

# Ice and Political Heat

## *Cultural Memory Mediates the Past*

The year 1992 marked many momentous local and global events, including the Seville World Fair. As a site of meaning five hundred years later, Seville, through the theme “Age of Discoveries,” attempted to put a positive and colorful spin on the origin of what Aníbal Quijano (1997a, 1997b), Walter Mignolo (2000, 2005), and others have productively defined as the coloniality of power, the colonial origin story of deadly rupture in the Western Hemisphere beginning in 1492.<sup>1</sup> Through rehearsing the tropes of colonialism, most instrumentally by re-creating the voyages of the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*, Spanish leaders fashioned the dense event, process, and death project of colonization into a national and global media event. In the articulation of race(ism) and power, culture was mobilized as a strategy and resource made to compete against national integrationist paradigms. Culture was a key arena for the selective management of colonial history toward producing a stable national culture in unstable times. In the aftermath of the regional isolation left by the Franco dicta-

torship, and in a transitional moment toward defining itself through national, European, and global integration, Spain viewed the Seville World Fair as an important site of historical retelling with presentist ends in mind.

By hosting the World Fair in Seville, alongside the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spanish elites worked to rebrand Spain's national image through totems of glorious pasts.<sup>2</sup> Spain's image had been plagued by violence, Franco's thirty-six year regime, the subsequent fragile democracy, and uneven integration into the European economy. Drawing on the symbols of Seville's golden era as a nexus of colonial cultural and economic exchange, the Spanish government seized the moment to showcase the region's promising future, both as a hub of technology and as an emergent metropolis. The spectacle of "Discovery" at the Seville World Fair was mobilized as a cultural resource used to tame subaltern recognition and dissent (the counterhegemonic scripting of "Conquest" and colonization by indigenous activists as five hundred years of resistance), while favorably resituating Spain within the geopolitical map of global capitalism. It was, as Yúdice might have it, an expedient use of culture in the accelerated era of globalization (2005).

In the 1992 material and representational struggles over future possibilities, an iceberg from Chile had an equally symbolic and supporting role to play on the world stage, even while it was perhaps less spectacular. In an effort to rehabilitate the country's international image, tarnished by its legacy of authoritarianism, Chilean elites sent an iceberg from Patagonian waters to the Seville World Fair. Indeed, moving an iceberg over such a large distance required immense faith in refrigeration and streamlined bureaucratic export systems, twin icons of Pinochet's economic

model, based on exporting fresh fruit for the world market (Petras and Leiva 1994). In one sense, the iceberg advertised Chile's capacity to transport perishables to Europe during the off-season, signaling to global elites that the country's neoliberal economic model would continue without so much as a ripple.<sup>3</sup> Spain's ex-colony Chile was also eager to distance itself from its image of authoritarian excess in order to *empujar* the transition toward political democracy after General Augusto Pinochet's regime, which lasted from 1973 to 1990.<sup>4</sup> In so doing, it alternately addressed, managed, reconciled, and obfuscated the violent excesses of the military junta.

Indeed, in the early 1990s, Chilean political democracy was a fragile enterprise, as many scholars have noted (Drake and Jaksic 1995; Winn 2004; Portales 2000). Pinochet still held his post as commander in chief of the military forces and had appointed himself *senador vitalicio* (senator for life). The principal obstacle of the time for "democratizing elites" was the distorted constitution, which in 1980 had been revised by Pinochet and the generals Merino, Mendoza, and Leigh to include a ban on union activity and, unsurprisingly, a grant of amnesty to state perpetrators through the 1978 Amnesty Law. As Villalobos-Ruminott states, "the amnesty procedure[s] soon revealed their efficacy, redirecting official discourse towards an ill-fated politics of impunity that appealed to well-publicized Chilean economic success to legitimize the dictum that proposed 'forgetting the errors of the past,' reconciling ourselves to the present, and advancing together united in a process of modernization and national development" (2000, 232). The legal framework for these alterations bounded up and hollowed the transition to political democracy, perpetuating the external image of Chile as a nation where the pros-

ecution of atrocities could be at least temporarily suspended, while also laying the groundwork for the erasure of systematic atrocities from the nation's institutional memory, at least for the time being.

For critics of the transition to democracy and how it was handled, the iceberg (named *el blanqueo* or, literally, “whitening”) was equated with historical erasure and analyzed as an archetype of “the economic miracle” (Moulian 1997; Richard 1998; Villalobos-Ruminott 2000). As sociologist and former Chilean presidential candidate Tomás Moulian expresses, the compulsion to forget and block the dictatorship past was in fact what defined the new democracy, at least in its early years (1997, 31).<sup>5</sup> Like the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation's Rettig Report (1991) that circulated the first year after the transition, the iceberg became an icon in the quest by elites to distance the nation from the bloody past and to stake out a niche for its democracy in the era of globalization.<sup>6</sup> The iceberg display at the Seville World Fair metonymically signified the nation's desire to submerge the dirty work of the regime in an effort to showcase emergence in the global capitalist market. Interestingly, the colonial power and the ex-colony did not differ too widely in their belief in a global meritocracy, where new technology offered the possibility for national prowess, competition, and capitalist accumulation, rebranding nations through the erasure of violence. In this sense, both nations embodied Giorgio Agamben's notion of the spectacular state, whereby new states become legitimized through spectacles of erasure (2000, 75, 84–85).<sup>7</sup>

I open with this story about the iceberg and rebranding of both Chile and Spain to illuminate how the mobilization of national symbols can reveal historical processes of memory-making and

forgetting. In the case of Chile, what was unseen or blocked by the glacier's apparent transparency? What remained hidden within the nation's mass graves, human rights archives, and national subconscious, covered up by the iceberg's long shadow and slow melting? Literary critic Lauren Berlant offers the term *national symbolic* to describe how nations mediate the national public through an "entangled cluster" of texts, which serve as links through which national identity is constructed and consolidated (1991, 1997). This is a relationship I expand on more fully in the subsequent sections, but for now want to suggest that the process of national identification gains traction through a kind of selectivity that condenses particular meaning formations, while banishing others from public visibility. Building on Berlant's work, I use the term *memory symbolic* to indicate how the national public sphere in transition is mediated and constructed by state-led initiatives (truth commissions, reports, commemorative events, memorials) and alternative forms of memory that reconstruct the past (gatherings of witnesses, public funerals, memorials) with presentist interests in mind. These are forms of memory that capture, disentangle, subdue, refuse, dilute, and otherwise tell the story of the authoritarian past and its legacies.<sup>8</sup> On the part of the state these are often symbolic strategies that assist in the process of smoothing over painful memories on the path toward national unity, strategies that in the case of Chile have aided the process of legitimizing capitalist restructuring.

