "My name is Analia Couceyro. I'm an actress and in this film I play the role of Albertina Carri." For much of the rest of the film Couceyro stands in for Carri, although the real Carri is seen behind the camera and

³⁷ Joanna Page, *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 173. Original emphasis.

the two interact in several scenes. The logic of this conceit is extended to extreme lengths; when the film crew visits the Center for Forensic Anthropology, blood samples which might be used to identify Carri's parents are drawn from both Carri and the actress standing in for her.

Couceyro's substitution for Carri in front of the camera never allows us to forget the mediation of the image, even as we come face to face with the violence of the dictatorship. Mediation is emphasized at a number of other moments, as at times we see interviews on a television screen while Carri's double reviews footage, rewinding or fast-forwarding at will. Here the interviews with Carri's parents' fellow militants that would make up the main body of a more typical documentary are instead playing in the background, fragmented as Carri's double skips around the tapes, or ignored altogether as she crosses the room to work at a computer. Another key interview, with a former Montonero who was imprisoned with Carri's parents, is never seen, but only described onscreen by Carri's double. At one moment we hear voiceover describing shots that we never see. Ana Amado writes of the disjunction between the audio and visual tracks of the film, which operate "with autonomous trajectories that establish a different temporal sense."³⁸ At another moment, we see a whole sequence repeated several times, as Carri coaches the actress on how to deliver a monologue. As Page writes, "*Los rubios* exposes the complicity of film—whether documentary or fiction—in providing illusions of coherence, of closure, and even of experience, stitching the spectator into a narrative that produces easy emotional identification, but ultimately results in political

³⁸ Ana Amado, *La imagen justa: Cine argentino y poética (1980-2007)* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue, 2009), 186.

complacency.”³⁹ Yet despite all of the mediation and temporal disjunction, the power of Carri’s own experience remains throughout the film, and the events of Carri’s parents’ disappearance are rendered no less chilling, as when Carri sits in the back seat of a car with Couceyro and other crew members and describes the feeling of physical sickness she felt when returning to her former neighborhood to interview neighbors who may have been complicit in the disappearance of her parents.

If the film casts identity, memory, and the documentary mediation of “truth” all into question, it does so while nonetheless maintaining what Francesco Casetti calls “the dialectic between objective and subjective vision”, in which “film is able to offer both immediate data (or ‘reports’) and a mental reworking of them (or ‘inner shots’).”⁴⁰ “Reports” and “inner shots” (both terms taken from Béla Balázs), however, are messily entangled in *Los rubios*. Carri states in the film that she is no longer able to distinguish between her own memories and those that she has inherited from her sisters, who were older at the time of the disappearance. This slippage leads Carri to attempt to create her own memories on film.

Writers such as Martín Kohan, Beatriz Sarlo, and Luis-Martín Cabrera have leveled criticisms at the film. Gabrielle Nouzeilles writes that Kohan “accuses [Carri] of narcissistic excess, of disrespect toward her parents, and of holding a post-political, superficial view of Argentina’s social and political past (and present).”⁴¹ This critique is typical of many of these criticisms, which often fall along generational lines, as the film

³⁹ Page, 169.

⁴⁰ Francesco Casetti, *Eye of the Century: Film, Experience, Modernity*, trans. Erin Larkin with Jennifer Pranolo (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 57.

⁴¹ Gabriella Nouzeilles, “Postmemory Cinema and the Future of the Past in Albertina Carri’s *Los Rubios*.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (December 2005): 276.

itself acknowledges. In one scene, Albertina's actress double reads a letter that Carri has received in response to a grant application from the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales ("National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts"/INCAA). The national funding body has rejected her application, stating that "we think that the project is worthy, but it asks for revision in a more rigorous documentary fashion. The story, as it is shown, fictionalizes life experiences when pain can fog the interpretation of harmful facts." The letter goes on to request that Carri's film include more interviews with her parents' comrades. The scene cuts from the color image of the actress reading this letter to a black and white scene of the film crew discussing its contents.⁴² Albertina Carri states, "They're dictating what they think the tone of the film should be. They want to make the movie they need and want." At which point a crew member asks, "As a film institution?" Carri responds, "No, as a generation. I get that. Someone else should make that movie, not me." Carri's film then comes as the bearer of a new kind of postdictatorial politics, one that is centered on the generation of children of the disappeared. Memory remains important, but so does the recognition of its indeterminacies. This is what leads Carri to the memory *mise-en-scene* of the final scenes of the film, from which *Los rubios* receives its title.

One of the Carris' former neighbors, an elderly woman, remembers the family as being blondes (*rubios*), a memory that is clearly false, given the photographic evidence we see throughout the film, as well as Albertina Carri's on-screen presence. This mistake reflects the neighbors' perception of the family as being outsiders from a different, and

⁴² The switch between color and black and white, which occurs frequently throughout, usually denotes a break between footage of Carri's double (color) and footage that reflexively incorporates the film crew (black and white).

higher, social class. Indeed, before we hear the comment being made, at a much earlier point in the film the crew members discuss it, one of them pointing out its associations: “*blanco, rubio, extranjero*” (white, blond, foreigner). Rather than dismiss this comment, Carri closes her film by using it to create her own memory-image, one that is also an image oriented toward the future. Carri dresses herself and her film crew in blond wigs, and, as Charly Garcia’s song “Influencia” (a Todd Rundgren cover) plays, the film ends as they walk away from the camera into the distance, in the countryside near where Albertina moved to live with her uncle after her parents’ disappearance. Nouzeilles writes of the film that “it is as a collective project that *Los rubios* argues for a future based on a new politics of memory and a different type of community, beyond the family and the political cell.”⁴³ The film crew stands in for the missing family in what is both a *re-enactment* of a memory that never happened, and a present tense enactment of imagination.

El edificio de los chilenos (2010)

Los rubios is part of a small but significant wave of films by children of disappeared political activists in Argentina, which also includes films like *Papá Iván* (María Inés Roqué, 2004) and *M* (Nicolás Prividera, 2007).⁴⁴ All three of these films make a generational argument about memory, and bring demands for a representation of the experience of the dictatorship that is different than that presented by the previous

⁴³ Ibid., 271.

⁴⁴ For discussion of *M*, see Chapter Two.

generation.⁴⁵ In Chile, there was also a postmemory moment in documentary production, although when I spoke to the filmmaker Macarena Aguiló, she stated that this moment came a number of years after Argentina's. Aguiló's film *El edificio de los chilenos* (*The Chilean Building*, 2010) stands as an important film in Chile's postmemory moment.

Aguiló's parents were both members of MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario/Left Wing Revolutionary Movement), the militant leftist revolutionary group. They both survived the Chilean dictatorship, but Aguiló's experience of those years is nonetheless one of absence. Aguiló's mother, Margarita Marci, went into exile in France after the coup, and shortly after, Aguiló, still a child, was kidnapped by the military, and held for 20 days, in an attempt to draw Aguiló's father out of hiding. In the film, Aguiló recalls watching the older children climbing a tree in the prison camp, and wondering why they did not leap over the wall and try to escape. When Aguiló was released, the decision was made to send her to France to join her mother, for her own safety. Her father never left, but remained in the country clandestinely. In the late 1970s, when the MIR instituted Operation Return and called many of its members back to Chile in an attempt to remove the Pinochet dictatorship from power, Aguiló's mother returned to Chile. She decided that it would be unsafe to bring Aguiló with her, and Aguiló was placed in Proyecto Hogares (Project Homes), an experiment in communal upbringing operated by the MIR in which between 60 to 80 children lived with 20 adults, first for a year in Belgium, then for four years in Havana, Cuba. (The film takes its title from the name that several neighbors in Havana have given to the building. Even after Proyecto Hogares left, one woman says, "this continued to be the building of the Chileans.") The

⁴⁵ However, there are also very significant differences between these films, as my later discussion of *M* will make clear.

children were assigned “social families” within the larger group home, and Aguiló was cared for by her “social father,” Pablo, together with her “social siblings” Gerardo, Andrea, and Manuela.

Aguiló’s film brings together those who were children at Proyecto Hogares, now in their 30s and 40s, as well as some of the social parents who cared for them, and the biological parents who returned to Chile. The film maintains a respect for the collective spirit of Proyecto Hogares and the revolutionary ethos that guided it, and nostalgia for the feeling of community it created, but also reveals the anger and pain felt by children who were abandoned by their families in the service of what was seen to be a higher calling, the possibility of fighting to overthrow Pinochet and replace his regime with a more just, egalitarian society.

The film opens with an image of Macarena Aguiló’s young daughter, asking her mother what shampoo to use, from behind the shower curtain. A title tells us that it is December 2004. The handheld camera tracks back out of the bathroom, and moves to the living room, where it alights on the television set, tuned to TVN, the state-owned station. Onscreen, Macarena Aguiló is walking through Villa Grimaldi (the infamous detention center), recounting her own kidnapping and disappearance as a child. As the interview concludes on the TV set, the phone rings offscreen. “Yes, I saw myself,” Aguiló says into the receiver. Here, connected in one camera movement, and mediated by the screen within the shot, we move from Aguiló’s child to the starkly contrasting dangers and traumas of Aguiló’s own childhood. Aguiló’s daughter appears a few other times in the film, and audio of her daughter is used to score Aguiló’s memories of her own childhood in Proyecto Hogares. Another woman, who also grew up in Proyecto

Hogares, describes her need to have a child as soon as possible after returning to Chile, so that she could create her own family to replace the one that she felt abandoned by. In an interview, she relates that she seldom visits either of her parents, each remarried and with younger children, because she is jealous of the environment that her parents have created for her half-siblings, and which never existed for her.

Marianne Hirsch writes that:

Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated.⁴⁶

This definition of postmemory needs some modification to be applied in the case of Proyecto Hogares, and in fact the closer analogue in Holocaust Studies might be the concept of the “1.5 generation,” those who were “too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there*.”⁴⁷ Here, although the narratives of political activism, militancy, and repression that prompted the creation of Proyecto Hogares did precede many of the children’s births, much of the repression suffered by the MIR activists who were parents of the children took place during the children’s lifetimes. However, the narratives that dominated the lives of those in Proyecto Hogares were separated from them spatially, if not temporally, and they certainly created an evacuation and replacement of the children’s own stories. Both those who grew up in Proyecto Hogares and their “social parents” speak in the film about the recurring event that would take place whenever news would arrive at the communal home about the capture, disappearance, or death of one of the children’s

⁴⁶ Hirsch, 22.

⁴⁷ Susan R. Suleiman, “The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust,” *American Imago* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 277.

parents. One of the social parents describes the way the death of parents would be described heroically, and how some children would even swell with pride at being the child of a martyr. Another woman, one of the former children of Proyecto Hogares, describes the lack of tantrums or bad behavior among the children, and argues that it was a result of being forced to grow up too quickly. “We missed them [our parents],” she says, “we were all somewhat abandoned over there.”

Like Carri’s film, *El edificio de los chilenos* tells a story that is defiantly focused on the experiences of the generation of the children of the activists of the 1970s. However, the film is more interested than *Los rubios* in understanding the motivations of the parents’ generation, and in reconciling that with the younger generation’s experience. The film’s primary formal tool is the interview, and Aguiló’s presence on- and off-screen, and her position as a former inhabitant of Proyecto Hogares prompts many of the film’s most interesting revelations. Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz points out that Aguiló’s own subject-position as a survivor of the dictatorship is “what gives her the social licence to engage in a desacralization of the account of heroic militance, still the dominant account inside the Chilean left.”⁴⁸ Often interviewees address Aguiló directly, or the camera pans from the interviewee into offscreen space to reveal Aguiló’s presence. One man, who made the decision together with his partner, that they would leave their children at Proyecto Hogares, describes how his partner had to take pills to stop her production of breast milk as their youngest child was eight months old, and states that there is no conceivable justification for their decision to abandon the children.

⁴⁸ Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz, “Desde otro lugar: La memoria de ‘los hijos de’ en el documental *El edificio de los chilenos*,” *La fuga* (Spring 2013) <http://www.lafuga.cl/desde-otro-lugar/647> (Accessed December 20, 2013).

In the process of remembering these events on camera, he breaks into tears and walks out of frame. While he collects himself off-screen, the camera lingers on Aguiló, staring towards the sky and also visibly shaken. When he returns, he says “I really don’t regret having been militant, and having given what we gave, but having left my two children in that situation, I could never justify that, ever.”

The film’s interviews also demonstrate a range of attitudes from those who were children in Proyecto Hogares, from the (already mentioned) woman who describes how her experience has kept her from having a meaningful relationship with her parents in the present, to a man who challenges Aguiló’s project, and says that he has never talked to his parents about what he lacked while they were away from him, and that he fully supports their decision to return to Chile.

At the end of the film, Aguiló types up all of the letters that her mother sent to her while she was at Proyecto Hogares, letters which were signed pseudonymously and referred to Aguiló as “Dorotea” instead of Macarena, in case they were intercepted. Aguiló presents these letters to her mother and step-father, enacting before the cameras a gift metonymic for the film as a whole, which seeks intergenerational communication even as it reserves the right to hold onto the suffering caused by the MIR’s failed experiment. At the beginning of the film, we see Aguiló looking through the contents of a wooden trunk, which contains all the physical remnants of her childhood, letters from her parents, photographs, and drawings. These artifacts are scattered throughout the film, and the film enacts an opening out, from the private box that one carries with one throughout life and keeps stuffed under the bed, towards the possibility of conversation and communication. Jorge Ruffinelli writes that the film is “a cinematographic ‘letter’

that one of those children, now adult, entrusts to us an entire generation blinded by idealism.”⁴⁹ And the idealism and cruelty of the project are inseparable, as the film’s ambivalence attests. Multiple interviewees speak of the creation of Proyecto Hogares as a feminist act, borne in part out of the recognition that initially it was only the men who were returning to Chile to fight against Pinochet, while women were forced to stay and look after the children. Aguiló reconciles with her mother, who expresses her own regret about the decision she made. But it is Aguiló’s social father who retains the final word among the parents’ generation in the film, privileging the social family in a move consistent with the spirit of Proyecto Hogares. “You’re my oldest daughter,” he says, describing Aguiló as equally a part of his family as his own genetic children.

El astuto mono Pinochet contra La Moneda de los cerdos (2004)

Bettina Perut and Iván Osnoyoff’s 2004 film *El astuto mono Pinochet contra La Moneda de los cerdos* (*The Astute Monkey Pinochet Vs. La Moneda’s Pigs*) is a film constructed collaboratively with groups of students from nine different schools, ranging in age from 5 to 25. The filmmakers visited each school and worked with the students to create and act out their own dramatizations of the Chilean coup, and the result is a film that not only demonstrates the different relationships that postmemory generations have to events of the dictatorship but also implicitly criticizes and decenters the idea of any sort of memory culture. The film intercuts various, strange, enacted versions of the coup, the dictatorship, or the collective meetings of the Popular Unity period. In one version, a young boy portrays Allende as a money-hungry despot who exploits the masses in order

⁴⁹ Jorge Ruffinelli, “*El Edificio de los Chilenos*,” *Cinechile: Enciclopedia del Cine Chileno* <http://www.cinechile.cl/crit&estud-103> (Accessed December 17, 2013).

to build himself a giant castle, surrounded by a moat filled with crocodiles. Another finds members of a boys' school arguing intensely over whether to allow girls into the school. In another, children act out an imagined event as Pinochet's henchmen capture Fidel Castro during a visit to Cuba, and call Allende so that he can listen in over the telephone as they torture the Cuban leader. Yet another portrays Allende and Pinochet as competitors on a reality TV dance show. Allende's death is presented in various ways as well: in one instance he is bombarded by paper bombs carried by other children, in another he shoots himself in the mouth with a toy pistol.

In an interview, Perut describes the process of creating the film:

Ok, we are talking about the Allende era, the coup, all of that, but it is not our objective to go to the "encounter with memory." On the contrary, it is pure subjectivity, a game that some people could call a perverse game... certain situations [in the film]... are elements that were present in UP [Popular Unity], and our "thesis" is that they are elements that coexist these days, they are not elements that have ended...⁵⁰

The film was initially commissioned for a television series marking the 30th anniversary of the coup in 2003, but the station declined to air the film after seeing preliminary footage. The film also was rejected for funding by the national film fund, FONDART (the National Fund for the Development of Culture and the Arts). Luis Martín-Cabrera writes that "what makes *Astuto mono* unpalatable to the authorities and the general public is that it presents the historical trauma of the coup as an unconscious repetition of the foundational violence of the dictatorship in the present."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Iván Pinto Veas, "Entrevista con Bettina Perut e Iván Osnovikoff: *Un Hombre Aparte y la Escena Local*," *La Fuga* <http://www.lafuga.cl/entrevista-con-bettina-perut-e-ivan-osnovikoff/340> (Accessed December 20, 2013).

⁵¹ Luis Martín Cabrera, *Radical Justice: Spain and the Southern Cone beyond Market and State* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011), 147.

The genesis of the film's title is revealed in the film's opening minutes, when a group of children are asked to imagine Pinochet and Allende as animals. This opening collaboration, where the filmmakers are heard speaking to the children, sets the stage for our understanding of the rest of the film's enacted scenarios, in which, particularly when the younger children are involved, the hesitations and revisions of dialogue and action reveal an improvisation in progress. The various improvised situations are intercut with each other for the duration of the film's length, without contextualization, and the effect is dizzying, particularly as each separate "storyline" builds toward the events of the coup. The film's cacophony of versions of the events not only suggests the distortion and feedback involved in generational transmission of memories, but also argues for the radical subjectivity of memory. As Iván Pinto Veas writes of the film: "here there is no possibility of a monument: 'Allende', 'Pinochet', 'Military Coup' are signifiers belonging to the social imaginary, present [in the film] as traumatic facts, but incommunicable in 'essence.'" ⁵² There is no possible memory consensus here, and official memory is drowned out by the widely varying and often counterfactual conceptions of historical events.

In this brief series of snapshots of filmmakers and films made during the postdictatorship, both by members of the generation of the New Latin American Cinema, and the postmemory generations, I have attempted to show the ways in which two of the most visible filmmakers of the NLAC have preserved or changed aspects of

⁵² Iván Pinto Veas, "Cine, política, memoria: Nuevos entremados en el documental chileno," *La Fuga* <http://www.lafuga.cl/cine-politica-memoria/341> (Accessed January 2, 2014).

their politics and aesthetics in the postdictatorship. I have also shown the ways in which three films made by members of the postmemory generation approach the subject matter of the dictatorship. Each of these latter filmmakers has very different goals, and employs documentary aesthetics in different ways, yet they all share a politics that critiques the representation of the dictatorship only in the terms of the political activism of the 1960s and 70s. We have seen as well that the NLAC cannot be reduced to a single set of ideas or cinematic practices, despite its usefulness then and now as a term signifying a continent-wide cinematic call to arms. Nonetheless, particularly in the cases of *Los rubios* and *El astuto mono Pinochet*, we are far from the “naïve realism” decried by Ana López. Indeed, it is these two films’ challenges to a realist historical depiction that is responsible for their unusual status as projects related to the dictatorship that are denied state funding. The cross-generational encounters in *Los rubios* emphasize a gulf of understanding between Carri’s crew and those members of the older generation that they set out to interview, but Carri maintains the authority to speak even as she troubles the fixity of identity of the subject position from which she speaks. In *El edificio de los chilenos*, Aguiló is much more interested in establishing a point of dialogue between the generations, but there is a wound that must be healed before this dialogue can take place. Finally, in *El astuto mono Pinochet*, the improvised dialogues we see are within a generation, but they illustrate at every turn the specter of dictatorship that haunts each interaction.

Chapter Two: “What to Do Starting From this Place”: Documentary Production and Official Memorialization

“Remembrance must happen deep inside each one of us in a very personal process, but it must also happen in our physical environment. You cannot talk about ‘social’ on one side and ‘space’ on the other. It’s a dialectic, in which the two must have equal weight.”
-Daniel Betti¹

An important and recurring element of postdictatorship documentaries from the Southern Cone is the importance given to place, and to the particular places charged with memory for the filmmakers and subjects. These places are often sites with widespread resonance, like the former concentration camp at Villa Grimaldi in Santiago, Chile, now converted into the *Parque por la paz Villa Grimaldi* (Villa Grimaldi Peace Park), but they can also be places charged with individual memory, like the street in Buenos Aires that filmmaker Silvia Malagrino tries to find in her film *Burnt Oranges* (2005). The difference between these types of sites can be approximately mapped to Steve Stern’s conceptions of emblematic memory and loose memory. Emblematic memory refers “not to a concrete or substantive ‘thing,’ but to a framework that organizes meaning, selectivity, and countermemory.”² On the other hand:

In the absence of a bridge between personal memory and the emblematic memory of larger social groups...individual remembrances remain somewhat ‘loose.’ Disarticulated from group meaning or frameworks, personal lore of experiences cannot acquire value as symbol or emblem of a great collective experience. At best they circulate as personal anecdotes or curiosities on the margins of the social imaginary, in tiny, fragmented personal circles.³

¹ Quoted in Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 179-180.

² Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet’s Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 105. Stern fits the emblematic memories of Pinochet’s dictatorship into four general categories: “memory as salvation,” “memory as an unresolved rupture,” “memory as persecution and awakening,” and “memory as a closed box.” *Ibid.*, 105-113.

³ *Ibid.*, 106.

This mapping gets fuzzier in the documentaries, as loose memories can become emblematic through the circulation and distribution of a film. Nonetheless, these categories allow us to approach the interplay between individual and collective memories, and how this plays out in the documentaries' use of sites charged with memory.

The proliferation of documentaries approaching the events of the dictatorship has occurred contemporaneously with other commemorative movements, including the official conversion of many sites of suffering and disappearance into memorials. These acts of memorialization, as Elizabeth Jelin and Susana Kaufman point out, are “attempts to mark the material and ‘real’ sites where the real and material bodies of people entered the phantom world of fantasy, disappearing.”⁴ Film, which even in documentary partakes of this “phantom world of fantasy,” can work in the opposite direction, by approaching these real and material sites from the domain of fantasy. Additionally, Jelin and Kaufman suggest that it is when efforts toward memorialization are stifled or resisted by the state, as they so often were in the early years after the dictatorships in both Argentina and Chile, that the will to remember becomes strengthened.

There is no pause, no rest, because it [the memory] has not been ‘deposited’ anywhere—it has to remain in the minds and hearts of the people. In a way, the need to turn the unique, personal and non-transferable feelings into public and collective meanings is left open and active. ... Doesn't the oblivion that the opposition/police repression attempt to impose have the paradoxical effect of multiplying memory and making more real the questions and the debate about what the society went through in its recent past?⁵

⁴ Elizabeth Jelin and Susana G. Kaufman, “Layers of Memories: Twenty Years after in Argentina,” in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, eds. T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (Routledge: London, 2000), 96.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

As efforts toward memorialization have gained more traction and official support, do the dangers of the calcification of memory, and the disappearance of memory's plural forms present themselves in turn? This chapter argues that, in the very process of documenting memory's linkage to physical sites, documentary films and videos have the potential to productively unfix memory from its tether to particular places, and to multiply the uses and heterogeneity of memories in their relation to place. The project of these films is to keep emplaced memories from becoming "deposited", and to ensure that memory remains active. In the chapter following this one, I will focus on individual sites of memory, but here I will consider documentaries that visit sites that have become official memorials, or that have widespread recognition in popular discourse as memory spaces. I read the films through the lens of the spaces they inhabit, refer to, and imagine.

