The Past Is Present

Irma Flaquer’s image as a 22-year-old Guatemalan reporter stars from the pages of a 1960 Time magazine, her eyes blackened by a government mob that didn’t like her fearless stance. She never gave up, fighting with her pen against the long dictatorship, suffering a car bomb explosion in 1970, then being dragged by her hair from her car one October ten years later and disappearing.

I knew she was courageous. I became intrigued by her relentless determination—why did she keep on writing? However, the case was already old even in 1996, when the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IAPA) assigned me the investigation for its new Impunity Project. Irma was one of Guatemala’s 45,000 disappeared—one of thousands in Latin America, men and women forcibly vanished, mostly killed. Yet I learned from the investigation that disappearance is a crime against humanity, a crime not subject to a statute of limitations.

And I also learned from Irma’s courageous sister Anabella that it really is a crime that never ends. “They took my moral support, my counsellor; in killing her, they stole my human right,” Anabella told IAPA members at a Los Angeles meeting. “I was orphaned again, condemned for the rest of my life to not know what happened to my sister...”

Anabella taught me that the past is always present. In Miami, where she has lived for more than 40 years, she might just seem to be the pet-loving, doting grandmother that she indeed is. She might have chosen to remain invisible—a silent victim. Instead, spurred by my investigation, Anabella’s determination and the steadfast leadership of the IAPA’s Ricardo Trotti, Irma’s case became the first the organization brought before the inter American Commission on Human Rights. In 2001, in a so-called friendly agreement of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights and a friendly agreement, monuments were built; scholarships were set up. And a funeral mass was finally held in Guatemala for the disappeared journalist. Ricardo and Anabella showed me how reconstructing memory could help strengthen democratic institutions.

My investigation turned into a book, Disappeared: A Journalist Silenced, The Story of Irma Flaquer (Seal Press 2004), but when I sought to publish it in Spanish, I was told, “People are tired of hearing about the war. They want to forget the past.” I wanted to tell the publishers (Seal Press 2004), but when I sought to publish it in Spanish, I was told, “People are tired of hearing about the war. They want to forget the past.” I wanted to tell the publishers...

...but when I sought to publish it in Spanish, I was told, “People are tired of hearing about the war. They want to forget the past.” I wanted to tell the publishers...

In 2007, in Miami, where I have lived for more than four decades, I was told, “People are tired of hearing about the war. They want to forget the past.” I wanted to tell the publishers...

Finally, after many years, the book has appeared in Spanish: Desaparecida, Una Periodista Silenciada (Sophas/Hoja del Norte, 2012). I get e-mail messages now from young Guatemala wanting to know about Irma’s legacy.

I’m tempted to dedicate this issue to the memory of Irma Flaquer, who would not have been silenced until she was forcibly taken on October 16, 1980—33 years ago. But instead, I’ll dedicate it to Anabella and to all the relatives and friends and witnesses who keep the struggle for truth and justice alive, who have taught us that the past is never really past.

Sovereign

Santander

EDITOR’S LETTER BY JUNE CAROLYN ERICK

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Beyond Mad Men A Review by Simon Romero

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ON THE COVER

Marcos Andújar made this portrait of Ana Barriomoso de Karszniaiczik, mother of Clara Karszniaiczik, arrested and disappeared in Argentina on October 28, 1976.
I visited the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos in Santiago, Chile, two years ago. It was a heart-rending experience. To enter the museum, I moved through a stark and subterranean passage and found myself in a somber space of transition. There, a wall of photographs transported me back in time—long ago in a messy graduate student lounge in Cambridge, Massachusetts, four of us stood in shock, watching television footage of airplanes strafing the government palace, La Moneda, tanks rumbling down city streets, and people fleeing, stumbling, looking backward in fear. I remembered how we began to sense that we were witnessing the end of a dream shared across a student generation that believed in the possibility and promise of peaceful revolution. For us, these images from Chile in 1973 evoked Armageddon. In Cambridge, we held hands and wept.

Almost four decades later at the museum, I watched the same television footage of airplanes, tanks, and people and I stopped to read the newspaper articles and the red and black posters promising a new world. The artistic energy of the protesters lived on in their communication: injustice and inequity could be vanquished. Then I was confronted with how this message had been rebuffed—I walked past the iron bed intended to accentuate electrical shocks, the tiny shoes and dolls of the children held captive with their parents, the letters, journals, and mementoes of lives cut short. Gradually, however, the museum’s prison-like feel gave way to an architecture of light and hope as the exhibits unfolded over four floors.

Along the way was a soaring atrium, lined with candles, the photos of the disappeared forming a broad, vertical collage, faces caught in a moment. This was my generation. Had these young people not been killed without a trace—disappeared—they would now be active in many walks of life; they would have become parents and grandparents; they would have experienced the hopes, disappointments, joys, and sorrows that the rest of us have known. Some might have made important contributions to the arts, or to the sciences, or to public life. Some might have continued to work for a more just society. In Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay, El Salvador, Paraguay and other countries also, so many lives of that revolutionary generation of the 1960s and 1970s are lost to us.

At the same time, all these years later, my own understanding of the very real threats embodied in radical social and political change had grown, and I could imagine the extent to which these young people represented a scourge of upheaval and insecurity to many in their societies. I appreciated the idealism of the young, and hoped I had not turned cynical in wondering what might have happened had the forces of order not put a stop to their experiment in protest and participation. The museum captured the moment, it evoked memories of shared experiences, and it forced me to reflect on how authoritarian and democratic political institutions are born, sustain themselves, and die.

When I returned to my office at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, I spoke with colleagues about my museum experience in Santiago. Many of them had similar experiences, and the gray-haired amongst us shared personal stories of where we were and what we
There is much to remember of that time in Latin America about the lives lost and beliefs betrayed; of the consequences of protest, repression and violence.

were doing when violent conflicts and political changes took place. One remembered being part of a march in Montevideo that ended brutally when the military cleared the streets on horseback—not in the 19th century, mind you, but in the 1960s. Another mentioned literary works that interpreted those times; another the work of a famous sculptor who evoked collective experiences of the past; another spoke of the altars to memories created for the Day of the Dead; yet another the works of a famous sculptor who evoked collective experiences of the past; another of the ways that histories of violence and repression influenced new constitutions based on democratic expectations; while still another warned of unresolved tensions in some countries about how to understand the past.

Yes, we agreed, there is much to remember of that time in Latin America about the lives lost and beliefs betrayed; of the consequences of protest, repression, violence, and resistance, of regime changes and political aftermaths. Through scholarship and testimony, we are now well aware of the extent to which military governments in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Guatemala made systematic use of violence, repression, disappearances, and fear to suppress resistance, protest, and human rights. But someone also spoke about the case of Mexico, where the military was largely marginalized from direct engagement in politics, but the machin- ery of the dominant party-state was nevertheless effective in subduing conflict and claims for democracy, including the use of systematic co-optation and repression of dissent. In Peru, another colleague made reference to how a civilian regime re-established state authority in the context of an ongoing and violent rebellion and, at the same time, significantly narrowed the space for democratic dissent in these and other countries, when civil and military authoritarians held power, tens of thousands of individuals were imprisoned, killed, or disappeared, and millions lived with restricted freedoms and heightened vulnerability, despite many brave moments of resistance.

Repeatedly, my colleagues and I discussed the importance of understanding how such experiences become woven into collective memories of particular times and places and how they influence societies and their future. It was through such discussions that the Democracy and Memory in Latin America Collaborative was born in the months after I visited the museum. At the broadest level, we decided, the Collaborative would assess the authoritarian past and the collective memories it embodied and their implications for the development of democratic governments in the region. Our approach would be broad and multidisciplinary. We would focus on the experiences of many countries in Latin America, and we would seek to spark discussions across disciplinary, geographic and institutional boundaries. In time-honored academic tradition, of course, we would organize a conference, but that was clearly not sufficient for all the suggestions that emerged. In the end, we decided that we should also schedule special lectures, art exhibits, theatrical and musical events, courses, and films. We could engage our sister organizations across the university in planning and augmenting these events.

The ideas kept coming. One colleague suggested that these events should begin on September 11, 2013, the 40th anniversary of the Chilean coup, and another indicated how fitting it would be for the events to culminate in an altar and memorial at Harvard’s Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology on November 2, the Day of the Dead. Our Brazil Studies Program was eager to mark the 49th anniversary of the 1964 coup in Bra-
The Democracy and Memory Collaborative looks at—among many other issues—how memories survive and are transmitted across generations.

To disappear is to vanish, to become missing, to be suspended in a limbo without physical evidence of what might have been. To disappear causes friends and relatives anguish for years and decades. Legally, forcible disappearances are crimes against humanity—they have no end.

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Merilee Grindle is the director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS) and Edward S. Mason Professor of International Development at the Harvard Kennedy School. Her most recent book is Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective (Harvard University Press, 2012).

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Because They Were Taken Alive

Forced Disappearance in Latin America

BY KIRSTEN WELD

In Guatemala City, a single garage light has been burning continuously for almost thirty years. The garage’s owner, a woman now in her nineties, cannot bring herself to turn it off. On May 15, 1984, her son, Rubén Amilcar Farfán, left the house early as he usually did, headed for the university. But later that afternoon, friends of his running the doorbell of the family’s house, anguished, to report the worst: witnesses had seen strangers force the young man, a literature student and union activist on his way home from work, into a waiting car and then drive away. Farfán, like many of his university contemporaries during this period of fierce intensification of anti-communism, to crush any left, under the policy of Operation Condor, state security forces rounded up at least thirty members of the country’s Communist party, tortured them, and dropped their bodies by plane into the Pacific Ocean. Some of their remains washed ashore, some didn’t.

As the Latin American Cold War heated up in the 1970s, the tactic was exported beyond Guatemala’s borders, as was a new episodical form: the wrenching plea from a victims family, addressed to the state and often published in newspapers, for their loved one’s safe return. Families may not have known where a sister or son had been taken, but they knew that their governments bore the blame. And yet, it was the singular horror of disappeared detainees who were interrogated, tortured, bundled into airplanes, drugged into submission by licensed medical professionals, and dropped into the sea by the thousands. As one of the pilots of these so-called “death flights” later remembered, the sedated prisoners would plummet from the planes down into the dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean “like little ants.”

In Chile, General Augusto Pinochet cracked down on the opposition to his 1973 ouster of the democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz. By that year the country’s military and police, fortified by U.S. weapons and training, had their corpses spirited away, piled in the morgues in places like Buenos Aires and Guatemala City. (Such is the twisted logic that obscures as much as it reveals, a desaparecidos is neither quite dead nor alive, simultaneously present and absent. The Guatemalan sociologist Carlos Figueroa Ibarra describes the disappeared as “those who will always be nowhere”; for the Chilean theologian Mario I. Aguilar, they are “those who will never grow old,” men and women and children forever frozen in time at the precise moment of their vanishing. As a systematic practice of calculated state repression in Latin America, forced disappearance was first deployed in Guatemala. The year was 1966, more than a decade after the CIA-sponsored ouster of the democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz. By that year the country’s military and police, fortified by U.S. weapons and training, had their corpses spirited away, piled in remote mass graves in the Atacama Desert. There, their aging family members still walk the rocky plains in the thin air, searching for bone fragments, like ghosts.

Cleanup”, state security forces rounded up at least thirty members of the country’s Communist party, tortured them, and dropped their bodies by plane into the Pacific Ocean. Some of their remains washed ashore, some didn’t.

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We know, from accounts of those detained and eventually released, a little about many of the disappeared persons in Cold War Latin America endured in captivity—the interrogations, the electric shocks, the rapes. We know more about the impact those disappearances had on families, a powerful and multigenerational multiplier effect. Figueroa Ibarra describes family members’ recurring dreams and nightmares; their inability to mourn, since the disappeared could not be proven dead; the intensity of the social pressures on women whose partners had disappeared, especially if those women eventually found new partners; the guilt of resuming anything approaching “normal” life. State-sponsored disappearances were both political and psychological crimes, aimed to muzzle and shatter in order to tighten social control. And yet, it was the singular horror of disappeared—for what legal analysts Reed Brody and Felipe González call “perhaps the cruelest form of government abuse” for the torture it inflicted not only on detainees but on their emotional networks—that gave rise to some of the continent’s most iconic 20th-century social movements. These were groups, predominantly of women, who met each other in the course of their daily visits to the morgues in places like Buenos Aires and Guatemala City. (Such is the twisted nature of disappearance—it puts families in the grim position of actually hoping to find the physical remains of their kin.) The first such organization was the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who in 1977 began marching in front of Argentina’s presidential palace, demanding the safe return of their disappeared children. For their efforts, which shook the foundations of the dictatorship’s legitimacy, several of the Mothers were themselves disappeared. A similar story unfolded in Argentina, the military junta that took power in 1976 elevated forced disappearance to a perverse art form. Expert manipulators of language to chilling effect, the generals thundered that desaparecidos were “absent forever.” They developed an elaborate process by which disappeared detainees were interrogated, tortured, bundled into airplanes, drugged into submission by licensed medical professionals, and dropped into the sea by the thousands. As one of the pilots of these so-called “death flights” later remembered, the sedated prisoners would plummet from the planes down into the dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean “like little ants.”

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Some countries have developed policy instruments in order to resolve the unresolved and measure the unmeasurable. When the Argentine dictatorship fell, the new civilian government, headed by President Raúl Alfonsín, launched the National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP), the first of the hemisphere’s many truth commissions set up to tally and account for the disappeared and dead. Years later, in attempting to create a reparations program for victims of the dictatorship, the national government crafted a new legal status for desaparecidos—“absent by forced disappearance”—that conceded the state’s responsibility for a person’s absence without presuming his or her death. (Reparations were another terrible practicality: did accepting reparations mean accepting that a brother or sister, or husband or wife, or mother or father had died?) As of 2013, the Argentine census will formally include desaparecidos as a population subcategory. And yet the legal and logistical challenges posed by having a subset of citizens absent but officially considered alive—while one of his Guatemalan counterparts, military strongman Oscar Mejía Vícto- res, argued that many of the supposedly disappeared were “perhaps in some Com- munist country with some scholarship or in Havana, Cuba.” A common rejoinder to the anguish entailing the loss of a loved one, in particular, was to suggest that their husbands had only “disappeared” to take up with other women. And then there was the matter of the disappeared children. In El Salvado, soldiers on military sweeps through guerrilla-controlled communities would snatch babies and toddlers—allegedly, in some cases, as war trophies. In Argentina, pregnant women detained in torture centers like the Navy School of Mechanics, or ESMA, were kept alive long enough to give birth, whereupon their infants were taken away and placed with army families in order to “eradicate the seed” of subver- sion. Organizations like the Grandmoth- ers of the Plaza de Mayo, now a separate organization from the Mothers, and El Salvador’s Asociación Pro-Búsqueda, work today to locate these children—now adults—and, using DNA matching, to restore their birth identities. Palestinian women who were government functionaries’ official denials, phrased to deflect blame away from the state. That is, the state is not adequately confronting the issue of forced disappearance. Also in Chile, a series of families had their desa- parecidos’ remains returned to them dur- ing the 1990s—which, while a wrenching experience, at least brought closure—only to find after DNA testing that they had been given the wrong bones. State security archives contain many clues, including, potentially, confirmation of some desaparecidos’ deaths, information withheld from families even after dozens of habeas corpus requests. But in coun- tries where arms remain powerful, win- ning access to the bureaucracy of state terror can be an uphill battle. Large- ly as a result of the Latin Ameri- can experience, international legal norms now accommodate and delineate the parameters of forced disappearance. The Organization of American States rati- fied the Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons in 1994, and as of July 2002, the Rome Stat- ute of the International Criminal Court stipulated that forced disappearance is a crime against humanity. The distinc- tion is an important one, as it means that perpetrators can no longer claim protec- tion under national amnesty laws, such as those passed in Guatemala and El Salvador when these countries’ civil wars concluded. And, as the indefatigable efforts of victims’ advocacy organizations, led by families like Farfán’s, prosecutions for the crime of forced disappearance are being mounted across the hemisphere, although these remain rare amid the staggering number of total cases. But the law is, ultimately, an imperfect instrument for reckoning with the sublime horror of a person being erased from the earth by her government. Instead, disa- pearance has perhaps been best engaged with by art. The Colombian sculptor Doris Salcedo has long worked on the subject; her Atrabiliarios series uses shoes to represent the missing, because “when- ever you see a shoe abandoned on the street, you ask yourself, ‘What happened here?’” Noemí Escandell’s Disappeared depicts an empty-armed Pieta wearing one of the kerchiefs of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. The Argentine photogra- pher Gustavo Germano, whose brother was disappeared, painstakingly recreates decades-old family photographs, retaking the image with only the surviving family members. (One of Germano’s photosets features a 1970s-era photo of a young, ecstatic couple dandling their baby beside a bed. In the recreated photo, that baby, now a striking woman in her twenties, stares alone at the camera; her parents are both desaparecidos.) And, mixing perfor- mance art with political theater, different branches of the family joined at his side. “I cannot write more poetry,” Sicilia told reporters after his jour- ney. “Poetry no longer exists inside me.” The geography of Latin America is now, irrevocably, a geography of forced disappearances, a landscape of deep and jagged chasms that can never be bridged. But there is another way to visualize an America, from Ciudad Juárez to the Tierra del Puego, forever transfigured by enforced absence. Picture it as a dis- tenant satellite image at night, revealing a hemisphere dotted by thousands upon thousands of tiny lights—garbage burning bright with the impossible dete- rmination that because they were taken alive, they will return. Kirsten Weld is Assistant Professor of History at Harvard University. Her book, Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala, is forthcoming in March 2014.
Patchwork Memories

_Arpilleras and Reflections on Disappearance_  
**By Marjorie Agosín**

_In every season of the year, Violeta Morales would dress exactly the same: a jacket, black skirt and a pair of worn-down shoes. A leader of an artisans’ group engaged in making intricate patchwork memory tapestries, Morales talked and created when others dared not._

Practically the moment I arrived back in Chile, she became my safe haven, my refuge, my anchor in a country in which no one was talking about anything relevant to human rights. Where silence reigned together with fear. Every single day: I’d ask her over and over again, “Violeta, aren’t you hot? I always see you wearing the same clothes.” She would look at me with her olive-colored, always sparkling eyes, answering, “No, Marjorie, both I and my clothes have been frozen in time. Even my worn-down shoes accompany me on this perpetual journey.”

She taught me what it means to disappear, be forcefully disappeared, desaparecer. This extremely complex concept is almost impossible untranslatable, causing us to reflect on this sinister condition invented by the military dictatorships of Latin America. To disappear is to be neither dead nor alive. It is to enter into a state of shadows. An act of violence, altered destinies, loss of lives, loss of illusions: a borderline state. And we seem to feel that the disappeared are evaporating, bodies, ghosts that can only return to us through memory. To disappear is to be part of the history of absence. To search for the disappeared is to recover them so that they do not dissolve into the forgetting that the repressive forces so cruelly intended.

Since 1973, I’ve worked very closely with the original group of women who make _arpilleras_. This memorial patchwork honors the life of the relatives of friends who have disappeared. Working with all sorts of delicate materials often donated by charity organizations, the women cut out pieces of cloth and then these artists of memory recreate life through cloth, evoking the life of the home and hearth, the empty seat at the table, the first steps ever taken, the first day of school....

_The arpilleras_ are true compositions and works of memory. The process of making them is a healing process, as well as a memorializing one. From the scraps of fabric that are sewn together emerge disappeared lives that materialize once again. For those brave women, to disappear is not to cease to exist; it is not only to search for a body, but to reclaim the memory of a daily life. The _arpilleras_ are sent to many parts of the world. They form part of a collective memory of a lost generation with its many who disappeared; other people will hang the patchwork tributes on the walls of their homes. The women will manage to always live with their pain and the memories—and to reconstruct those memories.

The patchwork art is similar to memorializing texts about the disappeared. Both have the ability to dredge up memories, to awaken the conscience, to make the absent present and in this fashion attempt to make the awful horror that disappearance implies transformed into the possibility of remembering what it means to exist. Fully human and not truncated lives, frozen at such an early age.

I frequently remember my encounters with the _arpillera_ makers and our conversations about their disappeared relatives. These disappeared ones had names and fruitful lives. Irma Muller, mother of a disappeared son, observed that the textile experience of the _arpilleras_ reminded her of a soft caress. The _arpilleras_ maker who shows us a large window and a woman who looks out over the horizon, Violeta Morales would say to me, represents hope and the possibility of return.

With the arrival of democracy in the Southern Cone, the names of the disappeared indeed appeared on lists and in reports such as the well-known Rettig Report, officially the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report, but even before then, relatives and community groups in support of human rights were remembering those names constantly; memory transformed into a demand to know the truth.

The crime of disappearance, considered a crime against humanity, affects entire societies and more than anything destroys the family fabric in a slash. Newborns never knew their parents. And they, those who disappeared, never watched their children grow up or their parents get old.

To remember them and to keep them from just becoming names relegated to official lists compiled by the human rights community, the _arpilleras_ makers, with nimble hands, create wall hangings with images embodied with gestures of solidarity, fruit-filled trees, rivers flowing with deep waters. They honor the memory of them, the disappeared, with images of life.