Memory symbolics can be mobilized to selectively manage history in ways that reproduce state hegemony, reinscribing national identity in the fragility *after* collective violence. Alternative memory symbolics, however, can challenge and cast doubt on these limited renditions by suggesting that memory-making is

complex, fluid, unending, and incomplete; it can construct, rather than merely flatten, human agency.<sup>9</sup> The iceberg is not the only such memory symbolic that has worked to obstruct the force of memory in the nation; this book is replete with examples. It is also replete with memory symbolics that untangle the stories of those who encountered state repression and its lingering afterlife in the nation and beyond. Although I also invoke the term *aftermath*, mostly to describe political and economic legacies, I find the term *afterlife* to be closer to the material struggles and realities endured by populations living through political violence. Therefore, I define the *afterlife* of political violence as the continuing and persistent symbolic and material effects of the original event of violence on people's daily lives, their social and psychic identities, and their ongoing wrestling with the past in the present.<sup>10</sup>

### CULTURAL MNEMONICS

Starting from the rupture and afterlife of large-scale physical, psychic, and symbolic violence (Robben and Suárez-Orozco 2000),<sup>11</sup> I examine the afterlife of the Chilean dictatorship in the cultural arena. One of my central objectives is to note how the cultural realm is often a critical arena of struggle, engagement, and identification, where the past gives vitality and social meaning for the present to those directly affected by violence. This point follows what Raymond Williams discusses as a critical approach that “instead of reducing works to finished products and activities to fixed positions, is capable of discerning in good faith, the finite but significant openness of many actual initiatives and contributions” (1977, 114). In advocating Williams's fluid concept of hegemony as “a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activi-

ties, with specific and changing pressures and limits,” Michael Renov identifies how cultural analysis must “seek to comprehend the dynamic, ever-shifting conditions of significations without enthroning the process itself as a mystifying continuity” (2004, 5). Herein lies the challenge of examining cultural memory, where artists, their works, and audience engagement reshape and animate contemporary society. Working in the vein of cultural sociology, Lyn Spillman offers a valuable and accessible way to think about culture and its analysis, which prompts a parallel to the study of memory.<sup>12</sup> In this view, culture is defined as a process of meaning-making, where the “variable enactment of symbolic repertoires” creates and “allows for difference and conflict within and between social groups” (2005, 9). In parallel fashion, culture and memory are both terrains where meaning is constantly under negotiation, and it is through culture that shared meaning of memory is given salience.<sup>13</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka contends that meaning of the past “is motivated by our experience but facilitated (or impeded) by public offerings. A ‘collective memory’—as a set of ideas images, feelings about the past—is best located not in the minds of individuals, but in the resources they share” (1994, 4). It is through the gathering of individual memory threads and reconstituted social experience that symbolic memory repertoires accrue and inscribe meaning to negotiate the past in contemporary society.

Representations of political violence, such as memorials, peace parks, documentary film, and visual art, contain important clues about the afterlife and memory of violence. These are the “media of memory” where the persistence of the past makes itself felt in the present (Stier 2003). Cultural production does not provide mere repositories, reflections, and expressions of the force

of the past in the present, for they are also productive sites of social meaning where societies deal with, contest, struggle over, represent, and continue their journey through rupture. Elizabeth Jelin proposes that memories are “subjective processes anchored in experiences and in symbolic and material markers” (2003, xv), where representational sites can unveil the different meanings attached to the past in the locus of the present. In fact, as Stier explains, “memory, history and society are . . . entangled, and nowhere is this more evident than in the cultural realm” (2003, 8). Culture, then, not only offers a view into the past but is constitutive of that very past in ways that thread together and pull apart social worlds.

The notion of collective memory as a shared enterprise that is performed in cultural production set the stage for my initial research questions: What do symbolics of memory tell us about its afterlife? How do these representations offer and negotiate meaning about the experiences of collective violence in the nation? To answer these questions, I traveled to Chile on five separate occasions for field research from 1998–2004, living there for a period of a year in total. I conducted research in human rights archives primarily in Santiago, including at the *Fundación de Documentación y Archivo de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad* (Foundation for the Documentation and Archives of the Vicarage of Solidarity), an impressive collection where more than eighty thousand legal documents, victims’ testimonials, eyewitness accounts, and visual materials are housed, and at the smaller yet substantive archives of the *Fundación Salvador Allende* and the *Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos, AFDD* (Association of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared).<sup>14</sup> I also conducted ethnographic and participant research at numerous counter-memory sites throughout the urban center. The striking memo-



Figure 1. Installation memorial to the disappeared and a mural honoring Father Juan Alsina (detail). A view from Puente Bulnes on the Mapocho River, June 18, 2002. Photo by Nicole Hayward.

rials at Puente Bulnes are but one of dozens of sites that did not become central to my archival work, interviews, ethnography and textual analysis (fig. 1). Here, a wall memorial, a mural, a collage project, and more traditional religious and memorial elements, such as plaques, crosses, and flowers converge to produce a layered and multileveled viewpoint of terror's memory. Though I chose not to settle on the site as a subject of sustained inquiry, the unsettling collage, where faded portraits of those who were disappeared hang over the Mapocho River, has stayed with me throughout this project as an aesthetic imprint that, despite weathering, refuses erasure.<sup>15</sup>

Through my site work I found that one partial answer to my

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research questions on state terror, its afterlife, and representational meaning is that large-scale violence, and in particular authoritarianism, creates new forms of exclusion and thus new forms of social participation and identification. Therefore two subsequent research questions emerged in my analysis of cultural production: What subjectivities, or how people identify in the social world, and intersubjectivities, or the way people identify in the social world with each other, does state violence help to produce? How do sites of representation of collective violence help constitute and otherwise make apparent these social identities?

