

“La historia es nuestra y la hacen los pueblos”¹

Collective Memory of the Pinochet Dictatorship in Chile

How does a country that has been traumatized by fear and political repression heal? How do societies strike a balance between allowing enough time to pass in order for the sting of anger and sorrow to lessen, and actively speaking in public ways about the pain that is felt by the country’s inhabitants? The formation of *collective memory* often plays a large role in the process of healing, and acts as a way for a group of people with some form of common identity to share, preserve and reflect on their group or society’s past. In Chile, on September 11, 1973, army general Augusto Pinochet lead a military coup d’état that overthrew and led to the death of President Salvador Allende. Pinochet went on to become the authoritarian leader of the regime that ruled the country until 1990. With the strong ideologically- and economically-driven goal of stamping out communist subversion in the country and rescuing the state from economic failure, the Pinochet regime brutally persecuted those who both openly and passively resisted, as well as those who attempted to speak out about the regime’s crimes. My interests in both recent Chilean history and the idea of collective memory began to intersect when I studied abroad in Valparaíso, Chile in the spring of 2011. In an attempt to understand why the issue is still unresolved for some Chileans now twenty-two years after the dictatorship’s end, I explored the ways in which Chilean society maintains and expresses its collective memory of the Pinochet regime.

In this thesis, I present my research results as three distinct, but interrelated sites of memory (Nora 1989). As I will show, each site or manifestation of memory serves to maintain

¹ “History is ours and the people create it.” This phrase, often quoted in Chile, of ex-president Salvador Allende’s comes from his last speech made to the public as the coup was taking place and the presidential palace was bombarded on September 11, 1973. Both the words and the man who said them are important to my work.

and preserve collective memory about the Pinochet dictatorship. The first “site of memory” which I discuss is the 2011 Student Movement, the historical symbols and ideologies contained within it, and the discourse outside the movement. Second, I examine the political and social “afterlives” of dead bodies by analyzing the use of images of important political figures related to the dictatorship, tombs, memorials, and cemeteries. Finally, I present as a third example of a site of memory the discourse of Chileans themselves regarding collective memory and the dictatorship. Overall, I argue that Chile’s collective memory is ubiquitous, diverse in its manifestations, and constantly interacting with modern day society in ways that reveal the emotional and unresolved nature of the Pinochet era for Chilean society. Before entering into the discussion of my primary research and findings, I begin this paper with an introductory section in which I provide the basic historical and cultural context which surrounds my research topic, as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches I use in formulating my thesis.

History, Theory, and Memory

According to the Rettig Report, the first government report that was finally released in 1991 as part of a Truth Commission, between 1,200 and 3,200 people were killed (though thousands of others, not registered in the report, simply “disappeared” and were never accounted for). Close to 80,000 were imprisoned, and around 30,000 were tortured by the regime (*Rettig Report* 1991). Some argue that these numbers are conservative, but more accurate data may never be available due to the state’s thorough and brutal repression of the Chilean public’s knowledge of its crimes. Steve J. Stern (2006: xxxi) reports victim numbers similar to those released by the Rettig Report, but adds that the number of exiled Chileans reached about 200,000. Some burying of evidence occurred literally: bodies of murdered people were disposed of and never seen again. It was routine practice for military and intelligence personnel

to eliminate physical evidence of the bodies. They exhumed and reburied or cremated remains; they used heavy machinery to churn earth and disperse bones, [and] they deployed helicopters to toss bodies into the Pacific Ocean” (Stern 2006:137). The government ensured the “closure of hostile news media, [changed reports of] the scale of detentions and violence...,” and “expelled thousands of people [from the country] who might provide testimonies of their own truths” (Stern 2006:93). Essentially, the heavy state-sponsored censorship and suffocation of people’s claims against the regime’s crimes ensured that many Chileans did not have a clear sense of the scale or degree of violence that surrounded them. Some of those that did know the truth believed wholeheartedly in supporting Pinochet’s neoliberalization of the country’s economy, and were conveniently able to turn a blind eye to the violations.

While suppression and the struggle to suffocate the truth of the government’s actions were widespread and brutal, networks of underground resistance formed, spread, and strengthened. Chilean and non-Chilean human rights groups like Amnesty International, the Catholic Church (including groups like the Pro-Peace Committee and the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*), and what Stern calls “memory knots”- groups of people who bonded together and sought to uncover what the regime struggled to hide – gave the alternative history of Chile, not endorsed by the state, the chance to survive (Notes from Museum of Memory, April 2011).

After the transition to democracy, the dictatorship and human rights issues were treated very gingerly by the state for many years. President Patricio Aylwin took an important first step through the tentative but necessary Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but there were no judicial processes to try the perpetrators of the crimes that were slowly being exposed during his presidency. This was in part because of the agreement that Pinochet had made with Aylwin during the transition to democracy, which included provisions of amnesty and immunity for

Pinochet and all those who had been under his command (Frazier 2007:198). Next, Eduardo Frei seemingly took a step backward as his government “tried to dismantle state human-rights programs as anachronisms,” while Ricardo Lagos, the third president, was forced to loosen the reins as the issue of human rights in Chile was once again taken up by international organizations (Frazier 2007:198).