After the wars and the catastrophes that followed, the dead, the wounded and the disappeared in combat appeared on list after list. Relatives flocked to human services offices to ask about their loved ones and they congregated in those places united in grief and in a common history. However, the victims of forced disappearances in Latin America and particularly in the area I know the best, the Southern Cone, do not appear on any lists. Exactly the opposite. Military
authorities deny their very existence. Many mothers of the disappeared from the harsh years of the 70s and 80s told me that they were told at military headquarters that their children had gone over the mountains and abandoned them. Sometimes, as Irma Müller recounted about her son Jorge who disappeared off a Santiago street in 1974, the military said that they were told at military headquarters that their children had gone over the mountains and abandoned them.

Many mothers of the disappeared from the 70s, such as the movements that the disappeared disappeared so they do not turn into mere legal statistics or a mere name on a list, at the petition of family members. That search has not ended. It was wondering what had become of Patricia Dixon, a girlfriend of mine in 1973. I googled her name I expected to find that she had become a teacher or a psychologist. Instead I was shocked to find out that she had become a teacher or a psychologist. She was a beautiful petite brown-haired woman, full of energy and humor. Strange-ly, in all the years up to that moment I knew what to say. But when Ale picked up her reaction was: “Ohhh...” She knew exactly who I was: that young man who had dated her sister, who was eight years older. It was almost as if she had been.

The memory of those lives transforms into presence, writing that recalls them is an act of conscience, and the mothers who embroider their stories and their names with fragments of cloth convert them into luminous memories that jour-ney from one place to another. We, the witnesses of these fabrics and these memorializing gestures, also con-trIBUTE with our gaze in solidarity by not forgetting, in denouncing this sinister and diabolical crime.

An arpillería accompanies me above my desk. I feel its presence always near-by. Every day I look at it and I sense that the disappeared are not ghosts hid-den in the shadows, but they are there, accompanying us in all our actions and in our active memory, seeking justice and light.

One evening about eight years ago I was wondering what had become of Patricia Dixon, a girlfriend of mine in 1973. We had met at the Sociology Department at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, at a time when the school was a recruitment place for revolutionary organizations. Juan Domingo Perón was in the process of returning to power after 18 years of exile, and many in my generation had expecta-tions that he would lead to deep structural changes in Argentine society. Patricia was a beautiful petite brunette, full of energy and humor. Strange-ly, in all the years up to that moment I had not thought of looking her up. When I googled her name I expected to find that she had become a teacher or a psy-chologist. Instead I was shocked to find her name on a list of people who had disappeared during the dark years of the 1976-1983 military dictatorship. She was taken from her home in the early hours of September 5, 1977, and never seen again.

In March 2005 I went to Buenos Aires to try to find out more about Patricia’s fate. A friend helped me locate her file, which included her sister Alejandra’s deposi-tion from 1984. In one of the many small miracles of this story, Alejandra was still living in the phone book, 21 years later! I called with a certain hesitation, not quite knowing what to say. But when Ale picked up her reaction was: “Ohhh...” She knew exactly who I was: that young man who had dated her sister, who was eight years older. It was almost as if she had been.

Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Active Memory (Memoria Activa), both in Argentina, and Women for Life (Mujeres Por la Vida) in Chile. These movements are essentially activities in which the memory of the disappeared does not conflict with the official memories of history (some spell this “history” with a capital “H”), but works in a dialogue with that history; in the process of reconstructing through memory, witnesses and art in its various forms, ranging from music to the Chilean arpillerías—patchwork testimonies.

The memory of those lives transforms into presence, writing that recalls them is an act of conscience, and the mothers who embroider their stories and their names with fragments of cloth convert them into luminous memories that jour-ney from one place to another. We, the witnesses of these fabrics and these memorializing gestures, also con-trIBUTE with our gaze in solidarity by not forgetting, in denouncing this sinister and diabolical crime.

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In March 2012 we laid a memory tile for Patricia in front of the building from where she was kidnapped. It became the memorial service she had never had.

The film aired on the PBS series “Independent Lens” in 2008 and “Global Voices” in 2011 and played at more than thirty film festivals worldwide. Audiences from India to Colombia to New Zealand have related to the universality of the stories. At the DVD launch in Buenos Aires, there was music and dancing. Family, childhood neighbors, friends and work colleagues recalled stories that reflected her beautiful soul. Everyone present felt that the act of laying the tile and remembering Patricia in this deeply felt way had been very healing. It became the memorial service she had never had.

There have been a surprising number of “coincidences” during the making of the film and since. In preparation for making Patricia’s tile, Alejandra and I met with two people from the group Barrios. Ali suggested that they see my film, but asked them not to copy it because an older woman who appears in the film still harbors some fears and doesn’t want the film widely distributed in Argentina. Mauro Rappano, one of the organizers, asked her name. “Ruth Weisz,” I replied. His face went white. He had been the best man at her disappeared son’s wedding!

For many years the disappeared have been remembered on the day of their vanishing with remembrance ads in the Buenos Aires newspaper Página 12. On the 15th anniversary of Patricia’s disappearance, Alejandra wrote a poem, and enclosed the photo I had taken. The last lines of the poem read, almost in a premonition:

“Duerme en medio del naufragio y sueña
que se desperta en el corazón de un hombre que se sacude la pena”

“She sleeps amidst the shipwreck and dreams that she awakens in the heart of a man who sheds his sorrow.”

Patricia has awakened in my heart and in the hearts of all who have come across her story. Patricia and the thousands of others who were taken are our disappeared, our disappeared, and we have a duty to always remember them.

Juan Mandelbaum is an Argentine documentary filmmaker living in the United States since 1977. Mandelbaum was a producer on the PBS series AMERICA AT CAS. His independent films have been shown on PBS and in many festivals worldwide. For more information visit www.ourdisappeared.com.
COLOMBIA HAS BEEN A COUNTRY WITH AMNESIA FOR A LONG TIME.

The country has been at war—a social catastrophe since 1948, sparked by the murder of the revered liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. Although his death took place in Bogotá, during the following 16 years Liberals and Conservatives waged a war mostly in the countryside. This memory is difficult to undertake in such a space that separates the individual from the world, a privileged space in which metaphor, metonymy and other figures of speech are all called into play. The role of the artist is not to make a faithful copy of reality. It is to give a form to our attitude in the face of this reality.

In a bend of the Cauca River, just by the town of Marsella, bodies and other objects tend to get stuck as they come flowing down the river. A woman living there, Esperanza, also called “death lover” (“la enamorada de los muertos”), worked as a secretary in the small hamlet of El Alto during the chilling period of the narco-paramilitary violence. Like Hechua and Medea in Greek mythology, Esperanza disobeyed orders from local killers not to retrieve the bodies that came floating down the river so they could be buried. Esperanza told me that she rescued the bodies because she felt a moral obligation toward her neighbors, the Regional Drug Cartel, mutilated bodies float by, headed downriver, they are all called into play. The role of the artists is not to make a faithful copy of reality. It is to give a form to our attitude in the face of this reality.

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The Marsella cemetery was recently declared historic and architectural patrimony of the nation by the Colombian Minister of Culture. After the declaration, the Beautification Society of the town ordered the tombs painted. This procedure erased the data that had been handwritten on the tombs of more than four hundred people, who had been buried as “NN” (“No Name”) with only the information about their gender and the year the body reached Marsella. Likewise, no one thought of making a map that would help locate and identify the remains. This act of painting over the information transformed the bodies into unidentified beings, an act that created a double disappearance.

As an act of reparation for what had transpired in Marsella and so many other towns along the Cauca River, the artist Gabriel Posada conceived an ephemeral work known as “Mágalinas by the Cauca,” a work of historical memory funded by a Culture Ministry fellowship. Posada designed some rafts from tropical guadua bamboo cane and added sails. On each sail, he used vinyl paint to depict, from remaining photos, the faces of some of the disappeared victims. Posada set the rafts adrift in the Cauca River, carrying along the images of men and women whose fate had been erased. The intent of the performance was to cleanse the stamp of the deaths that the Rio Cauca bore for having received so many mutilated bodies over so many years. The artist recreated this moving spectacle on several occasions, ephemeral art since the rafts crashed against the riverbanks to eventually become shipwrecked further down the river. The performance included the victims of the Trujillo massacre—actually a series of murders that took place along the Cauca River from 1988 and 1994—and was witnessed by the fishermen who lived along the riverbanks.

Another work of art that alludes to the disappeared is artist Clemencia Echeverry’s The Bier’s Funeral Song (Trenó Canto Fúnebre). By means of a video installation, Echeverry shows the invisible destruction that has characterized forced disappearances in Colombia. While we observe the turbulent and dark waters of the Cauca River on a double screen, the room is invaded by a soundtrack of the heartrending screams of loved ones who search for their vanished loved ones. This blending of image and sound, the artist performs a delicate alchemy to appropriate some
sounds that are heard on both sides of the river and, by association, creates an echo in the psyche of the viewer as in the psyches of so many other Colombians.

The recent history of Colombia is filled with voices and sounds that recall the violence—sounds like the cries of “viva” (long live! cries of affirmations) and “down with!” boos for each political party during the 1950s; or the clanking of chains on the truck that set off during the night to pick up members of the Liberal party and disappear them; or the melancholy, deep sound of a deer horn that was played on the grounds of the city’s Central Cemetery, where many victims of political violence are buried. The concert is a memorial that resembles a large group of people, penetrating into the earth and into the entrails of the city’s past—the very roots of the Colombian conflict, from which its victims may symbolically reconcile. The Center was established on the initiative of civil society organizations with the support of the city government, to demand the right to memory as an exercise in active citizenship. The goal was to open in 2010, but in 2009 excavators working on the site unexpectedly uncovered the city’s historic Paupers’ Cemetery. The city government then had to decide whether to proceed with construction. At the same time, it was discovered that between ten to thirty thousand people had been buried in thousands of mass graves around the country in recent years. They were the victims of selective killings, massacres, and extrajudicial executions carried out by paramilitaries, guerrillas and the armed forces. Terror at the horrific discoveries coexisted with the all too common indifference, and in this climate it was decided that unearthing the largest mass grave in the capital city’s oldest cemetery could not be treated as a routine administrative problem. Construction of the Center was delayed while 3,000 sets of remains, dating from 1827-1970 were carefully processed. It turned out to be Latin America’s largest archeological project involving modern urban history.

The institutional events of April 9 were meticulously choreographed to maximize their symbolic value. President Juan Manuel Santos began the day by delivering a highly patriotic speech to an audience of generals and other military and police personnel at the Monument to Fallen Heroes. Then he walked up the Avenida El Dorado to the Center for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation with a group of top government officials to pay respects to the civilian victims. They were met there by Bogotá’s Mayor Gustavo Petro, Vice-President Angela Gaviria, a group of foreign diplomats and other top city officials. The event brought together a president who had been minister of defense during some of the most violent years of the conflict, a vice president who was a former union leader and former vice president of the leftist Unión Patriótica, and a mayor who was a former member of the M-19 guerrilla movement. Together they planted a tree of peace in the cemetery where many of the victims of the Bogotazo lay buried. This remarkable event received the backing of the international community, the blessings of the high command of the ELN (National Liberation Army guerrillas) and the approval of the FARC negotiating team in Havana. The date chosen by the organizers marked the first-ever official commemoration of the April 9, 1948, assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a traumatic event which led to a spontaneous insurrection called the Bogotazo and a civil war known as La Violencia, leaving gaping wounds that remain unhealed to this day.

Until a few months ago it seemed that the Colombian state had nothing to say with respect to the day that had fundamentally changed the country’s destiny. For decades, the remains of victims of the conflict hastily buried in isolated rural fields all around the country.

A mass grave underlying the Center of Memory was an apt but terrible metaphor that only emphasized the urgent need to come to terms with the past and exorcize the demons of war. The Center finally opened its doors to the public in late 2012. The institutional events of April 9 were meticulously choreographed to maximize their symbolic value. President Juan Manuel Santos began the day by delivering a highly patriotic speech to an audience of generals and other military and police personnel at the Monument to Fallen Heroes. Then he walked up the Avenida El Dorado to the Center for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation with a group of top government officials to pay respects to the civilian victims. They were met there by Bogotá’s Mayor Gustavo Petro, Vice-President Angela Gaviria, a group of foreign diplomats and other top city officials. The event brought together a president who had been minister of defense during some of the most violent years of the conflict, a vice president who was a former union leader and former vice president of the leftist Unión Patriótica, and a mayor who was a former member of the M-19 guerrilla movement. Together they planted a tree of peace in the cemetery where many of the victims of the Bogotazo lay buried. This remarkable event received the backing of the international community, the blessings of the high command of the ELN (National Liberation Army guerrillas) and the approval of the FARC negotiating team in Havana. The date chosen by the organizers marked the first-ever official commemoration of the April 9, 1948, assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a traumatic event which led to a spontaneous insurrection called the Bogotazo and a civil war known as La Violencia, leaving gaping wounds that remain unhealed to this day.

Until a few months ago it seemed that the Colombian state had nothing to say with respect to the day that had fundamentally changed the country’s destiny. For decades, the remains of victims of the conflict hastily buried in isolated rural fields all around the country.
Grass-roots organizations, however, tried to keep the collective memory alive. On the 60th anniversary of the Bogotazo in 2008, for example, they undertook a multiplicity of independent initiatives, including street theater, mural painting, musical performances and flash-mobs.

This situation changed when Juan Manuel Santos became president. In order to promote large-scale mining, agricultural exports, and infrastructural development, the new governing coalition led by Santos decided to seek a peace agreement with the FARC. After the signing of an unexpected peace agreement in 2012, the combatant leaders agreed to démarche the past, interpreting the present, and imagining the future. Two very different narratives underlie these visions of national development.

One describes a country full of happy, hardworking people who live at peace in a paradise of natural beauty and great cultural patrimony. The other its historical memory. One of these mechanisms makes use primarily of collective symbols to address social and political questions previously relegated to the margins of national life. The other its historical memory. Those who prioritize cultural patrimony seek to produce a collective, durable reinter-pretation of the past. In this sense the struggle for memory that allows for the agency of the armed actors’ room for maneuver. This is an enormous challenge, but the events of April 9 allow us to discern it taking shape on the horizon—as a possibility.

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A Search for Justice

After the Colombian Holocaust

BY ANA MARÍA BIDEGÁN

In 2004, when I left Harvard and last saw you, I thought I would never learn the truth of what exactly happened to Carlos Horacio in the horrendous holocaust of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá. Yet fate was holding a tremendous surprise for my daughters and me, filled with pain and future challenges, which would uncover an important part of the story.

More than twenty years after the attacks on November 6 and 7, 1985, the Supreme Court embarked on a great effort to reconstruct the events. At the same time, it began a judicial process to discover what happened to the 11 people who disappeared from the configuration (Court magistrate Carlos Horacio Urián, Ana María’s husband, disappeared during the events of the Palace of Justice takeover by the M-19 guerrillas and the subsequent Army siege of the palace.)

In 2007, agents of Bogotá’s prosecutor’s office discovered a safe deposit box hidden in a Colombian military compound, which would change our lives. The box—kept by the Colombian Army for more than 20 years—contained my husband’s wallet with a bullet hole, and other personal effects: documents; photographs of our family, four religious scapular medals—I assume for our four daughters; and some personal items from Carlos Horacio Urián, Ana María’s husband, disappeared during the attack? But at that point, whom could I turn to?

Like many, we were not sure what had happened to our loved one, and like many victims, we and our dead were stigmatized by the victimizers. In addition to finding out what happened to my husband, I had to defend his honor. After the attack, a right-wing journalist, Darío Silva Silva, tried to tie Carlos Horacio to the M-19, the guerrilla group that originated the attack on the Palace of Justice.

Carlos Horacio’s lifeless body was found in the morgue. Confusion reigned over his death and the autopsy results revealed no clear indications of how he had died. I was given many versions of the last moments of his life, but one became the official version: a surviving magistrate told me that Carlos Horacio had been killed by Army crossfire. According to his account, together with magistrate Manuel Gaona and Dr. Luz Estela Bernal, my husband had been gunned down by the Army as they tried to rescue hostages holed up in the building; he had perished on the staircase.

At that point, I thought that my source, a magistrate of Colombia’s High Administrative Court; he was also a young legal scholar with interdisciplinary training. At the French Conseil d’Etat, just before the tragedy, we’d spent time at the Kellogg Institute at Notre Dame and in the Alcalá de Henares, Alcalá de Henares in Madrid, Spain, and we had made every effort to continue with our lives, albeit with great difficulty.

The discovery of the secret box in 2007 sent our lives into a spiral. After the Prosecutor had called me to inform me of this discovery and explained the difficulty of the case I was facing, I knew it would be a mystery, and the families of the eleven people who had disappeared continued searching for the whereabouts of their loved ones. The ghosts of the events reappeared constantly in the memory of many Colombians, and finally a Truth Commission was established in 2005 to unveil the truth. My daughters and I had made every effort to continue with our lives, albeit with great difficulty.

Carlos Horacio’s ardent Christianity, closely tied to early Liberation Theology (of the 1960s-1970s) and his defense of democratic political participation through social movements, were interpreted in the most negative light. However, the facts speak for themselves. Carlos Horacio was not only a lawyer, and a member of Colombia’s Highest Administrative Court; he was also a young legal scholar with interdisciplinary training. At the time of the attack, he was completing his doctoral dissertation in political science on the participation of the Colombian Army in the Korean War at the University of Paris-I, Sorbonne. He had previously completed masters’ degrees in Philosophy of Law and Administrative Law, respectively, and worked briefly at the French Conseil d’Etat. Just before the tragedy, we’d spent time at the Kellogg Institute at Notre Dame and in the Washington DC National Archive, in order for him to continue his doctoral research. One of his most recent publications had been a working paper on Presi-
found two different versions. The prosecutor’s tape had been found in the house of the colonel who had directed part of the Army’s retake of the Palace of Justice in 1985; he was being investigated for his actions in such events. It was made similar to the video I had found just a day before meeting the prosecutor. By coincidence, the day after our meeting, a well-known journalist contacted me; he had found yet another video. The search was finally paying off. In addition, the report issued by the Colombian Truth Commission acknowledged subsequently that Carlos Horacio had left the Palace alive in company of members of the Armed Forces and that he was later found dead. That time, we were closer to finding out the truth. Months had gone by, though, and no legal proceedings had been initiated. I thought it was going to be a crazier.

I approached the families of those eleven people who had disappeared from the Palace of Justice. They had more experience than I had, and they gave me some new tips. Their search had never ceased and they had brought a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and had initiated criminal proceedings in Colombia. Finally, at the beginning of 2009, the public prosecutor’s office opened the case: the statute of limitations could not apply because Carlos Horacio’s extrajudicial execution by the Colombian Army qualified as a crime against humanity.

With our authorization, the prosecutor in charge of the case exhumed Carlos Horacio’s body and performed forensic studies, including ballistics testing. In June 2010, suspicions became certainty: he had been executed, presumably by the Colombian Army, after being tortured and subsequently brought back to the Palace of Justice to cover the homicide.

The case’s lead prosecutor, Angela María Bidegain, a brave woman, summed the three generals who had directed the counterattack for questioning. The next day, she was removed from her post, ironically on grounds of incompetence. A new, lower-ranking prosecutor was appointed. To date he has done nothing but weaken the evidence. It took 18 months, and several petitions, for the body to be returned to us after being exhumed—even more pain.

With these investigations, we believe we have established the truth—as tough as it is—but we are lacking justice.

The Colombian courts have sentenced two of the officials who led the operations relating to the disappearance of the 11 people. However, shortly after the sentences were handed down, both Presidents Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos have publicly announced their disapproval of the decisions, clearly affecting and infringing on the judiciary’s independence. Carlos Horacio’s case is still pending before the Colombian criminal justice with little or no progress.

In 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found the Colombian State responsible under international law for these events, and submitted the case before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. In this latter proceeding, Colombia, represented by an allegedly independent inter-ministerial agency created to defend the state in these and other legal proceedings (ANDJE, for its Spanish acronym), is now denying that the disappearances and executions ever took place. Even more importantly, current or former members of the Colombian Army appear to be controlling the ANDJE (by, among other mechanisms, imposing the line of arguments and vetting which counsel shall be retained). This is of great concern to us as a family and as citizens. By permitting the intervention of the Armed Forces to cover up grave violations of human rights, the ANDJE, and thereby the Colombian State, is not only compromising the agency’s institutional integrity and failing its mission of protecting the state as a whole, but it is also attempting to cover up crimes against humanity and ensuring the impunity of those responsible for the death of my husband and for other crimes committed as a result of this painful and controversial episode in Colombian history.

As you can see my friend, the truth about the facts themselves and their historical significance has still not been clarified. At the present time, the Colombian executive is making renewed efforts to put an end to the armed conflict. In order for the current peace process to prosper, it is fundamental to satisfy the demands for truth, justice and reparations. The case of the Palace of Justice is an emblematic one, fixed in the heart of Colombians. Thus it calls out, perhaps more than any other case, for an end to the impunity and the lack of truthfulness about what happened. Since that day in 1985, Colombians have watched as the system of justice grew weaker by day while militarism is strengthened.

Without truth, there is no justice and without justice, there can be no peace, well-being or economic prosperity. Without truth, there is no strengthening of a legitimate state and accompanying democracy.

The importance of seeking the truth of the Palace of Justice conflagration was even underlined in U.S. Department of State reports presented to the Congress in 2010 and 2011, in which the failure to clarify these events was held up as proof of Colombia’s continuing human rights challenges.

The Inter-American Court on Human Rights has called for a hearing in October 2013. Let’s see what that court rules, and whether the Colombian state chooses to abide by those decisions. The videos and the secret box have changed my life since I last saw you. Let’s see if they can work for justice.