My position as researcher was often as an outsider, although as a second-generation Chilean I had insider knowledge about how memory constructs identities, personal meaning that when narrated and creatively embodied produces sociality. In California, in both the Bay Area (San Francisco and Oakland) and in Southern California (Los Angeles and San Diego), I participated as an “insider” in exile cultural events throughout a three-year period from 2001–2004, which provided insights that find their way into the contents of this book’s conclusion. Throughout the research, site work, and writing process, both at the sites and afar, textual, visual and interpretative analysis have been critical components and integral to my sociological imagination that incorporates multiple methodologies in the difficult effort to approximate imposed disaster and its attendant consequences.<sup>16</sup>

Since 1997, the year sociologist Tomás Moulian’s *Chile actual: Anatomía de un mito* (Chile Today: Anatomy of a Myth) was published, dozens of books and articles in cultural magazines have discussed both the distinctive character of democracy as amnesiac about the violent past, and the subaltern spaces in which mem-

ory lingers (Richard 1998, 2000, 2001; Lira 2000, 2001; Illanes 2002).<sup>17</sup> My own contribution extends this important scholarship by telling a story about sites of ruptured memory and the process of rescue, transmutation, and recovery. I view cultural memory as archival fragments, as memory symbolics, as sites of disaster, and as ways to understand the persistence of state terror in people's lives, bodies, and subjectivities. Although these cultural productions have different degrees of mobility and circulation, they share an imagination about state terror that begins from the perspective of those most affected in the nation. These productions include Villa Grimaldi, a clandestine concentration camp turned into a memorial site; *Fernando ha vuelto* (Fernando Returns), a 1998 documentary film by Silvio Caiozzi about the remains of a man who was a husband, brother, and Allende sympathizer; and the body of work by painter and torture survivor Guillermo Núñez. From outside Chile, I also consider the transnational exilic dimension of cultural memory by focusing on an art exhibit and event on the politics of memory in the San Francisco Bay Area, home of La Peña Cultural Center.<sup>18</sup>

Though my focus is on representation, state terror effects must necessarily be situated within the frame of collective mnemonics. Joining other studies that theorize and argue for contending with the haunting legacies of torture, disappearance, and the massive violence through cultural sites and their meaning (Gordon 1997; Robben 1995, 1996, 2000; Straker et al. 1992; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 2002; Young 1993; Sturken 1997; Nelson 2002; Coombes 2003; Stier 2003), I focus on visual representations and physical spaces that relate to important political historical genres (political art), offer an engagement with audiences (documentary

film), and map the collective subjectivities of state terror and its afterlife (memorial parks). Methodologically, I show how the sociality of cultural places and productions are important deposits of memory, logical places to turn to for evidence of the relationships between collective violence and national refashioning, as well as its effects.

The social projections, use, meanings, and mobilizations of cultural sites uncover effects on group identities over time. Along these lines, Jeffrey Olick discusses how collective memory “refers to the group’s sense of itself as a continuous entity through times, as well as to the manifestations of, and efforts to enhance, that sense of continuity” (2007, 86). This sense of continuity touches down through mediation. Marita Sturken notes that cultural memory “is a field of contested meanings in which Americans interact with cultural elements to produce concepts of the nation, particularly in events of trauma, where both the structures and the fractures of a culture are exposed” (1997, 2–3). In a similar vein, I show how cultural production not only is a repository of social reality but also plays an active role in constituting meaning toward a field of identification and memory. The work of memory and identity at the collective level leads us to the analytical scale of nations and nation-states that have a particular purchase on referencing group identity.

#### MEMORY-NATIONS, EXCLUSION, AND STATE VIOLENCE

Given that symbolic enactments produce systems of meaning in a nation, in periods of transition various performances of memory, such as memorialization, truth-telling processes, and so forth,

create the symbolic repertoire for the reconstruction of national identity. Max Weber defines the features of the nation-state simply as a political community based on a common language or culture in close relation to power, linking the nation to the state (1978, 1:325). Weber also identifies the nation as a community of memories, suggesting that the past forges crucial social bonds within a national territory through feelings of adhesion to the abstract entity that is the nation (1978, 1:398). These bonds are reinforced through constructions and narratives of the past, and through the selection of particular histories. As Benedict Anderson comments, the nation promotes membership through common bonds of an “imagined community,” a delimited territory that is sovereign (1991, 6).<sup>19</sup>

Like memory itself, the nation-state functions through the process of selection and also through a series of exclusions. One of the most pivotal exclusions turns on the construction of the citizen-subject. As philosopher Giorgio Agamben underscores, the nation-state’s sovereignty is instantiated through the citizen-subject, which at birth replaces the attribute of human as the primary condition of being (2000, 20–21). Therefore, citizen becomes a quintessential locator for national subjects and legal processes that emerge with the “birth of the nation,” which forcefully produce hierarchies between social groups.<sup>20</sup> Many have also characterized these exclusions as the nation-state’s inherent denial of sexual and racial difference (Balibar 1994, 58; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Omi and Winant 1994; Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem 1999). Through marginalized subjects, the nation-state constitutes and polices its boundaries to define itself, a hegemonic process that exacts new forms of consent to continually maintain the fiction of a containable and “governable” entity. Indeed, the

nation is made possible and expressed through cultural and political means wherein borders (between subjects, geographical entities, and histories) construct it as a homogenous, stable, and enduring geopolitical entity. Though national subjects are conditioned to view the nation as fixed, nations are in fact phantasmatic and inherently unstable productions. Nations also structure subjects' ability to belong.<sup>21</sup> In this light, the nation is a project that is always made, challenged, and remade through exclusionary practices as much as through inclusionary structures of meaning. Just as nations create the desire to belong, they use violence to target who is cast as marginal in the national project of reconstruction.