Michael Lazzara wrote, in the early 2000s, of Chile's official disavowal of its past:

Santiago, in the post-dictatorship, is like an immense crime scene where a number of important political actors (the military, the *pinochetista* political right, big business) have entered into a kind of tacit agreement to expunge from the urban landscape any symbols of the dictatorship's human rights violations. The ruins of political violence are indeed hard to map in the city's modernized, neoliberal urban space.⁶

While this certainly still describes the memorial landscape of Santiago today, there have been increasing attempts in recent years to rewrite violence's ruins back into the city's space. Two of the former torture centers that Lazzara mentions, José Domingo Cañas 1367 and Londres 38, have been reclaimed from "anonymous buildings" into memorial

⁶ Michael J. Lazzara, *Chile in Transition: The Poetics and Politics of Memory* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2006), 129. While the book was published in 2006, a portion of the chapter I am quoting from had been published in Spanish in 2003.

sites, even if the material traces of their existence as locations for torture have long been destroyed. The years since Lazzara's passage was written have also seen the 2004 construction of an evocative memorial to the disappeared in Paine, a farming suburb of Santiago which suffered the worst violence per capita in the country, and the construction in 2010 of the large *Museo de la Memoria*, located centrally in Santiago nearby other museums in the Quinta Normal Park. Nonetheless, attempts at inscribing Chile's memories of torture and terror into the city face the challenge of an official erasure that was a legacy of the dictatorship, and continued for many years during the transition, as a look at the example of Londres 38 makes clear.

Londres 38

Prior to the September 11, 1973 military coup that ousted Salvador Allende and placed Augusto Pinochet in power, the two-story house at Londres 38 had been used by the Socialist Party (PS).⁷ Shortly after the coup, the building became the headquarters of the DINA, the Chilean secret police.⁸ For just over a year, from late 1973 to late 1974, the building was used as a detention and torture center for prisoners of the DINA, primarily members of the left-wing revolutionary group MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda

⁷ As a result, some prisoners at Londres 38 recognized the building from its previous incarnation. This past incarnation of the building is significant symbolically, and adds another layer to the torture that took place there.

⁸ Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional. In 1977, the DINA was dissolved, and replaced by the CNI (Centro Nacional de Informaciones), although the CNI at first continued to be led by Colonel Manuel Contreras, who had led the DINA from its inception. See Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 138-140.

Revolucionario/Left Wing Revolutionary Movement).⁹ Prisoners were generally held at Londres 38 for a short period, up to two weeks, before being executed or transferred to other camps, such as the more isolated Tejas Verdes and Villa Grimaldi. Londres 38 is particularly unusual among buildings in Santiago used for imprisonment and torture for its central location, near the heart of Santiago, just blocks away from La Moneda, the presidential palace. In 1978, the building was transferred by the military to the Instituto O'Higiniano, a group presided over by a retired army general, and dedicated to preserving the legacy of Bernardo O'Higgins, one of Chile's founding fathers. All traces of the building's history as a torture center were removed, and in an attempt to purge the building itself from the city, the address was changed to Londres 40.¹⁰

Londres 38 would remain in the hands of the Instituto O'Higiniano until 2007, when the state recovered the building, after protests against the Institute's plans to sell the building to a private buyer. The struggle to convert the building into a memory site did not end with its acquisition; the state originally planned to use the building as the site for the new National Institute for Human Rights, which would not have been open to the public. Former prisoners and relatives of the disappeared opposed this decision and

⁹ Enrique Azúa, who works in the Education department of the National Institute for Human Rights (Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos/INDH) told me that the discussion of how to turn Londres 38 into a memorial site was smoother than at other locations, because the site was used for operations specifically targeting the MIR. Therefore, unlike at locations like Villa Grimaldi, which contains separate memorials for the disappeared and executed of MIR, MAPU (Popular Unitary Action Movement/Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitario), and the Communist Party (PCC), at Londres 38 the monument did not share the burden of signifying for different political groups.

¹⁰ A timeline of the building's history can be found at www.londres38.cl.

successfully argued that the space needed to remain accesible to the public.¹¹ In the new memorial space that eventually resulted, Londres 38: Memory Space (Espacio de Memorias), rather than attempt to restore the inside of the building, or to recreate the torture and detention cells, the inside of the building was kept largely empty. The visitor's primary exposition into the space comes outside on the sidewalk, where there are a series of informational boards, and where tiles have been inserted into the cobblestone street bearing the names of the 96 known victims who were disappeared or executed after being imprisoned at Londres 38. When I visited the site in October 2012, one of the upstairs rooms was hosting an exhibit of photographs of the 2011 student protests (a couple of the photographs included signs or banners that explicitly linked the privatization of education and the police's treatment of protesters to the lineage of the Pinochet years). Another upstairs room contained a table and a large ring of chairs, but the rooms were otherwise empty and unmarked, except for sporadic sentences written in black ink on the walls. (Este es un pasado que sigue siendo parte de nuestro presente. This is a past that continues to be part of our present. / Lo que sucedió en esta casa, sucedió fuera de ella. El terrorismo de estado operó sobre el conjunto del país. What happened in this house, happened outside of it. State terrorism operated across the entire country.)

The bareness of the building's interior suggests at first a conviction that the space will speak to visitors, but the guided visits given twice a day present another possible justification. In these visits, emphasis is placed less on a pedagogical lesson about the

¹¹ On the struggle over the fate of Londres 38 see Nelly Richard, *Crítica de la memoria (1990-2010)* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales, 2010), 244-252; and Steve J. Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 314-323.

site's history than on using the memorial site to create a space for a dialogic encounter. Standing on the street outside the building, the guide begins by informing the visiting group that he/she will be recording the tour on an audio recorder, explaining that former prisoners may be among those taking the tour, and that the group's reactions will become part of the site's archive.¹² Members of the visiting group are asked to introduce themselves and describe the reason they decided to visit the site. Before the group enters the building the guide gives a short description of the site's history and use by the DINA. Upon entering, the guide informs the group that the building has been kept empty, as it was left by the military and the Instituto O'Higiniano, because "it is full of memories." The tour quickly passes through the other rooms of the site, and then ends in the upstairs room where everyone sits in a circle. Here, the guide invites members of the group to reflect on their experience of the site. At the guided visit I attended, after a brief silence, a teenage girl spoke movingly of her own disappeared uncle, whom she never knew, and her decision to visit the site as a way of accessing some part of his story. Several other group members made connections between the events that transpired at Londres 38 and more recent instances of police brutality and disappearance, stressing that the events of the dictatorship should not be viewed as a closed episode of the past, but rather as contiguous with, and still reverberating in the present. In all, this final portion of the guided visit took about half the total time, and illustrates that rather than a scripted, controlled narrative, these visits are conceived as variable, individual occurrences, that the site intends to create conversations, but not to dictate their terms or plan their every result. As Nelly Richard describes the creation of the memory site,

¹² All descriptions of the tour come from the author's visit to Londres 38, and participation in a guided tour in October 2012.

The Londres 38 Collective tells the state that, perhaps, the destiny of the recuperated house is simply to serve as a point of encounter and discussion to maintain collectively open and in suspense a reflection on the complex relations between recording history, giving figuration to memory, and creating mechanisms for the transmission of its meanings.¹³

Pierre Nora describes a tendency in *lieux de memoire*, a wide category that includes memorial sites, to create the sense of approaching their object from a great distance, and to derive their fascination from this same fact; no longer felt to be on a continuum with the past, we become all the more enthralled by it.¹⁴ The memorial at Londres 38 seems to run counter to this tendency, and instead productively leaves the continuity between past and present open. In this, it is closer in spirit to what James Young has described as the countermonument:

it's aim is not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desanctification; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet.¹⁵

For Nelly Richard, the importance of the memorial space at Londres 38 is that rather than musealizing and fixing memory within the space, it

interlaced the easily arrived at question of '*what to do with this place*' (as if the memory must remain contained and delimited by the blueprint of the space where the crime was physically enacted) with the other question, more interpellative because more dialogic, of "*what to do starting from this place*": a space that doesn't depend on the fixed anchorage of the material place where events took place but which explores other bases of action and intervention—for example, the web page—to be able to disseminate the mobile potential of remembering in heterogeneous flows of plural connections.¹⁶

¹³ Richard, *Crítica*, 248.

¹⁴ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 16-18.

¹⁵ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 30.

¹⁶ Richard, *Crítica*, 249.

The creation of memorial sites such as Londres 38 is also the creation of a *mise-en-scene* for future visits, memorials, protests, screenings, talks, encounters, performances, exhibitions, and (most germane to my purposes) documentary films.

Because Londres 38 was only recently acquired and converted into a memory space, it has not yet served as a location for many documentaries.¹⁷ However, it does play a significant role in the documentary *El Mocito* (Marcela Said and Jean de Certeau, 2011). *El Mocito* means “the little waiter” and is the nickname of Jorgelino Vergara, who worked for the DINA as a teenager at the cuartel Simón Bolívar, an extermination center from which no prisoners are known to have escaped. Vergara has recently come forward and given testimony that has proved valuable to human rights organizations, victim’s families, and judicial proceedings, allowing for the identification of the location of cuartel Simón Bolívar, the names and details of the deaths of many of those who were detained there, and the identification of the role that particular DINA/CNI agents played in disappearances. But Vergara is also a complicated figure himself and projects an ambiguity that the film capitalizes on. Vergara claims to have only served as a waiter for DINA agents, bringing them coffee, and also bringing food and water to the prisoners. But the film also shows him dressing in military fashion with a black beret, practicing martial arts with a pair of nunchuks, and killing and skinning a rabbit. Vergara visits Human Rights lawyer Nelson Caucato, who is stunned when Vergara asks him whether he can apply for compensation as a victim of the military dictatorship. How, Caucato

¹⁷ It is the subject of a forthcoming documentary directed by Carmen Luz Parot, who also made *Victor Jara: El derecho de vivir en paz* (Victor Jara: The Right to Live in Peace, 1999) and *Estadio Nacional* (National Stadium, 2002). See <http://www.londres38.cl/1937/w3-printer-90974.html> (Accessed April 27, 2015).

asks, can he apply for compensation when he worked for the DINA at an extermination center? Vergara replies that he was restricted by the DINA from pursuing educational and other opportunities and that, “in the end, I felt like one more prisoner.”

One of the most harrowing scenes in the film finds Vergara reenacting the tortures that he witnessed (and, according to him, *only* witnessed) while working for the DINA. As Vergara opens the doors to a room marked “Torture Room” (*sala de tortura*) with a white sheet of paper, he says “I always had access, because when they were torturing, they would ask me for coffee, and for this reason I entered without any restriction.” Describing the torture referred to as the *parilla* or grill, Vergara walks over to one side of the room, and gestures with his hands to where a metal bed frame would have been, where a prisoner would be restrained and given electric shocks. He crouches down, taking the position of a DINA agent, and mimes the motion with which the torturer would hand crank a generator, administering the electric shocks. The scene bears the hallmarks of what Janet Walker has called “situated testimony”, testimony that “realizes the materiality of testimony in the power of place,”¹⁸ and the testimony indeed is seemingly prompted by the particular place. But this is also a *mis*-situated testimony: presumably because access to the former site of the cuartel Simón Bolívar was not available, this scene is filmed at Londres 38, a site where tortures did take place, but not the ones that Vergara witnessed. The film does not mark or name the space, we are only cued that this is not the building that Vergara worked at when, walking into another room at Londres 38, he says “this cell is very similar to the ones at the barracks where I

¹⁸ Janet Walker, “Rights and Return: Perils and Fantasies of Situated Testimony after Katrina,” in *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*, eds. Bhaskar Sarkar and Janet Walker (New York: Routledge, 2010), 85.

was.” Here, not only does the testimony of a figure about whom the film encourages us to question a simple label of victim or perpetrator stand in for the testimony of those who are absent and cannot testify (the disappeared), but the site of Londres 38 (empty, but full of memories) stands in for the absent cuartel Simón Bolívar, and it is precisely the “emptiness” of Londres 38 that allows it to “play” another site. *El Mocito* illustrates one possible answer to Richard’s question of “what to do starting from this place.”

Reinalda del Carmen, mi mamá y yo (2006)

One of the most ubiquitous memorial sites in Chilean postdictatorship documentaries is the *Muro de la memoria* (Wall of Memory), located at Puente Bulnes, a bridge across the Mapocho River in the Quinta Normal neighborhood of Santiago. Designed by Claudio Pérez and Rodrigo Gómez, this memorial occupies a significant site: Puente Bulnes was the location of three separate and unrelated incidents during the dictatorship, the murder of a priest, Father Juan Alsina, the murder of five workers from the San Juan de Dios hospital, and the massacre of 14 youth from a *población* (shantytown) in Puente Alto. The *Muro de la memoria* is located adjacent to the Plaza Padre Juan Alsina, where there are plaques to Alsina, the 14 *pobladores*, and to the priests killed by the dictatorship. Across the busy General Bulnes Avenue from the memorial is a mural depicting the murder of Padre Juan Alsina, and the sentence “Kill me from the front, because I want to see you so I can forgive you.” [Matame de frente porque quiero verte para darte el perdón.] These were, according to the testimony of the then-18 year old soldier who shot him, Padre Alsina’s last words as he refused a

blindfold before being executed and dumped into the Mapocho.¹⁹ The *Muro de la memoria* was added to this charged location in 2002. It is composed of photographs of 936 of the disappeared, affixed to ceramic tiles, with an additional 256 blank tiles interspersed to represent those victims whose photographs Pérez and Gómez were unable to find. As Michael Lazzara points out, “the photos we see are not the typical *fotos-carnet* (state ID cards) that were so vital to the apparatus of state terror.”²⁰ Instead, mixed in with conventional headshots are many photographs from everyday life, outings, and posed pictures. The effect resists the anonymizing amalgamation of faces, even while preserving the sense of magnitude of the disappearances. The placement of the memorial in a busy urban thoroughfare was also deliberate, and Nelly Richard valorizes the *Muro* in contradistinction to more secluded memorial sites, such as the memorial at the National Cemetery:

Instead of commemorating death in a demarcated place set apart from the everyday life of the living, the “Wall of Memory” chooses a bridge as a point of convergence for multiple urban trajectories whose day-to-day meanderings will be *interrupted* by these signs of memory. Instead of concentrating memory in a cult-like place (the cemetery) that invites both inwardness and exclusion from the city’s dynamism, the wall at Puente Bulnes wants to deprivatize the act of remembering and force the memory of the disappeared to intersect with the routines of a living community whose members, in turn, can disseminate their memory unpredictably in their daily comings-and-goings.²¹

While Puente Bulnes has appeared in a number of Chilean documentaries, often anonymously as a signifier for the sheer number of people disappeared during the

¹⁹ “Un procesado en caso Alsino.” *La Nación* (Aug. 19, 2004)
<http://www.lanacion.cl/noticias/site/artic/20040818/pags/20040818201648.html>.

²⁰ Lazzara, 116.

²¹ Nelly Richard, “Sites of Memory, Emptying Remembrance,” in *Telling Ruins in Latin America*, eds. Michael J. Lazzara and Vicky Unruh (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 180-181.

dictatorship, it plays an especially important role in *Reinalda del Carmen, mi mamá y yo* (*Reinalda del Carmen, My Mother and I*, 2006), a film in which both collective memorial sites, and places charged with individual memory figure. Lorena Giachino Torréns made the film about her mother Jacqueline Torréns' friendship with Reinalda del Carmen Pereira Plaza, who was active with the Communist Party (PCC), and who was abducted and disappeared while pregnant in 1976, after living clandestinely for the two years prior. Giachino set out to make the film shortly after her mother suffered a coma related to diabetes that also partially deteriorated her memory, although as Jacqueline points out in the film, she remembers this earlier period more vividly than the more recent years of her life, because it is more important to her, an observation that we understand to have everything to do with her friendship with Carmen and the pain of her disappearance.

One of the film's central strategies is its use of photographs, whether by staging scenes in which the subjects look at photographs on screen, or by intercutting photographs of Reinalda del Carmen and Jacqueline into the film.²² The scene that launches the journey of mother and daughter into the past combines this use of photography with the film's even more significant reliance on visits to sites and situated encounters to stimulate memory. Lorena Giachino and her mother set out on their journey by visiting the *Muro de la memoria* at Puente Bulnes. Arriving at the memorial, Giachino and her mother stand silently before the wall of photos, as the camera pans

²² For more on the use of photography in the film, see Antonio Traverso, "Working through trauma in post-dictatorial Chilean documentary: Lorena Giachino's *Reinalda del Carmen*," in *People, Place and Power: Australia and the Asia Pacific*, eds. Dawn Bennett, Jaya Earnest, and Miyume Tanji (Perth: Black Swan Press, 2009), 217.

quickly across photographs of the disappeared, before finally Jacqueline Torr ns reaches out a finger and touches the photograph of Reinalda del Carmen.

Steve Stern points out the “false fixity” of memorials, which

materialize and affix memory to a spot, but...emerge within the dimension of time, as products of human struggle to assert the meaning of the past. New memorials come on stream, as memory projects backed by a social base; others lose their publics and fall into neglect, as contending social forces shift or as living memory gives way to oblivion.²³

The *Muro de la memoria* had been standing for four years before Giachino and Jacqueline visited it in the film, but despite the use of “strong, weather-resistant ceramic tiles,” many of the tiles had already begun to fade.²⁴ Giachino points this out, noting that fortunately the protective film covering Reinalda del Carmen’s tile has not come off (as it has on other tiles), so the photo is still clearly visible.²⁵ After looking at the picture for a few moments, Jacqueline steps away from the wall, visibly moved, and says “It made me sad.”

Jacqueline’s condition has left her especially fragile, and she often comes off as childlike in the film, necessitating particular care, and Giachino frequently expresses her concern about her mother’s wellbeing in the voiceover and in interactions with her. Nonetheless, Jacqueline expresses her desire to help her daughter in her investigation, and to find out more about the fate of Reinalda. Following the scene at Puente Bulnes, Giachino and her mother visit a series of sites as they trace Reinalda and Jacqueline’s history: the neighborhood and houses where both grew up, and where Jacqueline’s

²³ Stern, *Reckoning*, 314.

²⁴ Lazzara, 116.

²⁵ When I visited the *Muro de la memoria* in 2012, it was further deteriorated by time and weather, and also by graffiti, including Reinalda del Carmen’s tile, which had been defaced.

mother (Lorena Giachino's grandmother) still lives; the medical school that both attended; the hospital where both worked together at the blood bank, and where a stone memorial to Reinalda del Carmen has been erected. Along the way, more information about the relationship between Reinalda and Jacqueline begins to emerge; it seems that their friendship had begun to deteriorate a couple years before Reinalda was disappeared. After the coup Jacqueline's parents did not want Reinalda to visit their house, fearful of association with Reinalda's Communist politics, and when Giachino asks her mother about events following the coup, Jacqueline becomes visibly uncomfortable and asks to not talk about the subject anymore. "Their friendship started vanishing with the coup," Giachino later says in voiceover, "both of them had started to disappear."

At the end of a conversation with a worker at the blood bank about hearing the news of Reinalda del Carmen's disappearance, the camera returns to the *Muro de la memoria*, panning across photographs of the disappeared before resting on Reinalda's image. Giachino and Jacqueline leave flowers below Reinalda's picture, and Giachino asks her mother what it would be like if Reinalda were still alive. Jacqueline says "she would have had her baby," and goes on to describe the things from her everyday life that she and Reinalda would do together.

Giachino's filmic investigation into the disappearance of Reinalda del Carmen functions at several levels; it is a factual investigation into the events that transpired after Reinalda was abducted from a street corner, on the same day that 12 other members of the Communist Party were also detained, events about which few definitive details had surfaced in the thirty years since. But the film also serves a reparative function, staging

on-screen opportunities for Jacqueline to work through her loss, as well as the postmemory of Giachino's own relationship to this trauma, and the ripple effects it has had on Giachino's relationship with her mother.²⁶ Each of these aspects progresses narratively through a series of situated encounters at memory sites related to Reinalda's story. Following the locations already mentioned, Giachino and Jacqueline visit the office of Nelson Caucato, a human rights lawyer; the corner of Ezequiel Fernández and Rodrigo de Araya, the intersection at which Reinalda was abducted, where they speak with two witnesses who happened to be present in 1976 when Reinalda disappeared²⁷; and an abandoned mine pit at Cuesta Barriga, which is likely where Reinalda's body was buried after she was killed, only to later be unearthed by the military and dumped in the sea. At Cuesta Barriga, Giachino and Jacqueline are accompanied by Patricia Hernández, a forensic anthropologist who had worked to identify bone fragments at the site. Following the visit to Cuesta Barriga and about halfway through the film, Giachino's voiceover informs us that Jacqueline has suffered a medical setback and been hospitalized for three days, and that her doctors have advised her not to continue participating in the film because of her condition. Giachino continues with the film on her own, her mother's presence reduced to a voice on Giachino's answering machine. Giachino visits the Legal Medical Institute to speak with a Forensics expert, and a

²⁶ On working through trauma in *Reinalda del Carmen*, see Traverso, "Working through trauma." On postmemory, see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Susana Kaiser, *Postmemories of Terror: A New Generation Copes with the Legacy of the "Dirty War"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

²⁷ Giachino also travels to Concepción to attempt to interview another eyewitness; when she arrives at the market where he works he behaves hostilely, despite having previously agreed to meet with Giachino, and states that his lawyer has advised him not to answer any questions.

former clinic and torture center used by the DINA, which has been converted into an archive and documentation center for human rights cases, and where Reinalda del Carmen might have been taken because she was pregnant when abducted.

In tracing Reinalda del Carmen's history onto Santiago's landscape, Giachino also arranges for encounters at each site that she and her mother visit, or that she visits alone. The abandoned mine at Cuesta Barriga comes to stand in the film as the epicenter of the terror that surrounds Reinalda del Carmen's case. When Lorena Giachino asks Jacqueline how she feels about visiting the sites connected to Reinalda's story, Cuesta Barriga is the only site that Jacqueline says she does not want to visit; it would be "much too saddening," she says, "it would do me harm. ... I won't go there, because Cuesta Barriga is where they dumped her." Nonetheless, Giachino persuades her to go, but when they are at the site, Jacqueline keeps her distance, refusing to walk up to the mouth of the pit when Giachino and Patricia Hernández leave flowers there. It is shortly after this scene that Jacqueline disappears from the film, but near the end of the film Giachino returns to Cuesta Barriga without her mother, this time accompanied by Antonia Cepeda, the daughter of Horacio Cepeda Marinkovic, a member of the Central Committee of the PCC, who was detained on the same day as Reinalda del Carmen, and may also have been dumped at Cuesta Barriga after having been killed. Giachino states in voiceover: "I wanted and needed to verify how the daughter of a victim who disappeared in the same circumstances as Carmen had internalized all that could have happened to her father, so she could live with that and do her mourning." Antonia Cepeda believes that Reinalda del Carmen was the last person to see her father alive, and she relates a dream that she had, in which she pictured her father and Juan Fernando Ortiz Letelier (another of the

disappeared) inside the Cuesta Barriga mine shaft playing with a small child, Reinalda's son, while Reinalda cooked food nearby. "I reassembled the facts," Cepeda says, "and now I can believe that the baby protected Reinalda. . . . I know I am struggling against history here, because history was not that way, but that has helped me a lot, and has allowed me to go on living with more hope."