Ana María Bidegain is the research director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center at Florida International University and a professor in the Department of Religious Studies. Bidegain founded the History Department at the University of Los Andes in Bogotá and opened the field of Religious Studies at the National University. She was a Visiting Professor at the Center for Women in Religion at Harvard Divinity School in 2003-2004.
There is no apparent structure to give collective social— and moral—meaning to civilian collaboration which is an ordinary part of war.

mother, María insisted on the distance between her and the war, adopting the apolitical, and hence legitimate, role of caretaker of her family and her community. As told by María, the paramilitaries in their first encounter threatened her with death because ‘people’ had told María that she was a guerrillera. She faced her death to her full five-stone stature, and convinced Mario to hear her out alone in her kitchen while she made coffee for him, leaving his weapons outside. She explained the nature of her leadership, convinced him of her non-partisanship, and his field of torture, and explained to him not to mas- sacre local peasants. It seemed María grew to like or respect her, refusing to believe the many rumors which ‘gave him a constant headache.’ Trust came with a price. Once she was asked to identify wheth- er or not a man belonged to one of the Junta, and the man, tied up and tor- tured, was placed before her. The local

When however, I went to ‘San Lázaro,’ I found out that only one woman served as leader. María, and her college-educated new wife, had accepted the invitation. Once Marta told me his story of the marches, to which she felt she was addressed, she asked him, saving his life, endanger- ing her own. María placed her thus in the ambiguous role of caretaker, trust- ing nothing and suspicioning her at the same time. She tells of the horror of retrieving mangled corpses after María told her where they were; of returning the bodies to grieving families. The final encoun- ter, and reason for her displacement, is also framed by her role as mother/ caretaker. In her telling, the real rea- son María expelled her from Puerto X was that he had not been invited to her eldest daughter’s fifteenth birthday party. I had heard this story before, but María’s presence gave it a new weight, and Marta’s privacy.

COmmunITy oRGAnizinG iS LiKE wOmEn’s wOrk. However, near the end of the lunch Marta admon- ished María to give up community orga- nizing and concentrate on her family, as she did not “like women’s work” and did not see herself as doing community work. She added references to women, indigenous people and Afro- Colombians, seeing that we were inter- ested by what she, like the Constitutional Junta, perceived, was placed before her. The local commander. The story of her displacement was not part of her official identity when we first met. She was in a special IDP region that had carried her own name, and in her telling, the real reason for his expulsion, was the secret of her son’s, and possibly her eldest daughter’s fifteenth birthday party. María filled an uncomfortable place in the region. Stigmatized as a guerrillera collaborators, many of the victims of paramilitary violence were murdered in the years that followed (1999 to 2006) when the paramilitaries, often in alliance with the Army, took over the towns in southern Putumayo. Because María and her husband had participated in the marches, after the displaced were murdered in the region, which we’ll call Puerto X, she was signalled as a guerrillera. In a context of brutal massacres, she faced up to Mario, the local commander. The story of her resistance in the months she stayed on became the hallmark of her new identity, one that gives her legitimacy both in the new Municipal Victim’s Committee and in other transitional justice spaces.

Stories of Death and Survival After the survey was over, I hired María as a field assistant for another project. Overtly, the project concerned low-inten- sity coca cultivation, but it was really to finance a way for me to go back to field work in Mocoa, where I still had unan- swered questions. She gladly assumed the task, and organized a series of interviews and a lunch in her house for five cocalero leaders.

However, when I went to “San Lázaro,” I found out that only one cocalero leader, Martin, and his college-educated new wife, had accepted the invitation. Once Martin told me his story of the marches, to which he felt he was addressed, she asked him, saving his life, endanger- ing her own. María placed her thus in the ambiguous role of caretaker, trust- ing nothing and suspicioning her at the same time. She tells of the horror of retrieving mangled corpses after María told her where they were; of returning the bodies to grieving families. The final encoun- ter, and reason for her displacement, is also framed by her role as mother/ caretaker. In her telling, the real rea- son María expelled her from Puerto X was that he had not been invited to her eldest daughter’s fifteenth birthday party. I had heard this story before, but María’s presence gave it a new weight,
The Alchemy of Narrative

Estaba la paja pinta sentada en el verde limón

BY FRANCISCO ORTEGA

Six-year-old Ana peeked out of a keyhole on her mother's orders. She saw the police murder a man in cold blood. She stared at the bludgeoned body and saw a police officer pick up the dead man’s cap, an image that haunts her for the rest of her life.

Even though Ana leads a sheltered life, she is a victim of excessive family control, censorship, rape, aggression and even state intimidation. As a young woman she discovers that her best friend, Valerie, a political activist, has been murdered, and later learns that her own boyfriend, Lorenzo, has been imprisoned and tortured. Twenty years after the Bogotazo Ana tells us that 1948 was the same year in which she lost her first tooth and they killed Gaitán, after the murder of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán led to the selection so that the youth of the country could comprehend “the greatness and the meaning of so much violence and terror.” Anna’s intellectual and emotional awakening is bound up with the origins of national history.

Ana is ideally poised to provide an account of the event, but she chose not to write a history or an illuminating testimony. Unlike Joaquín Estrada Monsalve, the country’s Minister of Education during the Bogotazo, who wrote a collection so that the youth of the country could comprehend “the greatness and miseries of the darkest night of our country.” Ana does not write an instructive memoir. Instead, she is the fictional narrator and protagonist of Alba Lucía Luna’s novel, Estaba la paja pinta sentada en el verde limón [The Speckled Bird Was Sitting in a Lemon Tree] (1975).

The author spurned prevailing realistic conventions and appealed to avant-garde strategies—such as the alternation of multiple perspectives and narrative voices, the use of flashbacks and non-sequential narrative time—to produce a text that is difficult and recalcitrant; that stutters; that does not find its thread; that does not disclose the causes and the meaning of so much violence and terror. Historians and social analysts of Ana’s generation shared her difficulty in grasping the logic and consequences of La Violencia. In the preface to the landmark study La violencia en Colombia (1962), the authors—Germán Guzmán Campos, Orlando Falo Borda and Eduardu Umuha Luna—wrote that

... [Colombia] lacks the exact notion of what this violence is: neither it has understood it in all its abhorrent brutality, nor does it have evidence of its dis-solvent effects on the structures, nor its etiology, nor its impact within the social dynamics, nor its meaning as a social phenomenon, much less its importance in the peasantry’s collective psychology.

Shared perplexity is surprising, especially if we consider the obvious differences between a modernist novel and a sociological analysis: while social scientists are driven to identify variables with precision to provide a coherent narrative, avant-garde novelists—or at least this one in particular—resist coherence and stage disorientation. The authors of La violencia en Colombia characterized their lack of knowledge as the disorganized proliferation of subjective impressions and the absence of an organizing principle for an analysis of social decomposition. Estaba la paja pinta... on the other hand, artfully offers narrative dis-order to its readers as its most outstanding formal feature. Its formal governing force is made up of a stream of voices interrupting each other, the absence of chronological linearity and the mundane character of many of the text’s anecdotes. But why would anybody write a narrative about social violence that—instead of seeking coherence—stages disarray? Is there a lesson here for historians, political analysts and other social scientists who want to explore the scene of social devastation?

Readers soon discover that the novel’s style is a thoughtful—if challenging—response to the dislocating effects of intense social violence. Writing bends under the weight of brutality; it demands careful rethinking of the available forms of reporting in order to grasp the eluding logic of destruction. The idea is rehearsed throughout the novel:

Very difficult, I tell you. Because to understand, just like that, so suddenly, so many things, is like wanting to crash through the sound barrier with a bicycle. It’s not a given. One has to remain alert, always looking up at the universe, with one’s skin and eyes wide open, spying the vibration of the colors; the aura of the birds; the movement of the wind; the rotation of the sun, which keeps on... (172).

Ana’s claim is not only that the scenarios of social destruction are highly complex and must be described in depth. She also
impugns realism—the belief that reality possesses its own narrative—as the most suitable discursive form for the representation of social experience. “The memories of childhood have no order and no end,” says Ángel, quoting Dylan Thomas, at the beginning of the novel. When coping with intense social conflict, realism might be an ideological straitjacket that obfuscates and impoverishes interpretation. In such cases, narrative order is no more than organized social disorder.

Finding the appropriate form, as the quote implies, is tantamount to comprehending. That is the reason why Ana remained ambivalent about Tina, her childhood friend and only successful storyteller in the novel. On the one hand, she was enthralled by Tina’s inventive talents, her apparently endless imagination and her ability to “[find] words and [let them] fall as they will, not mattering if the public captures them” (79). But although Tina’s stories were quite clever and unexpected, they follow the classical conventions of popular tales, always returning to the word of princes, monsters and fantasies. Ana’s turbulent world, however, required an unyielding form of narration, one that transformed unmalleable truths and exploded traditional discursive forms. Knowledge is not just information, Ana would say if asked: it is information in a certain form. In the case of intense social conflict, conventionally sanctioned forms of reporting might be a hindrance.

Literary forms imbue stories with expectations and values, even if their objective is to defy them. Thus, Esteban la pajara pinta… invokes the traditional Bildungsromane or the coming-of-age story in which Ana, the young sensitive artist, seeks to overcome social obstacles in order to find her place in the world. Ana demonstrates her vocation early on, as she expresses her fascination with words, copying in her diary those with the most beautiful sounds. Language becomes a utopian refuge, a space for mourning, desire, difference and even rebellion. She makes friends with, like Valeria, also a writer, become mentors and models, and the text suggests at several points that what we read is Ana’s own attempt to give meaning to her life. The discursive frame usually invoked by this type of narrative makes the elements available with which the story constructs a moral and social universe. That the novel resists such conventions—instead of fulfilling its expectations—shatters all the more effectively our readerly expectations.

In Ana’s account there is no knowledgeable authoritative subject to guarantee growth and learning; no one can uncover the structuring logic behind social chaos or organize traumatic memories and convert them in a coherent history of progress and development. Not that the narrative does not gesture in that direction. It draws from memoirs and other documents providing composed and conclusive interpretation of the tragedy. These are historical documents authored by the political elite, such as Doña Bertha, President María-no Ospina Pérez’s wife, and the already mentioned Minister Estrada Monsalve. Their interpretation hinges on the view of Bogotá as South America’s “Athenas” or Athens, as it was proudly hailed, the aristocratic seat of a refined and cultured civic tradition. “The destruction of the most civic-minded, most spiritual and intelligent city in all of Latin America,” writes Monsalve, “caused great bitterness.” In this narrative, the Bogotazo and its aftermath were barbaric interruptions by morally debased people lacking in education and civility. These accounts lamented the invasion and violent displacement of the cultured city by the chaumas, the dregs of society, and showed a topsy-turvy world in which social hierarchies were suspended and both moral and political authority ceased to exist. Authorial voices appear as obstacles to understanding.

In contrast, the text inscribes vivid accounts of non-elite first-hand witness-
tension of uncontrollable chaos and despair. For her, it was as if they had killed my mother and my father and all of my family together, such anger, such impotence, brother. Here is what has to be done: to go all out; there’s no other remedy.

Telling and listening to stories—a multitude of diverse and often contradictory stories—is related to comprehending. Only when listening to those we hear her… Ana saw Don Anselmo with his arms folded across his chest, praying on his knees while tears were hanging, cradled in his wrinkles.

Our intellectual and creative pursuits are located between these two impulses: telling or mournful reconstruction and withholding or melancholic remembrance. Ana’s implied argument is that interpretations might further the work of mourning or constitute a disavowal of the other’s pain. In all cases, our lack of attention and imagination in the reception and processing of testimonies denies pain and constitutes a double act of violence. Anselmo’s scene elaborates what might be the most serious challenge to researchers of social conflict: the intran- sive nature of emotional pain, the fact that I can feel my pain but cannot show it or point it to someone else. Furthermore, by isolating Anselmo’s suffering, the scene highlights the absence of technical languages that can communicate its nature, that can alert us to its insidious effects, the modes in which it works in memory and construes daily life. But pain is also a beckoning, a desperate call soliciting recognition, and testimony is our precious but precious mode for apprehending it. It is the vehicle through which listening about the pain of others is possible. To receive somebody’s testimony, that is, to be a witness to his or her suffering, demands we understand with intellect and emotions. Testimonies make evident how people absorb painful memories and root them into their everyday, day, use them to their advantage, or simply evade them by coexisting with them. Anselmo’s testimony bears their imprint: the ways he suffers, perceives, persists and resists such violence; remembers and mourns his losses. Knowledge of what has happened, what is being done: to go all out; there’s no other remedy.

Don Anselmo and to others, but also the role others played in what happened to him—silently structures social relations. His knowledge is poisonous, but his testimony affirms the will to live.

Clearly, silences are not lacunae of information. Most frequently they inscribe a refusal to yield; they insist on the difficulty of comprehending and the labor of recognition; they challenge and return to the unreason of suffering; they set up interpretative limits to the voraciousness of scientific inquiry. Most evidently, they speak of the incompleteness of testimony, of a National Front that harked back to the civilist myth of the South American Athens and shut off most non-elite from political dialogue. The following years saw the birth of the two main guerrilla groups, FARC and ELN, and the sowing of the seed of the conflict that still grips the country.

Contemporary researchers might want to look back at the creative ways in which the country responded to La Violencia. Like Estaba la pájara pintada… is a meditation about apprehending, comprehending and representing difficult, poisonous knowledge in the midst of social conflict. Its starting point is that Ana’s social experience—as the experience of those who lived through La Violencia—demands a type of inquiry and reporting that takes into account its intense nature. Eschew- ing received notions of fiction and history, its stylistic choices and notorious difficulty embody this meditation for the reader. It insists on apprehending the way memory works and thus seeks to transform infor- mation into testimony, while nameless victims become human subjects. The novel might be seen as a testament to the desire for a true comprehension and a recognition that took place in the country during the ten years between Gaitán’s assassina- tion and the bipartisan agreement that put an end to La Violencia.

All of this makes the novel relevant for social researchers today, as the coun- try moves towards a peace agreement and faces massive mobilizations, truth commissions and the reparation of vic- tim’s. Much as what happened in the aftermath of La Violencia, when Liber- als and Conservatives, the two parties responsible for instigating fratricidal vio- lence, reached a peace agreement in 1957, contemporary political figures stake out their claims on the past and siêute public discourse with their view of the conflict. Most of the country greeted the cessation of the conflict, but grew weary of a National Front that harked back to the civilist myth of the South American Athens and shut off most non-elite from political dialogue. The following years saw the birth of the two main guerrilla groups, FARC and ELN, and the sowing of the seed of the conflict that still grips the country.

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Democracy, Citizenship and Commemoration in Colombia

Performance of “Pastal and Emotional Memories” by Matié Yie Garzón

The bicentennial of the independence of Colombia in 1990 and its program was called Diversities of Memory, one of the linchpins of the bicentennial celebration of the past of the nation, and as such, the state called upon the Colombian case, multiculturalism had emerged from Independence. This included the creation of local centers in several towns throughout the country, designed to “recover, register and save the common local memory.” The local centers were led by cultural agents known as “keepers of memory.” In the same spirit, another line of the bicentennial program named Pluralities of Memory presented three documentaries entitled Memorias de la Libertad. These films recreated the emancipatory experiences and cultural diversity of Colombia’s ethnic minorities: the Ika tribe from the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, the Muisca group from the northwest Andean region and a collective of Afro-Colombian women from the Caúca Valley, all of whom rose up against “distinguished agents” of the nation.

Such programs promoted the notion that local and ethnic communities made up specific varieties of national memory—something similar to the national collective memory or “typical” nationalism. The basic idea is that memory itself is a richness, a patrimony, whose worth derives from its diverse nature—as happens with the biological, ethnic and cultural wealth. Thus, not only the state but also the citizens are considered responsible for the recuperation, recording and rescue of memories. It is clear that this patrimonial concept of memory is closely linked to the two decades-long emphasis on multiculturalism in Latin America. Indeed, in the Colombian case, multiculturalism had been elevated to a constitutional principle in 1991, obliging the state and its citizens to protect cultural and ethnic diversity conceived as part of our cultural patrimony.

From the viewpoint of the state, this nationalization of the memories of ethnic groups and local communities could be seen as a way to achieve social inclusion. In fact, the Local Centers for Memory have as their slogan “All of us are memory,” another way of saying that all of us are a nation. However, this recognition of the diverse nature of the Colombian memory creates dilemmas that limit this goal of inclusivity. The three documentaries grew out of state recognition of the plurality of independences. Nevertheless, different social struggles are included under the same umbrella “liberation movements,” assuming that all are part of the same process. So, the contradictions between different stories are unknown—and the profound historical inequalities that they show us can be evaded. When memories are treated as an expression of diversity and not also of inferiority, they are permitted to coexist without being participated in “a lighter fashion,” each kept in its own place. Thus, it is possible to evade the tension between a history “in black and white” and an about national independence and others that assert that not all social groups were emancipated, some of which carried out their own heroic deeds, even against the project of nation that emerged from Independence.

This patrimonial concept of memory does not cover all its current meanings—the memory is being linked in many ways and by different actors to democratic practice. Today, in Colombia, it is common to talk about memory as a right and to “make memory” (hacer memoria) as an exercise in citizenship. Together with ethnic and local memories, the memories of the victims of social and armed conflict have come into play in the last decade, spurred on by human rights activists and transitional justice policies. An entire legal and institutional apparatus has been created to carry out these policies. In 2005, the Uribe Vélez government signed an agreement with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a paramilitary umbrella group, to adhere to the Law of Justice and Peace (Law 975, 2005). This law provides legal incentives to induct paramilitary chieftains involved in crimes against humanity and supplemented already existing norms that favored the demobilization of paramilitary and guerrilla groups and individuals.

The Law of Peace and Justice created institutions such as the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR) with its Group for Historic Memory (GMH) that performed a double task: to undertake “historic reconstruction” of the causes and effects of the recent armed Colombian conflict, and to identify “the distinct truths and memories of the violence, with a differentiated focus and a preferential option for the voices of victims who have been suppressed or silenced.” (See the GMH website, http://www.memoir historico-crr.org.co/s-home/). Fulfilling this double function, GMH, which is now called the Center for Historic Memory (CMH) has produced several reports on small municipalities—such as Trujillo, El Salado, Bojayá, La Roche-
The Language of Public Memory

La Asociación Minga and the Authentic Image of the Victim

A green mid-sized Renault sedan sits on a ramp lifting the car’s open hood and revealing an engine stuffed with palm seeds. Entitled Renau1t, the piece is part of an exhibit Sernos Tierra developed as a result of a large group dialogue. In a series of workshops that discussed the death of young taxi drivers, the arrival of the palm cultivation in the region, and massacres, the exhibit came into being as the brainchild of Asociación Minga, a human rights organization that has turned to art to preserve and transmit victims’ stories.

Minga co-founder and artistic director Francisco Bustamante described how the image of the car emerged after “smaller group sessions developed a series of ideas, histories, memories, stories and drawings.” Ultimately, the group decided the image of the car would be an apt representation of the young taxi drivers they hoped to memorialize, many of whom had been killed as they were forced to transport paramilitaries and guerrillas after the palm oil industry entered the region and exacerbated the violence there.

The scope of the problem in Colombia is enormous. According to statistics collected by the Colombian newsmagazine Semana, 5,405,629 Colombians have been direct victims of the Colombian armed conflict since 1985 (Semana, June 10, 2013). Think about it: nearly five and a half million have suffered torture, sexual assault, homicide, forced displacement, and injury from shrapnel and crossfire. Driven by this impossible reality various recent national and local governmental initiatives have sought formal reparations for these incredible numbers of victims. These include Law 1448 of 2011, popularly known as the Law of Victims, which has energized a process that intends to “establish judicial measures, administrative, social, economic, individual and collective for the benefit of victims that they might enjoy their right to truth, justice and reparations” (Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras, June, 2011). Pivotal within the social aspect of this project has been the development of a public history of the conflict, specifically the memorialization of these victims’ recent experiences.

Minga responded in response to the “necessity to protect and accompany communities from far away territories forgotten by the state that had begun to suffer the impacts of the conflict in a very significant way.” The political reality of memory, therefore, has provided profoundly important work for human rights organizations like La Asociación Minga as they fight to ensure that the victims’ authentic accounts are communicated.

Although the Law of Victims explicitly states that memory should be allowed to develop openly without the bias of an official State Memory, Article 143 “On the Duty of State Memory” explicitly states that memory should be allowed to develop openly without the bias of an official State Memory. Article 143 “On the Duty of State Memory” seeks the ideal of a free economy of memory wherein “society, through its different expressions such as those of victims... just as those of state organizations, can give account with competency, autonomy and resources” (Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras, June, 2011). Such an inclusive ideal, however, has proven problematic. Elizabeth Jelin, a Spanish academic in memory studies, asserts that though memory is necessarily public and social, public memory is never “collective memory.” It is rather, “shared memory, superimposed, the product of multiple interactions, framings in social contexts and in relations of power” (Los Trabajos de la Memoria, 2001).