While Pinochet’s cases were never closed², and he was never convicted of the crimes for which many believed he was primarily responsible, some trials and cases *were* carried out between 2000 and 2010 against former security agents and military officers. A summary of these, provided online by the Human Rights Observatory (March 2010) at the University of Diego Portales in Santiago, Chile, states:

Since 2000, 782 former agents have been charged and/or sentenced for past human rights related crimes. Of these, 206 have received final stage confirmed sentences. Of these 206, 60 former agents are currently serving confirmed custodial sentences. 7 more have already served their sentences, 2 have since died, 1 is on the run and 1 more [...] was given permission not to serve his sentence on medical grounds. The remaining 135 people subject to confirmed sentences have been conceded benefits such as house arrest or suspended sentences. The total of 60 represents the highest single total of former repressors sentenced for these crimes anywhere in Latin America.

While these numbers unarguably reflect actions taken by the Chilean courts to prosecute those responsible for the human rights violations under Pinochet, the Chileans who claim that justice has not been done either do not have a full sense of these proceedings, believe it is not enough or that the sentences are too lax, or conceive of the justice which they believe Chile

² Beginning in 1998. Pinochet himself was indicted twice by the Spanish federal court and by Chilean courts (once in 1998, after which he was forced to remain under house arrest until 2000, and once in 2006) for “crimes against humanity” (Roht-Arriaza 2005). However, despite the fact that neither the 1978 Chilean amnesty law established by Pinochet, nor his immunity as head of state were able to prevent Pinochet from being *charged* with the crimes, he was never convicted in any of the cases (Roht-Arriaza 2005:86). By 2003, Pinochet’s health was failing and his high-power defense team “argued that it was a due process violation to try an old man with mental and physical health problems that made it impossible for him to communicate adequately with his lawyers.” He died in 2006, still in the midst of several human-rights prosecutions and other investigations on charges of money laundering and tax evasion (Roht-Arriaza 2005:90).

needs in other terms. Regarding the topic, one Chilean I spoke to about the issue heatedly insisted that “the torturers and assassins have to be imprisoned.” However, he also admitted that he didn’t believe there would ever be this kind of justice, and that the issues would never be resolved more than they already had been. Unfortunately, at the time of the interview I did not know about the report by the Human Rights Observatory and was unable to ask my informant what he thought about the trials and sentences that *had* been carried out.

Throughout the Frei, Lagos, and Bachelet presidencies (all presidents whose governments were part of the self-proclaimed center-left *Concertación*, a coalition of democratic political parties) a call for “reconciliation” was the official political trope. Government discourse espoused a politics of “looking toward the future” or “turning the page in history,” a politics based on a wish for national unity (Lazzarra 2006:1). Many of my informants agreed that during the first fifteen years of post-dictatorship Chile, “reconciliation [was] little more than a word bandied about by politicians, a synonym for forgetting” (Lazzarra 2006:1). However, other Chileans I spoke to believed that enough had been done to heal the country, and that it truly was time to move on. However, because some still feel anger and pain, I argue that the issue is still unresolved. Whether it the government, another actor, or the passage of time will finally reconcile Chile remains to be seen. Much insight into Chile’s collective memory can be gained by considering broader historical, anthropological, and sociological theories on the way in which collective and individual memory, history, and truth intersect in the wider world.

My observations of the maintenance and preservation of collective memory in Chile is supported and theoretically informed by the works of Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Connerton (1989), and by Pierre Nora’s (1989) theory of *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory. In order to understand collective memory, it is important to consider the role of the individual in

constructing and preserving their society's history. Rossington and Whitehead (2007), Coser (1992), and Whitehead (2009) discuss broad connections between Halbwachs' theory on collective memory, and other social and psychological issues related to memory. Rossington and Whitehead cite Maurice Halbwachs, one of the first academics to write extensively on collective memory, as arguing that "the individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory" (Rossington and Whitehead 2007:134). Halbwachs also says that people often inherit collective memories from their society and that "it is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (as cited in Coser 1992:38). In other words, because individuals function within a culture and not as isolated entities, they necessarily come into contact with, and often adopt some of the ideas and collective memories that exist in their culture. Whitehead echoes this, saying that "the group, in Halbwachs' understanding, provides the individual with a 'framework' into which her remembrances are woven" (Whitehead 2009:126). This framework is collective memory. Regarding the span of collective memory, Whitehead explains Halbwachs' belief that it can stretch back into the past, but is generally more preoccupied with events that are within living memory (Whitehead 2009:131). What do members of a society do with the collective memory that may inform their own outlook? One of my main research questions about how Chile maintains its collective memory of the Pinochet regime is also raised in a broader theoretical discussion by socio-anthropologist Paul Connerton, who discusses the nature of collective memory in his book *How Societies Remember* (1989).

Connerton uses the history of the French Revolution to explain his theories on the maintenance and role of collective memory in a society. He asks how, "given that different groups have different memories which are particular to them...are these collective memories passed on within the same social group from one generation to the next?" (1989:38). In asking

these questions, of course, Connerton assumes that these memories *are* passed on, evidence of which he argues can be found in the “images of the past [which] commonly legitimate a present social order” (1989:3). In this vein, I would add that memories themselves – particularly collective memories – legitimate and shape the present. These memories, their essence and the lessons that societies take from them, are extracted and used by new generations in the future.