Giachino's film, particularly its ending, parallels the imaginative act of healing contained in Cepeda's story. Giachino has described the various losses that Reinalda del Carmen's disappearance marked: "My mother lost Carmen, Carmen lost her child and my mother, this child, whose fate we do not know (he would be only a little younger than me), lost his mother. I, in some ways, also lost my mother." At the beginning of the film, Giachino reveals Jacqueline's desire to have her ashes cast into the sea after her death. At the film's end, after Jacqueline's lengthy absence from the film's investigations, Giachino persuades her mother's doctors to allow them to film one more scene together, and the film ends with mother and daughter looking out at the sea, Reinalda del Carmen's resting place, where Jacqueline hopes to once again encounter her some day.

In tracing an itinerary across both sites of loss (e.g. the streetcorner where Reinalda del Carmen was abducted) and emblematic (Puente Bulnes, Cuesta Barriga) memory, and staging encounters at each with individuals who are alternately positioned to speak about their personal recollections of Reinalda and Jacqueline, or to connect their stories to the wider experience of the dictatorship and of the post-dictatorial struggles of relatives of the disappeared, *Reinalda del Carmen* encourages flow and

connections between social and generational experiences of suffering and the individual sufferings that speak particularly to Giachino and her mother.

El Mocito and *Reinalda del Carmen* are not only linked in the ways they activate memorial sites. After *Reinalda del Carmen* was completed, and it was too late to include new material in the film itself, the testimony of Jorgelino Vergara, the subject of *El Mocito*, brought new details to light about Reinalda del Carmen's death. Lorena Giachino filmed a short "spin-off" to *Reinalda del Carmen*, which is included on the DVD, and in which we learn that Reinalda del Carmen's death occurred at the cuartel Simón Bolívar. Giachino includes a brief snippet of footage of a demonstration at the site of the former extermination site, where the site, an anonymous gate in Santiago, is marked with posters and graffiti, reclaimed temporarily as a memorial site.

ESMA: *El predio* (2010) and *Tabula rasa* (2013)

In April 2013, I attended a screening of Jonathan Perel's documentary *Tabula rasa* (2013) at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema (BAFICI).²⁸ Frequently compared in press materials with the works of James Benning and John Gianvito, Perel has made a series of patient, observational works that visit memorial spaces and, through the use of long takes and precise, rhythmic editing, give the viewer a suggestive but open reading of the transformations worked on these sites by the state and human rights groups. Both *Tabula rasa* and Perel's earlier film, *El predio* ("The Site," 2010) are films about the ESMA (Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada/Navy Mechanics School), a large campus of buildings along the busy Avenida

²⁸ This screening took place on April 21, 2013. The film was part of a program of short films, also including *Buenos días resistencia* and *Resistente*.

del Libertador in Buenos Aires that was the most notorious of Argentina's Clandestine Detention Centers (CCD/Centros Clandestino de Detención) during the most recent dictatorship.²⁹ One building in particular, the *Casino de oficiales*, or officer's quarters, was used as the detention site, where prisoners were tortured and held. Many prisoners were drugged, then taken to the nearby airport and placed on infamous death flights, where they were stripped naked, then pushed, still living, out of the airplane to fall into the sea and drown.

The ESMA remained in the possession of the navy for many years after the dictatorship but was reclaimed by the national government from the Armed Forces in 2004, and the process of converting the site into a memory space began slowly. The Navy vacated the premises in stages, and for a period of time part of the large campus of buildings was occupied by various human rights groups, while the military continued to use other buildings. Now, however, the military has left, and the site is given over to various uses, partially devoted to preserving the memory of the torture and disappearances perpetrated on its grounds, and also as a site of broader human rights mobilization. While the *Casino de oficiales* has been converted into a memorial site with regular guided visits and contested plans to convert the site into a memory museum³⁰,

²⁹ While I will be exclusively focusing here on Perel's films that feature the ESMA, there are a number of other recent documentaries that have also focused on this highly charged site, including *Es más vida* (2008), *Nosotros que todavía estamos vivos* (2009), and *ESMA: Memorias de la resistencia* (2010).

³⁰ The viewpoint of many who do not want the site converted into a museum is that they prefer that it be preserved as it is, as a memorial site. For a discussion of, and one entry in, the debate over what to do with the ESMA, see Marcelo Brodsky, ed., *Memory under Construction: The ESMA Debate*, bilingual edition trans. David William Foster (Buenos Aires, la marca editora, 2005).

other buildings on the large campus serve as meeting rooms, a cultural center, a screening room, and offices for various human rights groups.

Perel's *Tabula rasa* documents the destruction of a linked group of buildings at ESMA. A long horizontal construction, with cube shapes jutting out so that it appears to be multiple cross-shaped buildings linked together as though created with children's toys, these "accommodation modules" ("*módulos alojamiento*") seem at first to be innocent of any part in the logics of repression employed at ESMA. However, as Perel's film points out, this long structure, located on the back side of the ESMA next to Avenida Leopoldo Lugones and the commuter train line, served to obscure the sight of what occurred inside ESMA. Perel's camera lingers on a paragraph from Claudio Martyniuk's book *ESMA: Phenomenology of Disappearance* (*ESMA: Fenomenología de la desaparición*), partially reproduced here:

From the window of the train car, one after the other you would see buildings of ESMA pass by; newly constructed buildings with an ugliness difficult to describe. Like cubes, they were linked one to another, covering the back side of ESMA. It was a strange mass. As the structure of the cubes was completed, the rhythm of the work became sluggish, as if it had only been important to raise this concrete curtain that hid the central buildings from sight, that hid something worse than a frightening void. They did not put up a wall around ESMA: this would have shown that they were hiding something. They lifted rifts to show something else, using concrete to make invisible kidnapping, robbery, torture, births, nightmares, the factory of pain. Today, seeing these buildings from the train, the anguish and unease persist.³¹

The destruction of this mass appears to have occurred with relatively little public discussion or controversy, an erasure of an erasure that went as quietly as it came.

Perel's film is a quiet rejoinder to this disappearance, and the majority of the film is

³¹ Claudio Martyniuk, *ESMA: Fenomenología de la desaparición* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo libros, 2004), 43.

made up of long takes of the mechanical claws and jaws of excavators as they tear into the buildings and slowly raze them to the ground. Aside from a few contextualizing shots at the beginning of the film (including the Martyniuk citation), and the film's coda (which I will address below) these images and sounds are presented matter-of-factly, without explicit argument. But the decision to spend so much screen time³² on this demolition implies a criticality toward the decision to destroy this building which, as we find out in an intertitle at the end of the film, will be replaced by a museum dedicated to the Malvinas War.

It was perhaps this implied criticism that inspired the heated exchange during the audience Q&A with Perel at the BAFICI screening I attended. It became quickly evident that a significant percentage of the audience was made up of people who worked at the ex-ESMA in some capacity, three of whom asked questions during the Q&A and identified themselves as workers at the site. The first asked Perel to clarify the film's stance toward the destruction of the modules and toward the site of the ESMA more generally. Perel, clearly uncomfortable with the idea of reducing the film to any particular argument, replied that this was "not that kind of film," but when another of the ESMA workers asked him what his personal stance was, he replied that he thought that the decisions on what to do at the ESMA site had happened too quickly, and with not enough public conversation. The critiques that followed seemed to latch onto this statement rather than the film itself, and one angry denunciator of the film insisted that Perel should have visited and interviewed those who made the decision, and captured multiple sides of the story of this demolition. One or two voices also entered in Perel's

³² The film is only 42 minutes long, but feels long enough that about a third of the audience walked out during the screening I attended.

defense, arguing that the film was more open than these criticisms took account of, a feeling that I share. I raise this anecdote however, not merely to critique a dogmatic idea of what documentaries should look like, but more importantly as an illustration that just as there are conflicting views of the form and use of memorial spaces (like ESMA, or Londres 38 in Chile), so too there are vastly different ideas about what form representations of these places should take. Screenings like this one at BAFICI become instances at which the conversations and contestations prompted by memory, place, and trauma get extended into other spaces. And, while the grounds of debate at this particular screening at times shifted between or conflated form and content, the fact that Perel's film was not crafted in the testimonial register of so many of the other films I am considering here seemed both to prompt additional debate and to confound accustomed forms of speech in equal measure.

However, as we can see in the example of *El predio*, Perel's earlier film about ESMA, even though separated from either the first-person or collective testimonial register that many postdictatorship documentaries employ, Perel's mode of filmmaking allows for a unique consideration of different spatial forms of memorialization. Although Perel's filmmaking relies on a certain openness and ambiguity in the images, both *Tabula rasa* and *El predio* open with contextualizing shots that play a significant role in how the remainder of each film is read by the viewer. In *Tabula rasa*, before the long sequence of images of excavators razing the accommodation modules, we are shown maps of the ESMA, and the buildings that the film focuses on are identified, and we also see the quotation from Claudio Martyniuk quoted above. In *El predio*, following several tracking shots along the verdant, tree-lined roads that run through the interior of

the ESMA (the only times the camera moves in the film), we see a billboard announcing the plan to convert the site into a memory space, the plan's total cost (\$14,763,721.08), and its sponsorship by the administration of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. This billboard is shown from behind, but its transparency allows us to read its message. The decision to film the billboard from behind suggests a lack of alignment with the project and its linkage to the political aims of the Kirchner government. Perel follows this with a shot of a crooked gate bearing a sign reading "Danger: Area in Construction", placing both the act of entry into this space undertaken by the filmmaker and the conversion of the space into a memorial under the sign of danger (and in a third signification of danger, the act of viewing the film).

In *El predio*, because we get so little conventional exposition, these opening shots take on a heightened role in the viewer's interpretation of the remainder of the film. Perel documents the various uses and transformations effected on the space of the ESMA, with shots of construction-in-progress, of interventions by artists and filmmakers, of screenings and panels, and of a gardening project. It is usually not clear where these scenes are filmed, and in her excellent analysis of the film Pamela Colombo points out that it is unclear to the viewer whether or not any of the film's footage has been taken in the Casino de oficiales, and that the film also never shows the most emblematic icon of the ESMA, the large white building with four large columns. "Here Perel takes a stance, refusing to show us this habitual image of ESMA. This is a complex decision since it reveals an ESMA of tiny details, a different ESMA from the expected

one.”³³ This represents a dramatically different tour of the ESMA to the official guided visits, which exclusively tour the inside of the Casino de oficiales and its surroundings, at great length. Perel’s ESMA is a site-specific critique of the emblematic centrality of site. Both here and in *Tabula rasa*, the act of being *in situ* is crucial, yet the point is to show that the events that transpired in the ESMA, and the horrors that this site represents, cannot be contained either within the emblematic center of horror, the Casino de oficiales, or even within the wider grounds of the ESMA campus. The final shot of *El predio* is, like all of the others, taken from inside the ESMA’s grounds, but this time looking out through a gate onto the street and foot traffic outside, showing those who pass by the ESMA without looking in.

The question that arises here is how to ‘delimit’ the space in which disappearance is inscribed. How can we tell where a concentration camp begins and ends? Is the concentration camp just the Officers Club or all of the ESMA estate? Or perhaps the camp stretches down to the River Plate—that place of secret ‘burial’ that millions of citizens live alongside? Do the constant ‘trips’ of the ESMA detainees-disappeared through the city of Buenos Aires during the last dictatorship also push the boundaries much further beyond the location of the site? What then are the boundaries that construct the process of disappearance?”³⁴

This exploration and pushing of the boundaries that mark, delimit, and are constitutive of the site and process of disappearance is enacted formally by Perel in what can be thought of as another instance of “mis-situated” testimony. Here it is the camera that testifies,

³³ Pamela Colombo, “A Space Under Construction: The Spatio-Temporal Constellation of ESMA in *El Predio*,” trans. Philip Derbyshire, *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 4 (December 2012): 501.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 507. The “trips” Colombo refers to here were both instances at which the detained-disappeared were taken in an unmarked police truck to identify other “subversives”, and to short leaves that were given to certain captives. On the former, see Brodsky, 96. On the latter, see Munú Actis, Cristina Aldini, Liliana Gardella, Miriam Lewin, and Elisa Tokar, *That Inferno: Conversations of Five Women Survivors of an Argentine Torture Camp*, trans. Greta Siebentritt (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006): 210-240.

and does so in a way that is intricately bound to place, and yet eludes any conventional spatial orientation. We always know where we are, generally (somewhere within the space of the ex-ESMA), but we almost never know precisely where we are, and we are never given the orientating landmarks and icons that appear in every other film of ESMA. After observing the various memory work and cultural activities that take place in the ex-ESMA, the final shot through the gate stands as an unanswered question. What can be done about the line that separates the city from the dictatorship's most visible wound, the space that figures as the epicenter of state terror in the social imaginary? What to do, *starting from this place*, in order to properly extend its remembrance outside of its own walls?

In the coda of *Tabula rasa*, after we have seen the destruction of the accommodation modules, and the titular blank slate has been created, the film abruptly cuts to an office desk. Here, Perel uses stop-motion animation to assemble and disassemble, using legos, different models of the building complex whose destruction we have just watched. The toys appear to coalesce and disperse in front of our eyes, passing from pile of rubble to completed structure and back again. These varied constructions suggest greater potentiality and openness than Perel's detractors give him credit for, and they also suggest an affinity with Pilar Calveiro's conception of the ambivalences and disagreements proper to memory:

In this sense I believe that memory assembles remembrance not as a puzzle where each piece fits in one and only one place, and only one figure can be formed. I believe that memory operates more like a lego game than like a puzzle. That is, where you can create more than one figure with the same pieces. And this diversity of figures is really, from my point of view, the richness of memory. And what happens in this exercise of memory is that there are no owners. There can be no owners,

nor can there be unique stories, but rather necessarily there are those who are going to assemble some figures and those who will assemble others.³⁵

The area where this utopic vision of memory meets up with the contested reality of memory sites, which do have owners, is the territory of Perel's films.

***M* (2007)**

Nicolás Prividera's film *M* (2007) is also concerned with the contested visions of the past, but in this case the filmic investigation revolves around the case of Prividera's mother, Marta Sierra (two of the multiple connotations of the titular "M", "*madre*/mother" and "Marta"), who was disappeared by the military government just days after the military coup. Sierra was 36 years old at the time of her disappearance, the same age of Prividera when he began making the film. Prividera was only six years old when his mother was disappeared, and his younger brother Guido was only 2 months old, and Prividera has no memories of his mother, only a collection of Super 8 home movies, photographs, and the sometimes reluctant testimonies gathered for the making of this film. One of the first scenes in *M* shows the Prividera brothers being interviewed by a television crew, and Nicolás responds to his brother's statement that he has often thought of what their lives would have been like if their mother had not been disappeared.

There was another possible life for us, just as the possibility of having a different nation existed. This is what is important. Maybe we are more aware because it touched us more personally. But there is an entire disappeared generation in this country and this has certainly changed the

³⁵ Pilar Calveiro, "Lecture 'Bridges of Memory: State Terrorism, Society, and Militancy' UTPA, Buenos Aires, 2004," in Brodsky, 196, 263. First page number is Spanish version, second is English translation. I used the English translation as a starting point, but have made a few small changes.

appearance of Argentina. As long as we don't discover what happened with each and every one, who is responsible in every case for their disappearance, it will be very difficult to say that we live in a real democracy in a real republic.

The interviewer then asks Nicolás if he is angry, and he responds: “Of course. I think we should all be angry. It is not only because they did something to me.” But Prividera’s position as a victim also allows him to levy criticisms both from a generational subject-position, toward the leftist militants whom he interviews in the film, and of a practical or functional nature, toward the human rights organizations and state entities that manage the testimonial and memorial landscape of Argentina.

Before the television interview, we see Prividera interviewed over the phone, presumably for a radio program, and he states his frustration that justice in Argentina can only proceed when the family members of each *desaparecido* pursues their case individually, even though the repression in Argentina occurred at a more general level. We then witness the obstacles he encounters as he pursues his mother’s case, trying to learn more about her fate after she was disappeared from the family house. No survivors of any of the Clandestine Detention Centers (CCD) mention his mother in their testimony, and it is unknown which of the CCDs she was held at before being killed. The first part of the film (subtitled “the end of the beginnings”) shows Prividera visiting a series of archives, looking for information or records that would link his mother to any of the CCDs, or that would allow him to search through various testimonies for her name. Prividera visits the archive at the House of Memory at Mansion Seré,³⁶ the

³⁶ Mansion Seré was a CCD in Castelar, part of Greater Buenos Aires, used by the military until shortly after several prisoners escaped in 1978. The building was subsequently destroyed by the military, and the excavated remains of the building have been preserved as a memory site. The House of Memory (Casa de la memoria) is in an

National Archive of Memory, and the office of the Center for Legal and Social Studies (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, CELS), and at each of these sites he complains that information is too dispersed, and laments that there are not greater efforts to combine and interface various sources of data, particularly those related to each of the CCDs. Alongside these scenes, Prividera also visits a series of memorial sculptures and plaques, which are seen to be in disrepair and neglect. A woman who works at the House of Memory at Mansion Seré tells him about a plaque to the disappeared erected ten years earlier at the Plaza de Morón (which the film subsequently visits), but that his mother's name will not be on the plaque. Marta Sierra worked for the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), and Prividera visits a memorial on INTA's grounds that is faded and choked with weeds, and another memorial at the office of the trade union for state workers (Asociación Trabajadores del Estado/ATE) which is broken and awaiting funds for repair.

In the second part of the film ("the remains of history"), Prividera's search for information about his mother shifts from an institutional level to a personal level, tracking down friends, co-workers, and fellow militants. We slowly piece together more information about Marta's militancy, which began at an adult school that she and several others from INTA ran, and that was also used for political meetings. Marta became involved with the Montoneros, most likely through "Chufo," a mysterious figure who appears in many of the testimonies gathered in the film, and who had a much deeper involvement and higher status in the Montoneros than any of the other workers at the

adjacent building, and the Municipality of Morón's website describes the House of Memory as "the first Latin American space dedicated to recuperating and exercising collective memory, located in the site where a clandestine center of detention and torture operated." <http://www.moron.gov.ar/ddhh/casa.php> (Accessed June 5, 2013).

adult school. The extent of Marta's militancy is unclear, although she certainly was not a high-ranking member of the Montoneros. Throughout this portion of the film, particularly in several striking dialogue scenes where Prividera's brother acts as a sounding board or devil's advocate, Prividera criticizes the ex-militants on several levels. Some of them are reticent or unwilling to speak to Prividera about his mother, and one woman who was a militant with Marta tells Prividera over the phone that she has been undergoing chemotherapy and treatment for depression, and that her psychologist has instructed her not to revisit painful memories. The film cuts to Prividera's brother Guido saying that these are excuses for those who don't want to remember, to which Prividera responds, "But there are no possible excuses. It isn't a matter of 'it's my private life, and I don't feel like talking about it.' ... We're talking about adults who were in their right minds in the past, and are much more so now. They must own up to their history." Additionally, Prividera is critical of what he sees as the lack of foresight of those involved in militancy of the level of violence that awaited them, or in the phrase repeated in the film, the failure to see the "foreshadowing of something more violent."

But Prividera's most vehement critique is of the structure of the Montoneros that allowed those with most involvement and power, like Chufo, to flee the country, but that exposed those with minimal involvement or without the potential to leave to the state repression unleashed during the dictatorship.³⁷ When Prividera talks to one of his mother's friends, she says that they did not expect those who were not deeply involved

³⁷ The film later relates that after being in exile for several years, Chufo returned to Argentina. After his return he was confronted by the military, and took a "suicide pill" rather than being detained and tortured.

in the Montoneros to be targeted. “Although we followed a logical strategy, logic failed.” Prividera’s critiques of the left clearly benefit from hindsight, and to his credit he also includes in the film a response to his persistent line of questioning from one of the women who knew his mother: “He [Prividera] sees things as one reads them in a history book. But things are not lineal. One reads about history, and one reads about events, but the situations are confusing, they never happen as a whole.”³⁸ But the film does present the complexity of events, and the contradictions present in the various memories of them.

Prividera’s critique of the left is held in tension throughout the film with his evident respect for the utopian project and ideals for which Prividera’s mother lost her life. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the two scenes that serve as the film’s epilogues. In the first, a group of Marta’s fellow militants gather together for the first time in years, seemingly happy to be reunited, but very quickly arguments erupt between two of them. The topic of the current administration (that of Néstor Kirchner, who was near the beginning of his term at the time of filming) comes up, and one woman says that she sees no difference between the Peronist administrations of Menem and Kirchner. “They still sell the people, they still sell the land.” Another man protests that Kirchner can’t be held to the same standards of the Peronism of the 1940s, to which the woman responds, “Why? Because they turned the ESMA into a museum?” She works as a teacher, and goes on to say that, particularly for the poor students she works with,

³⁸ Prividera’s second film, *Tierra de los padres* (2011), is especially interesting in light of this comment. The film stages 200 years of Argentine history inside the Recoleta cemetery, where Prividera has his actors stand outside the tombs of various national figures, reading passages from their writing, and making the history of books come alive in this memorial space.

nothing has changed under Kirchner, it is still the *piqueteros* and the poor who are persecuted. When the man argues that Kirchner should be given some time to dig Argentina out of the hole it is in and approvingly cites a recent labor policy, the woman responds, “I don’t mean to offend you, but it seems like you don’t live in Argentina. ... Because yours is an abstract argument, when reality for the poor is very different.” The scene presents a vision of the old left in Argentina as bitterly divided, at once nostalgic for a Perón who betrayed the left, and embittered about the prospects in the present.

But the following scene presents a very different story. Prividera returns to the memorial at the INTA campus where his mother worked, where a new plaque is being unveiled. We see short snippets of two of his mother’s comrades, both interviewed earlier in the film, speaking to the assembled crowd, followed by a lengthy section of Prividera’s speech:

I’d like to start by pointing out a simple fact. Some years ago, a memorial plaque was set up in this same place. This plaque bore no names and this absence was perhaps a victory symbol of those who made people disappear. I’m pointing this out because I’m not as much interested in memory plaques as in names. To know their names, to know who they were, because to remember them simply as the disappeared is to assume that haze in which the dictatorship left them, left us. ... Memory shouldn’t be only remembering. It should be the reason for acting. We must remember not only the disappeared, but also the ones to blame for their disappearance who were always amongst us working as if nothing had happened, peacefully sleeping, without being asked for explanations by justice, and with nobody who told them that they were as guilty as those who kidnapped, tortured, and murdered. The ones who didn’t take part knew, the ones who didn’t know suspected, and the majority remained silent, or repeated the dictatorship’s slogans on the grounds of fear, indifference, or complicity. While we choose to remain silent, to resign, today as yesterday, it will be us who lose our names, we the erased, we the disappeared.

Prividera’s speech is followed by a short excerpt from a speech by a representative of ATE, the trade union, who praises Prividera’s words, but also refers to them as

“vomiting old grudges”, a characterization that Prividera appears uncomfortable with. Judging from what we have seen in the rest of the film, Prividera and the ATE representative likely disagree as vehemently as the two old Peronists in the preceding scene, but the ritual of memorialization and of the unveiling of a monument to Prividera’s mother forces them into a reconciliation that only rings false for the viewer because of the previous two hours of film that precedes it. Gonzalo Aguilar describes the juxtaposition of these two epilogues:

While the first scene is disturbing, the second configures a typical ritual act for memory and for the disappeared. Even though, from my point of view, the second scene narratively weakens the inquisitive journey that the whole film articulates, its effectiveness comes from the insurmountable difference between it and the first part.³⁹

And it is this insurmountable difference, or the tension between these two visions of the past, that provides us the lens through which to read all of the scenes in which Prividera visits various memorial sites.