These entry points into nation allow me to analyze the macrostructural project of authoritarianism and its transition to political democracy. Rather than the outcome of decisions made by a few rogue military men, Chile's authoritarian regime was the byproduct of centuries of social exclusion by elite classes and the culmination of profound social challenges to that exclusion. A medical doctor who had served as Minister of Health (1939–1941) and held various elected offices, socialist politician Salvador Allende unsuccessfully ran for president in 1952, 1958, and 1964. By 1964, social unrest had made its presence on the national scene. In particular, the grave structural and economic divides between rural landless peasants and the owners of latifundios, estates in a colonial system that had persisted for more than four hundred years, took center stage in the presidential race of that year. The hemispheric system of influence ensured that the United States would pour millions of dollars into the middle-of-the-road, reform-oriented Christian Democratic candidate Eduardo Frei, who ran on the platform of land reform, in contrast to Allende's more radical promise to dismantle the serious inequities of the latifundio

system in Chile through land redistribution. Six years later, Chile's working classes would no longer be content with a modest plan of reform, and despite a close race, a massive social movement propelled Allende to the presidency in 1970.<sup>22</sup>

Allende's substantive program was to redistribute wealth and land in Chile, mainly through increasing wages by about forty percent while keeping the prices of goods static and, significantly, by nationalizing the copper industry and the bank system. These policies outraged the elite classes and multinational interests, who retaliated through a series of national and international boycotts and political complications that ultimately paralyzed the nation. Allende's political action had made visible the social fractures that existed in the nation and the degree to which the elite classes in Chile had sustained their privilege on the backs of the poorest and most marginal sectors.<sup>23</sup> By 1973, with inflation at an all-time high, the revolution had been preempted by powerful economic and ideological interests, and rumors of a military "solution" to political and economic turmoil ran high. On September 11, 1973, President Allende's socialist path was truncated by a military coup, which led to Allende's death. Human rights violations became the primary mode of dismantling all that Allende's dream of social equality entailed. Efforts by popular classes to gain access to the privileges of citizenship through the short-lived Allende presidency (1970–1973) were effectively shut down by those conditioned to police and maintain social, class, and color hierarchies.

Even long after the dictatorship's end in 1990, political democracy in Chile continued to exclude from the nation the social subjects it had fractured during the period of state violence. This was a twofold process: First, authoritarianism expelled those at the

other end of the state's accusatory finger and war machine from the "political community" through imprisonment and banishment. The specific subjects of my study are those who have been tortured, those disappeared and their relatives, and those forced into exile. Second, during political transitions, exclusions formed the basis for the system of political democracy, in many ways stripping aggrieved groups of their rights as citizens, while also transforming them into symbolic occupiers of grievance that functioned to consolidate the transition. This is no more true than in the figure of the grieving mother, the widow, and the *compañera* whose loss in Southern Cone dictatorships has stood in for the transitional nation.<sup>24</sup> Female subjectivity in this instance is literally fused with victimization despite these women's activism and protest, which I detail in chapter 4. Part of the complexity of this omission is that it is based on prior exclusions, again forming a double boundary; that is, those detained, tortured, and disappeared were first the most disenfranchised subjects of the nation (working-class, indigenous, female, queer).

During the transition to political democracy, especially in the early period, these subjects still did not belong to the nation, since many spheres continued to be minimally democratized. Democracy, as the standard term that is used in the literature is "minimally, a governmental system that provides for peaceful competition for positions of power at regular intervals, open participation in the election of leaders and policies, and civil and political liberties that ensure the legitimacy of competition and participation" (Paley 2001, 3). As Julia Paley observes, there are many descriptions of what Chile's democracy has been. The most provocative that circulated in the public sphere include "*democracia restringida* (restricted democracy), *democracia cupular* (elite democracy),

*democracia lite* (low-fat democracy), and *democracia entre comillas* (democracy in quotation marks).”

A more expanded treatment rethinks the limited terms of a political democracy that constrains contemporary and historical agency. To summarize these constraints, I would argue that those affected by state-sponsored terror had little legal or formal recourse, exemplified by a fraught and stacked court system and constitutional restraints, which dramatically limited any possibility for citizenship participation in a traditional sense. In its effort to rebrand the nation as a global capitalist player, the state again reproduced exclusion, whereby dead, damaged, and disappeared bodies became the debris of capitalist restructuring.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the state created new market subjects and citizens by erasing the memory and subjectivity of the dead, the tortured, and other survivors.

There is one final theoretical frame that cannot be vanished. Dead bodies come from the labyrinths of the interlocking systems of empire and state violence. As Menjívar and Rodríguez have argued (2005, 4) and as countless declassified CIA documents now make clear, political violence and authoritarianism in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s can be attributed, at least in part, to U.S. dominance in the regional system.<sup>26</sup> These authors note how state violence cannot be exclusively explained as a legacy of colonialism, since the rational and bureaucratized character of terror is consistent with the Weberian model of a modern nation embedded within the exigencies of a global system. Indeed, state-sponsored terror works through the modern political system of bureaucratic societies (Rejali 1994; Menjívar and Rodríguez 2005). State violence enacts, through the framework of the modern nation-state, the empire’s and national elite’s effort to maintain and expand hegemony.

## MODERNITY AND FORMS OF KNOWING

As scholars have commented, the contemporary character of memory in Chile is fragmentary, yet for all its lapses, memory remains ubiquitous (Huysen 1995; Nora 1992; Olick 2003). It also leaves traces. Jeffrey Olick notes a historical shift with respect to memory: “Where premodern societies lived within the continuous past, contemporary societies have separated memory from the continuity of social reproduction; memory is now a matter of explicit signs, not of implicit meanings” (2003, 3). Olick suggests that postmodern memory is constructed from residues, a point that leads us back to the question of the afterlife of violence. Memory’s trace is a materially embodied image of the violence of modernity. Indeed, World War II, with the Jewish Holocaust and the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, is the quintessential period that makes evident how modernity erupts as violence. The remnants of the Holocaust, which include ashes, hair, and the remains of shoes from ovens and gas chambers in Nazi camps, materialize, however obliquely, to make their claim on the past. Such artifacts constitute what Stier calls “Holocaust icons,” or those objects that stand witness to horrific events and communicate a piece of their enormity. These pieces of lives lost, such as a child’s shoes, red and gray and black shoes, leggings, slippers, and so forth,<sup>27</sup> are all ghostly representations that signal modern atrocity.<sup>28</sup> However, their visual display cannot ensure that we are somehow getting closer to the matter of living through, or perishing from, something as unfathomable as the Holocaust experience. Scholarly analysis requires paying close attention to what these traces say about modern forms of power.