Another theorist who addresses the way in which societies maintain memory is Pierre Nora, who coined the term *lieux de mémoire* (“sites of memory”), to describe sites of collective memory that help to condense and frame the past. Sites of memory are “where [cultural] memory crystallizes and secretes itself,” and are described as both “material [and] non-material in nature” (Nora 1989:7). According to Nora, they can be places such as museums, cemeteries, and memorials; concepts and practices such as commemorations, generations, mottos, and all rituals; and objects such as commemorative monuments, emblems, texts, and symbols. As Roniger and Sznajder explain, “in principle, their physical presence could enable the evocation of the past into the present. However...creating physically defined *lieux de mémoire* could also establish boundaries between the places designated for commemoration and the spaces in which social actors and individuals live their daily lives” (1999:222). This idea is central to my analysis of Chilean collective memory, as the three main sections of my thesis each explore a different *lieux de mémoire*.

Finally, my questions and ideas about the Chilean process of reconciliation are also framed by Connerton in his discussion of state-sponsored repression and forced amnesia. He explains that “when a large power [such as a foreign enemy or a specific regime] wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness it uses the method of organized forgetting,” of censorship, and of suppressing those who would fight it (Connerton 1989:14). The Pinochet

regime is clearly an example of a repressive power, and Chile is still grappling with the effects of the dictatorship. In the face of abusive, criminal actions against a group, whose duty is it to use collective memory as a testimony against those who committed crimes? Should the current government make an effort to prosecute ex-military officials who were responsible for human rights violations? Should the government pay families who lost members to the Pinochet regime? Some believe it should, while others argue that the government should not be so involved. However, some doubt whether official reparations for wrongs done will ever be sufficient for the rifts in Chile to truly be repaired. For them, non-government organizations, artists, or writers, not the state, should be the primary activists in helping the reconciliation process along. The following brief reflection on a well-known Chilean documentary provides us with an example of how the first steps toward open discussion of the dictatorship and collective memory were taken by the Chilean people after the transition back to democracy.

La memoria obstinada: Chilean Collective Memory in Film

The 1990s were a time when the Pinochet regime and its human rights violations were still too recent for most people to discuss in public, yet many authors, artists, musicians, historians, and other creators and safe-keepers of culture were among the first to actively express Chile's pain publicly. One groundbreaking and impactful Chilean documentary from that decade, *La memoria obstinada* ("Obstinate Memory"), was among the first public works intended to preserve and express collective memory of the Pinochet dictatorship. It is both itself a site of memory and a theoretical presentation of collective memory in Chile, and offers insight into what some call the country's "lost decade." In the 1990s, the Chilean state seemed essentially to be shutting the memory of the dictatorship and its crimes away in a drawer, out of the reach of the public. Many Chileans were angered by this lack of discussion of the topic, and

desired atonement, recognition, justice, and resolution from the part of the state. They believed, as Tzvetan Todorov expressed, that “a group or a nation has a duty to remember,” to bring back memory, to provide a testimony (cited in Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva 2005:135).

Some, such as filmmaker Patricio Guzmán, actively worked to preserve the memory of the dictatorship years as the people slowly regained their voice. In 1970, Guzmán began a project of documenting on film pre-and post-coup events related to Allende’s rise and fall. This footage was later released abroad in three parts under the title *La batalla de Chile* (“The Battle of Chile”). Twenty years later, Guzmán coined a term that perfectly fits both the individual and the social act of remembering when he released a fourth and final chapter to accompany his original documentary, which he named *La memoria obstinada*. In this documentary, Guzmán plainly states that while some Chileans obstinately insist on keeping discussion about collective memory and the dictatorship alive, memory is a closed topic for others, either out of denial or out of pain. For those people for whom memory was a closed topic because of the pain it caused them, a man who speaks in the documentary explains the danger that ignoring the anger and hurt still felt by many Chileans poses to the memory of the past: “If you let yourself linger in the pain, amnesia automatically sets in. However, if you overcome the pain and transform it into something else, you can better remember, and things begin to flow again.”

Indeed, as Guzmán shows in 1997 and as is still the case in 2011, the dictatorship continues to be a wound in need of tending. *La memoria obstinada* also includes footage of a group of high school students who, after watching *La batalla de Chile* in its first screening ever to be held in the country, hold a forum to discuss their reactions and emotions to learning the details of the coup and dictatorship. “Twenty-three years of censorship and self-censorship,” Guzmán’s voice says as we see the faces of the students watching the documentary. “The

majority of youth [in 1997] has grown up not knowing anything about the dictatorship,” he explains. Guzmán’s documentary, which first gained international recognition and was released in Chile after the return to democracy, acts as a site of memory. Through the use of this and three other *lieux de mémoire* which I explore in this paper, I explain how Chileans determinedly held on to the memories of their country before the coup, of Allende and his message of hope, and of the family and friends they lost.