Public memory is only ever developed within a contest of interacting perspectives, all with various arsenals of power and therefore varying degrees of agency in the debate. An excellent example of this dynamic is found in the Colombian false positives scandal of the past 10 years in which politically uninvolved civilians were killed by the Colombian Army and “subsequently presented as guerrilla casualties to inflate the combat body count” in the war against the FARC and other guerrilla groups (The US National Security Archive, www.gwu.edu, January 2009). Mothers of victims have had to fight the state, not only in a legal battle over their loved ones’ remains, but also as part of semantic contest over the memory of a victim. Their perspectives have only recently developed a forceful voice. Minga has dedicated the past 20 years to the task of effectively and authentically communicating the perspectives over their loved ones’ remains, but also as part of semantic contest over the memory of a victim. Their perspectives have only recently developed a forceful voice. Minga has dedicated the past 20 years to the task of effectively and authentically communicating the perspectives...
of the victims themselves. Originally a group of artists, activists, psychologists and sociologists working on a volunteer basis with victimized communities in Catatumbo, Asociación Minga, by 1990, was formally registered as a human rights protection organization, offering primarily pro bono legal assessments, casework and representation, and long-term community involvement. As Minga continued to grow, it began to parallel its traditional human rights advocacy with a series of art projects dedicated to enhancing the public visibility of the communities with which it had worked. Given a public that director Bustamante says was “indifferent, asleep, anesthetized”, he says they were “left with no alternative but to evidence their reality, to make it known, to bring it to light for the public.” Art had become a necessary tool in this mission.

Minga is most recognized for a series of projects they’ve called “Galleries of Memory.” Beginning with a project that emerged from work with war-torn communities in Putumayo and San Onofre, a traveling exhibition called Nunca Más toured libraries in Bogotá from 1994 to 1996. The tour was realized in collaboration with a long time partner organization, the Manuel Cepeda Foundation. Nunca Más was followed by another collaborative project at the end of the decade which they called the Buceo de la Memoria. This project brought various art exhibits to sites around Bogotá, public squares, schools and the national university. When members of the Manuel Cepeda Foundation received a series of threats that forced them to leave the country, they continued to put their exhibition on tour in France and Switzerland. When Minga and the Manuel Cepeda Foundation were reunited in Colombia in 2004, they developed a new exhibition with these same communities that they named Recuerdame, which toured the United States. With Recuerdame’s success, they were then able to develop a fourth gallery of memory, an exhibition they named Somos Tierra, this time informed by work with communities in Catatumbo and Montes de María, which is currently on tour in Bogotá.

According to Bustamante, these exhibitions have been the product of a common goal between Minga and the Manuel Cepeda Foundation: to find “alternative languages that can generate more solidarity” between the victimized communities and the general public. As their galleries of memory present victims’ stories to audiences in Europe, the United States and in Colombia, Bustamante says that the role of his organization is only that of an intermediary. This passive attitude in project development is a critical element of Minga’s work, as all of their projects seek to function through what Bustamante calls “horizontal dialogue.” He says Minga isn’t interested in their artists working as the “enlightened minds” who consult the community but then design projects independently. Minga is dedicated, rather, to the inclusive development of the artwork. “In a collective dialogue with the affected individuals, they tell their stories and we ask questions,” and on the basis of images and symbols that emerge from conversation, plans for the pieces take shape.

This unique artistic methodology has been in part affected by Minga’s use of a similar research paradigm in their more classical human rights work. In various projects wherein Minga has sought to develop local infrastructure for victimized communities, they have applied Orlando Pás Borda’s Participatory Action Research (PAR) method which seeks to empower communities to act for self-improvement by teaching systematic research methods that allow leads to lead data collection projects themselves and formally discuss their communities’ development interests. Minga led a project under this methodology with a group of women in Cauca to discuss food distribution and health care provision along with a contracted researcher. Bustamante says these women were able to use their “conclusions to discuss their case with authorities, and they could then begin to make their own proposals that agreed with their reality.” In parallel with PAR, Minga’s art-making process makes sure that communities with which they work are directly involved in the formation of the reality presented.

With projects like Somos Tierra, Bustamante says that Minga hopes to foster a greater sensibility for dialogue that might “permit an understanding, a comprehensions that would translate, in the future, to the reconciliation of our country.” It’s for this reason, Bustamante continues, that they use “a language of symbols and images. Because we believe symbols and images are less biased that words.” The goal would seem to be a language of memory that escapes the power play of political discourse and merely delivers the reality of the victim’s experience as explicitly and authentically as possible. Although the complex network of superimpositions present in any system of public memory make such a goal hugely difficult, Minga’s dedication to the support of the victim’s self-representation is an earnest attempt to achieve such an ideal.

Minga devotes itself to the inclusive development of artwork through a collective dialogue with individuals who have been affected by Colombia’s violence.

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Keeping the Silence, Breaking the Silence

The Role of the Published Word

BY ROBERT J. COX

As an editor of the English-language Buenos Aires Herald, I lived through the worst years (1976 to the end of 1979) of the dictatorship in Argentina, and I was constantly astonished by the way the general population accepted military rule. It is true that the media silenced themselves in complicity with, or out of fear of, the special task forces that resembled the Nazi Einsatzgruppen. However, ordinary citizens denied what they could see with their own eyes as leather-jacketed thugs drove their sinister unmarked cars, usually Ford Falcons, through the streets of Buenos Aires, threatening anyone who got in their way. By May 1976, they were launching a Process of National Reorganization aimed to destroy the atheistic communism, which began with a pre-arranged plan to exterminate people the military considered to be “subversive.” But anyone who questioned the military, not just the armed members of revolutionary organizations, was at risk, and thousands of people were abducted from their homes to be tortured and killed. The Process proved to be the most brutal dictatorship in Argentine history.

Despite the evidence of their own eyes, most Argentines managed to pretend that all was well, apart from the ever-present threat of so-called subversion, which could only be imagined, and terrorism, which was very real. This extraordinary apathy in the face of what philosophers term “radical evil” has yet to be accounted for, let alone explained. Notably, however, in an article on the death of Jorge Rafael Videla, the nominal dictator of Argentina from March 24, 1976 to March 29, 1981, the essayist Beatriz Sarlo tackled this painful subject. Sarlo, who describes herself as “a Social-Democrat, former Marxist and ex-Maoist,” breached a taboo in a May 18, 2013 column in La Nación, which is open and still unapologetically supportive of the military.

Laurie Conte is the mother of Augusto Conte Max Donelli, arrested and disappeared in Argentina on July 7, 1976.

Memory has been restored. Those who lived during the horror of the ‘70s and ‘80s cannot convincingly claim they did not know what was going on. The aged dictator’s statements did prompt a public outcry and general condemnation of Videla, but privately, in circles close to the military, he is still admired by people who believe the military “did what was necessary.” I discovered that there is residual support for the military dictatorship when I wrote a Sunday column from November 2011 until May 26, 2013, for the Buenos Aires Herald, where I was editor from 1968 to the end of 1979.

In response to my columns, the newspaper received and published a number of letters that expressed veiled admiration for the military. In messages to my own e-mail account I encountered utter- ly vile statements in open support of the dictatorship.

I do not think there is any danger today that the military will return to power. While there are still people who deny the horrors committed during the “Dirty War,” the trials initiated under the administration of the late Nestor Kirchner, followed by a ruling by the Supreme Court in 2008 that declared the Menem blanket amnesty unconstitutional, have established beyond any reasonable doubt that massive and horrendous crimes against humanity were committed during the dictatorship. Memory has been restored. Those who were alive during the horror of the 70’s and 80’s cannot convincingly claim that they did not know what was going on. It is encouraging to see that there is finally some movement toward reconciliation through forgiveness. In an article in La Nación, Hector Leís, a former Montonero guerrilla, wrote: “[We] Argentines lost the opportunity to do ourselves a good turn by not knowing how to forgive old man Videla so that he could die in peace at his home with his family.” The column carried the headline: “The task of pardoning the unpardonable.” It aroused such a vitriolic furor against him that Leís, who lives in Brazil and is a professor of philosophy at the federal university of Santa Catarina, said he regretted entering the public forum.

There have been other notable incur- sions into the no man’s land of reconcili- ation, which suggest that Leís, who fol- lowed in the footsteps of former militants Héctor Schmucler, Oscar del Barco, Pilar Calveiro and a few other intellectuals, is not alone in seeking to restore that part of national memory that relates to actions in the 1970s of the many guerrilla groups that were termed “subversive terrorists” in the lexicon of the dictatorship.

Effectively, Leís acknowledges that the Montoneros, in which he was a combatant and which he escaped to Brazil in 1976, were ter- rorists, almost as bad as “state terrorists.” In an interview with Astrid Pikielny in La Nación, he asked for “forgiveness for the suffering caused by my actions. Our madness led to an encounter with madness. In this sense I understand the ill named ‘theory of the two demons’ expressed in Nous soyons des nazis par Ernesto Baha- to: the two sides of the conflict in the 70’s were equally blind and mad.”

Leís’ new book, Un testamento de los años 70: Terrorismo, Poblitya y verdad en Argentina, has two prologues, one by Sarlo and the other by Graciela Fernández Meijide, who was a member of the Perma- nent Assembly for Human Rights during the dictatorship and who served as secre- tary of the The National Commission on the Disappeared. Fernández Meijide is also the author of a recently published book Eran humanos, no héroes (Sudamericana), which looks at the “Dirty War” through a different lens. Referring to Leís and other self-critical former guerrillas, also in an interview with Astrid Pikielny, Fernández Meijide empha- sized that “every one of them was a mili- tant with direct participation in the armed organizations. I wasn’t.” Pikielny said that Fernández doesn’t accept the Kirchner government’s “epic vision” of the 70’s guer- rillas. Fernández doesn’t believe that “the best of the best” died in the struggle. She argues that both “good and bad” died and “good and bad” survived. Her view has par- ticularly for someone who was 17-year-old son,泥之中的恶魔
Covering Central America in the 1980s

A Memoir in Words and Photos  BY SCOTT WALLACE

THE WIPERS SLAPPED ACROSS THE RAIN- smeared windshield as we sped through downtown San Salvador. Nelson Ayala clutched the steering wheel to keep us on the road through the torrential downpour. It was already two hours past dark, and it felt too late to be out on the streets in this part of town.

Suddenly, a body appeared in the headlights just ahead of us, sprawled on the pavement. Nelson everved to avoid it and kept going. “Shouldn’t we stop to help?” I asked. “It’s not convenient,” he replied, wagging a finger. “You don’t know who that person might be or why he is there. We’ll call an ambulance from the house.”

It was my first day in El Salvador, my first day as a professional reporter. I’d arrived that afternoon as a freelancer fresh out of journalism school, and with only $50 in my pocket, I’d made a bee-line from the airport to the Camino Real Hotel, headquarters for the foreign press agencies covering the civil war. Most importantly, I had credentials from CBS News, and Nelson, the CBS driver whom I met in the network’s bureau, offered to put me up while I saved money and looked for a place of my own.

Nelson steered his Land Cruiser through a gate and into his garage just down the street from the motionless body. He made the call from an upstairs room through a gate and into his garage just down the street from the motionless body. He made the call from an upstairs room.

We’d grown up with images of Vietnam on the nightly news, and we saw another Vietnam in the making in Central America. Perhaps through our reporting we could help stop a catastrophe before it happened. Public opinion mattered to U.S. officials. But as the conflicts throughout the isthmus intensified, we came to understand that reality wasn’t as black and white as we’d initially thought; it was far more nuanced.

Thirty years from my arrival in El Salvador in 1983, it seems an opportune moment to look back on those times and reconstruct how I—together with my colleagues—came to perceive the many shades of gray in the people, policies and events we covered. Indeed, what has happened in Central America in the ensuing years has confounded any predictions we could have made at the time.

I eventually found a small apartment in upper-class El Escalón, where interspersed among smaller middle-class homes were the walled mansions of coffee barons, factory owners, army generals and government ministers. These were impenetrable fortresses topped with guard towers, flood lights, barbed wire and guard towers, flood lights, barbed wire.

Pablo, was abducted on Oct. 23, 1976, and remains one of the Argentinian’s ten thousand to thirty thousand “desaparecidos.” It is significant that there is not even a generally accepted rough estimate of the number of people seized, tortured, murdered by the military and whose bodies remain unrecovered.

A third book that seeks to restore memory is by Norma Morandini, a senator who ran as a center-left vice-presidential candidate in the 2010 elections. From Guilt to Forgiveness (De la culpa al perdón, Sudamericana) is a passionate appeal for reconciliation and for a national commitment to rebuild democratic society.

“I lived in dark times” she told Cadena 3, a television station in her home city of Córdoba, “and saw my two brothers disappear and how my mother overcame this huge blow. I took with me into exile a generational cemetery: friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, lovers. It was a banishment that sent me into the depths of suffering, but also allowed me to see more profoundly.”

The blindness of the general populace to the horrors of the dictatorship is a malady that has passed. But today in Argentina there is still a willful blindness to the danger facing democracy as another government, elected but scornful of the rights of minorities, seeks to use its power to change the election's results. It is another government, elected but scornful of the rights of minorities.

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wire—the last lines of defense in a joint-venture of public and private capital and U.S. aid that stretched all the way out to the search-and-destroy units combing the hills of Morazán for the guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, or FMLN.

Across the narrow street from my place was a towering, garrison-style wall, with gun slits and peep slots through which a pair of eyes studied my comings and goings. I never met those neighbors. In fact, I never even saw them. They entered and exited through a steel gate in a bullet-proof Cherokee jeep with smoked windows, attended by a small army of men in aviator sunglasses and polyester suits bulging with Uzis, pistols and ammunition belts. Getting to know the neighbors was no easy feat in El Escalón. I had no idea that an academic lived on my block until he was already dead. I heard the report of guns in the night, not the burst of an automatic weapon, but the punctuated and deliberate single shots that betrayed a fatal intentionality. The following day my housekeeper told me that a professor two doors down had been found slumped over his desk. His live-in maid and gardener had also been executed.

Mostly I read about the unfortunates in the next day’s newspapers. Barefoot boys would thrust them through the car window at the intersections. I’d toss the kid a few grimy bills and speed off, horns blaring behind me, no time to wait for change. What caught my eye were the brief, tersely worded captions beneath the photos—black-and-white head-shots of extinguished life, streams of blood across their faces. The captions never changed; only the names: “Juan Perez, laborer, resident of Ilopango, ultimado—literally, “finished off”—last night in his home by unidentified men, heavily-armed and dressed as civilians, whereabouts unknown. The authorities remain ignorant of motive. An investigation is underway.”

Whatever prowess might have existed among El Salvador’s detectives was directed toward facilitating the extra-legal war effort. The investigators just signed the death papers; they didn’t want to know the details. Their reports were remarkably meticulous when it came to describing the wounds, the caliber of the bullets that produced them, and from what distance the weapons were fired. The reports were equally remarkable for their failure to identify the perpetrators. It was as though you’d entered a world of Hitchcock’s creation, where black sorcery had staged a coup d’etat, and M-16s were invested with magical powers to appear at the location of their targets, aim themselves, and pull their own triggers.

Just being journalists made us suspect in the eyes of many. A full-page ad from the Secret Anti-Communist Army, a renowned death squad, denounced the U.S. press as “agents more dangerous and sympathetic to the terrorists than anyone in Moscow.” I smirked at the time, but I came to appreciate the logic behind such subliminal threats and how right those faceless people were, in their twisted way, how little Moscow really had to do with El Salvador; and how much we U.S. journalists did. The Soviets may have helped arrange some arms shipments from Hanoi or Tripoli via Cuba that eventually found their way to Chalatenango, but it was hardly the Ho Chi Minh Trail. In El Salvador, the Russians were totally peripheral to the conflict. But the government was completely dependent on U.S. aid, and our reports represented the only real counterweight to the flow of propaganda that helped sustain it.

I am haunted when I look back through my photographs of Central America. In an instant, calm could be shattered by flying bullets.
The newly appointed defense minister, General Eugenio Vides Casanova, told his troops that the battle for American opinion was one of the war’s major fronts—“as important as San Vicente or Morazán.” The U.S. reporters covering El Salvador straddled both fronts. We found ourselves at the intersection where the war on the ground and the one back home converged. We were in its crosshairs.

A huge topographic map of El Salvador, 1:100,000 scale, sprawled across an entire wall at the CBS office in the Camino Real. Every bureau on the second floor had one, covered by clear plastic overlays smeared with grease pencils showing the zones controlled by the five rebel armies of the Farabundo Martí, zones that were up for grabs, Army garrisons, the alleged routes of arms smugglers. I would park myself in front of that map with its brown and green contours suggesting steep hollows and meandering brooks. There were countless hamlets with exotic names—Anamorós, Santa Clara, Yamabal—places where few, if any, reporters on the second floor had ever reached, places where I knew I’d find the war in all its living color and intensity.

No other country in Central America, much less any others locked in guerrilla war, made maps of such detail available to the public. They came in six separate pieces, and we began to carry them with us on forays into the countryside, a critical guide for exploring the war zones. But we had to keep them under wraps, not strewn out on the backseat. Being caught with them at a roadblock of either the army soldiers or the rebels was bound to spell trouble.

One afternoon, driving alone in brilliant sunlight, I turned off on to a back road toward the mountain-ringed village of Anamorós in far-eastern El Salvador. The rebels had overwhelmed the army garrison there days before, and I expected to run into them somewhere along that road. After consulting the map at the turnoff, I tossed it on the backseat and forgot it there, until a half-hour later, when I rounded a bend and saw a dozen or so armed men blocking the dirt road up ahead. I had no chance to turn back, no time to reach around and hide the map. The men were wearing black uniforms, with no insignias or shoulder patches, and they were waving me to a halt. Some of them had beards, not normal army protocol. But I’d heard that government soldiers had begun to operate in such a fashion, to confuse and intimidate.

I saluted them through the windshield, presented my army press credentials. I preemptively grabbed the map, spread it over the hood of the car, and said: “So tell me, brothers, what’s going on in the zone?” It caught them off-guard. “We’re on a sweep through here,” their evident leader said. “But what are you doing—looking for the terrorists?” It was no time for equivocation. “Not at all,” I replied with a touch of indignation. “My Colonel Cruz told me the army had regained control of the area, so I’ve come to have a look.” They let me pass, but I stuffed the maps under the seat and vowed never to get caught with them out in the open again.

Over time, alone and in the company of other reporters, I came to know the back roads and back towns of El Salvador better any comparably sized piece of real estate in the world. I knew where to find the guerrillas, where there was a high probability of running into an army sweep, which hamlets were ruled by jack-booted paramilitaries and which towns lived in a perpetual twilight zone—where neither the government nor the rebels had the strength to maintain a permanent presence. I liked to think that this knowledge enabled me to offer my readers more compelling and thorough reports than I could have otherwise provided.

The task of distilling and interpreting information was challenging enough for journalists covering a single country. But it was all the more complicated for those who covered the rest of Central America, particularly the Contra War in neighboring Nicaragua.
El Salvador’s civil war cut right across the country and into even the most well protected redoubts of the privileged. The conflict was everywhere. But in Nicaragua, the war unfolded deep in the backwoods. Unlike the FMLN in El Salvador, the Contras never managed to establish a serious urban presence. The main cities along the Pacific coastal plain, including Managua, were thus free from the war’s direct impacts. Under a trade embargo imposed by the U.S., there were severe shortages of goods, and funerals aplenty for officials and conscripts killed in the far-off battle zones. But Managua felt remarkably safe for the capital of a country in the midst of a war that was exacting a terrible toll in lives and treasure.

To cover the shooting war there, journalists had to venture deep into the countryside, often far beyond any settlements. Back roads were often sealed off by Sandinista Popular Army checkpoints, and it could take a measure of bluff to get past. Such was the case one July afternoon when Newsweek photographer Bill Gentile and I persuaded some young recruits to let us pass down a dirt road that snaked back into the mountains of northern Jinotega. Several hours later we found ourselves in Bill’s jeep wedged into a 40-truck military column ferrying an entire battalion of the Sandinista army into battle.

At dusk two evenings later, we witnessed the Sandinistas rake a Contra encampment with rockets and machine-gun fire. When the operation resumed at dawn, the Contras had fled, leaving behind two dead and two wounded. The wounded sniped at the advancing troops from the brush, the Sandinistas screaming all the while for them to surrender. Neither of them did. It took more than a half-hour for the Sandinistas to overwhelm and subdue the two Contras. Their refusal to give in seemed to fly in the face of Sandinista propaganda: if the Contras were merely mercenaries in the pay of the U.S., as the Sandinistas contended, why would they fight to the finish as those two did?

The events that played out that morning added one more piece to the broader mosaic that I was constantly constructing in my head. First-hand experience is always the only real way to distinguish between information and its opposite. In the midst of claims and counterclaims from so many different sides, that ever-changing mosaic was my only guide toward an approximation of the truth. You had to keep in mind that your understanding was always tentative: at any turn it could be thrown off in a new direction if the next piece in your mental jigsaw puzzle didn’t fit where you were expecting it to.

Today, the international reporters covering those distant wars are long gone. Daniel Ortega has returned to govern Nicaragua as head of a fractured Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN, after losing national elections three times. Throughout the 1980s, the nine-member FSLN directorate led by Ortega found wide sympathy for resisting President Ronald Reagan’s efforts to drive them from power by arming the Contra rebels and turning them loose in the Nicaraguan backwoods. Many of Ortega’s former comrades-in-arms are now his most vociferous opponents, alleging that he has subordinated Sandinista ideals to a self-serving quest for power. The former guerrillas of the FMLN have attained power in El Salvador through the ballot box, embracing a far less radical approach than their Marxist forebears of the previous generation. But it will take years, perhaps decades, before Central America recovers from the intense violence that undid much of its social fabric.

We left a great deal of ourselves behind in covering these conflicts. And we left behind a highly skilled generation of Central American journalists to report on the ongoing aftershocks.