Sketching the effects of many forms of modernity’s violence,

Avery Gordon describes the haunting by the inevitable and often untamable ghosts of modernity (Marx's ghost in the machine) that are a constitutive feature of social life (1997, 7). For Gordon, ghostly matters are those things that are unseen and therefore difficult to measure, but that are nevertheless a seething presence in the social world. In many ways, the concept of ghostly matters is an entrance point for discussing the complexity of social worlds and the difficulty of rendering them through conventional disciplinary approaches, which is why Gordon gestures to the importance of interdisciplinary work.<sup>29</sup> Ghostly matters produce hauntings, the traces of power on subjects and their social world. Therefore, how do we make knowledge that does not foreclose the rich texture of social life?

Gordon's notion of ghostly matters creates a multivalent conceptual frame that allows me to stage three of the book's themes. First, ghostly matters are those themes that are either absent from power's purview or conditioned and banished into invisibility. Second, ghostly matters challenge the compartmentalization of knowledge that is overly invested in the empirical. Gordon writes that "the real itself and its ethnographic or sociological representations are also fictions, albeit powerful ones that we do not experience as fictional, but as true" (11). These are the multiple modes of representation embedded within the constitution of the "real" that are needed to escape from, or at least to see, these epistemological pitfalls. Third, ghostly matters are about complex subjectivity. Tracking complex personhood requires an understanding of how the social world is discursively constructed, as well as "an engagement with the social structuring practices that have long been the province of sociological inquiry. It is these that draw our attention to the multiple determination and sites of power in

which narratives of and about our culture and its artifacts are produced and disseminated” (11). Gordon continues, “If we want to study social life well, and if in addition we want to contribute, in however small a measure, to changing it, we must learn how to identify hauntings and reckon with ghosts, must learn how to make contact with what is without doubt often painful, difficult, and unsettling” (23). In studying the afterlife of atrocity, I take as central Gordon’s points about what is vanished, the “real” of complex subjectivity. Representation offers an entry into these three themes. Memory symbolics also offers a way to think about conditions of historical knowledge and agency after violence, engaging aspects of the social sciences and the humanities as critical access points by which to address traces.

In her stunning work on the memoryscape of Hiroshima in the aftermath of the atom bomb, Lisa Yoneyama similarly addresses the possibility for historical agency and knowledge in a way that bridges the objective/subjective divide of modern disciplines on the one hand, and postmodernist and deconstructionist critique on the other. Memory becomes a form of mediation that does not immediately discount the possibility for individual agency within the historical structures that postmodernism has sometimes suggested (1999, 33). As Yoneyama asserts, “By formulating the question of historical knowledge in terms of memory, and by illuminating its constructed and mediated nature, we can determine more precisely the conditions of power that shape the ways in which that past is conveyed and ask how such representations interpolate and produce subjects” (ibid.). Historical agency can be imagined through how the past is reinterpreted and renarrated in contemporary conditions. This leads to a central epistemological inquiry of my book: if management and con-

cealment are primary modes of hegemonic historical transitions, where indeed can memory be found?<sup>30</sup>

In her work on postapartheid South Africa, Coombes explores how visual culture is the starting place for an analysis of memory and nation building, where social fractures loom large in the attempt to redefine the nation. Coombes analyzes nationally visible cases that highlight the debates over culture within the public sphere during the early remaking of the nation; these “possibilities on offer” by artists show the range of imaginaries in the new period (2003). As scholar Mieke Bal puts it, cultural analysis differs from history in that it “is based on a keen awareness of the critic’s situatedness in the present, the social and cultural present from which we look, and look back, at the objects that are always already of the past, objects that we take to define our present culture” (1999, 1). In reading film, memorials, and paintings as social texts, I follow a tradition in sociology and cultural studies, indebted to Durkheim, where the social world is viewed as a system of signs whose meaning can be interpreted (Seidman 1997, 43). My analysis of cultural objects as social expression follows this view to acknowledge how society is “deeply cultural or . . . organized by signs and meanings patterned in relations of identity and difference” (ibid.). In other words, I discuss practices of and conflict produced by visual mediums within the particular cultural and social milieu of Chile. As Michael Emmison and Philip Smith outline, researching the visual has often been “marginalized from the core concerns of social sciences” (2000, 2). Much is lost without visual analysis to track the effects of authoritarianism in people’s lived daily encounter with structures and to illustrate how these constitute meaningful social relations toward deeper democratic possibilities. In fact, through gestures,

icons, metonyms, abstraction, and so forth, the visual is sometimes the only archive of what is better left unfound and unsaid.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the visual register often adds important dimensions to written testimonials, creating archives that function as exceptions to the culture of silence so present in the afterlife of collective violence.

Even while the intersections of the work on trauma and cultural memory are useful and generative for the postauthoritarian period in Chile, it is beyond the scope of my book to rehearse the vast and continually expanding literatures and conceptual framings on the topic.<sup>32</sup> How can memory be analytically approximated in a manner that does not, as Todorov would ask, abuse its origin? Critic María Teresa Rojas tells us that art, as with other cultural sites, can be the voice of official memory or an alternative to it (M. T. Rojas 2000, 299). I believe this classic binary in memory literature between official memory and countermemory as two opposing sites of contention, representation, and possibility occludes important gradations in terms of the labor that cultural production and symbols perform.<sup>33</sup> In part, this is a question about the limits of epistemologies as modes of understanding the past that cannot apprehend, beyond binary analytics, how memory can be constitutively constructed. In this book I make explicit how these cultural productions constitute, fashion, rehearse, and otherwise contend with the memory of collective violence.