Research Methods

Before beginning the main section of my paper I will explain my research methods. The principle types of sources that I used in formulating my thesis questions and research include informal personal conversations; participant-observation; formal interviews; site visits and observation; television; online, and print newspaper reports; Facebook as a social networking site; government documents; and related literature on collective memory, Chile, and the Pinochet dictatorship. My goal in using such a broad and diverse array of sources was to gain various perspectives and incorporate information from various genres and fields into my research. I gave equal importance to official news reports as I did to gossip and personal interactions, or to my own observations of specific sites, because each type of source helped me to form a fuller, more detailed sense of collective memory in Chile.

In my participant-observation, I began to consciously watch the student movement with an anthropological eye. I observed marches and talked to people who were participating, I signed up for various independent news sources online which fed me constant updates on the movement, and I watched news reports on television as often as I could. I was primarily searching for themes in the discourse surrounding the movement, as well as evidence of

collective memory, related to the dictatorship, within the movement. At the same time, I began to research other manifestations of collective memory of the dictatorship. During my first trip to Chile, I visited the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago two times in order to gain a strong sense of how Chile's history and memory of the dictatorship were presented in a public, government-sponsored place. At the museum, I was given a full copy of the Rettig Report and promised that I would share a copy of my completed thesis with the museum. I used this government document to obtain precise data on the Pinochet government's human rights crimes, as well as to read some of the narratives of those who testified during the compilation of this truth commission. In addition to my visits to the museum and other sites of history and collective memory, I watched several well-known documentaries about the dictatorship. On my second trip to Chile, I visited the General Cemetery in Santiago where I hoped to gain important insight into Chilean collective memory by visiting tombs, graves, and memorials related to victims of the dictatorship.

My 16 interviews, conducted in both my first and second trips to Chile, were among the most time-consuming of research methods but also among the most revealing and useful sources. Any Chilean between the ages of about 30 and 85 should have some memory of the era relevant to my study. However, I did not limit my interviews on collective memory to Chileans who personally lived through the dictatorship, as I found that many Chileans born after the end of the Pinochet regime also have a strong sense of the collective memory of the period. I organized my interviews, which I did both with individuals and in pairs for as long as people wished to talk, to cover the opinions about student movement, collective memory, perceived connections between the two, and in general the current state of politics in Chile. I was interested in discovering whether Chileans felt that collective memory was present in their society in the same ways that I

believed my observations had demonstrated. I was also interested in discovering whether the dictatorship was a relevant topic in the lives of those I was interviewing. After transcribing the interviews I categorized my informants into four groups: 1) those who felt they were not directly affected by the dictatorship, 2) those who were not personally affected, but knew people who had been tortured, exiled, or killed, as well as those who had strong emotions and opinions on the topic, 3) those who were closely, personally affected by the dictatorship through the loss of close relatives, friends, or partners, and 4) those who were themselves tortured, imprisoned, persecuted, or exiled. I then organized and coded my interviews into four themes or categories, depending on the topic being discussed in any given section: 1) the dictatorship and current political and social divisions, 2) discussion of the student movement, 3) discussion of repression of the student movement, state violence, and fear, and 4) collective memory and related emotions, discourse, symbols, and events. Finally, I identified key words, phrases, and themes that appeared in multiple interviews, the most important of which were: “unresolved,” “delicate and complicated topic,” “the need for justice and recognition of the past,” “social and political discontent,” *la lucha*, political disillusionment, collective memory, current police violence and censorship of the media, and the idea of working toward a better future while reflecting on the past. They key ideas helped me identify topics about which the Chileans I interviewed seemed to agree upon, as well as gain a sense of how patterns of discourse about important topics emerge in conversations.

It is important that I discuss the political ideologies of my informants. Twelve of my informants were left wing, and some extremely so. One considers himself a Marxist, while others are liberal, politically-active, and unaffiliated with any particular theory or party. Two of my informants did not discuss their political ideology, and spoke to me about historical and current

issues in a fairly objective way. Two of my informants consider themselves right wing and fairly conservative. I attempted to interview two other acquaintances that I knew to be more conservative, but one turned down the interview and the other was not available. It was more difficult to even engage more conservative acquaintances in conversation about the topics I was researching, seemingly because they felt uncomfortable or were uninterested in it. Thus, my interviews present mostly liberal beliefs and ideologies. However, because I was interested in discovering where collective memory of the dictatorship is still *present and active*, and because the Chileans who are most eager to discuss it are almost entirely leftists, I let my research take a natural course. *I do not attempt to present a great diversity of beliefs, but I wish to emphasize that diversity exists – even defines – Chileans’ political and social beliefs.* In fact, in many ways, the fact that Chile is still very politically and economically divided is what maintains the sense of irresolution that lingers around the issues of Pinochet, the human rights violations, and collective memory. *While I refer to the collective memory I explore in my thesis as “Chilean collective memory,” what I am actually presenting is the collective memory of a sector of the population that has chosen to link itself to the past.* To represent how the Pinochet dictatorship is dealt with on a broader, more diverse scale in Chile would have required much more time and research.

Like Patricio Guzmán’s documentary *La memoria obstinada*, my other sources of information, and the sites of memory I visited in my research, revealed that collective memory in Chile is still everywhere in daily life and public spaces. I will now explore three distinct, but interconnected *lieux de mémoire*: the 2011 student movement, the social and political “afterlives” of victims of the dictatorship, and the narratives and discourse of individuals as presented in interviews. I discuss how each one both maintains and allows for manifestations of collective memory of the Pinochet dictatorship.