...Scott Wallace covered Central America in the 1980s for CBS News, Cox Newspapers, Newsweek, and the Guardian. He is a frequent contributor to National Geographic and the author of The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon’s Last Uncontacted Tribes.
The Best and the Worst  

BY JUAN O. TAMAYO

WHEN AN ASSASSIN’S BOMB TORE THROUGH the La Penca guerrilla base in southern Nicaragua three decades ago, it cast a spotlight on some of the worst and some of the best of journalism.

The blast was meant to kill Eden Pastora, who had broken with the Marxist Sandinista government and launched a war against it along the southern border with Costa Rica while other “contras” pushed in along the northern border with Honduras.

The Reagan administration and Central Intelligence Agency backed the contras in a war that claimed tens of thousands of lives, sparked the Iran-Contra scandal and eventually led to the Sandinistas’ defeat in democratic elections in 1990.

Pastora was therefore a legitimate military target of the May 30, 1984, assassination attempt. But the way in which the assassination attempt was carried out was an outrage to the tenets of journalism.

The bomb exploded as Pastora started a news conference, spewing a deadly fan of peanut-sized steel balls that scythed through a dozen journalists who had slipped into La Penca from Costa Rica across the muddy San Juan River.

He survived, but three journalists were killed: American Linda Frazier, 38, a reporter for the English-language Tico Times newspaper and wife of Joe Frazier, the Associated Press correspondent in Costa Rica; and Costa Rican TV crewmen Jorge Quirós Piedra and Evelio Sequeira Jiménez.

That the bomb went off during a news conference was a vicious violation of the neutrality that journalists should enjoy to be able to report on all sides of a conflict. Al Qaeda violated it in the same way in 2001, when “journalists” assassinated anti-Taliban Afghan leader Ahmad Shah Massoud with a bomb hidden in their TV camera.

But it got worse.

It turned out that the bomb had been brought into La Penca and detonated by a “journalist” using a stolen Danish passport in the name of Per Anker Hansen. He was not injured, was evacuated to Costa Rica with the other survivors and immediately vanished.

And then it got even worse. Horribly, horribly worse.

Peter Torbhornsson, a Swedish journalist who was at La Penca, began confessing in 2009 that he had cooperated with Sandinista intelligence to introduce “Hansen,” whom he knew to be a Sandinista agent, into Pastora’s camp. Torbhornsson filmed a documentary claiming that he did not know “Hansen” was packing a bomb or planning to kill Pastora.

Soon after the blast, a couple of leftist American freelancers in Costa Rica—Tony Avirgan, who was wounded at La Penca, and his wife, Martha Honey—began reporting that the CIA had ordered the bombing because Pastora was disobeying U.S. orders on the war.

Their evidence was so flimsy that when Avirgan filed a $23 million lawsuit in Miami against 29 contra, CIA and other U.S. officials, U.S. Judge Lawrence King threw it out and damned the plaintiffs $1 million in court fees.

Yet the Avirgan-Honey reporting led Costa Rican prosecutors to file murder charges against two U.S. citizens for the La Penca bombing: John Hull, an elderly orange farmer in northern Costa Rica who supported Pastora; and Felipe Vidal, a Cuba-born CIA asset who trained and advised Pastora’s guerrillas. They fled to the United States, but Hull lost control of his farm and Vidal could not get a legitimate job for years because of the pending charges.

And for the first nine years after the blast, the “CIA-did-it” version was the one that most U.S. and other journalists in Central America believed or suspected was true. Even the Newseum in Washington D.C. for years indicated in its displays that Linda Frazier had died in a “contra” bombing—creating a false historical memory.
That version tended to be accepted because it matched the prevailing biases of the journalists who covered the wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala at the time: Rezaq was a warmonger, the CIA murdered people and the Sandinistas were driven into the arms of Moscow and Havana by unwarranted U.S. hostility.

But the La Penca bombing made me angry. And I felt a special debt to Linda, Joe and their young son Chris.

Joe and I had been transferred from New York to Mexico City at about the same time in 1979, he by the AP and I by UPI, and we covered the same Central American turf. We lived near each other, our wives were good friends and stayed so after Joe was transferred to Costa Rica and I joined the Miami Herald in 1982.

For years, I made it a point of asking anyone I could about La Penca—especially when I became the Herald’s European bureau chief, based in Berlin and covering the Sandinistas’ former allies in Russia and East Germany. My friend Mark Rosenberg, now president of Florida International University, made fun of my “obsession” with La Penca every time we met.

And then in 1981 the La Penca tale got better. Much better.

An unprecedented collaboration between six journalists in three countries identified “Hansen” as the bomber beyond any doubt.

A Miami Herald correspondent who knew of my interest in La Penca, Andrés Oppenheimer, was interviewing a fellow Argentine who had worked for Cuban intelligence and asked about the bombing. The source replied that he knew the assassin.

Oppenheimer alerted me and immediately flew to Paris to interview the man. But he knew the bomber only as an Argentine who worked for Sandinista intelligence and was nicknamed “Martin the Englishman” because of his fluent English.

I showed the source a passport-type photo of “Hansen” that investigative journalist Doug Vaughan had found in Panamanian migration files. Although Vaughan worked for the Avigian law-suit, he had shared the photo with me as part of an agreement to cooperate in the search for the killer.

“That’s Martin the Englishman,” the source confirmed.

The source explained that after the Sandinista guerrillas, most of them poor peasants, toppled the Somozoa dictatorship in 1979, they lacked anyone who could run complex counter-intelligence operations. Most could not even hold a fork properly, he added. So the Sandinistas decided to essentially outsource their foreign operations.

A colonel in Cuba’s elite Interior Ministry Special Forces who used the name of Renan Montero was seconded to the Nicaraguan Interior Ministry as head of its counter-intelligence unit.

And some of the unit’s operations were assigned to members of a Marxist Argentine guerrilla known as the Revolutionary Peoples Army, headed by Enrique Gorriarán Merlo. His men killed a contra chief in Honduras in late 1979, and Gorriarán himself led the squad that assassinated Anastasio Somoza in 1980 in Paraguay.

I contacted Argentine journalists Juan Salinas and Julio Villalonga in Buenos Aires, who had written about Gorriarán, and they provided one of the final pieces of the puzzle: “Martin the Englishman” was a Gorriarán follower named Vital Roberto Gaguine.

Gaguine’s parents confirmed that the man in the “Hansen” photo was their son. And a fingerprint expert hired by the Miami Herald matched prints also found by Vaughan with a set provided by Argentine authorities to Salinas and Villalonga.

Gaguine was reported killed in 1989, at the age of 35, while leading one of the four squads of Gorriarán fighters that staged a virtually suicidal attack on Argentine army barracks at La Tablada in Buenos Aires.

Felipe Vidal and John Hull remain under murder indictments in Costa Rica. Hull is now farming in southeastern Mexico, and Vidal lived in Miami for a while but now lives abroad.

Gorriarán died of a heart attack in 2006 at the age of 64. Montero is believed to have died of cancer in Havana around 2008. And after I complained to the Newseum, its listing on Linda Frazier now reads as follows:

“Killed May 30 by a bomb blast at a press conference called by a Nicaraguan rebel leader just inside the border with Costa Rica. Three others were also killed, including two journalists. Other rebel factions initially were blamed, but several years later, a journalistic investigation said that the evidence points to an Argentine who worked for Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.”

That passport photo of “Hansen” still hangs in my office cubicle, a reminder of both the shortcomings and the power of journalism.

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The Rub

Against the Proud Grain of Chile’s History BY DORIS SOMMER

BRACE YOURSELF AS YOU ENTER THE MUSEUM of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago de Chile. Galleries of missing people will glare back at your glance, from a wall so enormous the collective calamity exceeds the span of your vision. The photographed faces float over funerary crypts designed by candles in the above ground altar, and photographed faces float over funerary crypts that once belonged to eliminated political prisoners. The bunker-like museum building is a monument to the recent past, erected during Michelle Bachelet’s presidency. Her legacy here is a relentless reminder that the wages of authoritarianism far exceeded the alleged establishment of order and decency after Chile freely elected a socialist president. Pinocchio’s crusade against communism and anything else that came in his way cost Chile more than the vibrant lives of social reformers along with those of unsuspecting neighbors. His crack-down crushed the collective confidence and hopes that came with a particularly Chilano sense of political pride and dignity.

Chile, you see, has a distinguished political history which surely framed the violent 1973 coup as a shock, an unbelievable aberration. By the 1830s, while other Latin American countries were busy fighting civil wars, the popular and factional struggles that followed independence movements throughout the continent had been contained through O’Higgins’ government. What’s more, the successful democratizing experiments launched by Liberals (beginning in 1828) gave Chile the enviable reputation as the only stable democracy in all of Latin America (and most of Europe). In 1852 Juan Bautista Alberdi spoke for all the Argentine refugees from Rosas’ government when he proposed a toast to this haven from anarchy, “the honourable exception in South America.” (Simon Collier, “Chile from Independence to the War of the Pacific,” The Cambridge History of Latin America: Vol III, From Independence to c. 1870 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985] pp. 583-614).

A century and a half of dependency—however limited the access to power and whatever the inequalities in the distribution of resources—Chileans must have been astonished at the sudden loss of liberties and legality. They were bereft of familiar paradigms. Repression of this blunt and brutal variety was the experience of other countries, countries such as the Argentina remembered in Alberdi’s toast. Political exiles from elsewhere had historically fled to Chile, you see, has a distinguished political history which surely framed the violent 1973 coup as a shock, an unbelievable aberration. By the 1830s, while other Latin American countries were busy fighting civil wars, the popular and factional struggles that followed independence movements throughout the continent had been contained through O’Higgins’ government. What’s more, the successful democratizing experiments launched by Liberals (beginning in 1828) gave Chile the enviable reputation as the only stable democracy in all of Latin America (and most of Europe). In 1852 Juan Bautista Alberdi spoke for all the Argentine refugees from Rosas’ government when he proposed a toast to this haven from anarchy, “the honourable exception in South America.” (Simon Collier, “Chile from Independence to the War of the Pacific,” The Cambridge History of Latin America: Vol III, From Independence to c. 1870 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985] pp. 583-614).

Almost a worldwide banking center in the 1850s, Chile had built the first major railroad in South America, and was exploiting coal and copper mines for domestic industries as well as for export. Chile continued to constrain the disintegrated, politically incompatible mining sector, in which the country an enduring model of stability and productivity. With the founding of the University of Chile in 1842, under the leadership of Andrés Bello (that master of conciliation), the state established a training center for a modern citizenry (see Iván Jakubisz Academic Rebels in Chile: The Role of Philosophy in Higher Education and Politics [Albany: SUNY Press, 1989], especially pp. 21-34). There were, to be sure, armed conflicts between Liberals and Conservatives while civil wars raged throughout the hemisphere. In 1861 and again in 1859 Liberals and Conservatives were literally at each other’s throats. But the traditionalist bankers and the free-thinking miners learned to make up quickly, before broad-based rebellion challenged the legislative systems that Bello helped to put in place. A Liberal-Conservative conciliation and the consequent political continuity came to seem inevitable. The country achieved distinction as a “democracy of the oligarchs.” (John Cow, The Epic of Latin America 3rd ed. expanded and updated [Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980]) The quote is his title for chapter 48 of this once popular text, about Chile in the second half of the 19th century: pp. 640-648).

After a century and a half of dependable democracy—however limited the access to power and whatever the inequalities in the distribution of resources—Chileans must have been astonished at the sudden loss of liberties and legality. They were bereft of familiar paradigms. Repression of this blunt and brutal variety was the experience of other countries, countries such as the Argentina remembered in Alberdi’s toast. Political exiles from elsewhere had historically fled to the safe and neutral sanctuary that Chile represented. Chile’s citizens might be invited to care for their lost lives, lost to the ultimate sacrifice. The Museum of Memory includes a long view of the shameful events and dynamics of a dictatorship that had conveniently hidden or misconstrued the facts of repression. But the laser focus on shame—without framing the longer view—has the unfortunate effect of cutting out the public’s cause for pride, the reason why Chile’s citizens might be invited to care so intimately about democracy.

During my May 2013 visit to the museum, I walked in along with a local father and his 8 or 9-year-old son. The unhappy child heared his father explain that he may well be in a group photo of a crowd being broken up by armed forces, urging the boy to help locate the image. But their visit lasted only a few minutes, probably ending just after we entered the loop of obscenely detailed testimonies about sexual abuse. I wondered then how long they might have lasted in the museum if there were also galleries represented. The Museum of Memory include a long view of urge citizens to remember national accomplishments alongside national shame? The combined effect might even heighten the horror, given the political dimensions of the loss along with all the rest. But a side effect might be a welcoming embrace of inclusion. The pleasure and pride in this particular patriotism wouldn’t have to distinguish between sides of a conflict. It would share a heritage worthy of the struggle against getfulness.

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The museum substantiates the horror of Pinochet’s assault on citizens, in case anyone is in doubt. It commemorates their lost lives, lost to the ultimate blow of death but also lost in trickles, by dispirited survivors. Citizens who lived through those years are haunted by the horror of a national army that ravaged compatriots. This was no civil war of desperate though that kind of conflict challenged the legislative systems that Bello helped to put in place. A Liberal-Conservative conciliation and the consequent political continuity came to seem inevitable. The country achieved distinction as a “democracy of the oligarchs.” (John Cow, The Epic of Latin America 3rd ed. expanded and updated [Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980]) The quote is his title for chapter 48 of this once popular text, about Chile in the second half of the 19th century: pp. 640-648).

After a century and a half of dependability democracy—however limited the access to power and whatever the inequalities in the distribution of resources—Chileans must have been astonished at the sudden loss of liberties and legality. They were bereft of familiar paradigms. Repression of this blunt and brutal variety was the experience of other countries, countries such as the Argentina remembered in Alberdi’s toast. Political exiles from elsewhere had historically fled to the safe and neutral sanctuary that Chile represented. Chile’s citizens might be invited to care for their lost lives, lost to the ultimate sacrifice. The Museum of Memory includes a long view of the shameful events and dynamics of a dictatorship that had conveniently hidden or misconstrued the facts of repression. But the laser focus on shame—without framing the longer view—has the unfortunate effect of cutting out the public’s cause for pride, the reason why Chile’s citizens might be invited to care so intimately about democracy.

During my May 2013 visit to the museum, I walked in along with a local father and his 8 or 9-year-old son. The unhappy child heared his father explain that he may well be in a group photo of a crowd being broken up by armed forces, urging the boy to help locate the image. But their visit lasted only a few minutes, probably ending just after we entered the loop of obscenely detailed testimonies about sexual abuse. I wondered then how long they might have lasted in the museum if there were also galleries represented. The Museum of Memory include a long view of urge citizens to remember national accomplishments alongside national shame? The combined effect might even heighten the horror, given the political dimensions of the loss along with all the rest. But a side effect might be a welcoming embrace of inclusion. The pleasure and pride in this particular patriotism wouldn’t have to distinguish between sides of a conflict. It would share a heritage worthy of the struggle against getfulness.

Doris Sommer teaches Latin American Literature at Harvard. She is author of several books including Foundation Fiction: The National Romances of Latin America, Bilingual Aesthetics, and The Work of Art in the World: Civic Agency and Public Humanities (forthcoming). She is a founder of the Agency Initiative to develop arts and humanities as social resources.
Walking up to 12,000 Feet in the Peruvian Andes took two entire days. With Ramiro Niño de Guzmán, a Quechua-speaking human rights leader, I set out for his childhood home in Checcasa, along the same path that the army had taken when it attacked his village in 1988, accusing his family of being Shining Path insurgents. His brothers were tortured and killed, his sisters raped and dismembered. But this was 2006 and Ramiro and I were returning to Checcasa to show the villagers the documentary film he was featured in and that I had directed called State of Fear: The Truth About Terrorism. Ramiro wanted to have State of Fear create a village-wide dialogue about their memories of the war, and, steeped in that painful memory, have them demand action from the local government to provide promised reparations. State of Fear is a film that looks backwards as well as forward. It tells the story of what the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission discovered about what had really happened during Peru’s 20-year war from 1980 to 2000. The Commission contested the official version that President Fujimori had promulgated, saying he had created economic prosperity and saved the country from terrorism. It replaced that narrative and rewrote that chapter of Peruvian history, giving voice to those most affected by the violence. The Commission’s findings indicted both Shining Path and the government for the massive death toll. They called both for specific military members to be prosecuted, and for a change in the conditions of poverty and exclusion that set the stage for the rise of Shining Path. My experience of being on the inside filming during the Truth Commission’s investigation inspired the making of a film about historical memory, now in pre-production, titled Memoryscape. Of course I would have to include Peru’s ongoing contested memory in this new documentary. Our premise for the new film is that memory is fundamental to our humanity. For most of recorded time, history was written primarily by those in power to serve their own interests. Today, the establishment of historical memory is more likely to at least involve debate—and in the best cases negotiation—among competing groups and social forces. Indeed, a society’s shared memories are constructed under specific political circumstances. When different sectors of society have conflicting narratives and framing of past events, vested interests manipulate the present political environment to try to ensure that their version of events is accepted. In countries like Peru with violent and painful pasts, unresolved memory issues can have a toxic effect in the present—perpetuating a societal trauma that needs to find resolution. Today we strive for a process of remembering that is increasingly democratic, collective, exciting and contested.
When a nation engages in debate over how to memorialize its past in public spaces, the road to consensus is usually fraught with fiercely opposed points of view coming from all segments of society, from the heights of academia and state agencies to grassroots movements. In countries around the world, competing groups now have a voice—though often only through fierce struggle—in constructing the physical, narrative, and emotional landscape of shared memory.

The simple question of who is a victim and who is a perpetrator, who should be remembered and who deserves to be forgotten, remains contested and has wreaked havoc on The Eye That Cries memorial.

These memoryscapes—made up of elements ranging from memorials and museums to street signs—and the process of creating them are the subject of Memoryscape. In Peru, despite an exhaustive process of consensus that seeks to integrate remember in order to progress—a pursuit of science and public memorials.

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Historical Footprints
Changing How We Teach Colombia’s Violent Past

BY LAURA BARRAGÁN MONTAÑA

GEORGE SANTAYANA’S WELL-KNOWN DICTUM, “Those who don’t remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” reminds us why it is important to learn history. But what does this really mean? What aspects of the past must we remember? Who chooses them? How do we remember them? Can this understanding really change our attitudes and behaviors? Are we truly capable of avoiding the mistakes of the past?

In a country like mine, Colombia, these questions are very significant as the country is involved in an intensive peace process. On July 24, 2013, the National Center of Historical Memory officially presented a 434-page long report entitled “Basta ya! Colombia: Memorias de guerra y dignidad” (Enough Already. Memories of War and Dignity). How can we hide under the excuse that it is too soon or that too little is known. We must embrace this past and really consider how we, as Colombians, are going to face what seems too little is known. We must embrace this past.

“...is it not as simple as saying that those who lose their memory only lose their short-term or long-term past. What is more terrifying to see is how this elusive past takes with it the present and future of people with this disease...”

But what does this really mean? What reminds us why it is important to learn history. “...GeorGe Santayana’S well-known dictum, ‘That which is past becomes the present, the present the future, and the future past, when we alter the sequence—probably familiar to anyone who has lived with someone who has this disease—that our role as a historian in Colombia finally made sense. Could this be true? Have we begun to see things in a new way, to recognize oneself in this moment and, even more difficult, to project oneself into the future.

And it is this new understanding—probably familiar to anyone who has lived with someone who has this disease—that our role as a historian in Colombia finally made sense. Could this be true? Have we begun to see things in a new way, to recognize oneself in this moment and, even more difficult, to project oneself into the future.

One of my more pressing concerns is that the narrative we are teaching our children is one that hardly fosters any agency—both in pedagogical and historical terms. On the one hand, we are reducing the role of the student to a passive recipient of content-delivery, rather than an inquiring and critical mind who can understand that history is a construction. On the other, we seem to be replacing the belief that we are so deep into our conflict, into decades of corruption, and into mounds of unfulfilled promises, that nothing will ever change.

A teaching of history for this brave new world of the conflict and post-conflict schizophrenia we are living in requires fundamental changes. How can we bring into our classrooms the many narratives that the National Center of Historical Memory has produced? It is not as simple as just printing and shipping copies of the reports or battles for the inclusion of a new chapter in a textbook. We cannot fall prey to the danger of rehashing the same issues that we may not be able to articulate if we were to begin with the massacre that happened next door.

“...it is with this in mind that I and some colleagues have created a nonprofit called Historical Footprint (HF)™. Through one of our main programs, we seek to provide a rigorous teacher training and support system through which social science teachers can ask themselves all these questions, reflect about their practice, and learn new and old methodologies that can counteract the charge that we are teaching an inevitable and irrelevant history...

The principle behind the HF model is that we all have our own Historical Footprint. This model is inspired by the idea of the “carbon footprint” that has done so much to bring environmental concerns into public consciousness. It has done this because it illustrates, in clear and simple terms, how much our habits impact the environment. Thus, “helping” the environment is no longer something that only governments or big corporations can do, but an action that any one of us can accomplish by being mindful of everyday actions. We want to establish a similar notion but in terms of how we impact history.

Therefore, the heart of this proposal is to create new pedagogical methodologies to gauge how everyday life actions determine the course of history. By calculating the Historical Footprints of others in the past, students and teachers can more easily understand how ordinary people have positively and negatively influenced a specific moment in time. It is about learning the past not only through what politicians, heroes, or a few others have done, but by studying how even the worst of atrocities are possible through the multiple actions or inactions many of us have taken.