These scenes, interspersed throughout the film, show Prividera visiting ex-CCDs such as Mansion Seré, El Atlético, and Olimpo, and memory sites like Plaza de Mayo, Recoleta Cemetery, and Parque de la Memoria (Memory Park). The sites are generally unidentified, and sometimes edited into the film in the midst of testimonies about Marta. Prividera’s site visits serve multiple purposes in the film. They are motivated by the lack of information about the details of Marta’s fate. Because Prividera does not know what CCD his mother was imprisoned at, he visits many of them, and imagines each as a possible point on Marta’s doomed itinerary. These scenes have a repetitive feel, and one

³⁹ Gonzalo Aguilar, “Con el cuerpo en el laberinto: Sobre *M* de Nicolás Prividera,” in *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino*, eds. Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival (Buenos Aires: Librería Ediciones, 2007), 186.

shot of Prividera climbing the stairs of a football stadium that stands on the site of Mansion Seré is repeated three times in the film, as though by returning again and again to a detention center and torture site that might have held his mother, Prividera can gain some further understanding of her plight.

But the site visits also carry a critical undertone, signaled by the first section of the film, described above, in which Prividera shows increasing frustration at the absence of information related to his mother, or a centralized archive in which to locate that information. What comfort can a memorial bring to a family member like Prividera, when his mother is missing from the list of names, as is the case at the plaque in Morón, or if there is no sign of where her body was held, or where her bones lay? We see Prividera look at the brochure for the Parque de la Memoria, and then the film shows him standing in front of William Tucker's sculpture *Victory* (1999-2001) at the park. The park's guidebook describes the artist's intention to "project...a geometric form, broken and incomplete, that alludes to the truncated lives of the disappeared."⁴⁰ Prividera gives no commentary on this sculpture in this film, but it seems clear that its abstraction in no way provides him with the kinds of answers he seeks. Nonetheless, Marta does find her way onto the INTA plaque at the close of the film. Prividera ends the film by keeping these two impulses in tension; a recognition of the importance of memorialization, and the inscription of names into public space, side by side with a critique of official memorialization's inadequacies and disfunction.

Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi (2008)

⁴⁰ "Monumento a las víctimas del terrorismo de estado: Parque de la memoria." Booklet handed out at the Parque de la Memoria, English version.

In contrast to the films discussed so far in this chapter, all of which are directed by members of the postmemory generations in Argentina or Chile, the film *Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi* (2008), is co-directed by Quique Cruz (with Marilyn Mulford), a survivor of the Chilean detention and torture center. Villa Grimaldi is the most infamous of the Chilean concentration camps, and it was the first former camp in Latin America to be converted into a memory space, with the groundbreaking of the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park taking place in March 1997. A large estate on the outskirts of Santiago, Villa Grimaldi was acquired by the Chilean military government after the coup, and served as a detention, torture, and extermination center from late 1973 until 1978. After democratization, the property was transferred to a company with ties to Hugo Salas Wenzel, the director general of the CNI.⁴¹ While news broke of the company's plans for new construction at the site in time to stop it, activists were too late to stop the destruction of the buildings of the detention center, almost all of which were razed to the ground. (A swimming pool, which was used in at least one instance to torture a prisoner, and from which prisoners reported hearing the sounds of children playing on weekends, was one of the only sections of the property left standing, aside from the outer walls and gates.)

There were debates about the best way to convert Villa Grimaldi into a memorial site, and the eventual decision was to convert the site into a Peace Park, with an emphasis on contemplation and reconciliation, rather than reconstructing the buildings of the camp. A memorial wall of names of the disappeared was constructed at the site, and mosaic tiles set in the ground mark the site of former buildings and inform visitors of

⁴¹ Stern, *Reckoning*, 170.

their use. The site has received much critical attention, which I will only briefly summarize here. Nelly Richard has perhaps been the most scathing critical voice, writing that the openness and beauty of the site fails to convey in any way the horror of what was experienced there:

Villa Grimaldi's flat geometry trusts in the predominance of the gaze to read, from above, the memory-laden remains of violence mapped on the ground. But the eye and the gaze are distancing mechanisms that physically displace the object, turning it into an abstraction, due to the supervisory control of the one who looks. The spatial homogeneity and geometry of Villa Grimaldi make an ordered *field of vision* out of what was once a lacerated *texture of experience*, disembodied the lived matter of remembrance, whose deep subjective fractures are unrecognizable in this flat, serene, uninterrupted map.⁴²

Michael Lazzara, although finding aspects of the park that trouble its straightforward reading, comes to a similar conclusion to Richard:

Innumerable testimonies have established that the prisoners' world was one of darkness, extreme fear, and unspeakable violence. If the Park of Peace is supposed to tell us something about that world, I fear that it has, on some level, failed at its attempt. I say this because the site in no way offends our sensibilities. It does not shock. It does not allow us to really sense the barbarity of the horrors perpetrated there. One might even say that, without the assistance of a guide, it unwittingly permits complacent spectatorship.⁴³

Lazzara also points out the difficulty of accessing the site, and that most of the times he has visited, it has been nearly empty. This, of course, is a product primarily of geography, and highlights the importance and "advantage" of a more centrally located site like Londres 38.

⁴² Nelly Richard, "Sites of Memory, Emptying Remembrance," in *Telling Ruins in Latin America*, ed. Michael J. Lazzara and Vicky Unruh (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 177.

⁴³ Lazzara, 142.

However, the perspective from which many critics (including Lazzara) choose to view Villa Grimaldi is that obtained from a guided visit. Lazzara and Diana Taylor both write about the guided visits given by Pedro Alejandro Matta, a former detainee at Villa Grimaldi who has perhaps been the most prominent of the ex-detainees who give guided tours of the site, having done so for many years as well as publishing a guidebook in 2000. Macarena Gómez-Barris writes about her visit with an unnamed woman guide. Lazzara and Gómez-Barris also use literary and testimonial accounts of Villa Grimaldi to fill out their analyses: Lazzara considers Germán Marín's novel *El Palacio de la Risa* (*The Palace of Laughter*, 2005), and Gómez-Barris includes her analysis of Carmen Rojas' testimonial book *Recuerdos de una Mirista*. Gómez-Barris writes that "[t]hese voices and narratives deepen the social meaning of the Peace Park, as forms of memory that force a different reconstruction of historical memory in the nation."⁴⁴ Gómez-Barris, Lazzara, and Taylor all use their guided visits and the other sources they draw from to present other modes of approaching or narrating the ruins of Villa Grimaldi that escape the narrative of reconciliation and redemption suggested by the Peace Park.

A wash of decorative tiles, chips of original ceramic from the site, forms a huge arrow-like shape on the ground pointing away from the gate toward the new "peace" fountain and performance pavilion. Matta ignores that for the moment. This is not the time for reconciliation.⁴⁵

Taylor's tour in particular prompts a number of questions, including a fear of being implicated in a tourism of suffering, the meaning of witnessing through the proxy of a guide, and the importance of "*being in place*" in a place such as this. But, ultimately, Taylor argues that this situated, guided witnessing is important:

⁴⁴ Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 70.

⁴⁵ Diana Taylor, "Performing Ruins," in *Telling Ruins*, 17.

We all live in proximity to criminal violence, and though some have felt it more personally than others, this violence is never just personal. If we focus only on the trauma, we risk evacuating the politics. Standing there, together, bringing the buildings and routines back to life, we bear witness not just to loss, but to a system of power relations, hierarchies, and values that not only allowed but required the disappearance of certain people.⁴⁶

I argue that the films already considered in this chapter, which also give the viewer proximate and guided “visits” of sites of suffering, can also achieve a form of the accompanied witnessing to which Taylor refers, one in which “the personal, interpersonal, social, and political come together.”⁴⁷ And as we will see in the case of *Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi*, this filmic tour can activate the site in ways that differ from the architectural or emplaced narrative of an official memorial like the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park.

The title of Quique Cruz’s film comes from a scene in which he visits the former site of the Puchuncaví Concentration Camp (also known as Melinka), in the western province of Valparaíso. In addition to being imprisoned at Villa Grimaldi, Cruz was also held at Tres Alamos, Cuatro Alamos, and Puchuncaví, where he spent about six months. None of the buildings of the camp at Puchuncaví are still standing, and when Cruz visits the site in the film, he searches for remains of the structures of the camp among the weeds, finding various fragments, a piece of the bathroom tiles, a section from the roof supports. He says in voiceover “You’ve got to be kind of an archeologist in order to find and tell the story because there’s nothing here, just the empty hill.” We see Cruz’s outstretched arm against the background of the overgrown field where the camp once was, with fragments of the camp spread across his forearm, laying the presence of his

⁴⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

body and the pieces of the site over the erasure of the landscape. Later in the film, Cruz describes the question at play in the way torture sites like Puchuncaví or Villa Grimaldi worked on the body of prisoners:

How could the body be punished and disciplined to such a point that the society could be disciplined? For a long time I was ashamed of my body. I had no idea why. And then I realized the watermark of the violence at Villa Grimaldi had been bigger than I thought.

Cruz is a musician, and the film follows the creation and performance of a musical suite based on his experience at Villa Grimaldi. When Cruz visits the Peace Park at Villa Grimaldi, he is at first dismayed at the level of erasure effected by the military before leaving the site. But he finds a box of rusted fragments that remain from the original structure, and he takes these fragments and leans them against the wall of names of the disappeared. Using drumsticks and their hands, Cruz and another musician drum on the fragments and the wall of names, moving up and down the wall and performing a sort of bodily, musical testimony. Intercut into this lengthy scene (the drumming goes on for several minutes) are Cruz's testimony of the details of the torture he endured at Villa Grimaldi, as well as the testimony of several other friends of Cruz's who were also tortured here. Nelly Richard has written of official postdictatorial commemorations:

Tribunals, commissions, and monuments to human rights regularly quote memory (they mention her) but leave aside from their diligent wording all the wounded substance of remembrance: the psychic density, the magnitude of the experience, the emotional wake, the scarring of something unforgettable that resists being submissively molded into the perfunctory forms of judicial procedure or inscription on an institutional plaque.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Nelly Richard, *Cultural Residues: Chile in Transition*, translated by Alan West-Durán and Theodore Quester (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 18.

If this is true, as Richard argues, of the Peace Park at Villa Grimaldi, then Cruz's performative, bodily, musical testimony, together with the more conventional talking head testimonies that accompany it, certainly restores the "wounded substance" of affect to this site. Of the motive behind this impromptu performance, Cruz states in voiceover, "I was very angry because nothing was being said about the torture in Chile at that time." By the end of the film there is a new administration in Chile, and the president Michelle Bachelet (herself a survivor of Villa Grimaldi) makes the performance of Quique Cruz's musical suite at the Peace Park the occasion for her first return to the site since her own imprisonment. At the site, she announces her administration's intention to put an end to the amnesty instituted by Pinochet in 1978.⁴⁹

What unites the films considered above is a critical attention to the processes of memorialization, particularly in response to the question of how to mark the darkest spaces in the collective memory of Argentina and Chile's last dictatorships. These sites, which are bound by the impossible burden of making meaning for various constituencies, also stand in a fluctuating and often dependent relationship to the state. These documentaries, using a variety of different modes to approach these sites, share a concern to resist the fixity (or "false fixity") of these spaces and to deploy memory's markers heterogeneously in an encounter with a constantly unfolding present. Whether through *El mocito's* mis-situated testimony, *Renalda del Carmen, mi mama y yo's* imaginative encounter, Jonathan Perel's explosion of the conceptual boundaries

⁴⁹ See Larry Rohter, "Chile's Leader Attacks Amnesty Law," *New York Times* (December 24, 2006) http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/world/americas/24chile.html?_r=0.

constituting what fits *within* the site of the ESMA, *M*'s generational challenge to the tropes of memorialization, or *Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi*'s rewriting of affect into the space of Villa Grimaldi, each of these films suggests an answer to the (often justified) critique of monumentalization that sees in it, as Jens Andermann writes, "the culture of 'transition' and its desire for suture and reconciliation."⁵⁰ Recent documentaries from the Southern Cone thus suggest a place to turn for a politics that goes beyond the homogenizing drive to reconciliation. But what happens when filmmakers cast their eye toward spaces that are charged with individual memories? In my next chapter I will look at this parallel movement in recent documentary production, to inscribe memories of dictatorial violence into the spaces that are not officially memorialized.

⁵⁰ Jens Andermann, "Expanded Fields: Postdictatorship and Landscape," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 176. Andermann here mentions three critics in particular, Nelly Richard, Graciela Silvestri, and Hugo Achugar.

Chapter Three: Unofficial and Individual Memory Sites

In 1994, four years after the end of the Chilean dictatorship, Carmen Castillo made the film *La flaca Alejandra* (*Skinny Alejandra*, co-directed by Guy Girard). Carmen Castillo is the widow of Miguel Enríquez, the former general secretary of the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario/Left Wing Revolutionary Movement). On October 5, 1974, Enríquez was killed by members of the DINA, the Chilean secret police, after they surrounded his house and opened fire. Castillo, pregnant at the time, was in the house with Enríquez and wounded by gunfire but survived, and after being imprisoned for a month, fled into exile in France.¹ *La flaca Alejandra* relates some of Castillo's own story (which she would return to in more sustained fashion in 2007's *Calle Santa Fe*, discussed below), but is centered on the experience of Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega, nickname "la flaca Alejandra". Marcia Merino was one of the leaders of the MIR, but after being captured and tortured by the DINA, became a collaborator for the secret police, and helped them identify a number of left-wing militants, many of whom were later tortured and disappeared.² Castillo's documentary treats Merino with ambivalence, and enacts dialogues between her and survivors of torture who blame her for collaborating. At one point Castillo's voiceover asks "Can I forgive her without betraying all those who didn't crack?" But the film ultimately seems to come down on the side of representing her as a survivor more than a perpetrator.

¹ On Carmen Castillo, see also Carmen Castillo, *Un día de octubre en Santiago* (México D. F.: Ediciones Era, 1982). On Miguel Enríquez, see also the documentary *Miguel: La humanidad de un mito* (Victor Gómez L., Chile, 2005).

² On Marcia Merino, see also Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega, *Mi verdad: "Más allá del horror, yo acuso..."* (Santiago: A.T.G., 1993).

Merino was imprisoned at multiple secret detention centers, including Londres 38, José Domingo Cañas, and Villa Grimaldi. In the film, Castillo and Merino return to José Domingo Cañas, a building in the Nuñoa province of Santiago where they were both imprisoned, known by the DINA as cuartel Ollagüe.³ Castillo and Merino ride in a car that pulls up to the former torture site, and Castillo speaks in voiceover: “We are now in front of the José Domingo Cañas torture house. It’s deserted, an ordinary looking house, but in 1974 it was the world’s end, a place beyond the law.” The film cuts to Castillo and Merino, climbing over the tall gate that surrounds the property, and leaping down on the other side. They walk quickly toward the door, which Merino kicks open forcefully. Inside, she stands inside a small room, in which she was confined, blindfolded, often with as many as 25 or 30 other prisoners. She describes her surprise that the room is so small, and remembers it being larger, a discrepancy she ascribes to feeling psychologically smaller at the time of her imprisonment. Merino and Castillo then move to another building at the back of the property, where their entry is figured again as a form of trespass. They open a window, then clamber up into the building, which is revealed to have contained the torture room. Merino stands in the room and recounts the various forms of torture that she witnessed here. She was never tortured in this room, because she was collaborating during the time she was imprisoned there, but she also describes the psychological pressures and tricks she was subjected to, particularly by the DINA Captain Miguel Krassnoff Martchenko. (Krassnoff was also the officer who led the attack on Carmen Castillo and Miguel Enríquez’s house on Calle

³ The building’s name comes from the name of the street where it is located, at José Domingo Cañas 1367.

Santa Fe. In *La flaca Alejandra*, Castillo tries unsuccessfully on-camera to try to reach Krassnoff by phone several times.)

Castillo and Merino's decision to enter José Domingo Cañas, which was considered private property at the time of filming, is an important one, and the reiteration of two separate scenes that highlight their entry as a form of trespass raises the question of to whom sites such as this can "belong." Immediately before the scenes at José Domingo Cañas, Castillo goes to the memorial at Santiago's National Cemetery, which includes a large monument with the names of many of the disappeared. At the time of filming this was the only official memorial to the victims of the dictatorship, a fact that Castillo laments in voice-over. The Colectivo José Domingo Cañas, a collective dedicated to preserving José Domingo Cañas as a memory space, worked for years to try to gain public access to the site. In 2001, the building was purchased by Pablo Rochet, who owns a toy factory located adjacent to the site. Days before the site was to be officially named a National Monument, on December 27, 2001, Rochet demolished the buildings. In January 2002, the ground on which José Domingo Cañas had formerly stood was named a "Historic Site."⁴ Currently, the site has been converted into a memorial space, the Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367, with signs marking where various portions of the detention center once stood.

This chapter examines documentary films and videos that inhabit and represent unofficial memory spaces, and spaces of individual memory. I begin with the above example of trespass from *La flaca Alejandra* because it encapsulates the spirit of many

⁴ See the website for the Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas: <http://josedomingocanas.org/historia/recuperacion-del-sitio/> (Accessed March 5, 2014).

of the films and cultural acts I will be discussing in this chapter. Spaces of individual and collective memory in both Chile and Argentina have been bitterly contested since the years of the dictatorship, continuing to the present day. In fact, as I write this, Buenos Aires' Memory Park, widely celebrated upon its opening as a thoughtful and evocative public memorialization of the dictatorship, faces an uncertain future, with its employees having recently been informed that they would not receive any pay raise at the start of 2014. Given Argentina's rampant inflation, this effectively works as a pay decrease, and employees were also invited to quit their positions if they did not agree with the decision.⁵ The destruction of José Domingo Cañas before human rights groups and activists could secure its public use is typical of many of the ex-detention centers and other spaces charged with memory in Chile and Argentina: in Chile, witness the destruction of the mines at Lonquén, where the remains of 15 men were discovered during Pinochet's rule, or the destruction of buildings at Villa Grimaldi; in Argentina, the destruction of the ex-clandestine detention center Mansión Seré, among many others. In this respect, Castillo and Merino's trespass in *La flaca Alejandra* can be seen as all the more important, as it provides a rare, unauthorized filmic record of buildings that no longer exist.

In the chapter that follows I begin by considering the examples of political performance that have typified activism around the dictatorship in both Argentina and

⁵ See "Denuncian peligro de cierre de Parque de la Memoria de víctimas de dictadura argentina," *El Nuevo Herald* January 4, 2014, <http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2014/01/04/1649024/denuncian-peligro-de-cierre-de.html> (Accessed March 5, 2014); and Cara Levey and Francesca Lessa, "Landscapes of Memory: Argentina's Persistent Struggles over the Past," *Al Jazeera* January 10, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/landscapes-memory-argentina-persistent-struggles-over-past-2014197957935199.html> (Accessed March 5, 2014).

Chile, particularly for members of the younger generation, and which often carry a spatial focus. I look at documentary films that have adopted methods drawn from this performative model of activism. This takes me into a consideration of photography, and the use of the family photograph as a marker for collective memory. Finally, I examine various forms in which documentary films have approached and located sites of individual memory and suffering, and the ways in which this individual trauma then gets mapped onto the collective social body. This chapter continues and deepens the spatial focus of the previous chapter, and adds a consideration of how post-dictatorship documentary fits into a wider memorial and activist landscape and a field of representation which includes, along with the performances and photographs discussed here, literature, theatre, and the visual arts. Each of the examples considered in this chapter reveals a process of mediation in which subjects return to places haunted or charged with memory, and open them up toward a socialized meaning. Janet Walker writes of the Holocaust documentary of return:

by virtue of its necessarily spatial and temporal unfolding, and because it engages the bodies and imaginations of literal and armchair travelers, the documentary film and video of return has tremendous potential to stage very tangibly the pulsions and problems of the contested territories of the Holocaust and beyond.⁶

Documentary film, developing in an intertextual relationship with the other forms discussed in this chapter, provides a particularly fertile medium for both the reflection and creation of a spatial politics that turns the urban spaces of Buenos Aires and

⁶ Janet Walker, "Moving Testimonies: 'Unhomed geography' and the Holocaust Documentary of Return," in *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future*, eds. Jakob Lothe, and Susan Rubin Suleiman, and James Phelan (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 274.

Santiago, as well as other cities in Argentina and Chile, into a palimpsest of past and present suffering, memory, and action.

Escrache and Funa

Children of the disappeared in Argentina have mobilized their own political awareness and activism through the group H.I.J.O.S., or “Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia Contra el Olvido y el Silencio” (Children for Identity and Justice and Against Forgetting and Silence). H.I.J.O.S. had its origin in a memorial project at the School of Architecture at the National University in La Plata. As a center of political activism, the Architecture School had been particularly hard hit by state violence, and in 1994, alumni of the school organized a sculpture contest to remember those students who had disappeared or been killed during the military dictatorship. For the event at which the winner would be announced, they sought out as many of the children of their disappeared classmates as they could find, and 27 children gathered in La Plata for the unveiling of the winning project. This was the first time that many of the children had gathered together, and they decided to organize a larger gathering the following year, in the mountains outside Córdoba.⁷ From the beginning, one of the founding missions of H.I.J.O.S. has been oriented toward achieving justice, and condemning those responsible for the death of their parents, whether through legal or other means. H.I.J.O.S. describes this part of their mission as follows:

⁷ On the early history of H.I.J.O.S., see Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 178-186, and the website for H.I.J.O.S., http://www.hijos-capital.org.ar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19&Itemid=400 (Accessed March 6, 2014).

We work to achieve, through social condemnation, a legal condemnation and sentence (*condena*) that imprisons the assassins responsible for genocide: because we are not in agreement with the laws and the decree that left the responsible ones free, because a country can never be at peace until it punishes the guilty and shows that to disappear, kill, and torture people are the worst crimes that can be committed, because we do not want assassins to be treated as ordinary people.⁸

In recent years this activity has turned toward the trials of military members and others responsible for or complicit in state violence, but at the time of the group's founding legal trials were not possible, due to the Due Obedience and Punto Final (“Final Stop”) laws passed by President Raúl Alfonsín in 1984 and 1986, and the 1990 presidential pardon of convicted military leaders granted by Carlos Menem.⁹ Instead, H.I.J.O.S. invented their own form of condemnation, the *escrache* (a term without a direct translation, but that could be roughly translated as “outing” or “public shaming”). *Escraches* reject the ease with which many former torturers and repressors had been able to slip into anonymity in the postdictatorship. H.I.J.O.S. would locate these agents of state violence and organize a large gathering, usually of several hundred people, “outing” them in the neighborhoods in which they lived or worked. These gatherings are performative, theatrical, and festive, and include songs, chanting, drums, and flutes. *Escraches* function to provide some measure of justice where the legal system has failed: the slogan commonly appearing on banners reads “Si no hay justicia, hay escrache.” (“If

⁸ http://www.hijos-capital.org.ar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19&Itemid=400 (Accessed March 6, 2014).