#### SKETCHES OF THE PAST

Although Allende's socialist project had been under sustained attack by global and national conservatives since its inception, September 11, 1973, marked the beginning of the end of a political

dream that involved millions of people who had worked to create revolutionary and cultural change through *poder popular*.<sup>34</sup> The military takeover that dramatically overturned the socialist path in Chile was initially accomplished by bombing La Moneda Presidential Palace and through the death of democratically elected President Salvador Allende.<sup>35</sup> With a cast of characters that included Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, the CIA, Chilean elites and their puppets, U.S. imperialist and cold war ideologies and policies pushed national conditions until they “screamed.”<sup>36</sup> This momentous time was a national, and perhaps global, historical shift and irrevocable breach, certainly not singular in its importance but at least pivotal at that particular juncture of world political change and collective social possibility. Allende was a charismatic leader who offered, like Simón Bolívar, José Martí, and others, a hopeful if fully unrealized civil rights and economic agenda for the nation and a politically democratic revolutionary path for the Americas. In stark contrast, the military resolution that generals Merino, Mendoza, Leigh, and Pinochet imposed came to embody a social, economic, and cultural nightmare, perhaps more in line with the autocratic tendencies of the nation that continue to haunt Chilean social and political realities.<sup>37</sup> The truncated dreams of U.S. black civil rights leaders and the assassinations of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King can be referenced to describe the terrible breach that Salvador Allende’s death and subsequent state terror produced, not only for national supporters, but also for individuals and social movements around the planet. For instance, it is still common to hear detailed accounts, almost like flashbulb memories, of where people were located when they heard the end of Allende’s final broadcast transmitted by Radio Magallanes: “Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my

last words. I am sure that my sacrifice will not be in vain; I am sure that it will at least be a moral lesson which will punish felony, cowardice and treason” (Cockcroft 2000, 242). Abductions, collective graves, disappearances, military curfews, torture, media censorship, forced exile, and a generalized climate of fear followed the military coup. Poor urban communities, such as Pintera outside Santiago, were effectively occupied by military forces, leading to bitter and deadly street battles that have marked the political perspectives, structural opportunities, and social identities of subsequent generations.

In a process that took many years, but was especially acute in the seventies and early eighties, violence was used against Allende activists and sympathizers as a means to disarticulate mass social mobilizations and to install a counterrevolutionary project. Especially in the first period, from 1973–1978, many exiles who fled the country, including my family members and family friends, had been victims of concentration camps that were set up around Chile, were forced into hiding, and were under constant persecution and surveillance by the military. Their homes were subject to random ransacking and their families were threatened. In short, millions witnessed and bore the extremes of collective effervescence and complete rupture in a very short window of time, with grave consequences for social and individual being.

One of the key ideologies and practices of authoritarianism was the dramatic turn toward privatization and deregulation, where the state rescinded its social contract with its citizens. Beginning in 1974, Chile was in many respects the global test case for neoliberalism as Pinochet’s dictatorship was characterized as “one of the most comprehensive free market restructurings ever attempted worldwide” (Paley 2001, 7).<sup>38</sup> This was to form the main engine

of continuity in the transition period. As authoritarianism increasingly came under local, regional, national, and international pressure in the 1980s and 1990s for its overt human rights violations, nations began to shift toward “democratic governments.” In so doing they were faced with stepped-up pressure to instill or continue free market principles from the “Washington Consensus,” the compendium of global lending institutions dominated by the United States. In his inaugural speech, Patricio Aylwin, the first president of Chile (1990–1994) after the return to political democracy, said that his main priority would be to deal with the human rights violations and address the “social debt” that neoliberal policies had accrued under Pinochet (1997, 152). Aylwin chose to direct attention to the military and its “masculine spirit” as a representation of the nation, rather than propose an open and public process for addressing its abominable role in dictatorship violence, a position that was to continue with the publication of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation’s Rettig Report in 1991. As he stated in the same speech, “Chile has always loved and admired its armed forces. It is identified with the nation’s glory, with the masculine spirit of Chileans, and with the sacrificial actions it takes in daily life or in the context of grave emergencies. Bearing the cross of reconciliation in a truly united Chile requires the removal of obstacles that still prejudice those feelings” (ibid.). Reconciliation as a form of concealment operated through patriarchal pacts of transition, forcing closure over what had yet to be revealed.

#### ATTENDING TO CONCEALMENT

My book is a cautionary tale to other nations transitioning from authoritarian forms of political organization to democracy. Many

states around the world, including Guatemala, Uruguay, Argentina, El Salvador, Vietnam, Peru, and South Africa have paid a high social price for sustaining structural inequality through terror, war, and apartheid. In reconstruction periods or in periods of transitions to democracy, nations that have experienced violence are forced to come to terms with the past and to engage a diverse group of citizens and victims into a new imaginary for the nation. Through truth commissions, reparations, and the processing of war criminals and peace accords, some contemporary postauthoritarian experiences of nation building have been successful at integrating the past into a new narrative and articulation of the national democratic project, but those individuals who have suffered the strong hand of power may never be able to stitch their lives together in a similar fashion. Reconciliation processes, “putting the past behind us,” are central ways that governments get on with the business of reconstructing the nation, often at the expense of victims and their families. As subsequent chapters show, superficial approaches to reconciliation alone produce a project of nation making that is unsustainable, jeopardizing the core principles and practices of democracy. In other words, while power from above moves to close the issue of violence for the nation, from below the heterogeneous effects of violence constantly threaten to rupture and disarticulate the transitional national project.

This is nowhere more the case than in the subjectivities of those who have had to persist in the face of unspeakable violence. In one of those strange moments of fieldwork, I met Carmen Vivanco, an elderly survivor whose struggle and post-state violence identity itself are symbolic of the uneven and confounding memory processes in the nation. I was interviewing Viviana Díaz—a torture survivor, the daughter of a disappeared militant, and the cur-

rent president of the internationally recognized Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (AFDD)—when Vivanco, now in her eighties, slowly entered the room and brought us tea on a tray. I gasped as I recognized her image from Patricio Guzmán’s now classic film *Obstinate Memory* (1997). In my mind, I quickly ran through the list of her Disappeared family members, those she lists before the camera and who I know by memory after seeing the film dozens of times. Díaz turned to me as if to reassure me. After Vivanco left the room, Díaz told me that she came to the AFDD office every day, and had been doing so ever since the group’s founding almost thirty years ago. After attending many events and visiting the office of the AFDD several times, I began to understand how relatives of the Disappeared were family to each other, linked through a history of collective tragedy and personal loss. The close bonds formed by suffering have created an important human rights movement in Chile that continues to demand accountability. Carmen Vivanco’s daily life, like that of the other mothers, wives, husbands, brothers, and sisters that form the core membership of the AFDD, is the expression of an identity produced out of the experience of dictatorship violence and incomplete justice in the democratic era.