Our curriculum is a three-step process. Inspired by the already successful model of Facing History and Ourselves, the curriculum begins by analyzing an international case study. Whether it is through examples from the Holocaust, South Africa, Northern Ireland, Peru or Guatemala, this distancing effect is important as a first step. It is not about neglecting our own history. It is about starting with a mirror that can allow us to face many of the issues that we may not be able to articulate if we were to begin with the massacre that happened next door.

“...repetition is one of the best ways to measure the Historical Footprints of different people in these past international events, the teachers will repeat the process but with a national case study linked to our recent violence. The narratives published by the National Center of Historical Memory will be fundamental to study how ordinary people have caused, suffered and/or endured our violence...”

The final step will invite teachers (and through their implementation, their students, and anyone) to gauge their own Historical Footprint. To think about their own history and try to assess the effects their own choices and actions have had. This will not only allow us to have the cathartic effect of storytelling, but will spark a projection into the future.

Yes, Colombia needs bold and significant top-down policies to guide us

Author Laura Barragán Montaña as a child with her grandmother

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YOUR STORY IS HISTORY IN THE MAKING

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Educating the “Good Citizen”

Memory in postwar Guatemala

by Michelle J. Bellino

ON MY MANY FIELD TRIPS, I TELL GUATEMALAN TEENS I’M INTERESTED IN HOW THEY LEARN ABOUT THE 36-YEAR CONFLICT ARMADO (armed conflict). I THEN STUDY THEIR FACIES. IF NOT BOLTED, THEY AVERT THEIR EYES AND SHARE REFRAINS PASSED ON BY MANY ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES: “WE HAVE NO HISTORICAL MEMORY!” OR “IN GUATEMALA, THERE IS NO HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.” SCHOOL TEACHERS SAY, OCCASIONALLY WITH CONCERN, “WE DON’T TALK ABOUT THAT HERE,” OR WITH MORE WORRY, “YOUNG PEOPLE DON’T CARE ABOUT THE PAST. THERE ARE TOO MANY PROBLEMS TODAY.”

GUATEMALAN YOUTH ARE EQUALLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR LACK OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. THEY SHAKE THEIR HANDS AND TELL ME, “OUR EDUCATION HERE IS THE WORST.” WITH SUNKEN EYES, THEY DESCRIBE HOW EDUCATION HAS BECOME PRIVATIZED, EXCLUSIONARY, AND YET REMAINS MEDIOCRE. YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF GUATEMALA’S DEFICIENCIES ARE INTERTWINED WITH THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE UNRESOLVED PAST AND THE WAY A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE RESONATES IN DEMOCRACY’S FAILURES. THERE IS A LONG LIST OF WHAT GUATEMALA LACKS.

COLLECTIVELY ACKNOWLEDGING HISTORICAL INJUSTICE IS CENTRAL TO THE PROJECT OF TRANSFORMING DEMOCRACIES. BUT THE VIOLENT PAST IS NOT EASILY EXAMINED IN “POSTWAR” GUATEMALA, WHERE CONTEMPORARY CRIME SEEMS TO ECLIPSE DECADES OF MILITARY BRUTALITY, EVEN WHILE TODAY’S POLITICAL REPRESION AND SYMPTOMATIC POWER DYNAMICS ENTANGLES PAST AND PRESENT VIOLENCE.

THE PAST IS INDEED TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS, BUT FOR MANY SURVIVORS ITS MORTAL AND POLITICAL ERASEDNESS ARE SO SUBSTANTIAL THAT IT IS RENDERED INVISIBLE. SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN GUATEMALA RELIES HEAVILY ON TWO NARRATIVE “TEMPLATES” FOR INTERPRETING THE CONFLICT ARMADO. THE FIRST PRESENTS AN ACCOUNT OF A WAR THAT ERUPTED BETWEEN “TWO DEVILS,” THE STATE AND GUERRILLA ARMIES. PRESUMABLY DEVELOPED AS “COMPROMISE” NARRATIVE IN OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES CONCERNING THEIR OWN HISTORIES OF STATE REPRESSIVE NEO-LIBERALISM, THE ROLE OF VIOLENCE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN “TWO DEVILS” (OR “TWO FIRES”) FUNCTIONS AS A SIGNIFICANT EQUALIZER OF ACCOUNTABILITY. RATHER THAN EXPLORE ASYMMETRICAL POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS AND THE PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY BORNE BY THE STATE TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER ALL CONDITIONS, CONFLICT BETWEEN THE DEVILS SERVES TO NULLIFY VULNERABILITY, CONSTRUCTING A ZERO SUM. THERE IS NO MURAL ACCOUNTABILITY OR UNFAULLED JUSTICE, BECAUSE EVERYONE WAS ACCOUNTABLE, NO ONE IS ACCOUNTABLE.

THE SECOND NARRATIVE LOCATES THE CONFLICT ARMADO IN A DARK PAST, A TRAGIC EVENT FROM WHICH GUATEMALA HAS RECOVERED IN ITS MARCH TOWARD PEACE AND PROGRESS. THE HORRORS OF THE WAR HAVE BEEN COLLECTIVELY ADDRESSED AND SWIFTLY ARCHIVED, SO THAT THEY ONLY REQUIRE A SINGLE PARAGRAPHS IN MANY TEXTBOOKS, SURROUNDED BY LENGTHY SECTIONS DEVOTED TO THE PEACE PROCESS, PEACE VALUES, AND HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES. ALTHOUGH THE WAR COMPROMISED THE “SUFFERING OF ALL GUATEMALANS,” THE CONFLICT WAS RESOLVED, AND TODAY’S GUATEMALA HAS LEARNED FROM ITS PAST. THE NARRATIVE OF HISTORICAL PROGRESSION CONJURES THE HOPE-FOR-BUT UTLIMATUM ELSIE POSTWAR REALITY, WHEREIN YOUNG CITIZENS OBTENABLY INHERITED A PEACEFUL AND HUMANITARIAN DEMOCRACY WHERE ALL PEOPLE ARE EQUAL. IMPORTANTLY, THIS IMAGINED FUTURE REQUIRE LOOKING FORWARD TOWARD SHARED GOALS, RATHER THAN BACKWARDS AT SHARED SUFFERING.

ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM APPLIES TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOLS, TEACHERS REPRESENT THE CONFLICT ARMADO AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRENT FRAGILE DEMOCRACY IN STRIKINGLY DISTINCT WAYS. SOMETIMES THEY TALK ABOUT HOW TO TEACH NEW GENERATIONS ABOUT THE “TWO DEVILS.” SOMETIMES THEY OFFER SUBTLE OR EXPLICIT CUES THAT ONE SIDE WAS ACTUALLY MORE IN THE RIGHT THAN THE OTHER. TEACHERS THEMSELVES HAVE SURVIVED THE CONFLICT OR INHERITED ITS LEGACY; THEY ARE INVESTED IN ITS MEMORY OR ITS OMISSION. THE INACCESSIBILITY OF PRIMARY HISTORICAL SOURCES SITUATES TESTIMONIO (TESTIMONY OR WITNESS ACCOUNTS) AS A USEFUL HISTORICAL SOURCE—OFTEN THE SOLE SOURCE—OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE. MEANWHILE, PRIMARY HISTORICAL SOURCES SUCH AS TRUTH COMMISSION FINDINGS, ARE ALMOST NEVER DISCUSSED IN CLASSROOMS. INCORPORATING THESE ACCOUNTS MIGHT MERGE THE DEVILS INTO ONE. FOR THE MOST PART, EDUCATORS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS FACE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW TO TEACH NEW GENERATIONS ABOUT THE PAST, WHEN IT SEEMS TO REMAIN AFFixed TO THE PRESENT. INTERPRETING A HISTORY OF MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY THE STATE, EVEN WHEN STATE POWER CHANGES HANDS, CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE CITIZENS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD DEMOCRACY, ESPECIALLY WHEN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS ARE RELATIVELY NEW POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND LACK A RECORD OF STABILITY. MEMORIES OF THE VIOLENT PAST ARE CONTINUOUSLY ACCESSED, PERFORMED, AND DISPUTED AS CITIZENS MAKE EVERYDAY DECISIONS ABOUT THE NATURE AND LEVEL OF THEIR CIVIC PARTICIPATION, EVEN WHILE THEY ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT THE WAR WAS FOR. YOUNG PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW THE HISTORICAL DETAILS OF THIS PAST, BUT THEY FEEL ITS PRESENCE IN THEIR LIVES.

CURRICULAR MATERIALS STRONGLY RELY ON THE PASSIVE VOICE, OBSCURING THE AGENCY OF HISTORICAL ACTORS WHO CAUSED HARM, ENDURED SUFFERING, OR RISKED THEIR LIVES TO CREATE A MORE JUST SOCIETY. ERASING THE POLITICAL AGENCY OF HISTORICAL ACTORS, NOTA-BLY THE GUERRILLAS, LONG CAST AS CRIMINALS WHOSE “INVESTIGATION” THREATENED NATIONAL SECURITY, CREATES AN IMPRESSION THAT LITTLE WAS AT STAKE DURING THE PROTRACTED VIOLANCE. THOUGH THE REBEL MOVEMENT’S TURN TO VIOLENCE WAS NOT WITHOUT ITS OWN EXCESS-

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ReVista FALL 2013

PHOTO BY MARY JO MCDONNELL

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es, it grew from wide-reaching popular movements, and began with nonviolent demonstrations expressed by an increasingly authoritarian government. The goals that joined diverse people in insurgent movements centered on social justice in the form of social, economic, and cultural rights. Depoliticizing the conflicto armado portrays decades of conflict as yet another bad thing that “just happened” in the succession of colonialism, natu-
ral disasters, and the infiltration of the global drug trade. Suffering—whether in extreme poverty, direct combat, or habitual fear of the fighting cities—is conveyed as inevitable, while those who intervene to change the status quo are cast as crimi-
nals, killed as martyrs, or become some tormented amalgamation.

What space does this leave for the “good citizen” in a weak democracy, espe-
cially when one is situated on the mar-
gin? Amidst pervasive refrains that “we cannot guard against everyday experience
of the past as impractical distractions from
what we lack.

Despite promises made in the Peace Accords to transform the educational sector, Guatemala’s school system continues to reflect a highly divided and unequal society. These conditions can-
not be overlooked when analyzing what young people learn in schools about their civic roles—some seated at modern desks with glossy textbooks and others staring out broken windows and with no books at all. Despite efforts at civic education, Guatemalan youth reveal one of the low-
est levels of trust for their government in the Latin American region. In this sense, strong knowledge of democracy’s ideals cannot guard against everyday experience with Guatemala’s democratic failures.

Young people in Guatemala may not actually know the historical details of the violent past, but they feel its presence in their everyday lives.

the most salient lessons of the two devils representation seems to be the rigid and autocratic relationship forged between citizens and the state during times of tur-
moil. The persistence of blame placed on activists today (characterized as agitators and even terrorists) reinforces a myth of civic actions that breed their own hopes, expectations, and policies about Guatemala’s future, namely, whether it will remain a democracy or return to a military regime. While former head of State General Efraín Rios Montt stood trial for genocide, incipient hopes of justice for the past were couched within everyday concerns over militarization. Young people question whether the fact that the current president is himself a for-
military veteran general constitutes a “mili-
tary government,” and whether there is a

Educational policymakers in the “post-
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improved civic knowledge, others drawn upon historical memory as a source of social division and political polarization, and others view discussions of the past as impractical distractions from current challenges facing the country. Good intentions (in most cases) underlie these diverse approaches, but impressions of civic responsibilities remain as polar-
ized as the past itself. Traces of the past and detentions of historical continuity breed their own hopes, expectations, and fears about Guatemala’s future, namely, whether it will remain a democracy or return to a military regime. While former head of State General Efraín Rios Montt stood trial for genocide, incipient hopes of justice for the past were couched within everyday concerns over militarization. Young people question whether the fact that the current president is himself a for-
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sequent uncertainty might significantly alter the historical narrative, it will also undoubtedly breed new counter-nar-
ratives and efforts to reclaim the past.

Young people inhabit the postwar future; or has it lost relevance entirely in the post-postwar?

Critical acknowledgement central to the

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Despite promises made in the Peace Accords to transform the educational sector, Guatemala’s school system continues to reflect a highly divided and unequal society. These conditions cannot be overlooked when analyzing what young people learn in schools about their civic roles—some seated at modern desks with glossy textbooks and others staring out broken windows and with no books at all. Despite efforts at civic education, Guatemalan youth reveal one of the lowest levels of trust for their government in the Latin American region. In this sense, strong knowledge of democracy’s ideals cannot guard against everyday experience with Guatemala’s democratic failures.

Educational policymakers in the “post-
war” years have significantly restructured primary school curriculum and increased access to early childhood education. Current efforts to improve the quality of schools have prompted the Ministry of Education to professionalize teacher prep-

eration, an important step (though highly disputed among teachers-in-training) in transforming the educational sector. Yet amidst these changes, little has been done at the level of secondary schools, where nearly half of Guatemalan youth drop out to pursue jobs in the informal sector, at high risk for criminal pathways. Efforts to revise curricular representations of the conflicto armado are continually “in pro-
cress,” meet with various forms of opposi-
tion, and remain a challenge at the central policy level. The uncertainty about how to move forward permeates all sectors of civil society: is historical memory a hindrance to shared hopes for peace; is it a critical acknowledgement central to the postwar future; or has it lost relevance entirely in the post-postwar?

It remains uncertain how Guate-

mala’s secondary school curriculum will be revised, especially given the ups and downs of the Ríos Montt trial. While the guilty sentence, its overturn, and subsequent uncertainty might significantly alter the historical narrative, it will also undoubtedly breed new counter-narratives and efforts to reclaim the past. “Postwar” generations will determine whether these democratic gaps and histor-
torical silences are filled in. The flawed democracy young people inhabit is the one they inherited, with deep and unre-
solved authoritarian legacies. It is up to

them to renew their parents’ dreams for peace and justice.

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eration. She has been selected as a Peace Scholar by the United States Institute of Peace and a John H. Coat-
sworth Fellow by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies for her research on Guatemalan youth civic development.

This is a very short story of how a small museum in Colombia underwent a pro-
found process of change and renovation, tackling sensitive and controversial issues of memory in recent Colombian history.

The independence of Colombia is cel-

ebrated every July 20, because on that
day in 1810, a group of creoles (children of Spaniards born in America) started a fight with a Spaniard who refused to lend them a flower vase. That initial fight sparked a riot that eventually ended in a declaration of independence.

In 1960, 160 years later, the house where the fight started was restored and made into a museum. This house-muse-

um, a memorial for the veneration of the country’s heroes, not only was anachro-
nistic but really boring for visitors at the begin-
ing of the 21st century. A change was necessary.

However, real change (not just the cos-
metic change in display cases and graphic design that most museums dream of) is hard to achieve. It takes a lot of time and resources, but also demands a change of attitude, both in the way the museum views the visitors, and most difficult, the way visitors see the museum.

In 2002, we (one of us the director and another a close advisor) started to think about how to make that change. Several questions came to mind: How to involve visitors actively, (not just as survey num-
bers)? How to challenge historical pre-
conceptions? How to defy the sanctity of the museum? As it is the birthplace of the nation, change might feel like sacrilege. The museum had also evolved as a place of memory; it had been the staging ground for the Army during the horrific Palace of Justice siege in 1985 that left half of the Supreme Court justices dead. We wanted to honor old memories, but we were not sure about incorporating the newer ones.

The New Museum for Independence honors victims of the conflict in its hot spot project.

A New Museum for Independence

Renovating Memories BY DANIEL CASTRO AND CAMILO SÁNCHEZ

MEMORY: IN SEARCH OF HISTORY AND DEMOCRACY
The first initiatives were of course based on the old exhibition design. We started to ask visitors about the very essence of the museum, the concept of independence (understood as a concept and not as a historical fact). Visitors were invited to write their own independence declaration, to sit on a sofa from the collection and “feel” independent (it was a play on words, as in Spanish the word “seat” [sentarse] is very similar to the word “feel” [sentirse]), to “break” the historical flower vase (at least a jigsaw puzzle of it) and then reconstruct it.

A survey even consulted the public about changing the name of the museum (it used to be called the “Museum of July 20, 1810”). People agreed with us that it should be called “The Museum of Independence.” Based on the survey, we developed a new plan following a participative, interdisciplinary and inclusive model, trying to bring in as many points of view as possible (architects, museum professionals, anthropologists, historians, politicians, artists, journalists, conservators and many others). The result was then presented, evaluated and approved by experts in Colombia and abroad. We finally had a plan for change.

Magnetoscopio, an internationally renowned exhibition design firm, was hired to materialize the concepts of the plan, and finally ideas started to take a physical shape. Colombians would have an innovative space to think about new ways of understanding the concepts of autonomy, liberty and independence.

However, one question still had no answer...

That was what to do about the relationship of the museum to the Palace of Justice siege 28 years ago. To make a political statement, a group of the M-19 guerrilla took over, in 1985, the building housing the Supreme Court directly in front of the museum. The Army—using the museum as its operation center—entered the Palace by force, killing several employees. After a couple of hours, the Army takeover became a slaughter. To make a long story short, the result was: around 117 people killed, 12 people still disappeared and the building burnt down to the ground.

After the massacre, the museum went back to its normal life, avoiding the issue as a subject of its exhibitions, as if nothing had happened. We knew we had to change this in our renovation, but there were several considerations.

The case is not closed yet and investigations are still ongoing.

The museum is a National Museum, operating under the Ministry of Culture, and hence everything the museum offers is basically an official message; in a way, it is the government speaking. Most of the accused (for using unnecessary force) are members of the Colombian Army, and because of that, there is a feeling that the government does not agree with the accusations made against them. The guerrilla group signed a peace treaty in 1990 and most of its militants were pardoned. However, at the time of the museum reopening (2010), they faced open opposition from then-President Álvaro Uribe, who accused them of being “terrorists.”

In 2009, at the Reykjavík annual ICOM/CECA (International Council of Museums/Committee for Education and Cultural Action) Conference, a Swedish museum gave a presentation that related its experience with a project called “Hot Spot: Awareness-Making on Contemporary Issues in Museums.” That concept was exactly what we were looking for.

We contacted the people responsible for the Hot Spot project in order to get their permission to duplicate their initiative. Their reply went even further:

“I [the project director] believe that the museum can play an enormously important role to mediate burning issues and invite the surrounding society and open up for debate. To connect a hot
The new Museum of Independence in Bogotá seeks to create a dialogue with a multiplicity of Colombia’s pasts. Its motto is “a place where history is built by your own history.”

army and a plea for a truce made by a magistrate caught in the crossfire; a list of all the people killed, images of the people who are still “disappeared” and we provided a mechanism for visitors to record and display their feelings and opinions about the issues.

Although it was a very sensitive topic, most of the elements listed above were easy to find. However, the problem was how to pose the question to the public. We did not want people to just read the information given and “take a side.” We wanted to, somehow, make visitors realize that there were several motivations for each side to do what they did. We aspired to activate critical thinking, rather than polarize opinion. After long discussions, we ended up formulating five questions that we hope can trigger critical opinions: To forget? To remember? To forgive? To condemn? To repair?

Then the real challenge began. How would people react to the exhibition? Would they be annoyed? Would someone feel attacked or just indignant?

Would such a person break something in the museum, or damage the exhibition? Would people complain to the press or directly to the Ministry of Culture? And most importantly: Would people ever care?

Since the museum reopened, we had had more than 500,000 visitors. Only about a hundred have complained they do not like the change. They miss the old museum. Some don’t like the fact that there is no guide (they seem to reject independence!). However, there had been just five complaints about the Hot Spot. Visitors actively participate by answering the questions (which are then exhibited, along with pieces from newspapers that come up virtually every day with judiciary decisions about the incident). Indeed, many even say that this is their favorite part of the museum.

Maybe the most interesting complaints come from people that were involved in the 1985 events. We have received a couple of “rights to petition” from the lawyers handling the cases of the people disappeared in the Palace of Justice and more recently, one from the lawyer of the family of one of the coronels that has been sentenced to jail for misuse of power. In both cases we have had to seek legal counsel and reply to their claims with museological arguments.

When you get reactions like these (when both parts affected feel that the other part should not be displayed, with arguments like “those who forget their history are bound to repeat it”), the first reaction is often an angry one. There are of course many arguments to defend the presentation of all the actors involved. But then, most of the time, a simple explanation of why we did things the way we did suffices to diffuse angry feelings. And at the end of the day, it is great to see that people actually read what is displayed, and get touched by it. The museum made people active. We would rather have a legal complaint every week than have no reactions at all.

Finally, we think that participation (and most importantly, involvement) of our public is a key element in everything the museum does. Given that participation is one of the principles of the new 1991 Colombian Constitution, we deliberately want to be consequent and take action as a result. It was not something we did just for the renovation. We keep asking our visitors about their feelings for future exhibitions: What would you want to know?, What would you like to see? What do you think? How does something make you feel?

It is not just a way of giving them the false illusion of participation; it is the way the museum wants to be, a place for dialogue. That is why our motto is “a place where history is built by your own history.”

It may sound like a utopia, but it is certainly one we would like to involve our visitors in, at least two ways: poetically and politically. Poetry implies the way in which we share knowledge and experience, and politics is seen as the compromise we have to accomplish as active citizens.