⁹ Due Obedience allowed lower-ranking members of the military to claim defense on the grounds that they were merely “following orders,” while Punto Final stated that all trials of crimes related to the dictatorship must be completed by February 23, 1987. Feitlowitz, 14. Menem’s pardon also included several prominent left-wing militants who were incarcerated at the time.

there is no justice, there is *escrache*.”) The film *H.I.J.O.S. El alma en dos* (*H.I.J.O.S. Soul Split in Two*, dir. Carmen Guarini and Marcelo Céspedes, Argentina/France, 2002) shows the preparations for an *escrache* of Basilio Benito Pertiné, a former military officer and brother-in-law of Fernando de la Rúa, president of Argentina during 2000 and 2001. Pertiné was one of the regular pilots of the death flights, on which still-living prisoners were drugged, stripped of clothing, then pushed, still alive, out of an airplane to fall into the ocean or the Rio de la Plata. The film shows members of H.I.J.O.S. meeting in preparation for the *escrache*, coming up with words that rhyme with “Pertiné” to compose a song, and walking through the neighborhood near where Pertiné lives at night, putting up flyers that describe Pertiné’s crimes, and include his address. *Escraches* mark the neighborhood, and space around the sites where repressors live and work, outing them in front of their colleagues and neighbors, and sometimes resulting in the targets losing their jobs or being forced to shut down private practices. *Escraches* were undertaken together with Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC, Street Art Group), a political artists’ collective which would create signs mimicking traffic signs, but bearing messages condemning the target of the *escrache* (“300 Meters: Agent of Genocide”, “Trial and Punishment,” etc.). GAC would also use road signs to mark the location of former Clandestine Detention Centers (ex-CCDs), or to create maps that locate perpetrators and sites throughout the city. As they describe their function, “After the *escrache* is gone, the sign stays in the place to be discovered by the neighbor or the pedestrian.”¹⁰ *Escraches*, and the signs created by GAC that accompany them, have both

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https://ia601806.us.archive.org/13/items/GACSomeProjectsEnglish/GAC_SomeProjects

a performative and a spatial function, as Diana Taylor points out. Taylor writes of GAC's tactics that they "provide an alternative map of Argentina's sociohistorical space: a 'You are Here' sign placed five hundred meters from a concentration camp. Their performance ... reminds fellow citizens that there are different forms of being there—that is, of being caught up in criminal politics."¹¹ Ubiquitous at *escraches*, Grupo Arte Callejero's "street signs" have also been enshrined in official memorialization in recent years. At the Memory Park in Buenos Aires, GAC has installed "Carteles de la Memoria" ("Memory Signs"), a series of 53 road signs arrayed in a row along the walkway that runs on the outside edge of the park, along the coast of the Rio de la Plata. Each sign graphically represents some aspect of the dictatorship, including such spatial markings as a road sign showing the distance in kilometers to several notorious ex-CCDs (Figure 1), and a map of Greater Buenos Aires, showing the location of sites of repression (Figure 2).

[english.pdf](#) (Accessed March 12, 2014).

¹¹ Diana Taylor, "DNA of Performance: Political Hauntology," in *Cultural Agency in the Americas*, ed. Doris Sommer (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 71.

Figure 1: A Grupo Arte Callejero sign marks the distance from the Memory Park to three of the most notorious former detention centers. (Author's Photo)



Figure 2. “Genocide Perpetrators Live Here” - Another GAC sign, mapping the location of former Clandestine Centers of Detention in Greater Buenos Aires (Author's Photo)



A few years after Argentina's *escraches* began, children of the disappeared in Chile began their own outings of former torturers and murderers, called *funas*. Chile had their own version of H.I.J.O.S., called Acción Verdad y Justicia Hijos-Chile (Action for Truth and Justice by Chilean Children). The Chilean Hijos group were influenced by the *escraches* of their Argentinean counterparts, but also by the October 1998 arrest of Pinochet in London, which gave "a sense that 'the word justice was not abstract.'"¹² Hijos began conducting *funas* in 1999, and like the *escraches*, the *funas* were celebratory despite the painful events for which they were denouncing the perpetrators. "The joy of cathartic release was tied up with the value of a cleansing openness, in a society where too much secrecy still prevailed."¹³ Catharsis, a challenge to secrecy and impunity, and a spatial mapping of the sites which contain memories of violence, as well as the sites that hide former perpetrators: these are the legacies of *escraches* and *funas*, as well as the work of groups like Grupo Arte Callejero. The confrontational mode of the outing, *escrache*, or *funa* is also present in postdictatorship documentary, although not only in films made by the generation of children of the disappeared.

Héctor Salgado and Marianne Teleki's film *Special Circumstances* (US/Chile, 2006) adopts this confrontational mode as it follows Salgado upon his return to Chile to confront those responsible for the death of his friends and for his own imprisonment and torture. Salgado is from Tomé, a coastal city in Chile not far from Concepción. He was

¹² Steve J. Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 232. Stern is quoting here from an interview he conducted with Patricia Lobos, a member of Hijos.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 234.

16 years old at the time of the military coup, and he and his friends heard about the location where a member of Patria y Libertad, the right wing paramilitary group, had hidden some dynamite. They stole the dynamite and gave it to a member of a left wing guerilla group. Salgado and his friends were later captured, jailed, and tortured, and while Salgado and several of the others were eventually released, one of his friends, Fernando Moscoso, was killed by a firing squad. Another young man, Irán Calzadilla, whom Salgado met in prison, was also executed at the same time. Salgado went into exile to the United States, and settled in Berkeley, California, where he lives now. The film opens with him performing at the La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley with the band Grupo Raíz, a band comprised of Chilean exiles that formed in the early 1980s, and which also includes Quique Cruz, the director of *Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi* (discussed in Chapter Two). He describes the inspiration for the film, which sets out to find and confront those who were responsible for his imprisonment and torture and his friends' deaths in Tomé, coming from seeing the arrest of Pinochet and realizing the possibilities that might exist for trying former military members and accomplices. He attends a talk given at UC Berkeley by Judge Juan Guzmán, the Spanish judge who brought charges against Pinochet after his return from London, and shows Guzmán a stack of documents that he has compiled on those who were responsible for the death of his friends.¹⁴ The film follows Salgado as he returns to Chile, and attempts to track down, film, and confront each of the officers or other public figures who bear responsibility in his case and the case of his friends.

¹⁴ Judge Guzmán is himself the subject of another documentary, *The Judge and the General* (Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco Leverton, US/Chile, 2008).

Salgado's dogged approach to these confrontations mirrors the confrontational approach of *funas* and *escraches*, but goes to greater lengths to achieve in-person interactions. He travels to Valparaiso, Santiago, and Tomé to track down his subjects, and, similar to Claude Lanzmann in *Shoah* filming former Nazis with a hidden camera, Salgado is unafraid to use various forms of subterfuge and deceit. He waits outside people's houses, follows them down the street, gains access to locked buildings by buzzing neighbors and telling them he has forgotten his keys, and wears a hidden necktie camera. When he is having difficulty finding Mario Duvauchelle, who was in charge of the tribunal that sentenced his friends to death, he uses Duvauchelle's identification number and address to find out where he is scheduled to vote. On election day, he stakes out the polling place, and waits for Duvauchelle to arrive. When he spots Duvauchelle, he allows him to vote before confronting him, pointing out that this is a measure of respect greater than any he or his friends received.

While the mood at *funas* and *escraches* is cathartic and celebratory even in the midst of denunciation, Salgado's tone in *Special Circumstances* is more somber. Halfway through the film, Salgado stands before the camera and describes a promise he made to Fernando Moscoso before Moscoso's death, that one day he would tell Moscoso's story, and that he would find those who were responsible for it, and expose them.

Given all that Salgado has riding on each of these encounters, they are inevitably anticlimactic when they occur. Most of the men whom Salgado confronts refuse to talk or promise future conversations that will never occur (as is the case with Duvauchelle). Others do speak with Salgado, but deny any responsibility, as with the Retired Navy

Lieutenant Jorge Behnke-Franck, who is interviewed in his office, where he sits beneath a portrait of Pinochet. At the end of the interview he asks the filmmakers to take a shot of him standing “next to my general.” After several aborted encounters, Salgado says, “If these guys are not going to talk to me, then at least I am going to have their faces on camera, so everyone can see them.” As in the *escraches* and *funas* of postmemory activists of H.I.J.O.S. and Hijos-Chile, Teleki and Salgado’s film makes manifest an urban space that hides murderers and repressors in plain sight. The filmmakers make a practice of charging through locked gates and front doors, and flouting conventions of privacy in order to reveal these faces. Salgado dresses in a suit each time he sets out to confront those who worked within or collaborated with the dictatorship, taking on an official appearance as he sets out to subvert the evasions, historical amnesia, and impunity that constitute official memory.

Photographing the Disappeared

Argentine photographer Gustavo Germano’s exhibition “Ausencias” (“Absences”) takes as its starting point the family photos of family members who disappeared during the years of the Argentinean dictatorship.¹⁵ The text accompanying the exhibition quotes John Berger: “The true content of a photograph is invisible, for it

¹⁵ I first saw a partial version of this exhibition on display at the Memory Museum in Santiago, Chile in October 2012, exhibited together with Germano’s later project “Distancias” (“Distances”) centered on the Spanish Civil War. For “Ausencias,” see the exhibition catalogue, Gustavo Germano, *Ausencias* (Barcelona: Casa Amèrica Catalunya, 2007), or Germano’s website, <http://www.gustavogermano.com/#ausencias> (Accessed April 21, 2014).

derives from a play, not with form, but with time.”¹⁶ In this case, Germano marks this invisibility photographically by returning to the original site of the family photograph, together with surviving family members and friends, and recreating the original photograph 30 years later. He then exhibits the two photos side-by-side, drawing our attention to the person or people who are missing in the second photograph, and making this absence visible. The family photos, exhibited on the left hand side of each pair of photographs, are typical of home photos, capturing what appear to be happy moments or posed family gatherings, and are unremarkable in this way. Germano’s photographs, exhibited to the right of each family photo, are very different in feel, a difference that is marked by all their graphical similarities. The setting of the photographs is the same in many of the cases, and bears a visual similarity in the rest. The framing and composition of the frame are mimicked in the newer photographs, and many of the subjects arrange their posture and hands to match that of the original photograph. Nonetheless, the faces are invariably somber in the newer photographs, no matter what expressions they displayed in the earlier photograph, and many confront the camera with their gaze in the newer photographs as well.

Omar Dario Amestoy was assassinated on November 19, 1976 at the age of 31, by members of the Army and State and City Police in Buenos Aires. His wife, Maria del Carmen Fettolini, age 29, and two children, Maria Eugenia Amestoy and Fernando Amestoy, ages 5 and 3, were also killed during the same incident, known as the “Massacre of Juan B. Justo Street.” The children were suffocated by tear gas after a

¹⁶ John Berger, “Understanding a Photograph,” in *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer (New York: Pantheon, 2001), 217.

canister was thrown through the skylight into the bathroom where they were hiding. A family photograph from Spring 1975 captures Omar with his brother, Mario Alfredo Amestoy, running down a hill in the countryside, where they had gone on a family outing to fish and barbecue. Omar is on the left, slightly ahead of Mario, as they sprint through the grass, arms outstretched. In Germano's photograph, taken in 2006, Mario is alone, his older body running down a hill that looks similar, including the presence of a wire fence in the background. The positioning of his legs, and the fact that he is slightly closer to the bottom of the frame, give the appearance that in the intervening 30 years between the two photographs, Mario has taken just one step further down the hill. But of course, this situated reenactment can only draw attention to the absence at its heart, the space in the middle of the frame where his brother should be.

Another of the pairs of photographs begins with an image captured in 1974, at the family dining table, of Clara Atelman de Fink, and her son Claudio Marcelo Fink, then 21 years old. The photo was taken by Claudio's father, Efraín, an amateur photography enthusiast. About two years after the photo was taken, in August 1976, armed paramilitaries showed up at the front door, and kidnapped Claudio, who remains disappeared. The photo shows mother and son listening to the radio, Claudio sitting in a chair, and his mother Clara standing at his side, looking down at him and smiling. In Germano's 2006 photograph, Clara again stands at the kitchen table, now bare except for the same shell-shaped glass dish seen in the original photograph. Instead of looking down, Clara looks directly at the camera with a weary gaze. Her left arm, at her side in the first photo, now is wrapped around and resting on the empty chair, where Claudio sat in the original photograph.

Gustavo Germano's own brother, Eduardo Germano, was kidnapped by the Army and disappeared on December 18, 1976, and one of the pairs of photographs in *Absences* has autobiographical content. Unlike the other photographs described above (and the rest of the photographs in the exhibit), the photograph of the Germano brothers is taken in front of a bare, nondescript white background, with the brothers (Gustavo, Guillermo, Diego, and Eduardo) lined up left to right in order of youngest to oldest. The photo was taken in Argentina close to the border with Uruguay, during a family vacation in 1969. Needing identification photos of the children to enter Uruguay, their father took the family to a photography studio, and decided to shoot all the photos in one shot. Staple holes from where the Argentine police stapled documents to the photo are visible along the edges, as is a portion of a passport stamp. Germano writes that "Today it is one of the few photographs kept by the family of the four brothers together."¹⁷ In the 2006 photo of the brothers, Gustavo Germano posed himself and his two brothers against another white wall. The preservation of the same framing dimensions means that the adult bodies swell to almost fill the frame once containing four children. A sliver of white space to the right of Diego Germano marks the space where the disappeared brother would be.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes describes meeting with a group of friends who are discussing childhood memories, and finding that, although he has just been poring over photographs of his own childhood, he has no memories to share. "Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory..., but it actually blocks memory, quickly

¹⁷ Germano, 78.

becomes a counter-memory.”¹⁸ As a result, Barthes writes, “the photograph is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion *it fills the sight by force*, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed.”¹⁹ Here, Barthes is leading up to photography’s oft-remarked relationship to death, as famously suggested by André Bazin in his placement of photography in a tradition of plastic arts that are linked with the arts of embalming the dead.²⁰ Where does this oft-remarked finality of photography stand in relation to the violence of disappearance, which leaves behind no material remains, and postpones closure indefinitely?

In the case of disappearance, the photographs kept by family members of the disappeared served a number of important functions, like the use of ID card photos or family photos by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, evidence of the existence of their loved ones burnished as they marched in front of the Casa Rosada, and material counter to Jorge Rafael Videla’s famous sneer about the disappeared “The disappeared are just that: disappeared. They are neither alive nor dead. They are disappeared.”²¹ As Ludmila da Silva Catela writes, “The images carried on the body, more than a representation of absence..., function as catalysts of presence, and of the memory of the dead or disappeared.”²² In *La ciudad de los fotógrafos* (Sebastián Moreno, 2006, discussed

¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981 [1980]), 91.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” in *What is Cinema? Volume I*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 9-16.

²¹ This remark was made in 1979, in response to a question asked about the disappeared by a journalist. Footage of this statement is used in many Argentine documentaries, including (*h*) *historias cotidianas*, the film I discuss below.

²² Ludmila da Silva Catela, “Lo invisible revelado. El uso de fotografías como (re) presentación de la desaparición de personas en la Argentina,” in *El pasado que miramos:*

below), Ana González, whose husband, two sons, and daughter-in-law were disappeared in Chile says “Not to have a photo of your family, is like not having played a part in the history of mankind.” In the case of children of the disappeared, a few family photographs were often all the children had of their parents, particularly in cases where the children were too young to remember their parents. In the photographs described above, together with the others that make up “Ausencias,” Gustavo Germano finds a way to make visible the absence characteristic of disappearance. The sight of aged bodies, posed in the same location, in the same position and framing, not only highlights what is missing in the newer photograph, but invites us to imagine what could have been, the body that should be filling the empty space left for it.

The attention that Germano pays to the setting of the family photographs can also be seen in a documentary made about children of the disappeared in Argentina, Andrés Habegger’s film (*h*) *historias cotidianas* (2001). Habegger’s own father, Norberto Habegger, was disappeared during the dictatorship, but the film is not autobiographical. The film is primarily constructed from six lengthy interviews with children of the disappeared, three women and three men: Úrsula Méndez, Cristian Czainik, Victoria Ginzberg, Florencia Gemetro, Martín Mórtola Oesterheld, and Claudio Novoa. Novoa is one of the stolen children later identified by the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, and his original name was Manuel Gonçalves Granada. His mother was killed in the Massacre of Juan B. Justo Street (mentioned above), and he survived and was kept in a hospital for

Memoria e imagen ante la historia reciente, eds. Claudia Feld y Jessica Stites Mor (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2009), 352.

several weeks, unbeknownst to his grandmother and other family members, before being adopted.

Habegger crosscuts between interviews and other footage of his six subjects, structuring the film thematically to address many of the different common aspects of their experiences as they came to know more about their parents and what had happened to them. Running throughout the film are scenes in which the film's six subjects each look through family photographs, and the film is punctuated by attempts by several of them to locate the site at which a photograph of their disappeared parent(s) or another family photograph was taken. Short snippets of footage of one of the film's subjects, Victoria Ginzberg, are used throughout the film to mark the transition between the four titled sections of the film, all of which begin with the titular letter "h" ["Huellas" (Traces), "Hijos" (Children), "Historia" (History), and "Hoy" (Today)]. Both Ginzberg's father and mother, Mario Ginzberg and Irene Bruchstein were disappeared in 1977. Ginzberg has become a reporter for the left-leaning newspaper *Pagina 12*, where she writes about a number of topics, including the disappearances and state terror of the last dictatorship. (At one point in the film we see Florencia Gemetrio, a member of H.I.J.O.S., participating in an *escrache*, and the camera also shows Ginzberg present at the event in her capacity as a reporter.) The repeated scenes of Ginzberg show her wandering through a park in Buenos Aires, holding a photograph, and looking for the particular trees and other landmarks that will reveal where the photo was taken. At the end of the film, after returning to this scene repeatedly, Ginzberg finds the exact spot where one of the photos was taken. "It was taken from here," she says, and for the first time we see a detailed view of the photo she is holding. In it, she and her sister hold

hands with their parents, standing on a pathway, in front of two large trees. The image holds for a few seconds, then dissolves to a shot of the same location taken by Habegger's camera. The people are absent from the foreground, and a few small trees, planted since the first photograph was taken, partially obscure our view of the larger trees.

Earlier in the film, the camera follows Cristian Czainik as he walks through his old neighborhood to find the school that he and his brother attended. He holds up a photo of the two children standing in front of the school, and standing across the street from the spot where the photo might have been taken, he identifies the window beneath which he and his brother stood. As in the scene with Ginzberg, a close-up of the photo fills the screen, then cuts to a shot of Czainik, now crossing the street to stand next to the wall of the school looking back across the street, as he was in the photo. He describes this as being the point from which he last saw his father, who was kidnapped and disappeared after he dropped the two boys off at school. Here, whereas the photograph does not contain an image of the disappeared parent, it takes on particular importance because it is a photo taken of the two brothers at the site from which they last saw their father, looking in the same direction as they did that day.

These two recreated photographs, like those in "Ausencias", are completely quotidian images, taken on days that have no special importance but for the presence of the camera, and the preservation of the photo. But the photograph's status as being among the few images that remain prompts a desire to return to the site, to mark this space, and remember or imagine it as a space that was once shared with a parent that has been absent from the child's life. Each of the subjects in (*h*) *historias cotidianas*

describes the need to fashion their own identity both in relation to, and separate from the specter of their disappeared parent(s). But the photographic image, its localized recreation, and its mobilization within the documentary each play an important role in the opening out of individual to collective memory.

The last film I will discuss in this context contains similar scenes in which photographs are held up before the motion picture camera at the site of their original exposure, but the photographs are of a very different nature, photographs that belonged to the public rather than the private sphere. Sebastián Moreno's film *La ciudad de los fotógrafos* ("The City of the Photographers") tells the story of a group of Chilean photographers who were all members of the AFI (La Asociación de Fotógrafos Independientes/Association of Independent Photographers). The film documents the work of these photographers in the late 1970s and 1980s, during the latter half of the Pinochet dictatorship, as they documented the work of activists and family members of the disappeared who increasingly turned the streets of Santiago into a contested space, protesting the violence of the dictatorship, and facing that violence themselves at the hands of police tasked with suppressing the protests. Sebastián Moreno's father, José Moreno, was himself a photographer and member of the AFI, and is one of the film's subjects.

The film painstakingly intercuts video footage and photographs of numerous important events in the struggle against the dictatorship, with the photographers commenting throughout on their perception and memories of their own role documenting these events. But here I want to focus briefly on several moments that are similar to those in the film and photographs discussed above. The film's account of the

resistance to the dictatorship begins with the 1978 discovery of bodies of the disappeared at the mines in Lonquén. The photographer Luis Navarro, who took one of the most iconic images of Lonquén, which was a watershed for public awareness of the crimes of the dictatorship, stands near the site of the mines, which were destroyed by the government not long after the discovery of the bodies. Navarro climbs a hill, looks through the viewfinder of his camera, and identifies the site from which the photo must have been taken. We see a long shot of the rubble at the former site of the mines, then Navarro raises a large print of the original photograph in front of the camera until it fills the frame. Immediately following this shot, the camera cuts to a shot of the Plaza de Armas in downtown Santiago, and Moreno asks in voiceover: “Where is the city photographed by my father? What are the things that he saw in it, and that no longer exist? What has disappeared?”

Here, the project of recreating the framing of iconic photographs at the same site is part of an attempt to find, or to manifest the traces of the past in the present. Later in the film, photographer Alvaro Hoppe stands in the middle of a street, holding up a photo that he took at the same site during the funeral of André Jarlan, a Catholic priest who was killed by the police during a protest in 1984. The film intercuts video footage from the funeral march, and the sounds of the march are played over the shots of the empty street in the present. In the film’s closing credit sequence, the photographers wear, on placards hanging over the front and back of their bodies, some of their most iconic photographs. Bearing these photographs, they walk through downtown, and stand in the Plaza de Armas, and the film captures curious onlookers who examine the photographs.

The work of photography and two documentaries described in this section, two of which are made by family members of the disappeared, and one of which is made by the child of an activist photographer, each share an impulse to return to the site at which photographs were taken. Katrien de Hauwere writes of the use of photography in Argentine documentaries by the children of the disappeared that: “The photos serve as a mirror before which the children of the disappeared see themselves, critique their parents for the choices they made, become closer to them, but also distance themselves so that they are able to take another path.”²³ In the works discussed above we see the ways in which this mirror is turned outward from individual memory to collective memorialization through a spatial mobilization that locates the past in the spaces of the present.

The House on Calle Santa Fe

I return now to Carmen Castillo, with whom I began this chapter, and her film *Calle Santa Fe* (2007). Castillo’s sprawling two hour and forty minute film is autobiographical, but consistently knits together the individual and the collective in order to construct a text that is at once personal autobiography, autobiography of a movement, and of a nation. The film’s focal point, to which it returns again and again, is the blue house on Calle Santa Fe in Santiago, where Castillo lived clandestinely for ten months in 1974 with Miguel Enríquez, the leader of the MIR, and one of the most famous and visible figures of the militant Chilean left, and their two daughters. As

²³ Katrien De Hauwere, “Fotografía y memoria en el documental subjetivo de la segunda generación,” *Cine Documental*, número 5 http://revista.cinedocumental.com.ar/5/articulos_02.html (Accessed May 13, 2014).

related at the beginning of this chapter, on October 5, 1974, the house was surrounded by agents of the DINA, Enríquez was killed, and Castillo, pregnant at the time, was wounded, and lay unconscious on the sidewalk until a neighbor called an ambulance. After being held for a month, outcry forced the dictatorship to release her into exile, and she was put on a flight to France. In Paris, she gave birth to the child, but lost it shortly after birth, as a result of injuries suffered during the encounter with the DINA.