In the early years of the transition in Chile, the Rettig Report, the release of white doves in the national stadium during President Aylwin’s inauguration speech, the human rights discursive regime of “never again,” and so on were all dramatic performances and rhetorical strategies by elite politicians to represent and therefore inaugurate a return to democracy as the new organization of the nation. For Southern Cone authoritarianism, the reconfiguration of national belonging has operated within cultures of impunity (Kaiser 2005), the diminished power of constitu-

tionalism (Lira 2000), and radical economic restructuring, which includes the imposition and alleged triumph of capital over labor and labor's agency. All of these tactics work to enhance the social trauma of the dictatorship years and to block the memory of popular struggle and achievement during the Allende revolutionary project.

#### WHERE MEMORY DWELLS

One piece of the story I explore in the book is where memory is absent and whom it continues to disturb. The other piece is where it can be found, recuperated and even incorporated, though never fully, to expand state power. In conditions where extreme forms of physical, spiritual, psychological, and emotional destruction target collectivities (as do conquest, slavery, genocide, invasion, state violence, femicide, decimation of welfare, imprisonment/torture during late capitalism, the "War on Terror," AIDS and its politics, and so on), it is impossible to tame memory, since these events produce an excess that can never fully be incorporated into hegemonic projects. I have come to think about the "dwelling" of the memory of torture, disappearance, and forced exile—the central topics of this book—as a double entendre: as a literal "living with" and inhabitation of bodies, psyches, and spaces; and as a lingering presence, one that persists, insists, resists, and exceeds the containment of these bodies and of the nation's boundaries, the afterlife of the event of violence. Those memories that dwell go unperceived by a state in transition, since its very existence is oriented toward the future, eliding or making increasingly invisible the past in its effort to get beyond it. Illuminating where and how memories dwell in specific cultural locations allows for a

“real-world” application of Benjamin’s dialectics of memory, which centers historical knowledge as a force for present efforts toward social change.<sup>39</sup> How can we access memory’s ephemeral and complex nature in situations of collective violence where experiences of loss, trauma, fracture, and instability are present? I contend that these experiences often accrue social visibility and audibility only through cultural production and representation. And it is precisely the accumulation and sociality of these memories that dwell, those memories emergent in cultural production, that may ultimately expose transitional states’ efforts to force closure over violence and its afterlife.

*Where Memory Dwells* reflects a search for the memory of atrocities, both on a personal level and through my scholarly work. In my search for what happened to family members, family friends, and those that I have now come to include in my imaginary as part of my extended family, whether they be archival figures or people whose work and journeys I have come to know and deeply respect, cultural representation showed me the vivid afterlife of violence. My research into state terror and its effects posed great ethical challenges, both because of its painful and ephemeral content and because of the inherent difficulty in adequately writing about such matters. One of the ways I resolved the dilemma (and burden) of representation is by realizing for myself (and suggesting to the reader) that this is always a partial story, and one motivated by my own ironic position. I came to the United States as a young child under conditions of exile and, after living in the United States for more than thirty years, I finally decided to apply for citizenship only after holding a green card became insecure after the events of September 11, 2001.<sup>40</sup> Since my childhood, identification with the U.S. empire’s audacity has conditioned my

social and political perception and intellectual sensibilities. My return to the ghosts of Chile's violence has been accomplished only through a treacherous, partial, and deeply saddening journey to the other side of what was lost and what remains to be found. Another way I have addressed the research of what remains is by engaging the work of survivors, artists, docents, and scholars as an acknowledgment of the unfinished project of deconstruction and reconstruction. This is what sociologist Denise da Silva Ferreira thoughtfully suggested to me once as the work of generations of scholars.

Much of what follows analyzes forms of cultural memory that complicate the uneven story the nation has told through its institutional processes. In this sense, I cover the period of transition leading up to January 2006, when Michelle Bachelet, a torture survivor and daughter of General Bachelet (who died from a heart attack caused by his imprisonment), was elected president of Chile, beginning to overtly and in more subtle ways encode her discourses with testimonial gestures of her own experiences. The death of General Augusto Pinochet on December 10, 2006, coincidentally on International Human Rights Day, has unleashed other public memory formations from which future work on cultural memory can build on what I set forth here.

There have been important markers of memory in the nation, periods where the rupture of national silence have shifted public commentary and understanding. These markers follow temporal sequences as much as they do the political framework of the Concertación transition, which aimed to solidify capitalist economic and social hegemony. For instance, the thirty-year anniversary of Allende's overthrow, in 2003, marked a momentous shift in memory politics in the nation, where the floodgates of what had been

a taboo public topic were thrown open in all forms of commemoration, tribute, memorial display, and so forth. And after years of little national recognition, Guillermo Núñez, the painter of torture scenes, received the prestigious 2007 National Prize of Fine Arts. It is important to state, then, that what I discuss in this book is based on shifting national conditions and possibilities for debate, and shifting uses and abuses of memory. These cultural productions are rich sites from which to understand what has been left out of the nation in transition and how geopolitical histories continue to impact transnational identity.

A nation of seventeen million people, Chile may seem marginal within U.S. sociology, but it has been a focus of U.S.-based Latin American Studies since even Allende's presidency.<sup>41</sup> The economic and political exigencies of globalization, much as the Cold War in an earlier moment, give an international focus particular currency. Although Chile was a pivotal country of political battles during the Cold War turmoil, representing in Henry Kissinger's eyes "the irresponsibility of its own citizens" (Burbach and Cantor 2004), as a story of counterrevolution it often resides outside the purview of centers of power, even while there are structural, material, and historical links to U.S. foreign policy and economic globalization.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the narrative of post-Allende Chile and the political transition in a U.S. context invokes a different form of historical memory.<sup>43</sup> In particular, using Latin American scholar Walter D. Mignolo's concept of border gnoseology, as knowledge from a subaltern perspective, which is "conceived from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial world system" (Mignolo 2000, 11), I work to make visible a counterhistory, within the contemporary global order, that disturbs and unsettles hierarchies of state and global power, intervention, national hierarchies, and historical memory

through its force in people's lived experiences that emerge in cultural memory. Yoneyama, writing on the indelible traces and spatial articulations of memory in Hiroshima, notes that memory is a useful way to point out the constructedness of national and global histories (1999). Chile as an economic miracle and "democratic" government has been secured through global and national political arenas that eclipse the complexity of memory formations, writing out of history those who suffered in their bodies and minds the political heat of the Cold War and its long shadow.