Daniel Castro is an artist, musician and educator with an MA in History from the National University of Colombia. He is director of two historical museums of the Ministry of Culture of Colombia (the Museo de la Independencia-Casa del Florero and the Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar).

Camilo Sánchez is an Industrial Designer and MA in Museology from the University of East Anglia. He is currently the museological advisor of the Museo de la Independencia-Casa del Florero and the Casa Museo Quinta de Bolívar.

 Sometimes unearthing the past is literal: digging up remains to find the truth. And sometimes it is a figurative unearthing of the past, the exploration of childhood experiences, adoption and exile to reconstruct painful histories.

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In Search of Miss Esme

Memories and History of the Spanish Civil War

BY MARYSA NAVARRO

A new book on the Spanish Civil War, Memories and History of the Spanish Civil War, by Marysa Navarro, explores the personal stories of children who were involved in the conflict.

Navarro, a scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, has been researching the experiences of children who were evacuated from Spain during the Civil War and their subsequent lives.

The book includes interviews with survivors, as well as archival research, to paint a picture of the impact the war had on children.

"I was interested in the issue of how children were affected by the war," Navarro said. "I wanted to understand their perspective and how they made sense of what they experienced."
Discovering Dominga
Adoptions and Tangled Truths  

IN THE OPEN CENTRAL MARKET ONE MORNING IN Rabinal, Guatemala, 28-year-old Denese Becker picked up a bolt of corte cloth, woven fabric used by Achi Maya women to make their skirts, and brought it to her face. She closed her eyes. “My mother,” she said. “This smells like my mother.” I knew which one she was talking about. That was more than a decade ago; we were in Rabinal to shoot the PBS documentary Discovering Dominga, the story of an Iowa housewife—Denese—a survivor of the 1982 Rio Negro massacre in which both her parents died. Denese, the former Dominga Sic, was returning to look for the bones of her father and to untangle the truth of a lifetime of nightmares. On that journey she also discovered a world of memory that might have remained hidden in small-town Iowa, where she arrived at age eleven, adopted by an evangelical pastor and his wife. Her adoptive parents were loving and attentive to her, their only daughter. However, as I watched Denese Becker in the Guatemalan highlands, among trees and flowers once familiar to her, I couldn’t help thinking how much this young woman had lost by being taken from her roots to live in a strange land.

“What is this tree called?” she would ask. “I know you can eat its leaves.” Or, “I think I recognize that flower. It’s bad. Don’t touch it.”

Like Denese, thousands of children during the Central American conflict were adopted by foreigners, mostly from the United States and Europe. When my husband and I arrived in Tegucigalpa from San Francisco with our 8-month-old in 1987, the hotel clerk glanced at the infant slung across my chest and said, “I assume you want the adopting parents’ rates.” During the week it took us to find a rental house, we learned that a dozen U.S. couples at the hotel, and several single individuals, had come to Honduras not to live, but to adopt.

There are reasons why journalists, academic researchers and others do not investigate such stories at the time, including the urgency of other coverage and the general confusion of war. Some feel that any child removed from the risk of war or life of poverty is indeed better off, and questions ought to stop there for the good of all. During the weeks we filmed Discovering Dominga in 2001 and 2002, Denese could not bring herself to accept invitations to sleep in the dirt-floor houses of her relatives; their lives and living conditions were too foreign to her. One day, we met an ajq’ij, a spiritual guide charged with giving thanks to the Creator of life, keeping the Maya calendar and performing ceremony. “What does his red kerchief mean?” she asked me later. “My grandfather wore one.” Now an evangelical Christian, she seemed to struggle with the knowledge that her grandfather had been a guardian of Maya spirituality, so inimical to the beliefs of her extended adoptive family. In the film Denese says that as a child in Iowa she never “fit in,” but off camera in Rabinal, it seemed clear that neither did Denese Becker/Dominga Sic “fit in” any longer among the people to whom she was born.

An advantage of peace is the gift of space and time to ask questions about what has come before. How much of the memory of the homeland is carried in the minds of children, now adults, as they live far from where they were born? Should adoptions during time of war be forbidden, or truncated in any way? They are questions we might consider before we are forced, should the occasion arise, to answer them again.

Mary Jo McConahay is the author of Maya Roads, One Woman’s Journey Among the People of the Rainforest (Chicago Review Press). She wrote the original story for the PBS documentary Discovering Dominga and co-produced it with producer Pat Flynn.

Photos by Mary Jo McConahay

Mary Jo McConahay

Discovering Dominga
Adoptions and Tangled Truths

Left above: A couple in El Salvador. Here too, journalists and academics often overlooked stories about adoption because of time pressures.

Right: Denese Becker/Dominga Sic holds a portrait of her biological father in Rabinal, Guatemala, during the filming of Discovering Dominga.
Notes from Exile
Horizons of Democracy

by Iván Jaksic

It certainly sounded glamorous at the time—and even might sound so today. In October 1981, I flew from Berkeley, California, where I had been visiting, to attend an academic conference at Yale University on political scenarios under the Chilean dictatorship. I had an airline ticket in my pocket to take me, after the conference, to Lund, Sweden. So far so good, except that the student visa I had received upon entering the United States in 1976 had just expired. At that point I was considering Sweden as a potential place of residence after receiving an invitation to present a paper there on Chilean Marxist philosophy, a topic I had analyzed in my dissertation. The Swedish conference was a gathering of mainly Latin American exiles seeking to address the increasingly agonizing question whether Marxism was still relevant in the early 1980s, when workers in Poland, just across the Baltic Sea, were rebelling against their Marxist masters. I was on my way to lots of questions and uncertainties about the future.

My host at Yale had been Daniel C. Levy, a specialist in Latin American higher education, who’d told me that there would be several Chileans at the U.S. conference. I was starved for Chileans, so I was grateful for the opportunity to attend and catch up with compatriots. I had given up on ever returning to Chile. In 1974 I had barely escaped arrest and fled to Argentina, where I managed to stay for a year working as a machinist, and where the political situation soon deteriorated. I returned to Chile briefly, but was again forced to leave the country; this time in defiance of the draft. I thought I could claim an amnesty a few years later, and in fact went back to Chile to claim it, but instead I was tried and sentenced for violations of military law. A return to the country under the circumstances would have been foolhardy, and surely a route to further trouble. Sweden, where I had friends and an academic purpose, sounded like the best prospect at the time.

This was what I meant when I listened to the presentations on Chile at Yale, analyzing the impact of eight years of the country was still an open-ended question, and that she clearly understood that intellectuals, both inside and outside of the country, could play a role in it. She saved me from cutting off all ties to Chile, though I did not know it at the time, when I was still searching for a place to live.

Giving up on Sweden for the time being, I returned to the United States thanks to an invitation from historian Tulio Halperin Donghi, which allowed me to settle in Berkeley briefly in 1982, and for a longer time beginning in 1983. My job as a researcher and then as program coordinator in the Center for Latin American Studies at UC-Berkeley was to put together activities relating to hemispheric issues. At the time, Central America, with the Nicaraguan revolution and the Contra War, was at the center of public attention. But so was Argentina, with the fall of the military government and the rise of Raúl Alfonsín, who became president of the country and was later honored at Berkeley for his role in leading the country back to democracy. I had meanwhile become involved in human rights issues through the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), writing a report on the Mapuche of southern Chile, whose lands had been privatized under Pinochet, disrupting and rupturing their communities. And under the guidance of Lars Schoultz, who was then the head of the Task Force on Human Rights and Academic Freedom at Yale, pursuing an M.A. in history. It was a short conversation, but it lingered in my mind when I arrived in Sweden. It became clear to me that for Sol the future of the country was still an open-ended question, and that she clearly understood that intellectuals, both inside and outside of the country, could play a role in it. She saved me from cutting off all ties to Chile, though I did not know it at the time, when I was still searching for a place to live.

Chile was also present in some of the lectures I helped organize, and very much so when the time of the plebiscite approached in 1988. It was in that context that I contacted Paul W. Drake, who generously accepted a proposal to collaborate, institutionally and personally, on a project that brought leading scholars of Chile to analyze the prospects for a transition to democracy. Such a transition had been contemplated in the 1980 Constitution, but there were doubts about the sincerity of the government in implementing it. The response from Chilean academics was extraordinary, partly because the space for public discussion had become very limited in Chile after the failed assassination attempt against Augusto Pinochet in 1986. Although we organizers of the event strongly believed that Chileans would orchestrate their own transition to democracy, it was in academic venues like this where issues were laid out and subsequent policies developed. Many of the participants in our conference, which took place in San Diego, and many of the authors in our The Struggle for Democracy in Chile, became leading figures in the Concertación government that reinstated democracy in 1990. What became very clear to me, both in my own work and in the coordination of academic conferences and workshops, was that the times required a revision of the standard understanding of how our nations became nations, and how political systems evolved into what they had become at the time: in most cases a sad trajectory from formal democracy to authoritarian rule. It became important to me to return to the roots of our history in order to look more deeply into institutional designs, historically bound political decisions, and fundamental values that had been lost along the way, although I certainly did not idealize the 19th century. The excessively long experience of dictatorship made me, and I dare say my generation, appreciate what they had been taken for granted in previous decades. Democracy was now certainly more than a set of procedures for electing representatives; indeed it was a political philosophy that involved a commitment to fundamental values such as human rights.

And yet, the achievement of democracy in Chile in 1990 was not the triumphant end to an odd chapter in our history. For those of us who remained abroad, distance allowed us to be perhaps less celebratory, and certainly more critical than Chileans at home. Because of the peculiar nature of the transition, with a tight civil-military coalition that had been only partly defeated, the work of democratization was not done. Although there might have been some timidity on
Memory increases our chances of building the democratic procedures that will prevent the recurrence of another breakdown of civil rule.

the part of the government to push for a more stern policy on human rights, or for further democratization, governing with Pinochet at the helm of the army was not an easy matter. That is why it was still important to observe developments and promote an understanding of the gains and limitations of the transition era. This meant organizing new panels at LOASA and other venues, and embarking on a new project with Paul Drake, supported by the Ford Foundation, analyzing the first decade of democratically elected governments. What was eventually published under the title El modelo chileno: democracia y desarrollo en los noventas (1999) was an attempt to critically assess the outcomes that the case spoke directly to the personal and emotional immediacy that is necessary to move on, both individually and collectively. Memory also increases our chances of building the democratic process, maintains a reminder of the importance of enduring the pain of knowing that there is another breakdown of civil rule with all its consequences. We will be the stronger for it.

Jedrek Mular ski

In 2010, the case of Felipe Agüero, a friend and colleague of many years, who came to be the stronger for it.

The case resonated strongly in Chile, and also in the United States, where it was extremely significant for me personally. The case of Felipe Agüero, a friend and colleague of many years, who came to be the stronger for it.

Chavez was not the first politician to manipulate the past in the service of nationalist objectives, so it might appear peculiar that the extradition of Bolivia’s remains would evoke such strong backlash. However, as historian Lyman Johnson has noted, governments “owe great care to conserve and protect the reputations of heroes regarded as essen-

tial to the development and defense of the nation. As a result, school curricula, textbooks, speeches delivered on patriotic holidays and other forms of public memory are routinely scrutinized by bureaucrats and politicians to defend the official versions of these remembered lives from criticism or dismissal.” In the case of Bolívar’s extradition, both Chavez and his critics fetishized Bolivar’s remains as they attempted to attract their own versions and histories of history to a powerful symbol as a means of advancing their political agendas.

The case of Felipe Agüero, a friend and colleague of many years, who came to be the stronger for it.

The exhumation of Chilean icons such as Pablo Neruda and Víctor Jara have represented a movement against smoothing over painful memories on the path toward national unity. At their root, such initiatives to smooth over the past form a pragmatic response to dealing with a difficult history. They facilitate a process of selective remembering and forgetting as a means to cultivate a collective national memory that recognizes and embraces relevant events through commemorations, monuments, truth commission reports, and human rights trials, while simultaneously emphasizing the need for populations to unify by letting go of past traumas. The premise that underlies this approach is that populations cannot dwell on the past because doing so would only prevent a nation from moving forward towards a better future, which states often define as a path rooted in national harmony and an embrace of neoliberalism. Those who oppose this manner of dealing with the past argue that it has the potential to reshape historical memory in ways that undermine justice, democracy and civil liberties in the present and future.

The question of whether or not to exhume icons has taken on an increasing role in this debate during the last few years, and not unlike Chávez’s exhumation of Bolivar, the exhumation of Chileno icons has represented a movement against smoothing over the past to achieve national reconciliation. In 2004, a Chilean court agreed to a request by the family of Eduardo Frei Montalva to exhum the body of the former president, who initially had supported Chile’s right-wing military dictatorship, and who became a leader of its centrist opposition. This investigation, challenged by
the Chilian right, revealed evidence that pointed to members of the military government having secretly poisoned Frei in 1982. In 2009, some two decades after the end of military rule in Chile, Chilean authorities agreed to exhume the body of leftist musician Victor Jara after his family presented new evidence surrounding Jara’s 1973 death. Forensic analysis of Jara’s remains confirmed that military officers assassinated Jara and led to the arrest of several implicated officers. In 2011, the family of Salvador Allende, despite believing that the former President took his own life during the 1973 coup that overthrew him, agreed to allow the exhumation of Allende’s remains in order to determine whether or not the military assassinated him. Most recently, a Chilean court has ordered the exhumation of former Communist Party politician and Nobel Prize winning poet Pablo Neruda at the behest of Chile’s Communist Party. The April 2013 ruling in favor of this exhumation was based on testimony from Neruda’s former chauffeur, who believed that doctors poisoned Neruda at the same clinic where Frei appears to have been poisoned nearly a decade later.

Exhumations raise ethical questions about what rights dead bodies have and political goals that will benefit the living, such as ending uncertainty for friends and families of missing or deceased persons, prosecuting war criminals or contributing to political stability. Rosenblatt has argued that dead bodies accordingly are viewed as objects of study, objects of mourning, or objects of political negotiation, but rarely as a direct beneficiary of forensic investigations. Therefore, while we might assume that most individuals would want to have their remains exhumed for forensic analysis if they believed that doing so would help their friends and family find closure or bring war criminals to justice, strong evidence of public good must be provided in order to ethically or legally violate the rights of the deceased.

In response to the ruling to exhume Neruda’s remains, the New York Times published in April 2013 an op-ed piece by Amherst College Professor Ilan Stavans entitled “Disturbing Pablo Neruda’s Rest.” In his essay, Stavans contended that Neruda’s exhumation is a “pointless” endeavor, an “act of expiation” that is unlikely to lead to convictions and has little historical value. Stavans made a legitimate point about convictions. Efforts to bring Frei’s assassins to justice have yet to yield significant results; forensic analysis appears to have confirmed that Allende took his own life; and Jara’s accused assassins have not yet been convicted. Furthermore, those accused of dictatorship-era crimes—including Augusto Pinochet, the leader of Chile’s military government—often are themselves deceased or able to hide behind claims of being unfit to stand trial due to old age or failing health.

Exhumations raise ethical questions about what rights dead bodies have and when exhumations are justified. Strong evidence of public good must be provided.

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MEMORY: IN SEARCH OF HISTORY AND DEMOCRACY

when exhumations are justified. Societies often afford certain legal rights to deceased bodies, such as the right not to be trafficked, not to be dissected without consent, and not to be used sexually. These legal rights, however, must be weighed against the value that an individual and families would want to have their remains exhumed for forensic analysis if they believed that doing so would help their friends and family find closure or bring war criminals to justice. The Pinochet regime was undoubtedly the villain in this film, but the film ends with the electorate voting Pinochet out of office and the main character moving forward into a high-profile job with a much-hyped, glamorous soap opera about Chilean jet setters. In a conclusion that dramatizes state efforts to smooth over the past and move forward into a unified, neoliberal future, the film poignantly never returns to the issue of how those who suffered under the dictatorship would cope in this new era with the Pinochet regime. Strong evidence of public good must be provided.

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their forgotten demands for justice, truth and full disclosure.

Facts about the lives and deaths of historical icons have the potential to preserve and expand historical memories that run counter to official histories, which enrich our understanding of the atrocities that can be unleashed by authoritarian regimes and those who are complicit with them. The meaning that individuals derive from poems is shaped not only by the words that emerge from an author’s pen, but also by what readers know about the author. The loss of life due to political convictions generates strong public emotions, and evidence that the military murdered Neruda would irreversibly link the poet’s image and words with the brazen atrocities of Chile’s military regime. If assassination is proven, Neruda and his poems would become a more vivid reminder of what can happen when democracy and civil liberties are upended. Given the propensity of state forces to “smooth over” the past through actions such as the Chilean government’s recent changing of historical vocabulary in elementary classrooms from “dictatorship” to “military period,” such reminders play a critical role in keeping alternative versions of the past alive in Chile’s collective memory.

Revealing the tragic stories of fallen icons plays an important role in learning from the past. However, investigations into the deaths of icons should not become the defining characteristic of the dictatorship era. This period can only be understood fully if investigations examine on multiple levels the complex web of behaviors that caused it. The human rights violations of this time were the result of various behaviors ranging from the overt actions of the military leadership to the complicity of citizens who supported the authoritarian regime. Investigations into the death of icons such as Neruda are an important act in the process of learning from this past and coping with the trauma that it caused. But the dictatorship era brought about the torture and deaths of thousands of individuals whose plights must likewise be investigated. Scholars have revealed that knowing the facts about tragedies and gaining closure is part of the healing process for many people. The knowledge about the torture and deaths of many relatives of individuals who were “disappeared” during the dictatorship have become known—and some unanswered questions persist—because the state now has to resolve cases pertaining to the deaths of their loved ones. Those who experienced such traumas deserve any information that can be obtained from identification of remains to cause of death to identities of those responsible for their deaths—that might help them find solace. They also deserve a broader, ongoing effort that does not seek simply to “smooth over” the past in the name of national unity, but that strives more deeply to understand and remember the violence of the dictatorship era as a means of preventing its reoccurrence.

The exhumations of icons can serve as valuable starting points in these processes, but they are valuable only so far as they serve as a launching point for cultivating a deeper awareness of the past and the healing of wounds that some individuals whose plights must likewise be investigated. It is hoped that a significant number of human rights cases are kept alive through the tireless persistence and the permanent sense of urgency on the part of relatives of the victims. They know that mothers, families and friends of victims may get old and die not knowing the truth or receiving justice. There is no excuse for the slow pace of justice; but there must be an end to impunity.

It may be that at least some aspects of justice prove easier to attain after a transition. “It has disturbed the actors and the society from the events in question” writes Naomi Roth-Arriaza in The Pinochet Effect, a book that details the circumstances of the Pinochet detention in London and its unexpected effect in Chile (the conversations it opened, the truth that it revealed, the justice limits it tested). The assertion seems particularly appropriate in the case of recent Chilean exhumations.

Roth-Arriaza has described “advocates who have taken in the cases of human rights crime trials, and at the beginning of the 21st century those advantages are seen in Chile. She describes how, as time passed and democracy grew stronger, witnesses lost their fear while those most implicated in human rights crimes retired and lost their influence.” Victor Jara’s widow Joan watched her husband’s execution, but her family suspected murder. She managed to keep hope and courage, and renewed her public call for information to any of the 6,000 persons, soldiers and detainees alike, who entered the detention center where Jara was killed. And finally, former conscripts began to come forward. “It had been a serious situation. They had been living in fear;” said Joan Jara, who collected enough information to reopen the case that led to his death. “Time passes for judges too, and in another effect described by Roth-Arriaza, new magistrates may have less ‘a personal stake in trying the crimes of the past’ decades after repression. New, younger judges, who ‘don’t feel the guilt pang from their inaction in desperate times’ are (more) willing to follow the evidence wherever it goes.”

When special judge Miguel Vásquez issued indictments and arrest warrants against eight former military officials involved in Jara’s death, his widow observed “the interesting thing is that the new judge is not from a human rights background; he is a criminal judge. This has produced different results.” Allende was unbrieﬂy on the first ofﬁcial investigation into his death. The inquiry was part of new investigations into 726 human rights-related cases where no investigations had been undertaken before. Filing the legal complaints on behalf of the victims, the judicial prosecutor said to the Chilean press: “Justice will investigate what has not been investigated yet, and it will reach the relating result. We may clarify some situations, some others we will not. But justic won’t investigate, so that10 years from now, no one may say: this is still pending.”
NEW FORENSICS The Neruda case evokes questions about the power of evidence and the limits of its use. In 1995, Chilean Forensic Medical Service, experts from the University of Chile, United States and Spain and observers from other countries with expertise in medicine, anthropology and toxicology among them, were brought together. They were called to establish whether the remains found in 1990 belonged to Neruda. It was a sensitive and delicate process of removing human remains, even if the processes are conducted sensitively. When Neruda was “disturbed from his rest,” as The New York Times observed, classical musicians played a set based on his works, adding solemnity to the ceremony. After the exhumation, Victor Jara was reburied in a mass funeral where thousands paid homage and respect. Even if they do not erase the pain, such gestures may open public dialogues if they do not erase the pain, such gestures may open public dialogues.

TRAILS AND TRANSITION Once democracy was recovered, Chilean democratic governments addressed a transitory period of torture, killing and disappearances in the frame of a political transition. The Pinochet government was a political entity, but also a judicial body. The employees there were all considered as a life Senator. In a long series of “tacit pacts,” Patricio Aylwin, the first elected president after the military dictatorship, offered justice “to the extent possible.” Three leaders of Pinochet’s secret services were incarcerated, but in a special prison facility, and many perpetrators of human rights crimes and abuses remained in a state of impunity or had wide access to penal benefits.

The Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, “Informe Rettig,” investigated repression between 1973 and 1990. Endorsed by the state, the report highlighted truth and dignity to the memory of more than 3,000 victims. Nevertheless, in a 2005 Special Report for the United States Institute of Peace, Judy Reckhow described the Chilean commission as “one of the clearest examples of a transitional justice mechanism compromised by politics. Although its work was still of great value, its mandate was limited in three important aspects: it could investigate only deaths and disappearances—all other hearings were held in private; and it was forbidden to name perpetrators.”

Historian of modern Latin America Kirsten Weld, assistant professor at Harvard, describes the effect of the Pinochet government, the first government after 1989 not made up of Pinochet opponents. As Chile returned to democracy, former military authorities were a real threat; the vestiges of a drama of deaths, torture and exile may have kept some politicians from taking measures that could be perceived as too provocative by the military. A certain sense of loyalty to the recovered democracy may have also discouraged the demands for justice. Former opponents became the establishment. Once Pinochet was elected, relatives of victims and judges were not afraid of rocking the boat anymore.

In a country where a wave of students protest has lead to a profound debate about the Pinochetian bases of economics and politics and the calls for a constitutional reform, there is no space to repress some pending questions from the past. That Neruda died of cancer, and maybe of grief in the aftermath of the coup was a politically unanswerable answer to his death. His aide and driver, Manuel Araya, spent years denouncing it as a political murder, but he was ignored as a witness to the truth. Found dead and the poe’s survivors found their own way to deal with the death. Araya may not be right, but he sounded reasonable enough for Judge Mario Carroza who, after two years of investigation, ordered the exhumation of Neruda’s remains.

Roht-Arrese points out that photos of children with their large and tender eyes, photo-books seeking to entrap the readers, immersing them in easy emotions. The photographs on page 19 is highly revealing. It captures the movement of people, the chaotic hubbub, the ongoing life of the town and—finally—some armed men who seem entirely out of place. On the left, a little girl embraces a wooden pole. She is the focal point of the image, she holds on to the pole to keep herself from falling and at the same time appears to be holding up the world so that it will not be swept away by the whirlwind. It is an intimate photo—the girl is lost in her fantasies—and DeCesare approaches her with great respect and delicacy.

There is something dreamy, slightly incongruent in that photo. The contrast between the sweet and interiorizing experience of the photo and the presence of the armed men is unsettling. It is evident that her fanciful dreaming could easily be turned into a nightmare. In spite of the admiration and respect I have for DeCesare, I had some doubts when I heard that she had published a book about the children of violence. It is a prejudice that I carry with me after having seen innumerable photos of children with their large and tender eyes, photo-books seeking to entrap the readers, immersing them in easy emotions. Unsettled/Desasosiego is a book that hurts. Its photographs are testimonies of children whose childhood was mutilated, whose images are always made with enormous respect, without affection or sentimentality. The text, written by DeCesare in a personal and committed voice, offers us a political and historic context that we need to understand the significance of the images. DeCesare’s writing tells us how the counterinsurgency war of the 1980s in Central America, financed by the United States in blatant support of genocidal governments, left an indelible mark on these societies. And we come to understand that the rebels also committed terrible deeds. We learn that many of today’s gang members were yesterday’s victims. And we conclude that today’s children will probably perpetuate this cycle of violence.

The first part of the book discusses the 1980s civil war—friar–cabinet war—that tore through the social fabric and produced countless deaths and thousands of displaced people. The photos from this period display the euphoria, the worry, the fragility of civilians. DeCesare avoids graphic or violent photos; rather, her images bring us closer to the humanity of those portrayed and to their innermost emotions.

The second part of the book discussed Central America’s displaced people, how, as victims of war, they ended up living in the most violent neighborhoods of large American cities, especially in Los Angeles. The tragic destiny of many of those who emigrated is that they found themselves immersed in a new war when they sought a place that should have offered refuge and protection. DeCesare basically photographs the way people relate to each other, and tries at all cost to redeem them by demonstrating their most human and tender aspects.
Writing the Rough Draft of Salvadoran History
A REVIEW BY JOCELYN VITENEA

El Salvador Could Be Like That: A Memoir of War, Politics, and Journalism from the Front Row of the Last Bloody Conflict of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War

By Joseph B. Frazier (Karina Liberty Press, 225 pages)

“There are no just wars. There are only just causes.”

I was sitting in the modest home of a former FMLN guerrilla woman in a rural village in the northeastern corner of El Salvador. It was 2001, and I was nearing the end of my second year-long stint in this small Central American nation, interviewing more than 200 Salvadoreños, mostly from rural areas, about their experiences during the civil conflict of the 1980s. My host was not one of my campesina respondents, but rather a highly educated woman with urban, middle-class roots. She was small but wiry; an aura of relaxed self-assurance veiled, but wiry; an aura of relaxed self-assurance veiled, but rather a highly educated woman with urban, middle-class roots. She was small but wiry; an aura of relaxed self-assurance veiled, but rather a highly educated woman with urban, middle-class roots.

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One of the most important uses of photography is to help create a family, a kind of Rosary of memories and feelings that belong to the very people who have lost it. Unsettled/Desasosiego is a precious family album, a personal diary written with warmth and care.

The crisis of photjourn- alism is due not only to the radical democratization of photography. Certainly, now there are millions of people who have access to a camera and who use photography to communicate. Photographic- ism is also losing relevance because we photographers have not understood that we are not the owners of photographic language (in the same way that writers are not the owners of the language that all of us use). We have forgotten that our mission is not to save the truth, nor to redeem it—that is true arrogance—and that no one has an obligation to listen to us.

Our task is much more modest: to tell personal stories—stories that are not our words to us—and do so with honesty. We should approach the lives of others with titillation, with enormous distrust and respect, just as Donna DeCesare has done in Unsettled/Desasosiego.

Pablo Corral Viga is the founder of unestandarte.org, the largest photjournal- nist network in Latin America. His photographic work has been published in National Geographic and other international media. He was a 2011 Nieman Fel- low at Harvard.

This is a memoir, not an academic analysis. As I read, I initially found myself somewhat what frustrated at the flatness of the Salvadoran people portrayed in the book. But soon I realized that this was intentional. Frazier wants us to feel his frustration with the flatness of his own interactions with Salvadoreños in a situation where so many more powerful emotions—outrage, anger, deep sadness—would have seemed more appropriate. For example, Frazier recollects how well and when AP editors repeatedly asked him to get the opinions of the “regular” Salvadoreños on the street, despite reminders that “regular” Salvadoreños were far too smart to vocalize their opinions to a U.S. reporter if they wanted to avoid torture and death.

By the book’s end, the eclectic and dizzying collection of recollected events began to take on a rhythm just to which she respond- ed: “There are no just wars. There are only just causes.”

Frazier’s book takes us back to El Salvador in the early 1980s, when thousands were killed, tortured and disappeared each month because they expressed the wrong political beliefs, lived in the wrong village, exchanged pleasantries with the wrong friends, or happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Frazier, a foreign correspondent for the Associ- ated Press living and working in war-torn El Salvador recounts the war in a dizzying fashion. His writing is clear and direct, slipping seamlessly from anecdote to interview colorful jokes to political commentary, but often losing track of dates, places or the significance of the reported event. Indeed, Frazier seems to be nudging us to draw exactly this conclusion: that the events themselves were insignificant; what mattered were the lives lost in exchange for the political posturings of the 1980s.

It is not an understatement to say that the war was an essential observation, of the image. He makes his photographic work has been published in National Geographic and other international media. He was a 2011 Nieman Fel- low at Harvard.

Frazier’s is at his best when he is reflecting about the past. The future has been developed through interviews with hard-to-kill communist lead- ers, gringo surfers and war orphans. His discussion of the complicated relationship between the Church, the state, and the press captured the complexity of political ideas, and the per- vasive nature of old power, in El Salvador. Frazier’s discussion of the present is understanding- ably less well-developed and tinged with sadness. He draws striking comparisons between deaths caused by gang violence today with those caused by political violence in the 1980s. He lamented the continued poverty and suf- fering of Salvadoreños, as well as the efforts to forget the past, including wiping the faces of the civil war out of school children’s history books. Mostly, he lamented how little the rest of the world seems to care about the con- tinued poverty and violence that wracks El Salvador, after having seen so much lethal atten- tion to it in the 1980s.

Frazier never had the luxury of getting to know Salvadoreños’ opinions about the war like I did—through protracted conversations that lasted into the dark of the night. And yet he sacrificed so much to tell the story of El Salvador. While El Salvador, Frazier’s friends and fellow journalists were at least for a while, placing the war’s warning signs to significantly reduce the massacre of civilians by the second half of the war, and of course to provide a peace agreement by 1992.

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Transforming the Andes
A REVIEW BY GARY URTON


In the spirit of full disclosure, I begin by stating that the co-authors of this award-winning book are both close, long-time friends of the author of this review. I attended graduate school in anthropology at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, with Joanne Rappaport in the 1970s, and I have been in close contact with Tom Cummins ever since we coincided on some of our earliest respective field research in Cusco, Peru, in 1981. Cummins and I currently co-teach a General Education course at Harvard, “Pathways Through the Andes.” While I will grouse about one aspect or another of this book—as is perhaps inevitable, when evaluating the work of one’s almost-siblings—I first hasten to state that Beyond the Lettered City is an exceptionally important, path-breaking contribution to the study of the transformations of society and culture in the northern and central Andes from the time of the Inca’s ltimarian until the early 18th century. The regional setting sets this work apart from the vast majority of works centering on Inca or Indian subject matter. The majority of studies of colonial Andean societies focus on the central Andes, with particular emphasis on Peru (to a lesser extent) Bolivia. The territory of the latter two nations— in the colonial era called, respectively, Lower and Upper Peru—lay at the heart of Tawantinsuyu: the Inka Empire. The northern Andes, the region from Colombia down through Ecuador, received less attention from colonial historians. Ratter still are works that meaningfully draw together the peoples, cultures, histories and environments of the north- ern and central Andes into a single work of deep histori- cal analysis; this is precisely what this extraordinary work accomplishes.

The central significance and major contributions of this work are, first, that it provides a guidepost for Andeanists to develop a more expansive, integrated perspective on the Incaic sources of colonial history. What is particularly striking is the way in which Cummins and Rappaport move beyond the notion of “indigenous literacies” to consider the exercise of power by native actors and Spaniards alike. Legal documents functioned as prime vehicles for transforming native perceptions of time, space, and the discourse of power... (2012:3-4). The above description points to the initial, central (though not complete) set of dynamics the authors exam- ine in their book. The difference here is that whereas Rama saw the primary source of actions and creative transformations within the European administrative and ecclesiastical bureaucraci es acting on indigenous communities, Rappaport and Cummins offer a much more dynamic and reciprocal account, in terms of foreign and indigenous actors and forms of action. The latter is implied in the subtitle: “indigenous literacies in the Andes.” In part, what allows the authors to inves- tigate more insightfully and convincingly than did Rama is the vast majority of documents produced by and on behalf of Andean peoples in their confrontation with the imposed bureaucracies. This offering would be enough of a contribution, particularly given how extraordinarily rich these sections of the book are. However, Rappaport and Cummins move beyond it to indigenous actions in a number of “fields” not strictly delimited by writing and reading. That is, the authors take the perspective of liter- acy to be constituted as widely as a range of practices linked to the order, disciplin- ary practices and knowledge that came along with the European technology and arts of writing and reading. The latter involved native construction of and participa- tion in places (e.g., the new towns, known as reducciones and/or requerimientos), institu- tions (tributes, censuses) and material productions (e.g., painting, music, etc.) that were integral elements of the imposed systems of power and knowledge. Most interesting and striking in this regards is the detailed discussion of the indigenous objects—keros (drinking cups), mantas (shawls), and other precious items— among the things overlooked by this reviewer’s view, principal contribution of this book. Historians and and commoners in communi- ties acting on indigenous communities, Rappaport and Cummins offer a much more dynamic and reciprocal account, in terms of foreign and indigenous actors and forms of action. The latter is implied in the subtitle: “indigenous literacies in the Andes.” In part, what allows the authors to investig- ate more insightfully and

The book provides a guidepost for Andeanists to develop a more expansive perspective on colonial history.
The Optimist’s Colombia

A REVIEW BY LAURA JARAMILLO-BERNAL

*Beyond The Lettered City* was recently awarded the Latin American Studies Association’s Bryce Wood Book Award for the outstanding book in the social science category for the year 2003. The book’s fourth chapter, *Violence sells, but it also distorts,* declares the author: “But political participation is not all that holds Colombia together. Throughout the book, Mejía and LaRosa close on an optimistic note: Colombia optimist. Harvard Law School graduate Laura Jaramillo-Bernal is currently a writer and producer for the TV show *Efecto Náin.* She is an active member of the don’t ask, don’t tell policy debate and is a supporter of peace talks in the past six decades. The authors walk the reader through myriad historical events, political efforts to end the conflict, and the recent peace talks between the FARC and the Santos government.

As indicated in the book’s fourth chapter, “The Colombian Nations,” Colombia has been able to remain unified and for the most part peaceful despite the worst of its civil war. The authors use the book’s fourth chapter to conclude in November, 2012, that it has been possible to end the conflict and establish peace. It was a war-torn, tragic, and expensive conflict for many individuals and their families. The authors discuss the challenges of representation and survival of many ethnic groups like the 87 different indigenous ethnicities, Afro-Colombians, and others.

Laura Jaramillo-Bernal is a Columbia optimist. Harvard College 2011, she was a political reporter for La Silla Vacía in Bogotá and is currently a writer and producer for the TV show *Efecto Náin.* She is an active member of the don’t ask, don’t tell policy debate and is a supporter of peace talks in the past six decades. The authors walk the reader through myriad historical events, political efforts to end the conflict, and the recent peace talks between the FARC and the Santos government.

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Mexico’s Great Transformation and U.S.-Mexican Relations

A REVIEW BY GABRIEL AGUILERA


As graduate students in Harvard’s Department of Government, Shannon O’Neil and I read from the same interminable Mexico reading list handed to us by our mentor, Professor Jorge Dominguez. A few years later, in 2002, we became good friends in Mexico City. Alejandro Poiré, a fellow Dominguez student, was then Chair of the Political Science Department at the Autonomous Institute of Technology (ITAM), where I was a faculty member. He provided Shannon with an office during her Fulbright stint, and so ITAM fast became an ongoing seminar for a gringo and this Mexican-American pocho to learn about Mexico’s great transformation from our chilango colleagues and friends, often over lunch and sometimes in their smoke-filled offices.

Now a Senior Fellow for the Harvard Government Studies at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama. He holds a PhD from the Harvard Government Department. His research focuses primarily on Latin American security and political economy. The views expressed here belong solely to the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the U.S. Government Department of Defense, and no official endorsement should be implied. He can be reached at Gabriel_Aguilera@us.army.mil.
The brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War

Beyond Mad Men: A Secret World War

A REVIEW BY SIMON ROMERO

At a time when so many viewers are captivated or repelled by Mad Men, Philip Caputo’s new book, The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War, charting their lives during World War I, 1920s Madison Avenue, and Cold War-era covert operations, is a timely reminder of how the U.S. spy agencies once oversaw the lives of politicians across the globe.

Caputo, a former correspondent for The New York Times who served as bureau chief in Latin America, offers a fresh perspective on Dulles and his brother Allen, who spent World War II in the intelligence services of the U.S. and were both deeply involved in Cold War operations.

Caputo’s book, published in 2014, offers a comprehensive look at Dulles’ life and career, including his time as a lawyer with Sullivan & Cromwell and his role in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

Caputo, who also wrote about the CIA during the Cold War, explores how Dulles and Allen maintained many of their clients through personal connections and, at times, through espionage.

United States Navy to send warships to Cuba to protect U.S. interests in the Caribbean, and to Laos, Tibet and Iraq.

Stephen Kinzer describes Dulles’ personality as “an arrogant man” and Win- ston Churchill as “a statesman of the first rank.”

The C.I.A.’s “nerve war” in Guatemala and Iran, secret bombings in China in 1954, and the ouster of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia in 1950, are all part of the Dulles legacy.

The Dulles brothers are vividly described by Kinzer in his new book, Allen, meanwhile, picked Tracy Barnes, a product of Groton, Yale and Harvard, to oversee the agency’s psychological warfare. The C.I.A.’s “nerve war” included death threats made to Guatemalan army officials and government officers and character-assassination warnings used in pre-dawn telephone calls.

Predictably, Allen and Foster viewed Arbenz’ overthrow as a success. But the coup reinforced a pattern of blatant disregard by some in Washington for political sovereignty in Latin America, ushering in brutal military rule in Guatemala and what Kinzer calls a “cocon of government intrigue and overreach” within the C.I.A., poiso-

ning sentiment toward the as something of a golden age for the KIzer, a former foreign correspondent for The New York Times, compiles the places where the K.I.A. director’s covert operations produced failures, including Vietnam, Taiwan, Laos, Tibet and Iraq.

For his part, Foster, a man who thought he held moral superiority in his dealings with political leaders around the globe, saw nothing wrong in doing years of legal work on behalf of corporate clients in New York. Kinzer’s profile author of books about U.S. international relations, including the classic Bitter Fruit about the Arbenz ouster, delved deeply into these tales. He describes how Foster wrote admiringly of Hitler, even when he wrote about the United States Navy’s Navy, as something of a golden age for the Arbenz ouster, delved deeply into these tales. He describes how Foster wrote admiringly of Hitler, even when he wrote about the United States Navy’s

The errors of the Dulles brothers are vividly described in this highly entertaining book—perhaps a present-day warning of the consequences of wielding U.S. power abroad.

The brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War

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The New York Times

The New York Times

The New York Times

The New York Times

The New York Times

The New York Times
Recupera Chile
You Are the World Experts

IN FEBRUARY 2010, AN 8.8 MAGNITUDE earthquake and tsunami devastated coastal towns in Chile. Not much later, Harvard Kennedy School Professor Doug Ahlers traveled to Chile to explore how his university could assist in community recovery, DRCLAS Regional Office staff member Marcela Renteria and I accompanied Ahlers on a trip to the Bio Bio Region to meet with authorities and disaster victims to determine the areas where we could be helpful. His approach has led to stunning results.

Ahlers had led teams of Harvard students and faculty in the now famous Broadmoor Project in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. One of the world’s top experts on disasters, he has provided advice on disaster recovery in places like Haiti, New Zealand and Indonesia. He focuses on the most difficult aspects of the rebuilding process: reviving local economies, reestablishing communities and integrating new built spaces. His experience has led him to novel approaches to disaster recovery.

In our first meetings in Chile two years ago we invited entire communities to meet in Dichato, Coquimbo and Perales, three towns where badly needed assistance was needed. Ahlers’ opening remarks in the first meeting in Coquimbo are indicative of his approach. “You are the world experts about Coquimbo, tell us how we can help,” he said.

The reaction of the communities was enthusiastic. They had been accustomed to international organizations telling them what was needed. They were finally being asked.

There was an immediate need to generate employment opportunities. The breakdown of the local economies caused by the disaster erased most means of livelihood. For example, in Perales, a family that depended on its cows—dead in the tsunami—for the sale of milk to its neighbors had no resources to buy a new one. In Dichato, the local entrepreneur who managed a newsstand had no working capital to replace it and pay for the publications lost in the tsunami. The owner of a small market saw her store smashed by the earthquake.

Unemployment combined with inadequate temporary and overly crowded living spaces in the refugee camps led to severe community dysfunction—violence, alcoholism and psychological problems, especially among children. Formerly picturesque coastal towns of houses built with adobe were in ruins, eliminating the normal tourist trade.

Based on our first meetings, and help from a number of experts in Chile, including several Harvard alumni, a plan took shape. By January 2012, Doug was leading a team of faculty and students to the area to begin the program. Students worked in teams in the three communities helping to build business plans, awarding 40 business development grants. Through these efforts, additional local entrepreneurs received working capital from a special fund set up by the Chilean government. Judy Palfrey, the Master of Adams House and former president of the American Society of Pediatrics, began a comprehensive program of child mental and physical health with colleagues at Universidad de Concepcion. MIT professor Milo Mazer eew set the stage for introducing new technologies in adobe construction to revive spaces attractive for tourists as well as people from the community.

Two years have passed by now, and the program has contributed enormously to the recovery of these three towns. Families have been able to return to work, children are receiving professional help, teachers in the local schools are being trained, entrepreneurs are starting new businesses, small-scale farming is returning, and construction plans are in place. Looking toward the future, plans include re-establishing shellfish beds that had been wiped out by the tsunami, and encouraging tourism with added attractions such as ATMs machines, free Internet, and even a microbrewery.

Doug Ahlers’ statement, that the communities themselves are the world experts on their own towns, has been the blueprint for the program, resulting in success after success as people advance with the right kind of outside assistance.

Ned Strong is the director of the DRCLAS Regional Office in Santiago de Chile. For more information, visit: http://www.recuperachile.cl/

Applications Due February 1st

The Application
Applications should be submitted electronically to drc_vsf@fas.harvard.edu or via the online application form. For the form and further details please visit: http://www.drclas.harvard.edu/scholars.

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With Featured Photography by Marcos Adandia, Gustavo Germano, Mary Jo McConahay, Sylvia Percovich, Scott Wallace and Special Thanks to: Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Chile and Centro de Memoria Histórica, Bogotá, Colombia.