In the opening minutes of the film, the camera tracks toward the house on Calle Santa Fe, as Castillo states in voiceover: “Yes, everything began on that street, the separation from my country, the family torn apart, the wandering. . . . Does all this mean anything to anyone besides me?” Throughout the film that follows, Castillo stages and returns again and again to her memories of the ten months she spent in this house, ten months in which “I experienced all one could ask for during an entire lifetime,” as well as the years of exile, mourning, and activism that followed. But she also constantly submits these memories and her actions to self-scrutiny, and positions her own experience in relationship to that of those who stayed in Chile, or returned clandestinely, as well as the younger generations who were continuing to uphold the legacy of the MIR’s activism in their own way. Lisa Renee DiGiovanni writes that *Calle Santa Fe* performs “the filmmaker’s state of mind, which lingers between nostalgic memories of resistance and ambivalent views concerning women’s political protagonism, motherhood and return. Castillo deals with such contentious issues by exploring, rather than

obscuring, the emotional charge of one's personal experience."²⁴ Castillo's question ("Does all this mean anything to anyone besides me?") is answered affirmatively, but not without qualifications, and the film's constant scalar shifts from the personal to the collective, and its testing of individual experience in that of others, looks for points of common resistance in a fragmented left. Patricia Espinosa writes:

In *Calle Santa Fe* the leaps and breaks erase the boundaries between the individual and the collective, between the past and the present, imposed roles and personal options, such that Castillo detects resonances, shimmering and constant, that aim at twisting the success-obsessed discourse of the democratic governments.²⁵

Yet, even as the film leaps and moves in space and time, it nonetheless persistently returns to the house on Calle Santa Fe.

The house, which had been purchased by Enriquez and Castillo, was retaken by its previous owner after Castillo left the country, and then resold. Because the film crew lack access to the house, it is approached obliquely during the first hour of the film, as Castillo meets with various neighbors, who invite her in, and share their own memories of Castillo, Enríquez, and their two girls. Other neighbors help Castillo to reconstruct the events of October 5, 1974. One woman lets Castillo into her yard, and shows her the spot where Enríquez's body lay on the ground after being shot. She was a child at the time, and while she says she does not remember Castillo, she recalls climbing the wall in her backyard to play with Castillo and Enríquez's daughters. Later in the film, Castillo is

24 Lisa Renee DiGiovanni, "Memories of Motherhood and Militancy in Chile: Gender and Nostalgia in *Calle Santa Fe* by Carmen Castillo," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 18-19.

25 Patricia Espinosa H., "El documental político realizado por mujeres," in *Cine de mujeres en postdictadura*, ed. Mónica Ríos, Patricia Espinosa, and Luis Valenzuela (Santiago: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2010), 76.

talking with two other neighbors, and tells them that she has a memory of being dragged, wounded, out to the street corner, and laying on the sidewalk until an ambulance arrived. She says she has always wondered who called the ambulance, and the neighbor tells her that it was a man named Manuel Díaz. She eventually meets this man, who embraces her upon approaching, and says “I’m glad to have helped you. I had no idea who you were, but you were a neighbor.”

These encounters also sit alongside less amenable ones, and some of the neighbors remember Castillo and Enríquez as being outsiders in the neighborhood. The owners of a small market on the corner remember Castillo and Enríquez standing out because they were the only ones in the neighborhood who smoked Viceroy cigarettes. “We tried to be clandestine,” says Castillo, “but we did the strangest things.” Enríquez and Castillo had bought the blue house in the 1970s using the MIR’s money, but after Castillo left the country, the woman they bought it from reclaimed it and later sold it to another man, who is hostile toward the crew and the members of the MIR who he says return to the house year after year. The film follows Castillo, her daughter, and granddaughter as they enter the house together and wander through the rooms and the back patio. As they are standing on the patio trying to place their memories in the site, the house’s owner appears onscreen and brusquely hurries them along. Castillo says, “We can’t leave this house like this. We have to recover it.” This becomes an obsessive project for Castillo over the rest of the film, and she later shows up at the house with a group of former comrades, and they canvass the neighborhood, passing out leaflets describing their plan to buy the house and convert it into a memorial space. As Castillo

describes it, the site would exist “not to build a temple to the past, but to create a gathering place for all those who refuse to give up.”

But, later in the film, when Castillo meets with Abner Vega, a younger activist, he questions the usefulness of a memorial at the house on Calle Santa Fe. Castillo tells Vega that she would like to recover the house, and keep it empty, as a space to resurrect the memory of the defeated left in Chile. Vega acknowledges Castillo’s intentions as worthy, but wonders about the usefulness of another memorial, particularly to the activists of his generation: “to young people, the idea of having a house isn’t all that exciting to us. ... Basically because we think the best homage to Miguel and other comrades is done in our daily lives, trying to do what they did. We must ask, ‘What would they do if they were here today, in our historical context?’” Vega also states that some younger activists have grown fatigued with the regular memorializations of the disappeared that happen on anniversary dates, and frustrated that activists from previous generations often impose their way of doing things onto the younger generation. Castillo responds, seemingly coming around to Vega’s point of view: “Our life isn’t about building memorials, making memory a static, nostalgic thing.”

Despite being an autobiographical film of return and loss, and going back again and again to the house on Calle Santa Fe, Castillo’s film also makes a marked effort to include the voices of younger activists, like Vega. Among those of the younger generation featured in the film is Macarena Aguiló, who is seen shooting and editing footage for her film *El edificio de los chilenos* (*The Chilean Building*, 2010, discussed in Chapter One). Aguiló describes Proyecto Hogares and her film about it, and Castillo also

interviews Aguiló's mother, Margarita Marchi, who talks about the pain involved in leaving her daughter to return clandestinely to Chile.

In a 2010 interview, Castillo describes the process of filmmaking as one which is resistant to the nostalgia of exile, and which allows her to connect the activism of the MIR with current social movements.

From my position as a mirista militant today, and I still consider myself one, I'm not nostalgic for what the world was before the '80s, before the Berlin Wall came down: I'm with those who are thinking and acting today, those who are trying to figure out what is still valid in what we used to think. I can't engage in politics in France or Chile today with the Leninist mental schema of the '70s. I have to study what's happening today with workers, culture, the media, with what Foucault called "the government of the self", that kind of government we give ourselves as individuals, as social subjects and as a state.²⁶

Castillo's encounters with younger activists, as well as with those members of the MIR who remained in Chile, and continued to live lives as social activists after the return to democracy and the disbanding of the MIR, seem to change her mind about the plan of turning the house on Calle Santa Fe into a memorial. Sitting with Aguiló, she says that she recognizes that the idea of a memorial space was out of tune with the younger generation, but that she still feels she needs to mark the space in some way. In October 2005, and near the end of the film, Castillo returns once more to the house with a group of fellow former members of the MIR, many of whom we have seen earlier in the film. They install a tiled rectangle of several plaques in the sidewalk in front of the house, commemorating the site where Miguel Enríquez was killed. While Castillo acknowledges that her own dreams for the space were perhaps out of touch with the

26 Michael J. Lazzara, "Militancy Then and Now: A Conversation with Carmen Castillo," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 7.

current realities and needs of the activist left in Chile, she wants, in this act of memorialization, and in the film as a whole, to honor the dead, and connect their memory with continuing efforts for social justice in the present.

Chapter Four: Exhibition Site as Memorial Space

In the previous two chapters I have considered how documentaries have represented spaces of official and unofficial memory, individual and collective suffering. Now, I turn to the examination of postdictatorship documentaries' inhabitation of space in the act of screening. If documentaries can re-imagine the spaces they film, what is their relationship to the spaces in which they screen, are viewed, and travel through? In conceiving of the space of exhibition as a memorial site, I will examine documentaries that film the space and event of screenings in a context of memory and conceptions of the exhibition space as a site of encounter—with others, with history, and with memory.

Encounters with Politics and Memory

In Chapter One, I began my discussion of politics with a discussion of several of the key figures of the New Latin American Cinema, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in Argentina, and Patricio Guzmán in Chile. Here, I return to these same filmmakers, for their emphasis on the space of exhibition as a site of political mobilization and *concientización*¹ (in Solanas and Getino) and of the eruption of memory into the present (in Guzmán).

¹ On *concientización* (or consciousness-raising) in the context of Latin American documentary see Michael Chanan, "Rediscovering Documentary: Cultural Context and Intentionality," in *New Latin American Cinema, Vol. One: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 210. Chanan traces the genealogy of this term through the writings of Paulo Freire and the testimonial documentary filmmaking practice of Eduardo Maldonado and Grupo Cine Testimonio in Mexico, and Fernando Birri in Argentina. On the incorporation of footage from Birri's film *Tire Dié* into Solanas and Getino's *The Hour of the Furnaces*, see Chapter One.

In Chapter One I discussed Solanas and Getino's film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968), made together with the collective Grup Cine Liberación, and Robert Stam's discussion of what he called the film's openness, its radical form which included an attempt to radicalize the viewers, and to include space for the viewer's response and discussion within the film's screening.²

This openness commits itself to a rejection of spectacle, or any notion of the passive spectator. "In their theoretical works, Cine Liberación developed several concepts, one of the most important of which is the *film-act*, which is based in the notion that the film is an excuse for action."³ At the beginning of part two of the film, "Act for Liberation", Solanas and Getino assemble a montage of images of imperialist war and anti-imperialist struggle in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, edited together with dynamic titles exhorting a tri-continental revolutionary movement. This opening is consistent with the form of part one of the film, "Neo-colonialism and Violence," which is the most famous and most-screened section of the film (and, in recent years, often the only portion of the film shown at screenings or in classrooms). But following this opening montage the screen goes blank, and we only hear the voice of the narrator for several minutes:

Compañeros, this is not just the screening of a film, neither is it a spectacle. It is, above all, an act. An act for Argentine and Latin American liberation. An act of anti-imperialist unity. ... The film is the

² Robert Stam, "The Two Avant-gardes: Solanas and Getino's *The Hour of the Furnaces*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, eds. Barry Keith Grant and Jeannette Sloniowski (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 256.

³ Maximiliano Ignacio de la Puente and Pablo Mariano Russo, "La exhibición como instancia de reflexión y construcción de las memorias de las luchas de los movimientos sociales," in *Cine documental, memoria y derechos humanos*, eds. Javier Campo and Christian Dorado (Buenos Aires: Nuestra América, 2007), 72. Original emphasis.

pretext for dialogue, for searching, for finding volunteers. It is an open report that we put forward for your consideration, to debate it after the screening. It is important above all to create this united space, this dialogue of liberation. ... To end, we hand over to our *compañero*, the narrator, who from the screening hall will bring up to date the present circumstances, and the nature of this act.

An intertitle of a lengthy Frantz Fanon quotation follows, concluding “all spectators are either cowards or traitors.”⁴ Then, the message “Space for the intervention of *compañero* narrator” appears on the screen. At this point at a screening in the 1970s, the film would have been stopped, and a discussion among the audience members would have ensued, converting the site of exhibition (which at the time included “rooms improvised by popular, workers’, or student organizations and spaces belonging to the Church of the Third World”⁵) into an extension of the film, and a site in which the film might spur the audience on to political action. This attempt to charge the space of screening is furthered by the fact that, as both Kriger and Stam point out, contemporary screenings of the film were carried out clandestinely, just as had been the case for the film’s production. “To write a journalistic report, to transport a copy of the film, or to attend a screening, implied entering into a political participation that could be harshly suppressed by the police.”⁶ Mere spectatorship of the film becomes impossible when attending a screening can be construed as a political act, carrying a significant risk for the audience.

This conceptualization of the screening hall as a space fraught with both danger and potential, and the goal of creating “a united space” out of the act of screening a film,

⁴ For a reading of Fanon’s significant influence on the film, see Javier Campo, “Frantz Fanon, instigador de *La hora de los hornos*,” in *Cine documental argentino: Entre el arte, la cultura y la política* (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2012), 95-118.

⁵ Clara Kriger, “*La hora de los hornos*,” in *Cine documental en América Latina*, ed. Paulo Antonio Paranaguá (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), 324.

⁶ Ibid.

is characteristic of the Third Cinema call for the creation of a new, revolutionary cinema. The goals of Solanas and Getino's film also exemplify the tendency that Jane Gaines has referred to as "political mimesis", the idea that she uses to think through the potential for documentary films to produce social change. "Political mimesis begins with the body. Actualized, it is about a relationship between bodies in two locations—on the screen and in the audience—and it is the starting point for the consideration of what one body makes the other do."⁷ Drawing on Linda Williams' discussion of body genres, Gaines argues that documentaries can have a similar mirroring effect on their audience although instead of making them "scream", "cry", or "come", as with body genres, they would "make audience members want to kick and yell, ... make them want to do something *because of the conditions of the world of the audience.*"⁸ In the case of *The Hour of the Furnaces*, however, there is an additional mediation, at least if we consider the ideal screening environment envisioned by the filmmakers at the time of the film's making. The film remains about the relationship between bodies in two locations, but it is not only the singular link between the bodies on screen and those in the audience. There is also the figure of the "*compañero* narrator"—the representative of the film in the screening hall who interrupts the film, and brings the audience up to date—as well as the importance placed on the relationship between the bodies in the audience, and the emphasis on the film as a vehicle for dialogue *and* action.

The case of filmmakers making films in the postdictatorship is clearly different than the situation in which Solanas and Getino made their call to action. The films I

⁷ Jane M. Gaines, "Political Mimesis," in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 90.

⁸ *Ibid*, 90. Original emphasis.

consider in this dissertation are oriented toward the past, and follow the violent and traumatic rupture of the dictatorships in Argentina and Chile. But there are nonetheless echoes of several of the ideas here in many of these films, beginning with Patricio Guzmán's *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (1997), which I turn to now.

Chile, Obstinate Memory (discussed in greater detail in Chapter One) follows Guzmán as he returns to Chile after the end of the dictatorship with a copy of his earlier film *The Battle of Chile* (1975-79). For my purposes here, I will focus only on those moments in the film in which Guzmán films audiences' in the 1990s watching the earlier film. Whereas *The Battle of Chile* was a film at least partially intended, like *The Hour of the Furnaces*, to spur its viewers into political action (Gaines uses the film as an example of political mimesis for its images of the "sensuous struggle" of masses of protesting bodies⁹), the purposes of its screening in *Chile, Obstinate Memory* are very different. Rather than prompting action, the screenings of the film prompt memories and affective response, memorably in the case of its screening for a group of students at the School of Gesture and Image, one of whom stares into the camera and sobs uncontrollably after the screening. Juan Carlos Rodríguez entertains "the possibility that the students may have been performing for the camera."¹⁰ This may be the case, but if so, it fits with the performative aspects of the film, which finds a wide variety of ways to perform memory, to bring the events of the past into the present-day spaces of Santiago,

⁹ Ibid, 91.

¹⁰ Juan Carlos Rodríguez, "The Postdictatorial Documentaries of Patricio Guzmán: *Chile, Obstinate Memory*; *The Pinochet Case* and *Island of Robinson Crusoe* (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), in *Duke Space*, http://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/10161/203/1/D_Rodriguez_Juan_Carlos_a_052007.pdf (accessed February 24, 2015), 72.

from which their traces had been so thoroughly eradicated, particularly at the time of filming in the mid-nineties.

In *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, we watch people on screen watching *The Battle of Chile*, but these screenings are staged for various different purposes. First, there are scenes in which Guzmán shows the film to former militants, activists, and bodyguards of Allende, and asks them to identify themselves or those they know in the footage. These scenes lead either to scenes in which those who recognized themselves reenact their activities—as in the case of the bodyguards, who then are filmed walking alongside a car moving slowly down an empty road, intercut with the footage of them in the same positions around a car carrying Allende—or in which those who appear in *The Battle of Chile* are confronted with their own images in the earlier film.

When Guzmán shows *The Battle of Chile* on a small television monitor to a group of former Allende supporters and asks them to identify anyone they recognize, two women identify Carmen Vivanco, whose face the camera pans over briefly. The film cuts to a shot of Carmen Vivanco in 1996, looking across a table at a monitor with the image of her face frozen in a frame from *The Battle of Chile*. Hesitant to recognize this image of herself, Vivanco says “It could be [me], but I have my doubts,” and seems to make manifest Elizabeth Bruss’ statement that “like frames around a picture, screens are simply the concrete manifestation of a barrier between the site of the perceptual stimulus and the site of the response; their presence underscores the cinematic lesson that objectivity ends where subjectivity begins.”¹¹ However, Vivanco’s inability, or

¹¹ Elizabeth W. Bruss, “Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film,” in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 308.

unwillingness, to identify herself in the earlier image stands also in the film for Chile's complex relationship with memory, particularly of the events before, during, and immediately following the coup, which Guzmán suggests lurks, repressed, in his country's collective unconscious. Prompted by Guzmán's offscreen voice, Vivanco lists the five members of her family who were disappeared—her husband, son, brother, sister-in-law, and nephew—each of their names recited slowly and in full, without any doubt. As Jorge Ruffinelli writes, “The time between the contemplated image of the past and her present includes the names of the five victims. In this interval, they ‘disappeared.’”¹² Apart from clarifying why it might be painful or impossible to recognize an image of herself during the period captured in *The Battle of Chile*, her litany of names demonstrates those memories which are held close versus those from which she deliberately distances herself. Guzmán shows Vivanco's face superimposed with her younger self in an image metonymic for the film's project, an attempt to hold together these two selves, the one young and idealistic, the other having lost her family, unwilling to recognize her younger self.

Solanas and Getino viewed the act of screening as a political act, and one that charged the screening site with potential, educating the audience and bringing them into revolutionary consciousness. In Guzmán's *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, the screening sites for *The Battle of Chile*, television monitors in ordinary rooms, become spaces of memorialization, a configuration that allows a temporary eruption of the past into the present. In a city in which most of the traces of the dictatorship had been destroyed or hidden—just as had the bodies of the disappeared—these fleeting and temporary

¹² Jorge Ruffinelli, *Patricio Guzmán* (Madrid: Cátedra/Filmoteca Española, 2001), 292.

memory spaces, made possible by the first film, and their representation in the newer film, express a resistant politics of their own. From Guzmán, I now turn to two Argentinean documentaries that, like *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, contain a view of the exhibition site as a memorial space.

Filming the Screening Site

As noted above, groups of relatives of the disappeared and other human rights groups in Argentina and Chile have secured many sites that once served as places of clandestine detention, torture, and execution carried out by the military dictatorships, and converted those sites into memorial spaces. The primary purpose of the recuperation of these sites is to preserve their memory, which is carried out in a variety of ways, including with guided tours like those of Londres 38 in Santiago as described in Chapter Two. These sites have also in many cases become cultural centers, and as such the staging areas for art exhibitions, theatrical works, community meetings and workshops, and film screenings. In Chapter Two I described the use of these memorial spaces as part of the *mise-en-scene* of documentary films, and here I will add to that consideration an account of a filmic representation of the use of memorial spaces for exhibition.

Jonathan Perel's *El Predio* ("The Site", 2010) is a meditation on the various ways in which the ESMA (Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada/Navy Mechanics School)—the most notorious torture and detention site in Argentina—was being used in its transition from being the property of the Argentinean Navy to being a memorial site, cultural center, and housing the offices of a number of human rights groups. In Chapter Two, I described Perel's film as a site-specific meditation on the problems of site-

specificity, and an attempt to at once consider the various uses put to the site as well as to challenge any tendency to use the memorial space as a safe container for the events of the dictatorship. *El Predio* also repeatedly returns, in a running theme, to sequences showing the screenings of various films. The film critic Quintín has compared Perel to Frederick Wiseman, noting that, like Wiseman's films, *El Predio* "makes institutions speak without the filmmaker saying a single word."¹³ But if Perel's films are comparable to Wiseman's, they are like alternate versions of Wiseman's films in which all the major sequences of dialogue or action are removed, and what remains is only the "pillow shots", the short scenes used to punctuate and fill the space between the more important sequences.

The first appearance of an exhibition space in Perel's film comes when the camera shows a room, with a shaft of light illuminating the backs of several folding chairs. We then see the same room illuminated, and now identifiable as a screening room, where we see the backs of the heads of about a dozen people gathered to see a film. That film turns out to be Michael Haneke's *Code Unknown* (2000), but Perel only shows a couple brief moments of the film's screening: a shot of a young girl standing in front of a blank white wall, and then a close-up of Juliette Binoche's face filling the frame. The film, like all the other films and artworks shown in *El Predio*, is only identified in the closing credits.

When Perel shows films being screened at the ex-ESMA, he is more interested in documenting the mechanics of putting on a screening, and the moments before and after

¹³ Quintín, "El Bafici 2010 (14): Sobre *El predio* de Jonathan Perel." *La lectora provisoria: Esperando el fin de la pesadilla K*, <https://lalectoraprovisoria.wordpress.com/2010/04/14/el-bafici-2010-14/> (accessed March 12, 2015).

the screening than the film itself. We see shots of blank projection screens and the backs of video projectors and the cords dangling out of them. A screening of Fatih Akin's Turkish and German co-production *The Edge of Heaven* (2007) is evoked with a couple brief fragments from the film of Kurdish protesters facing off with police and rallying against the imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan, one of the founders of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). The protesters chant "Öcalan, we are with you!" and "Long live the guerrilla war!" Perel cuts from this scene in the film to the closing credits, and we see the lights in the screening room flicker on, and the audience of the sparsely populated room silently rising from their seats and leaving. Here a number of juxtapositions arise for the viewer—the shots of political protesters on the street, rallying in the name of a jailed opposition leader and of guerilla war evokes those Argentinean militants who suffered torture and death in a building within the very same campus of the ESMA where the film is being shown. But Perel's film also pointedly juxtaposes the image of these protests within the film with the quiet, docile audience members leaving the screening room. This inclusion of the final moments of the screening also contrasts with Getino and Solanas's idea of the "film-act", the film as pretext for action, as well as with the different viewer reactions shown in the reactions of viewers in *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (crying, arguing, etc.). (It also contrasts sharply with the audience debate following a screening of Perel's own film *Tabula Rasa* (2013) at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema [BAFICI], as described in Chapter Two.)

In fact, though there were and continue to be debates about how best to preserve the ESMA site, and what to do with it, Perel's film shows very little of the conversations taking place on site. In one of the very few instances of speech included in the film,

Perel captures an isolated moment in a panel discussion, in which a panelist is thanking former President Néstor Kirchner for his role in establishing the ESMA as a memorial space. Instead of seeing the panel, Perel turns his camera on two camera operators who are themselves capturing the scene, a man holding a large video camera and a woman taking still photographs. Both the decision to only include this short moment, as well as that of emphasizing the mediated nature of the event, reflect Perel's interest in how the events of the dictatorship are being mobilized in different discourses by those who hold political power in Argentina today. Quintín writes of one possible interpretation of the film:

that the occupation of the ESMA by political organizations and their militants, who are recovering the space of horror, intervening on its ground and walls, substituting the preservation of the past for projects dictated by the present, is building a politics of forgetting in place of a politics of memory. In this way, the tumultuous use of this space, its partisan cooption and its banalization by means of worn out slogans and artistic manifestations of dubious hierarchy is the complete demonstration that Kirchnerism and its allies not only attempt to appropriate the memory of all of society, but that the project of the destruction of the ESMA on the part of the right is now accomplished by the left.¹⁴

Quintín notes one example of montage that drives this point home, in which a shot of a statue of a military admiral from the past cuts to a shot of a monolithic statue bearing a plaque that describes President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's role in creating a section of the ex-ESMA. To this, one could add the example of a shot of a billboard announcing the plan to convert the site into a memory space, the plan's total cost (\$14,763,721.08), and its sponsorship by the administration of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, which Perel films from behind, as well as the mention of former President Néstor Kirchner in the panel discussion described above. *El Predio* later shows

¹⁴ Ibid.

footage of a screening of the film *Mundo Alas* (León Gieco, Fernando Molnar, and Sebastián Schindel, 2009) a film that captures a travelling show put on by musicians, dancers, and painters with disabilities. Perel's decision to show a lengthy section from the credits identifying all of the funding bodies involved in the film's production is also consistent with his attention to how efforts at memorialization are linked to present-day institutions and power structures.