Part One: Collective Memory and the 2011 Chilean Student Movement

In May of 2011, my classmates and I received an e-mail from our Valparaíso-based study abroad program informing us that the Chilean students from the *Universidad Católica* were in the process of voting on whether or not to go into *paro* (a form of strike, in which classes would be suspended due to the students' refusal to attend). What followed the *paro* was a full-fledged student-led movement which was linked in many ways to the Pinochet dictatorship. In this section, I draw upon Connerton's theory that "images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order," but that they can only do so effectively when they are publicly performed (1989:3). I argue that the *historically-influenced political framework* within which the movement was positioned, the *public discourse* (as opposed to the discourse from interviews presented in part three of this paper) that emerged about the movement, and the *methods* used by Chileans to enact the student movement all helped it to become a public performance of collective memory. More specifically, these performances of memory took the form of dictatorship-era symbols, images, and protest traditions, interpretations of the police repression of the protests, and specific language used to frame the movement as a struggle between two ideological and political enemies. Thus, I examine the student movement as a site of memory – the first of three *lieux de mémoire* in Chile – in which old, unresolved issues and emotions emerged in a new public setting.

At the end of Allende's presidency in 1973, all eight major Chilean universities were publicly funded (Tomic and Trumper, in Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva 2005:99). They were run democratically with high student participation in both university and public politics, and fees were minimal (Tomic and Trumper 2005:99). In 1979 during the Pinochet regime, university systems in Chile underwent a process of neoliberalization – framed by the state under the

project-title of “modernization.” This essentially removed the welfare state created by Allende, and allowed capitalists “access to earn profits in areas previously out of bounds for them” (Tomic and Trumper 2005:100). In 1981, shortly after the Pinochet regime had implemented a new constitution which led to intense privatization of universities, as well as a withdrawal of state funding for secondary schools (they were municipalized, leading to unevenness in the quality of education between richer and poorer districts). The constitution stipulates that it should be the duty of parents to choose the educational institution for their children’s required education, according to the economic and sociocultural capital of the family (Lizana Muñoz, December 2009). What was essentially created through all of the changes made to the education system during the dictatorship was an education system for the elite – many of whom were Pinochet allies in both economic and social matters – through which some elite could even profit financially (Bolpress, 2/22/12: 1). While the neoliberalization of Chile was part of a much larger, global process, within the country it was (and still is) seen, both by those who did and did not support Pinochet, as the dictator’s work. In 2011, unrest due to rising tuition and interest rates finally boiled over as students called for change.

The students presented their demands, which ranged from an increase in state funding of universities, to the democratization of higher-education institutions, to more extreme constitutional reform and the resignation of certain capitalist politicians, to the legislative branch (Demandas Confech, April 2011). They criticized the system for allowing many investors, including the minister of education himself, to make substantial, private financial gains off of universities. Compromise, however, proved to be difficult when it became clear that both sides were very firm in their ideas about how the education system in Chile should or should not be changed in relation to government budgets and taxes. The government proved reluctant to agree

to any of the student's demands, so the next strategy after formal political debates and discussions failed was for the students to gather more support and attention by "stressing the system." "Dialogue isn't working," one informant said. "Instead we're protesting in public. If you block traffic, the cops come to solve the problem...they get stressed out when they realize they can't make us go away, they complain to their chief of police who complains to the mayor who complains to the government. And I think it works in the long run if you keep it up as a form of protest – they begin to realize that the students are serious about their demands, and that there is a lot of support for the movement. But it only works if you keep it up."

By May of 2011, the Catholic University students and most other major universities (with the exception of a few traditionally more right-leaning departments like Business and Engineering), had indeed voted to freeze classes. The first national "March for Education" was organized by the Confederation of Chilean Students (CONFECH), a nationwide organization that groups together all of the major universities' student confederations. On June 16, another national march brought over 100,000 people together in Santiago alone, and many more students in other cities across Chile, including Valparaíso, held their own marches. This march was the first of many until a pause in mobilizations in December of 2011, and was declared by countless reports to be the biggest social mobilization since the end of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1990 (Bolpress, 2/22/12).

This was significant in several ways. First, it reflected that Chilean society today feels much freer to express its discontent with the government than it had been directly after the dictatorship. It also revealed that, for the first time since the transition back to democracy in 1990, Chile had found a reason to agitate and demand a significant and quick change. Finally, as I will demonstrate below, the Chileans who were agitating for this change were drawing upon a

reservoir of anger that stemmed in part from the Pinochet era. Those who were in favor of the current education system (mostly conservative Chileans) were assumed to be supporters of the neoliberal system Pinochet had implemented, while those who protested (mostly center-left and left wing Chileans) were attempting to make the system less capitalistic.