WHILE HERE I FOCUS on place and memorialization, in the following chapters I think about visual culture, especially through memorial sites, art, and documentation. Chapter 2 discusses Villa Grimaldi, a former concentration camp turned Peace Park that has been preserved by a group of concerned witnesses, survivors, and human rights activists. This place was one site where the counterrevolution was won on the path to economic liberalization.<sup>44</sup> Places of extermination and torture, and their transformation during the transition to democracy, present a rich view of authoritarian rule and democratic consolidation. Unlike other concentration camps, mass graves, and prisons that constitute national symbols of atrocity, this memorial site has rarely been studied by scholars (Aguilar 1999, 2000; Richard 2001, Meade 2004). Yet it is one of the few sites of torture in Latin America that has been preserved as a memorial (Meade 2004, 193).<sup>45</sup> Like memorial sites that now have greater public recognition in Chile, it exists only through the work of a group of concerned activists and former prisoners who wanted to remember this brutal history in the public sphere and promote cultural activities that educate about state terror. I study Villa Grimaldi by incorporating little-known gov-

ernment documents and testimonies of the site (e.g., C. Rojas ca. 1981), while also providing a social, political, and cultural analysis of its present-day role in the nation. However, Villa Grimaldi is more than a story about Chile's dictatorship and the recuperation of memory. Through an analysis of the Villa Grimaldi concentration camp and the Peace Park, we get a better picture of the multiple modes of resistance and remembrance that, I argue, are fundamental and not contrary to the larger project of democracy in Latin America.

Similarly, as I discuss in chapter 3, in its logic and focus on matters of torture, Guillermo Núñez's art holds coheres so completely that it shines a spotlight onto the flawed and incomplete national processes of political democracy. I consider what Núñez's art says about the experience of torture to avail the social costs of authoritarianism and to expose social forgetting about whose bodies paid (and continue to pay) for Chile's global economic model. I focus on Núñez's blindfolded captivity, testimonial practice, and aesthetic interventions to argue that the experience of torture is not only relived daily, as the literature on trauma would suggest, but produces an impossibility of reattachment to national projects. The tortured subjects' dismemberment is never fully re-membered, perhaps until the terms of broad social justice are imagined and put into motion. Rather than being stuck in trauma's never ending cycle and in a static past, Núñez's subjective identification with torture and his aesthetic practices imagine a different past oriented, one toward the possibilities of democracy in the future.

Chapter 4 considers material disappearance and its cinematic witness during political violence in terms of those that remain. The act of disappearing a body can occur within a period of min-

utes, hours, or even months. It can happen through assassination, either through a single shot or through multiple gun wounds, with the body deposited into a collective and unmarked grave. Or disappearance can take place through slow, methodical torture that ultimately produces death and the dumping of the body, perhaps into the sea. Though the act of disappearance may vary, its effects continue over lifetimes. What happens to a family, to its members, *after* disappearance? Documentary can defamiliarize what we know or think we know about disappearance by revealing its effects on subjects' lives. I discuss the conventions, constructions, and silences of gender, military discourses, the family, burial, survival, and exile, and how documentary problematizes these issues when the subject is disappearance.

Before, during, and after the dictatorship, documentary film served variegated social and political purposes: First, documentaries archived the counterrevolution by the political Right, which culminated in President Allende's death, the death of a social dream, and the installation of the military dictatorship. Documentaries of these events have traveled the world over and formed a part of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary history. Second, outside of the Southern Cone, documentaries informed audiences about the violence of state terrorism, condemned its authors, and mobilized international condemnation of the military junta. From the locus of dictatorship, films made in exile were spurned as subversive and were virtually censored by their inaccessibility to distribution channels. By contrast, in *el exterior* they triggered human rights movements and served as visual testimony and witness for extreme rights violations. Third, documentaries worked to disrupt public debate about the past, specifically those by directors who intended to rupture the political consensus of *olvido* (forget-

ting) in the technocratic, seamless management of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.<sup>46</sup> Fourth, documentaries tackled the persistent effects of living with loss in everyday life and its very personal and intimate manifestations, including sexual torture and the psychological effects of captivity. And fifth, documentary films imagined and reconnected communities of Chileans from Santiago to London, recording the unending encounter with loss and its productive use among exile activists.

Because of its constitutive role both nationally and transnationally, I return to documentary film in chapter 5 to analyze culture and exile. I also include other forms of cultural memory that address how the counterrevolution has produced the identities of a second generation of Chileans living in the United States. Through staging memory during protests, founding and running cultural centers, and curating cultural exhibits, Chilean exiles (and their daughters and sons) form a hemispheric bridge of memory. In this chapter I show how the transgenerational transmission of memory of the counterrevolution has shaped the political identities of subsequent generations through key political events, such as Pinochet's arrest and his death, that activate communities of exiles. Located far away both temporally and spatially from its "original" instantiation, the memory symbolics of exile becomes an important form of political and pan-Latina/o identification with other groups who have suffered similar experiences of terror.

At a time when the stakes are exceedingly high for populations living through the aftermath of terror, civil wars, political violence, and the like, it is imperative that scholarship find ways to write about the structuring conditions and agency possibilities, in short the complex personhood, of those that continue to live with these experiences in their bodies, minds, memories, and daily realities.

The triangulation between political violence, market objectives, and transitions to democracy—as the rhetoric about the war in Iraq hides and the aftermath of genocide in Guatemala reveals—has indeed become a rule rather than an exception in the current era of globalization. And where democratic transition shows up, as it has in all reaches of the globe, memories of atrocity, though not exclusive, are formulated and cemented through state endeavors. We must tread with caution, and instead of taking policies at face value, work to understand how it is that people perceive, condition, think about, and act upon the legacies of direct violence and its reiteration in ways that directly negotiate the imprint of power.

As these chapters begin to sketch, what was submerged beneath the water and leaking from the refrigerated ship container was not the iceberg's melted runoff but the shadow crevices of disappearances, torture, and forced exile; the bodies and social debris of economic and political restructuring from the nation's counter-revolution against the Allende government, its supporters, and political revolutionary change. In this sense, shadow crevices from the past, alive and dwelling in the present, form a pathway toward the ontology of future possibility.