Whereas Perel's film provides an example of a site of collective memory used as an exhibition space, Nicolás Prividera's film *M* (2007) shows how the screening space can also function as a memorial in a more personal and individualized way. Prividera's film follows his own attempted investigation of his own mother's disappearance and death at the hands of the Argentinean military dictatorship. Prividera's mother Marta Sierra, a member of the Montoneros, was disappeared at the age of 36, when Nicolás was only six years old. Prividera does not remember his mother, and his search brings him into contact with many of her fellow-militants from the Monotoneros, who have memories of him as a child. The film follows Prividera as he visits various memory archives and Clandestine Detention Centers (CCDs/Centros Clandestino de Detención) searching, often unsuccessfully, for information about his mother. In Chapter Two I analyzed Prividera's film for its reflection on and critique of the processes of official memorialization. Here, I want to focus instead on the film's use of Super-8 home movies, and for the way it presents film as an extension of, or "prosthetic," memory.¹⁵

¹⁵ Alison Landsberg defines prosthetic memories as having four characteristics: 1) "they are not natural, not the product of lived experience . . . but are derived from engagement with a mediated representation (seeing a film, visiting a museum, watching a television miniseries)" 2) they, "like an artificial limb, are actually worn on the body" 3) "calling them 'prosthetic' signals their interchangeability and

The home movies, some of them them shot by Prividera's mother, but some of them also showing her within the frame, recur throughout the film.¹⁶ As Gonzalo Aguilar writes, "with her filming and with her photographs, Marta Sierra had involuntarily prepared one of the forms of remembrance: which she passed on to her son, who became a filmmaker."¹⁷ The first appearance of the home movies comes during a scene in which Prividera and his younger brother are being interviewed for a television program, and the interviewer asks how their mothers' disappearance continues to affect their everyday lives. "It is very hard to imagine what it would have been like, what we would be like, our lives, if that hadn't happened," says Prividera's brother, as the image track cuts to Super-8 footage of Prividera with his mother as a child. "We would have had another life, as the possibility of having a different nation existed," Prividera says. "This is what's important."

Prividera returns to these home movies throughout the film, as one of the only traces of his mother that he still has. They usually appear on the visual track as we hear the testimony of various coworkers, fellow militants, family members, and neighbors of

exchangeability and underscores their commodified form" and 4) "Because they feel real, they help condition how a person thinks about the world and might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other." Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 20-21.

¹⁶ In her practice of filming her family and friends, Marta Sierra could be said to be challenging gender and family norms. "Most often it is the father who holds the camera and peers through the lens. With still images, the mother often sorts and writes the narrative into the family album, providing another voice to the story; with moving images, however, Dad has near total control." Michelle Citron, "What's Wrong with This Picture?" in *Home Movies and Other Necessary Fictions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 11.

¹⁷ Gonzalo Aguilar, "Con el cuerpo en el laberinto: Sobre *M* de Nicolás Prividera," in *Imágenes de lo real: La representación de lo político en el documental argentino*, eds. Josefina Sartora and Silvina Rival (Buenos Aires: Librería Ediciones, 2007), 179.

Marta Sierra's. Their use is illustrative at times, showing certain figures as they are being talked about on the audio track. But the home movies are also used in more evocative or metaphorical ways. Two fleeting images of Marta seem to evoke her disappearance: in one, the camera pans slowly across the inhabitants of the back seat of a car until its gaze alights on Marta sitting in the front passenger seat. We see her for an instant, then the shot ends. In another, the camera films Marta from outside the same car; we see the back of her head through the window. She turns her face into profile, and just as we catch a glimpse of her face the camera shuts off.

Patricia Zimmerman writes:

As a cinema of memory, home movies not only function as empirical evidence of otherwise lost events; they are at the same time political interventions, dreamscapes, and phantasms suggesting collisions among different spheres and contiguities across differences.¹⁸

The function of Marta Sierra's home movies as a cinema of memory is even clearer, given that Prividera was present at many of the events recorded, but has no memory of the events or of his mother, except for those provided by the Super-8 movies, as well as the photographs we see in the film and the filmed testimonies of those who knew his mother (and him).

Zimmerman's description of the collisions and contiguities prompted in home movies is most evident when Prividera breaks the frame between the archival home movies and photographs and the *mise-en-scene* of the rest of the film. The Super-8 footage stands apart from the video footage used in the documentary not only in the

¹⁸ Patricia R. Zimmerman, "Introduction: The Home Movie Movement: Excavations, Artifacts, Minings," in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, eds. Karen L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmerman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 22.

quality of the image, but also in the aspect ratio. But in one of the film's most striking moments, we see a photograph of Prividera's mother that appears to be like others we have already seen. But Prividera's head is also in the frame, and we realize that the photo is being projected from a slide projector on the wall in his house as his head interrupts the beam of the projector. Prividera is about the same age as his mother in the photo, and as Ana Anado points out, "the evident physical resemblance between the two of them seems in revenge to erase the distance of time and disappearance, in an operation of superimposition of images of the present and the past."¹⁹ Prividera's face is positioned next to his mother's, and they both gaze toward the camera. Then, Prividera turns his head in profile, to look at the image on the screen. He advances the slide projector through a number of slides, in each of which Marta Sierra is on the right side of the frame, and his face remains visible on the left side of the frame. This sequence evocatively stages an impossible encounter between mother and son, past and present. Additionally, it raises the possibility that other instances of archival material in the film, most notably the home movies, are also being filmed from the wall of Prividera's home. The screening of both the home movies and photographs within the space of the home not only brings to the fore the "double, sometimes contradictory process of remembering that is collective and individual" and that is characteristic of the home movie.²⁰ It also casts the ruptured space of the family home, a home which we return to again and again in the course of the film, as a memorial space.

¹⁹ Ana Amado, *La imagen justa: Cine argentino y política (1980-2007)* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue, 2009), 171.

²⁰ Zimmerman, 3. Here, Patricia Zimmerman is describing Roger Odin's essay, "Reflections on the Family Home Movie as Document" in the same volume.

Activist Chilean Documentary of the 1980s and its Exhibition in the Postdictatorship

During the 1980s in Chile, activist protest against the Pinochet dictatorship grew in force and number, with street protests and encounters with police becoming regular events. Part of this protest movement also included increased political documentary activity as a number of collectives and activist groups began producing documentary videos, aided by the advent of U-Matic video technology in Chile, and screening them clandestinely as well as distributing them through informal networks.²¹ These collectives include Ictus, Teleanálisis, Grupo Proceso, and Fasic.

Ictus is a theater group originally founded in 1955, and which continued to produce theatrical works with a sharp political edge, critical of the dictatorship, in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1978, “Ictus members launched the independent video agency Ictus TV, conceived as a project of alternative television, whose initial aim was to produce videos based on Ictus’s stage productions.”²² Many Ictus videos were just that, but the group also began to shoot documentaries, and used video to reach audiences who would not otherwise have come to the theater. The documentary *Chile’s Forbidden Dreams* (1983), produced by Edward Goldwyn for the BBC, includes clips from a number of Ictus theater works and videos. It also contains rare footage of an Ictus screening. The screening is of a narrative video, but the screening environment is similar to that which

²¹ On this wave of documentary videomaking, see Antonio Traverso and Germán Liñero, “Chilean Political Documentary Video of the 1980s,” in *New Documentaries in Latin America*, ed. Vinicius Navarro and Juan Carlos Rodríguez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 167-184. German Liñero has also created the online *U-Matic Project*, which catalogs an extensive list of productions made in the format between 1975 and 1995, including clips from some of the videos: <http://www.umatic.cl/index.html> (Accessed April 20, 2015).

²² Traverso and Liñero, 173.

would have been used for Ictus's documentaries. (The video being screened is *El 18 de los García* [1983], directed by Claudio Di Girólamo.) In a población in the coastal city of Valparaiso residents are gathered in the living room of a private home to watch the video, and the documentary lingers on their rapt faces. Traverso and Liñero write that videos produced by activist collectives like Ictus "facilitated the development of a diverse and critical cultural 'imaginary' that countered the dominant picture of the nation as presented to the Chilean public through mainstream media."²³ Crucial to the dissemination of this imaginary were the creation of informal and clandestine networks of distribution and exhibition like those shown in the BBC film. These networks were remarkably extensive given their clandestine or semi-clandestine nature: Steve Stern writes that in "1985 and 1986, the 2,328 known Ictus screenings in Santiago reached 90,840 people."²⁴ In the remainder of this chapter, I will look at three different exhibition scenes for 1980s activist documentary, one in the later years of the dictatorship, and two in the postdictatorship.

Alicia Vega and the Children's Film Workshop

Ignacio Agüero's 1988 film *Cien niños esperando un tren* ("One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train"), relatively unknown outside Chile and Latin America, is one of the most celebrated documentaries within Chile.²⁵ Made in the final years of the

²³ Ibid, 169.

²⁴ Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 309.

²⁵ Agüero has made a number of documentaries, including *No Olvidar* (1982), a film signed pseudonymously about the discovery of bodies at Lonquén, and *Agustín's Newspaper* (2008), a film that follows a group of students at the University of Chile investigating Chile's largest daily newspaper *El Mercurio*, and its publisher Agustín Edwards, for their support of the 1973 coup d'état and complicity with the Pinochet dictatorship.

Pinochet dictatorship, the film follows film historian Alicia Vega and her *taller de cine para niños* (Children's Film Workshop). Vega would go into the *poblaciones* around Santiago, and invite children to join a workshop that would meet for 20 consecutive Saturdays. In the workshop documented in the film, the students would meet in a church, reconfigured as a classroom and screening hall; the opening scene of the film shows worshippers singing in the church as the sacristans take down the altar and replace it with an unfurled sheet to make a screen. The film then cuts to the same screen, now in darkness and surrounded by excited children awaiting the projection of a film. Over the course of the workshop, Vega gives the children, many of whom have never been to the cinema, a course in film history, showing films by the Lumière brothers (the film's title comes from a sequence in which the children watch *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*), Georges Méliès, Émile Cohl, Charlie Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy, Disney, Dušan Vukotic, Albert Lamorisse, and the Taviani brothers. In addition, the children create paper versions of pre-cinematic toys like the thaumatrope and the zootrope, and create their own "films" by drawing on pieces of paper marked with the borders of film frames.

The children react excitedly to many of the films they are shown watching, but among the films that seem to capture their interest most is the one that is closest to their own reality, and the only Chilean film that we see them watching. Vega shows the students a portion of Agüero's earlier film *Como me da la gana* ("The Way I Feel I Like It," 1985). This film consisted of interviews with five Chilean directors making films in 1984 and '85, and Agüero appears on camera asking them questions like "Why are you making this film?" and "Who do you think is going to see it?" One of the five films documented is Andrés Racz's *Dulce Patria* ("Sweet Homeland," 1984), the first film to

document the protests against the dictatorship that was signed in the filmmakers' own names. While shot on 16mm film and not video, *Dulce patria* is contemporaneous and similar in spirit to some of the activist video documentaries mentioned above. *Cien niños* shows the students watching a short passage from *Como me da la gana*, in which Racz and his crew can be seen filming protesters running away from the *carabineros* (police). Students can be heard shouting excitedly and reacting to the scene as it plays. Onscreen, we see protesters running from the police, carrying a wounded man to safety, and a *carabinero* is shown kicking a protester who cowers on the ground.

The film (or the fragment of it that we see) clearly captures the imagination of the students. *Cien niños* repeatedly reminds the viewer that the children have a lived experience of state surveillance and military and police presence. The students create their own storyboard images for invented films, and many of those shown in the film are of violent scenes involving police or military shooting at people. Agüero and his crew interview many of the children from the workshop, and ask them what they want to be when they grow up. One wants to be a carpenter, another a doctor, but several say that they want to join the military. An eight year old boy, interviewed on camera with his family, replies that he wants to be a soldier, but he uses the word “milico,” derogatory slang for the military. In the scene preceding the screening of *Dulce patria*, Agüero interviews two young girls in their home, one twelve years old and the other eight. Agüero asks them whether they have ever been filmed or recorded before. One of the girls responds that they have not been filmed, but have been recorded, by agents of the CNI (la Central Nacional de Informaciones/National Information Center, the Chilean secret police, formerly known as the DINA) who had come to their house two years

earlier when the younger girl was six years old. They reveal that the CNI agents interviewed them on audiotape, without their parents present, and asked them questions including whether anything was hidden in the house, and what their mother did for a living.

Cien niños is in most respects a joyful film. It captures Alicia Vega and the young students' enthusiasm for film with evident affinity, as when parents of the students visit the class to see what their children have been up to, and look on with surprise as their children show off their knowledge of precinematic toys. But the film also repeatedly manifests the memory and omnipresent threat of state violence, as well as the structures of poverty that hang over the children.

El Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos

Inaugurated in 2010, the *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos* (Museum of Memory and Human Rights), is a large, multi-story museum dedicated to the memory of the Pinochet dictatorship. "The museum appears as a striking glass and steel box clad in prepatinated cooper . . . mounted on robust concrete bases rising out of two reflecting pools."²⁶ It is located next to the Quinta Normal, a park in Santiago, and in close proximity to several other museums. The museum offers a tour that is both loosely chronological and thematic as the visitor moves upstairs from the lobby to the upper floors. The museum uses video very prominently, from the downstairs screening room and archives accessible to the public (which include a large collection of documentaries, and of the activist videos of the 80s) to the plethora of video screen

²⁶ Andrés Estefane, "Materiality and Politics in Chile's Museum of Memory and Human Rights," *thresholds* 41 (Spring 2013): 158.

displays throughout the museum, and clips from documentaries play a major role in the museum's organization of the narrative of the dictatorship. The chronological trajectory of the space leads from a central room on the 1st floor where three video screens arranged side by side show footage from September 11, 1973, under a time line of the day's events, to the final room on the floor above, where video screens show commercials from the "No" campaign leading up to the 1988 plebiscite that removed Pinochet from power, as well as the celebration of the transition to democracy and Patricio Aylwin's presidency in the National Stadium.

In this trajectory a visitor to the museum passes a multitude of video screens and installations. On the first floor, in a section dedicated to repression and torture, there is a video touchscreen where visitors can access testimonies about torture from various sources, including documentaries like *La venda* (Gloria Camaruaga, 2000), *The Judge and the General* (Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco, 2008), and *Piececitos de niño* (Hernán Fliman Kiblisky, 1986), as well as a 1991 TVN news report on torture, and various video testimonies gathered by the museum. Adjacent to this video screen, and in one of the museum's darkest rooms, there is a large video screen broken into 12 smaller screens, each showing survivor testimonies about torture. Sound directs the visitor's attention to particular screens at different times, and graphic, violent details are emphasized. Below the multi-screen display is a *parilla* (grill), one of the most ubiquitous instruments of torture, a metal bed frame attached by wires to a box controlling the application of electric shocks. In his analysis of this section of the museum, Andrés Estefane is critical of the emphasis on individual narratives devoid of larger context:

By atomizing the experience of survivors and victims of state violence and representing that very violence in terms that obscure its connection with, for example, the distribution of power and resources within Chilean society, the museum's narrative tends to fix a discourse that reinforces a compartmentalized vision of the catastrophe, promotes isolated rituals of mourning and remembrance, and detaches the past from the contemporary legacies of the dictatorship.²⁷

This critique certainly resonates with the museum's narrative as a whole, which seems overly careful to reflect a consensus view of the past characteristic of postdictatorship state transition politics. However, the museum does have merit as a highly visible platform for the elaboration of events that have not had this same visibility previously. Zachary McKiernan writes of witnessing a large variety of people, young and old, Chilean and international, grade students and academics in his visits to the museum. "Call it a consensus, but this, I believe, is what is special at the museum: an open-ended encounter that cuts across language and cultures, disciplines and principles, politics and people."²⁸

Of the material that the museum provides a platform for, the activist political documentaries of the 1980s receive particular prominence. On various screens through the museum, alongside clips from TV broadcasts and postdictatorship documentaries, are clips from videos such as Teleanálisis no. 30 *La verdad del disparo* ("The Truth of the Gunshot," 1987), which documents a *carabinero* shooting Maria Paz Santibañez in the head at a student protest, a shooting that Santibañez miraculously survived. Other Teleanálisis videos are featured, as is a clip from Ictus's *Andrés de la Victoria* (Claudio

²⁷ Ibid, 164.

²⁸ Zachary McKiernan, "The Museum of Memory and Human Rights: Making Consensus Matter?" *Public History Commons* (May 23, 2012) <http://publichistorycommons.org/the-museum-of-memory-and-human-rights-making-consensus-matter/> (Accessed April 24, 2015).

Di Girólamo, 1984), one of Ictus's first forays into documentary, which relates the death of the priest André Jarlan who was killed by a *carabinero*'s bullet in his house in the *población* of La Victoria, and the large protests that followed this event. This clip is accompanied by footage taken of the same protests by Chilean filmmaker Gonzalo Justiniano. Justiniano was detained by CNI agents, and had footage confiscated, but the clip on display is among the footage not found by the CNI. Clips from *Como me da la gana* are also on display.

One of the most powerful clips, and one that I saw museum employees call up for guided tours on multiple occasions, is a video fragment titled *Una flor para Santiago* ("A Flower for Santiago," 1985) shot by brothers Pablo and Francisco Salas.²⁹ This three-minute sequence powerfully captures the bravery of a group of widows who stand up to *carabineros* in their effort to mourn their murdered husbands, who became known as the "three professionals." José Manuel Parada, a worker at the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, Manuel Guerrero, a professor, and Santiago Nattino Allende, a publicist, were all kidnapped over two days on the 27th and 28th of March, 1985. On March 29th, their bodies were found, throats slashed, in a rural area outside Santiago. All three were associated with the Communist Party, and the government attempted to explain away the deaths as being a result of a purge within the Party. This ruse was seen through by the public who saw this clearly as the work of the CNI.

The video records one of the weekly memorial protests that Estela Ortiz, Owana Madero, and Elena Reyes, the widows of the "three professionals," would enact every

²⁹ The clip is available for viewing, as are many of the clips on display at the museum, at the Museo de la Memoria's Digital Library: <http://www.bibliotecamuseodelamemoria.cl/gsd/cgi-bin/library.cgi> (Accessed April 26, 2015).

Friday. The three widows would bring roses and posters demanding justice for their murdered husbands and attempt to lay them on a patch of grass in front of la Moneda, the presidential palace in Santiago. The camera focuses in particular on Elena Reyes, the widow of Santiago Nattino, and her young son, as they attempt to cross a street, their path blocked by a group of *carabineros*. Reyes confronts them without fear, her arm around her son, and says “I have the right to walk. This is my country, just as it is yours.” As Reyes, her son, and another of the widows try to walk toward the grass, the *carabineros* shuffle in a group to block their way. Reyes continues to confront the policemen, saying that her husband was killed, and that she only wants to leave an homage to him. Eventually, the *carabineros* let them pass, and they walk to the grass and leave several roses and two posters on the ground. The *carabineros* immediately walk up behind Reyes and her son, and snatch up the posters and walk away with them. The video ends with Reyes walking down the street, away from the camera, with her arm around her son.

It’s no surprise that this video is given prominence in the museum, given how it shows a moment of courage in the face of state power, and that it also reads as a sort of portent: there is something almost hapless in the *carabineros* stumbling over themselves to block a mourning woman and her child. The footage works well as an encapsulation of the way that the memory struggles that defined the 1980s were starting to swing away from Pinochet and toward the popular groups who were mobilizing their power to protest in the streets.

The museum excels at telling the story of these struggles between the populace and the state, and at providing a platform for the exhibition of activist video

documentary of the 1980s. This makes it all the more problematic that the story told by the museum ends in 1990, with the end of the dictatorship, as though the story could not be told any farther without damaging the fragile consensus on which the museum rests. Visitors will not learn anything here about the continuing efforts to bring perpetrators to justice, about Pinochet's continued position as commander of the army and his arrest in London in 1998, or about the struggle to create the museum itself. In this way, memory is too neatly separated from the present, as though it were possible to mark the start and end dates of the dictatorship and cleanly slice it out of Chile's history.

Exhibition in the Context of Education

The Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos (INDH/National Human Rights Institute) is an institution created by a Chilean law, first proposed in 2005 under President Ricardo Lagos, but not passed until 2009, under President Michelle Bachelet. In 2010, the INDH was created, with the mission "to preserve and promote the full effect of human rights in Chile."³⁰ On March 7, 2013, timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the coup that began the Pinochet dictatorship, the INDH announced the release of "Recordar y Conversar para un Nunca Más" (Remembering and Discussing for Never Again) a series of lesson plans for the classroom use of documentaries to "promote reflection on the massive, systematic, and institutionalized violations of human rights during the dictatorship."³¹ Eight total lesson plans were released, each one

³⁰ <http://www.indh.cl/mision-vision-y-objetivos-indh-2> (Accessed April 25, 2015).

³¹ <http://www.indh.cl/atencion-docentes-indh-presenta-materiales-didacticos-para-educacion-en-derechos-humanos> (Accessed April 25, 2015). I first received these materials in October 2012 from Enrique Azúa, who works in the Education section of INDH.

associated with a particular film, and designed for one of three levels of education. There are two for Educación Básica (students from age 6 to 13), centered on the films *Imágenes de una dictadura* (“Images of a Dictatorship,” Patricio Henríquez, 2004) and *Los niños prohibidos* (“The Forbidden Children,” Augusto Góngora, 1986); three for Educación Media (students from 14 to 17), *La ciudad de los fotógrafos* (Sebastián Moreno, 2006), *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos* (Bettina Perut and Iván Osnovikoff, 2004), and *Reinalda del Carmen, mi mamá y yo* (Lorena Giachino Torréns, 2006); and three for informal educational settings or adult education, *Por la vida* (“For Life,” Pedro Chaskel and Pablo Salas, 1987), *No olvidar* (“Not to Forget,” Ignacio Agüero, 1982), and *El mocito* (Marcela Said and Jean de Certeau, 2010). I’ve written about a number of these films in previous chapters, but here I will focus on *Por la vida*, for its emergence from the same 1980s activist video context as the other films I’ve been considering in this section.