Soon after the *paro* began, many departments of the Católica also declared a *toma* in which students took over their university buildings and asked all faculty and staff to leave. Students occupying their buildings locked and covered the gates and entryways as proof of their resolve and strength in numbers. Colorful banners were unfurled out of university building windows, banners with declarations like “*Por una educación sin fines de lucro*” (“For a not-for-profit education”). The students were angry and demanded change, politicians were unsure of how to deal with the unrest, citizens were being affected by marches and protests, and discussions on the topic were being held on every television station. How should education fit into the economy that was so thoroughly neoliberal, globalized, and capitalistic? While a significant number of Chileans saw no need for change, a larger portion did. At one point, a survey showed that approximately 80% of Chileans were in favor of the student movement’s goals. Unfortunately for the government, which had not expected such a massive uprising, President Piñera’s approval rating had fallen to 26% (TerraTV, 10/28/2011). The movement, apart from using countless modern tools like the internet to gain strength, was also heavily laden with collective memory of the Pinochet era and the years just before.

Collective Memory in the Student Movement

One way in which specific historical, collective memories are passed on is through words and images used in both daily life and specific events. Connerton explains that recollected knowledge of the past is conveyed through ritual performances such as social ceremonies and traditions, both formal and informal ((1989:4). I argue that the student movement can be considered an example of an informal ritual, as it was a social manifestation based on traditional models of protest, and expressed in weekly gatherings and marches. John Burdick has argued that anthropology should analyze social movements by examining their historical background and inner dynamics, but perhaps more importantly, by moving “beyond the current dichotomy in scholarly analysis between social movements and everyday forms of resistance” (cited in Frazier 2007:259). Thus, I approach the student movement as both a unique burst of social activity, as well as a part of a cultural and historical timeline of political struggle in Chile. Finally, while the student movement was not limited to one location, it was made up of people with a collective memory and similar political ideologies, and thus served as a reservoir or “site” of collective memory. In many instances, this collective memory was consciously used by Chileans to evoke emotions and opinions related to the past, thus giving cultural capital to the movement in the present. As Susana Kaiser explains about the case of Argentina, but which is also relevant to Chile, the stories and beliefs of young people in post-crisis societies are important to hear because they “shed light on how the memory construction works by revealing how those who lived through the dictatorship [reconstruct and transmit] this experience to their descendants” (Kaiser 2005:3).

The first public expression of collective memory of the dictatorship in the student movement emerged through the historically-influenced political framework within which it was

positioned. The Pinochet dictatorship was frequently brought into public discussions regarding the student movement. Everyone from Chilean students to public officials to people on the street began to speak of the movement in terms of a left-right struggle, a struggle of the Chilean public against an inequality that existed because of Pinochet's policies. But the issue was not understood in totally black and white terms, as most students seemed to agree that although Pinochet was to blame for the blatantly unequal education system and for Chile's highly capitalistic economy, subsequent governments and current politicians were doing their best to maintain the status quo. In contrast to Allende, both Pinochet and the presidents that followed seemed to be enemies of state-funded education. The first time I heard a news reporter on a conservative, government-owned television channel call the students "a bunch of communists," I laughed, assuming it was a joke or an exaggeration. At the same time, however, my Facebook newsfeed was bursting with Chilean students' comments which contained similar language. A student acquaintance of mine from a conservative background posted a plea on his Facebook "wall" for Pinochet to return because Chile was "falling to pieces." Similarly, many far-left students in the movement were impassionedly accusing anyone who did not support it of being capitalists, fascists, or Pinochet supporters. Another acquaintance called the right wing mayor of Santiago a fascist (that is, Pinochet supporter) for backing the violent police control of marches.

Another way in which collective memory was expressed publicly was in political, propagandistic, and media discourse. Many of the students who participated in the movement referred to it as a *lucha*, meaning "a struggle or fight" (La Primavera de Chile). *Luchar* is a historical, pan-cultural idea that spans much of Latin America. It implies symbolically and literally fighting for equality, freedom, and justice, and is an idea that has traditionally been strongly associated with liberal ideologies from the mid-twentieth century. To the very

conservative, it is negatively associated with communism, socialism, and revolution. A few of my Chilean friends who spoke of the student movement as a modern example of *la lucha* presented it as a fight for the common good, just as their parents and relatives had done against Pinochet in the seventies and eighties. They saw themselves as struggling daily against what they considered the excessive violence of the police. They also struggled weekly to hold conferences with political authorities, and they struggled throughout the eight months that the movement lasted to win the fight for state-funded education.

Not only did students talk about Pinochet's role in the problem with education in Chile,



Figure 1: A banner used in the student movement showing Pinochet and Piñera together with the 1980 Constitution.

but they also *showed* the connection between the two eras by bringing 1970s symbols of resistance into the movement. The students' use of the *toma* as a protest strategy also finds its roots in the Pinochet era. In the seventies, when certain branches of universities were

considered to be subversive by the

Pinochet regime, there were standoffs

between students who occupied the buildings and the military personnel sent to evict them and shut down the schools. This had not occurred before in Chile's history, and was not to occur again until the student strike. In the marches, the students thrust their fists into the air in the classic style of the clenched Power Fist of solidarity and resistance (another symbol of collective memory), chanting "*Y va a caer, y va a caer, la educación de Pinochet!*" (It will fall, it will fall, Pinochet's education [system] will fall!). Current politicians like President Sebastian Piñera and Joaquín Lavín, the Minister of Education at the time who was known for having supported

Pinochet's policies, were also blamed. Students in marches carried poster that read "*No se vende la educación!*" ("Education is not for sale"), while others had caricatures of President Piñera or Lavín wearing devil horns, and with dollar signs in place of eyes. One even had an image of Piñera grinning and holding Augusto Pinochet's arm with one hand, and the 1980 military constitution that still governs Chile with the other. Other signs had images of Che Guevara, ex-President Allende, and Miguel Enriquez (a famous anti-Pinochet Chilean revolutionary who was killed shortly after the coup) with subtext that read "May the struggle continue!" A few times, I caught parts of tunes as students carried speakers that playing revolutionary, left wing music of Chilean artists like Victor Jara, Quilapayún, and Sol y Lluvia (famous for the anti-Pinochet song "Adiós Carnaval, Adiós General"). While posters and slogans accompany most public demonstrations, the ones chosen by Chilean students to represent the heart and goals of their movement were laden with imagery and a collective memory of what a portion of Chileans had fought against during the dictatorship.