Por la vida, a 27 minute video documentary shot on U-Matic, follows the protests of El Movimiento Contra la Tortura Sebastián Acevedo (MCTSA/The Sebastián Acevedo Anti-Torture Movement). Sebastián Acevedo was a father who, in desperation after the kidnapping of his two sons in November 1983, poured gasoline over his clothes and burned himself to death in the main plaza in Concepción. Steve Stern writes that Acevedo’s action struck a particularly strong chord in predominantly Catholic Chile. “Symbolically, he was a devoted father devastated by the plight of his children, a person of faith forced to break the Catholic taboo on suicide, and a martyr who sacrificed himself to redeem life in a world gone to sin.”³² El Movimiento Contra la Tortura had

³² Stern, 257-258.

actually begun in September 1983, but after Acevedo's death they took on his name. The MCTSA, which contained a number of priests and people of faith, practiced non-violent resistance, and staged short, evocative protests in highly symbolic sites. *Por la vida* captures a number of these protests over a period of several years from 1984 to 1987, and edits them together with interviews of members of the group. The protests were planned in secrecy to try to gain the element of surprise; a time would be set, and the group would suddenly appear, interlocking arms, stopping traffic, holding banners and posters with the names of victims of torture, singing songs, chanting a liturgy of names of those who had been tortured, and posting fliers, and scattering them in the air. Then, after the protest was complete, usually within 20 minutes, the group would disperse from the scene. The protests were often at sites where torture was taking place or had taken place, or at other symbolic sites. In the video, we see a protest held outside Londres 38 (which had been redesignated as Londres 40), where members of the group spraypaint an arrow onto the building's wall, marking it as a site in which torture took place.³³ Another protest takes place inside the halls of the Palacio de Tribunales de Justicia, the building housing Chile's Supreme Court, appeals court and military court-martials court. The video also captures protesters standing together and pointing, in unison, toward sites of torture, "outing" them, in a gesture similar to those that appear in the postdictatorship actions of *funa* and *escrache*.³⁴

In a recent interview, Pablo Salas describes the challenges involved with shooting the film. He, Chaskel, and the other members of the crew would have to be close to the scene, but remain inconspicuous until the moment that the group

³³ For more on Londres 38, see Chapter 2.

³⁴ On *funa* and *escrache*, see Chapter 3.

materialized; then they would need to quickly appear and start shooting.³⁵ Despite the brevity of the protests, *carabineros* did often arrive before the group could disperse, and the video captures *carabineros* hitting protesters with batons, shooting tear gas canisters into their midst, and tearing down posters.

The INDH lesson plan for *Por la vida* is 16 pages, and contains materials for use as handouts, as well as suggested activities and discussion questions to accompany the screening of the film. In a section that appears on all 8 of the INDH lesson plans, tips are given for discussing difficult material, including a suggestion that teachers be aware that there may be students with family members who are either in the film being shown or may have had similar experiences, as well as a caution against oversimplifying complex issues. The lesson plan also contains quotes and questions about the active non-violence practiced in the film, as well as a timeline of events related to the film and the dictatorship, and a handout designed for students to take notes during the screening based on certain themes and elements.

The final page of the lesson plan addresses torture, and begins with a lengthy quote taken in the film from José Aldunate, a Catholic priest, and member of the MCTSA featured prominently. I translate a portion of it here:

What concerned us was the idea that a practice of this type (torture) is in reality the practice of all Chile, of the entire nation, some for executing it, others for remaining silent, in a way we all will be accomplices before posterity. . . . I think that after many years have passed, perhaps an entire generation, those of us who have lived in this time will feel ourselves, and I will feel myself, culpable for all those years in which there was torture and other atrocities. And us, what have we done? What account can we give to the new generations? . . . We, the priests, are sometimes good for talking, but we are not effective in action. Well then, let us go to the

³⁵ See video interview with Pablo Salas at *El Desconcierto.tv* <https://vimeo.com/84040447> (Accessed April 26, 2015).

street.³⁶

This quotation is followed by three discussion questions that ask students to reflect on what function torture served during the dictatorship; on what portions of the complicity described by Aldunate were shared by institutions such as the judiciary, the media, and the catholic church; and on Aldunate's question about his generation's responsibility to future ones. Students who are part of one of those future generations are asked to think about the legacies of torture and of acts of resistance like Aldunate's as presented in the video.

Like the *Museo de la memoria*, the INDH pedagogical materials create important potential exhibition opportunities for documentaries that had been difficult to find until recently. But unlike the museum, the lesson plan also encourages viewers, even if in limited ways, to think about the events of the past in relation to the present. This is done under the banner of *Nunca más* (Never again), which is oriented toward the present and future. But it also takes steps toward the thinking through of what the present-day legacies of the dictatorship are, and how the reverberations of torture and state violence in the 70s and 80s are still being felt.

Finally, the INDH's choices of films are interesting in their determination not to shy away from films that might present controversial discussion or that might escape the boundaries of a state-sponsored human rights framework of discussion. In this respect, the decision to include *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos* among the films included is particularly interesting. This film, with its wild, factually inaccurate

³⁶ Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, "Por la vida" *Serie Recordar y Conversar para un Nunca Más*: 15.
<http://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/bitstream/handle/123456789/471/Ed.%20No%20Formal%20-%20Por%20la%20vida.pdf?sequence=1> (Accessed April 26, 2015).

recreations of the events of the September 11th coup by grade students seems both the perfect film to screen to high school students, and the kind of film that a group like INDH could easily shy away from.

The exhibition of documentaries in Argentina and Chile, while not a large-scale market, has found niches and pockets in which it thrives on a small scale. Films screen at festivals like BAFICI (Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente/Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival) or FIDOCES (Festival Internacional de Documentales de Santiago, Chile/International Documentary Festival), which also are important venues for the screening of films from other Latin American countries and from around the world. Documentaries will also often have a short local run at small movie theaters or theaters at cultural centers. Screenings also take place at universities, museums, memorial sites, and through traveling programs like 2012's Memoria Audiovisual (Audiovisual Memory), a traveling festival of films dealing with human rights (primarily from Argentina and Chile, but also including a smattering of films from Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Canada, and the US) that was organized by the Museo de la memoria and traveled, among other places, to a number of small cities and towns in Region IV, in the northwest of Chile.³⁷

In this chapter I have considered just a few scenes of exhibition: the representation of screening sites as memorial spaces, and the screening of Chilean activist video from the 1980s in museum and educational contexts. Documentary

³⁷ The films that traveled on this leg of the festival were predominantly Chilean. See the website for more information: <http://memoriaaudiovisual.cl/itinerancia/> (Accessed April 27, 2015).

exhibition is an area that would bear further study, but I have shown here the importance of considering the site of exhibition as a space of encounter with memory, history, and with the echoes of the dictatorial past in the present.

Conclusion

As I was writing this dissertation, trials of perpetrators were ongoing in both Argentina and Chile, and stories about these trials or other reckonings with the dictatorial past appeared almost daily in the newspapers. In Argentina, the year 2014 saw 14 trials of perpetrators at Clandestine Centers of Detention (CCDs) come to a close, with 17 trials (in which 279 people stand accused) continuing into 2015.¹ In Chile, trials have also been ongoing, alongside high profile events like the 2013 exhumation of famous poet Pablo Neruda's body to conduct a forensic investigation. Neruda died 12 days after the September 11, 1973 coup, and rumors that he had been poisoned by the regime had persisted. As of this writing, in June 2015, two years after the exhumation, the poet's bones remain unburied. Original tests seemed to rule out the possibility of poisoning, and in February 2015 a judge ordered that the body be reinterred. However, in June the presence of a bacteria found by a Spanish forensics team reopened the possibility of a poisoning.² It seems that it is not so easy to bury the past.

The films I have considered here emerge within a juridical context that is still active, in which delayed, incomplete justice is still slowly being served. The films also engage with spaces, institutions, and entities for which the ways the past becomes memorialized have material, present-day stakes. On the one hand, the question of how to memorialize the past remains hotly contested. Witness, as just one example, the

¹ These tallies come from Laureano Barrera, "Principales logros de este año: 2014: 4 nietos, 17 juicios en marcha y otros 40 represores condenados," *Infojus Noticias*, December 10, 2014, <http://infojusnoticias.gov.ar/nacionales/2014-4-nietos-17-juicios-en-marcha-y-otros-40-represores-condenados-6721.html> (Accessed May 15, 2015).

² Adam Feinstein, "Pablo Neruda poisoning doubts fuelled by new forensic tests," *The Guardian*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/05/pablo-neruda-poisoning-doubts-fuelled-by-new-forensic-tests> (Accessed June 7, 2015).

controversy surrounding the plans to screen the pro-Pinochet documentary, *Pinochet* (Ignacio Zegers, 2012), which was protested by some human-rights groups and brought about protests and counterprotests reminiscent, but on a smaller scale, of when Pinochet was arrested in London in 1998. On the other hand, as more of the violence of the dictatorships have come to light at a mass level, and more of a tentative consensus has coalesced around historical memory, important criticisms have emerged of the ways in which memory discourses become coopted by institutions or turned toward political purposes. Among other films considered here, *M* and *El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos* are particularly critical of the calcification of memory cultures.

This dissertation has argued for the importance of postdictatorship documentaries in the Southern Cone for the various roles that they play in memory culture, as well as for the ways they engage with, represent, partake of, and inhabit spaces. It is my conviction that the methodology I've employed here, of reading documentary films alongside and as interconnected with the spaces that they represent, spaces that often have memorial significance, can productively travel to other contexts. I offer it up in the hopes that it is valuable to others working at the juncture of documentary studies and memory studies.

As a North American scholar, writing about the Southern Cone from a university in California, I've been struck often both by the challenges of writing from a great distance as well as the proximity that certain archives present. This dissertation would not have been possible without the opportunity to physically visit the spaces I write about here, and to find the films, many of which are not available outside of their home countries. At the same time, the proliferation of digital archives, like that of the *Museo*

de la memoria, or the growing number of films available on sites like YouTube or Vimeo (with or without the official approval of filmmakers) raises further questions about both the meaning of “touring” a site through its filmic record, and about the importance of the viewing space as discussed in the final chapter. These are questions for further study, and they will only become more pressing as more and more films migrate online in search of audiences.

In the prologue to a book about cinema on the margins in Argentina, David Oubiña writes that the task of the critic is “to construct a margin where these precarious films, at the brink of extinction, can survive and can make themselves visible.”³ It is my hope that this work, in some small way, contributes to this project.

³ David Oubiña, “Un mundo para las películas,” in *Cines al margen: Nuevos modos de representación en el cine argentino contemporáneo*, ed. María José Moore and Paula Wolkowicz (Buenos Aires: Librería, 2007), 15.

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Film/Videography

- Tire dié* (Fernando Birri, Argentina, 1960)
The Hour of the Furnaces (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Argentina, 1968)
The Battle of Chile (Patricio Guzmán, Chile/Cuba, 1975-1979)
No olvidar (Ignacio Agüero, Chile, 1982)
Andrés de la Victoria (Claudio Di Girólamo, Chile, 1984)
Chile's Forbidden Dreams (prod. Edward Goldwyn, UK/Chile, 1984)
Dulce Patria (Andrés Racz, Chile, 1984)
Como me da la gana (Ignacio Agüero, Chile, 1985)
Una flor para Santiago (Pablo and Francisco Salas, Chile, 1985)
Somos + (Pedro Salas, Chile, 1985)
Piececitos de niño (Hernán Fliman Kiblsky, Chile, 1986)
Por la vida (Pedro Chaskel and Pablo Salas, Chile, 1987)
Cien niños esperando un tren (Ignacio Agüero, Chile, 1988)
No me olvides (Tatiana Gaviola, Chile, 1988)
La voz de los pañuelos (Marcelo Céspedes and Carmen Guarini, Argentina, 1990)
Tierra de Avellaneda (Daniele Incalcaterra, Argentina/France/UK/Italy, 1992)
La flaca Alejandra (Carmen Castillo and Guy Girard, Chile, 1994)
Regístrese, comuníquese y archívese (Nora Anchart, Argentina, 1995)
Cazadores de utopías (David Blaustein, Argentina, 1996)
Mala junta (Eduardo Aliverti, Pablo Milstein, and Javier Rubel, Argentina, 1996)
Chile, Obstinate Memory (Patricio Guzmán, Canada/France, 1997)
Prohibido (Andrés di Tella, Argentina, 1997)
11 September, 1973: The Last Battle of Salvador Allende (Patricio Henríquez, Canada/France, 1998)
Fernando ha Vuelto (Silvio Caiozzi, Chile, 1998)
Montoneros, una historia (Andrés Di Tella, 1998)
Tosco: Grito de piedra (Adrián Jaime and Daniel Ribetti, Argentina, 1998)
1977, casa tomada (María Pilotti, Argentina, 1999)
Imágenes de una dictadura (Patricio Henríquez, Canada, 1999)
Padre Mugica (Gabriel Mariotto and Gustavo Gordillo, Argentina, 1999)
La Venda (Gloria Camiruaga, Chile, 1999)
Victor Jara: El derecho de vivir en paz (Carment Luz Parot, Chile, 1999)
Jorge Giannoni, NN, ese soy yo (Gabriela Jaime, Argentina, 2000)
Ni olvido, ni perdón (Ariel Ogando, Argentina, 2000)
Spoils of War (David Blaustein, Argentina, 2000)
(h) historias cotidianas (Andrés Habegger, Argentina, 2001)
Maestros del viento (Emiliano Fabris and Agustín Demichelis, Argentina, 2001)
The Pinochet Case (Patricio Guzmán, France/Chile/Belgium/Spain, 2001)
Volver a vernos (Paula Rodríguez, Chile, 2001)
Yo, sor Alice (Alberto Marquardt, Argentina/France, 2001)
Chile, los héroes están fatigados (Marco Enriquez-Ominami, Chile, 2002)
Estadio Nacional (Carmen Luz Parot, Chile, 2002)
H.I.J.O.S. El alma en dos (Carmen Guarini and Marcelo Céspedes, Argentina/France, 2002)

Los malditos caminos (Luis Puenzo, Argentina, 2002)
Mi hermano y yo (Sergio Gándara and Paula Sánchez, Chile, 2002)
Nora (Stella di Tocco and Fabio Grimaldi, Italy, 2002)
Sol de noche (Pablo Milstein and Norberto Ludin, Argentina, 2002)
Apgar 11 (Cristián Leighton, Chile, 2003)
La cueca sola (Marilú Mallet, Canada, 2003)
En algún lugar del cielo (Alejandra Carmona, Chile, 2003)
Flores de septiembre (Roberto Testa, Pablo Osoreo, and Nicolás Wainszelbaum, Argentina, 2003)
Los huérfanos del Cóndor (Emilio Pascull, France/Uruguay, 2003)
Playas del silencio (Pablo Torello, Argentina, 2003)
El proceso (Román Lejtman, Argentina, 2003)
Los Rubios (Albertina Carri, Argentina, 2003)
Actores secundarios (Pachi Bustos and Jorge Leiva, Chile, 2004)
El astuto mono Pinochet contra la Moneda de los cerdos (Iván Osnovikoff and Bettina Perut, Chile, 2004)
Imágenes de una dictadura (Patricio Henríquez, Chile, 2004)
Madres coraje: Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Emilio Cartoy Díaz, Argentina, 2004)
Me queda la palabra (Bernardo Kononovich, Argentina, 2004)
Miguel, la humanidad de un mito (Víctor Gomez, Chile, 2004)
Nietos: Identidad y memoria (Benjamín Ávila, Argentina, 2004)
Papá Iván (María Inés Roqué, Mexico/Argentina, 2004)
Los Perros (Adrián Jaime, Argentina, 2004)
Prohibido dormir (Paula Bassi and Diego Pauli, Argentina, 2004)
Salvador Allende (Patricio Guzmán, Belgium/Chile/France/Germany/Spain/Mexico, 2004)
Social Genocide (Fernando Solanas, Switzerland/France/Argentina, 2004)
Burnt Oranges (Silvia Malagrino, USA/Argentina, 2005)
La dignidad de los nadies (Fernando Solanas, Argentina/Brazil/Switzerland, 2005)
Maten a Perón (Fernando Musante, Argentina, 2005)
Muertes indebidas (Rubén Plataneo, Argentina, 2005)
Nadie olvida nada (Ariel Ogando, Argentina, 2005)
NN: Ni en el río ni en las tumbas (Berta Chudoba, Lucas del Valle, Agustina Rodríguez, Celeste Delgado, Tatiana Ratti, Isaías Cámara, Tatiana Cortes, Cecilia Silva, and Lucrecia Barrios, Argentina, 2005)
Paco Urondo, la palabra justa (Daniel Desaloms, Argentina, 2005)
Semillas de utopía (Rodolfo Colombara and Emanuela Peyretti, Italy, 2005)
Cavallo Behind Bars (Sula Erenberg, Laura Imperiali, and María Inés Roqué, Mexico/Argentina/Spain, 2006)
Un claro día de justicia (Ana Cacopardo and Ingrid Jaschek, Argentina, 2006)
La ciudad de los fotógrafos (Sebastián Moreno, Chile, 2006)
Errepé (Gabriel Corvi/Gustavo de Jesús, Argentina, 2006)
La Escuela (Eduardo Yedlin, Argentina, 2006)
Gaviotas blindadas 1-3: Historias del PRT-ERP (Aldo Getino, Laura Lagar, Mónica Simoncini, Omar Neri, and Susana Vázquez, Argentina, 2006-2008)
El golpe (Matías Gueilburt, Argentina, 2006)

Hacer patria (David Blaustein, Argentina, 2006)
El hombre de la foto (María José Martínez and Gonzalo Ramirez, Chile, 2006)
El lado oscuro de la dama blanca (Patricio Henríquez, Canada, 2006)
Nacimos en su lucha, viven en la nuestra (Camilo Cagni, Pablo Balut, Pablo Roesler and Juan Aíub, Argentina, 2006)
Propaganda negra (Julio Rivero, Argentina, 2006)
Reinalda del Carmen, mi mamá y yo (Lorena Giachino Torréns, Chile, 2006)
Seré Memoria (Christian Gil, Argentina, 2006)
Special Circumstances (Marianne Teleki and Héctor Salgado, USA/Chile, 2006)
Argentina Latente (Fernando Solanas, Argentina/France/Spain, 2007)
Búsqueda en el silencio (Andrés Lübbert, Chile, 2007)
Calle Santa Fe (Carmen Castillo, Chile/France/Belgium, 2007)
La Funa de Víctor Jara (Nèlida D. Ruiz de los Paños and Cristian R. Villablanca, Chile/Spain, 2007)
Héroes Frágiles (Emilio Pacull, Chile/France, 2007)
Los Irrecuperables (Ingrid Jaschek and Diego Díaz, Argentina, 2007)
M (Nicolás Prividera, Argentina, 2007)
Mansión Seré: Crónica de un viaje (Jorge Bianchini, Argentina, 2007)
Memoria desierta (Niles Atallah, Chile, 2007)
Mundial 78: Verdad o mentira (Christian Révoli, Argentina, 2007)
A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman (Peter Raymont, Canada, 2007)
La sombra de don Roberto (Hakan Engstrom and Juan Diego Spoerer, Chile/Sweden, 2007)
Sr. Presidente (Liliana Arraya y Eugenia Monti, Argentina, 2007)
Sueños compartidos (Edgardo Cabeza, Argentina, 2007)
Trelew (Mariana Arruti, Argentina, 2007)
Una Vida Verdadera: El Sacrificio de Miguel Woodward (Andrés Brignardello Valdivia and José Acevedo Olivares, Chile, 2007)
Allende, de Valparaíso al Mundo (Luis R. Vera, Chile, 2008)
Archeology of Memory: Villa Grimaldi (Quique Cruz and Marilyn Mulford, USA/Chile, 2008)
El Diario de Agustín (Ignacio Agüero, Chile, 2008)
Un diplomático francés en Santiago (Patricio Paniagua Giannini, Chile/France, 2008)
EEUU vs. Allende (Diego Marín Verdugo, Chile, 2008)
Escucha Chile (Andrés Daie Hervies, Chile, 2008)
Es más vida (Amanda Robalino and Johanna García Ruiz, Argentina/Colombia/Ecuador, 2008)
The Judge and the General (Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco, US/Chile, 2008)
La otra final (Juan Cruz Varela, Argentina, 2008)
Our Disappeared (Juan Mandelbaum, USA, 2008)
La próxima estación (Fernando Solanas, Argentina, 2008)
Relatos de la sombra (Víctor Ramos, Argentina, 2008)
Victoria (Adrián Jaime, Argentina, 2008)
Camposanto (Antonia Lobos, Chile, 2009)

De Mártires y Verdugos (Jorge Parada, Chile, 2009)
Fragmentos rebelados (David Blaustein, Argentina, 2009)
Gladys (Rodrigo Araya Tacussis, Chile, 2009)
El Memorial (Andrés Brignardello Valdivia, Chile, 2009)
La Mujer Metralleta (Francisco López Ballo, Chile/France, 2009)
Mi Vida con Carlos (Germán Berger-Hertz, Chile, 2009)
Nosotras que todavía estamos vivas (Daniele Cini, Argentina/Italy, 2009)
La Pérdida (Javier Angulo y Enrique Gabriel, Argentina/Spain, 2009)
Las piedras no se mueven solas (Emanuela Nelli, Chile, 2009)
La Quemadura (René Ballesteros, Chile, 2009)
Tierra sublevada: Oro impuro (Fernando Solanas, Argentina, 2009)
Abuelos (Carla Valencia Dávila, Ecuador/Chile, 2010)
Crónica de una retransmisión (Juan Cofré, Chile, 2010)
El edificio de los chilenos (Macarena Aguiló y Susana Foxley,
 Chile/Cuba/France/Belgium, 2010)
ESMA: Memorias de la resistencia (Claudio Remedi, Argentina, 2010)
Hornos de Lonquén (Luis Díaz, Chile, 2010)
Liliana y Eduardo...Las luces de la memoria (Sergio Monserrat, Argentina, 2010)
El Mocito (Marcela Said Cares and Jean de Certeau, Chile, 2010)
La muerte de Pinochet (Iván Osnovikoff and Bettina Perut, Chile, 2010)
Nazion (Ernesto Ardito, Argentina, 2010)
Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán, Germany/France/Chile, 2010)
El predio (Jonathan Perel, Argentina, 2010)
Pidan por todos (Juan Capecci, Argentina, 2010)
Plusvalía (Pablo Daniel Spatola, Argentina, 2010)
Santucho...todavía (Camilo Cagni and Lucía García, Argentina, 2010)
El soldado que no fue (Leopaldo Gutiérrez, Chile, 2010)
Tierra de los padres (Nicolás Prividera, Argentina, 2011)
Tierra sublevada: Oro negro (Fernando Solanas, Argentina, 2011)
Amor de Golpe (Carla Toro y Mauricio Villareal, Chile, 2012)
Tabula rasa (Jonathan Perel, Argentina, 2013)

Appendix: Acronyms Used in Dissertation

AFI	La Asociación de Fotógrafos Independientes/Association of Independent Photographers (Chile)
ATE	Asociación Trabajadores del Estado/Association for State Workers (Argentina)
CCD	Centros Clandestino de Detención/Clandestine Detention Centers
CELS	Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales/Center for Legal and Social Studies (Argentina)
CNI	Centro Nacional de Informaciones/National Information Center (The Chilean Secret Police, as rebranded from the DINA in 1977)
DINA	Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional/National Intelligence Directorate (Chilean Secret Police)
ESMA	Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada/Navy Mechanics School (Argentina)
FONDART	Fondo Nacional para el Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes/National Fund for the Development of Culture and the Arts (Chile)
GAC	Grupo de Arte Callejero/Street Art Group (Argentina)
H.I.J.O.S.	Hijos or la Identidad y la Justicia Contra el Olvido y el Silencio/Children for Identity and Justice and Against Forgetting and Silence (Argentina)
ICAIC	Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos/Cuban Film Institute
INCAA	Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales/National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts (Argentina)
INDH	Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos/National Human Rights Institute (Chile)
INTA	Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria/National Institute of Agricultural Technology (Argentina)
MAPU	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitario/Popular Unitary Action Movement (Chile)
MCTSA	El Movimiento Contra la Tortura Sebastián Acevedo/The Sebastián Acevedo Anti-Torture Movement (Chile)
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario/Left Wing Revolutionary Movement (Chile)
NLAC	New Latin American Cinema
PCC	Partido Comunista de Chile/Chilean Communist Party
UP	Unidad Popular/Popular Unity (Chile)