In one particularly poignant performance of symbolic collective memory was the movement's use of the *cacerolazo*. In this Chilean and Argentinian protest tradition, which was first used in Chile by conservative housewives to protest Allende's government, people bang on kitchen pots (*cacerolas*) with spoons and sticks to create a noise that is both harmless and powerful. While they have been used in different contexts, many Chileans associate them with the protests during the dictatorship. In the 2011 resurrection of the *cacerolazo*, the protest tradition had not been used since the dictatorship, many thousands of people flooded the streets, walking and clanging their pots in a march of solidarity. "The *cacerolazos* were so exciting!" a friend told me. "We all came out of our occupied university buildings and all of a sudden there were pots banging in the streets and from the apartments. That support from the people gave us

[the students] the hope that yes, we can accomplish something!” The power of the *cacerolazo*, and the ability it had to evoke emotions in the people around me, showed a sharp ability on the part of the student leaders of the movement to rally people around symbols that already meant something to Chilean society.

Both discourse within and about the student movement revealed that it was an incendiary social issue which was undeniably tied to the dictatorship in both legal and social ways. While the student movement was innovative and modern in many ways, it was also fueled by a reservoir of culturally-familiar tactics, symbols, and traditions of protest that belonging to Chile’s collective memory of the dictatorship. Similarly, with the implications of human rights abuses and inequality that calling someone a fascist or communist have in Chile, or of framing the movement as a popular struggle, it was clear that the emotions related to the student movement were also linked to the country’s history. In many ways, the presence of collective memory in the student movement often gained it attention and gave it cultural and emotional capital, but it also made it more politically and socially complicated for those who preferred to frame it as a modern issue that related to a universal right.

Repression of the Student Movement



Figure 2: A 2011 photo from an online news report showing students in a protest in physical conflict with riot police.

The student movement also went far beyond simply addressing the weakness and disparities in the education system: it forced every citizen to consider the true state of democracy in Chile. Chileans who criticized



Figure 3: A photo showing "encapuchados" using similar tactics of protest that were used by some armed resistance fighters in the 1970s and 80s. Their own ideological motivations were unclear.

the movement for being socialist in nature, and for disrupting the status quo, supported the government's efforts to prevent riots and destruction of property during the protests. While protests and demonstrations in any country often end in clashes with riot police, the repression of the student movement in Chile, encouraged

by some and criticized by others, was framed in a way that compared it to the brutality of the military during the Pinochet regime. Soon after the marches began, *encapuchados* – unidentified people³ who covered their faces with masks and followed the marches, defaced public and private property, threw burning tires across roads where people were driving, and in one particularly uncontrolled march, burned a gas station and someone's empty car. It was a familiar site that hearkened back to the Pinochet-era protests. However, unlike the armed resistance fighters who fought the Pinochet government in subversive ways during the 1970s and 80s, the *encapuchados* had no clear political agenda or ideology. They did not belong to the student movement, though they often appeared in the marches or spray-painted buildings, broke traffic lights, and threw up barricades across roads. In response to this violence, which was never condoned by the student representatives of the movement, the *carabineros* police force was ordered to control the marches. They were stationed at every street corner and wore military-like

³ Most Chileans I talked to, both supporters and dissenters of the student movement, agreed that the *encapuchados* were probably a mixed group of people including misguided youth who were not affiliated with the student cause and sought to vent their frustration with the state, and cops who had infiltrated the marches in order to undermine them. Several of these policemen were revealed to the public media as having dressed as students and committed crimes and violent acts. While the cops' motives (independent or under orders to do so) were never proven, many students that I talked to believed they had been ordered by their superiors in the police force or the government to cause disruptions so that the riot-control methods could be exercised on the crowds. This was, many believed, part of a tactic to undermine the student movement by making it look like simple, unrestrained, violent hooliganism.

outfits with shields and helmets, evoking associations with the military regime. Once the *encapuchados* began throwing rocks and homemade explosives at the police, force was immediately used to disperse the students who marched, for the most part peacefully.

Photos circulating the showed tear-gas filled streets with people running and covering their eyes, water cannons being shot at crowds of protesters, burning tires and blockades in the streets, and students being hassled by policemen (and vice versa). One photo I found showed a young man pulling down his shorts to reveal two police bullet wounds on his hip. Several reports of police detaining and humiliating or abusing students by kicking their bodies while they lay on the floor, spitting into their faces, and pouring tear gas and lemon juice into their eyes and wounds if they did not comply (El Observatodo, 9/22/11; FEUV, 10/22/11). Again, while police brutality is not uncommon across the world, the reports of torture and beatings were particularly enraging to the Chileans for whom the tortures of the military during Pinochet era remain a painful topic. For these Chileans, any sign of government control of popular freedom of expression is infuriating, and they believed the government, scared of such expressions, was ordering the *carabineros* to control the students.

The student movement, the repression of it, and the public discourse surrounding all of its aspects were a fascinating example of social unrest and change that many countries in the world are facing. Within the context of the country's particular history and culture, the movement proved to be a site of Chilean collective memory which both reflected and renewed issues that went beyond the education system, and touched the deep rift and strong emotions left by the Pinochet dictatorship. I will now explore the second type of *lieux de mémoire* which I identified – that of the “body symbol.” I will examine the dictatorship-era political and social figures of Salvador Allende and Victor Jara, and the treatment of their actual bodies in burial and symbolic

imagery. I will also explore the graves and memorial of the victims of the dictatorship in the General Cemetery in Santiago.

Part Two: Collective Memory and the Body Symbol

For at least a decade after the end of the dictatorship much of Chile was unable, unwilling, or too afraid to talk about the deep pain that had been created by the dictatorship and its human rights violations. As the generation that was young during the dictatorship grows older, the passage of time has led to both an increase in willingness to talk about the dictatorship, as well as a decrease in the personal relevance of the topic for many younger people. Still, Chile has not yet reached the point at which the dictatorship is no longer part of anyone's personal history. Some people continue to feel very strong emotions toward the dictatorship, and even those who do not claim to feel an emotional connection are affected by the country's history. In this line of thinking, Halbwachs argues that "although individual members [of a group] may 'vary in the intensity with which they experience [group memories],' the memories themselves are nevertheless 'common to all'" (Whitehead 2009:131). He maintains that in most cases, the nation is "too remote" from the individual's personal experience for them to consider it more than a large framework "within which his own history makes contact at only a few points" (Whitehead 2009:138). However, he does acknowledge that "exceptional occasions of national importance," such as the Pinochet coup and dictatorship, do occur and alter the lives of all citizens. One way in which Chileans are touched by the history of the dictatorship is through the presence of two important figures and victims of the dictatorship. The symbolic and physical bodies of ex-President Salvador Allende and folk singer Victor Jara have become touchstones of

collective memory in public, private, and political spaces throughout Chile. In this section, I draw upon Katherine Verdery's (1999) theory of dead bodies and their symbolic power in the public and the private sphere to show how the bodies of deceased victims of the dictatorship are also closely tied to collective memory.

Salvador Allende in Public and Private Spaces

Collective memory is, in addition to being expressed in social movements like the student protests, revealed through the transformation of important political and cultural figures into icons and symbols, or "cultural saints" as Katherine Verdery calls them, after their death (1999:28). Why are deceased figures so potent in their symbolic function, one might ask? Verdery believes it is because they are tangible, and their corporeality allows them to become a means of localizing an issue, a memory, or a political meaning. In other words, they have the ability to become reservoirs of meaning and sites of memory. They engage the emotions of the living because of their close ties to death, and they are a way for the living to keep maintain ideas that were at some point associated with the deceased figure. Bodies of the dead (both symbolic and literal) are especially strong and effective symbols for maintaining a connection with the past because they were once part of the world of the living. Verdery (1999:29) explains that dead bodies are also used as symbols and icons because of their obvious inertness, which makes it easier for the living to "rewrite history" by tying these bodies to words, ideas, and other symbolic meanings. Symbols may have multiple meanings, and their power comes in part from their ability to "evoke the awe, uncertainty, and fear associated with 'cosmic' concerns such as the meaning of life and death" (Verdery 1999:31). Statues and images of eminent figures in recent history recreate the presence of the actual person in the world of the living, thus maintaining their presence and relevance to current society.

Salvador Allende Gossens (born 1908, president from 1970-1973), was a Chilean physician by training, and is generally considered to be the first democratically-elected Marxist president in Latin America (Personal notes from Chile, 3/2011). He is a symbolic figure who evokes strong emotions among many Chileans, whether it be admiration, sorrow, nostalgia, scorn, anger, or uncertainty. For some, Allende was a “man of principles” and a symbol of a hopeful past that was lost in the 1973 coup that led to his death (YouTube: 24 Horas, “exhumación allende”). For others, he was a victim of a cowardly and brutal overthrow that led to repressive, violent, and “paranoid policies under the doctrine of ‘National Security’” (Tomic and Trumper, in Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva 2005:100). For yet others, he was an obstacle to Chile’s progress and a dangerous agent of the “communist cancer” which Pinochet sought to root out of Chile.

What is easy to see, if one spends time in Chile, is that Salvador Allende is still alive in Chilean collective memory despite the fact that Chileans born after 1973 grew up knowing of him only through second-hand accounts and historical records. I frequently saw Allende’s photo in student marches, on t-shirts and other souvenirs, and on book covers in shops. His face, with its characteristic heavy mustache and thick, square, black-rimmed glasses was also painted into murals all over Valparaíso and Santiago. Famous quotations of Allende, such as the one under the title of this paper, also appear painted onto walls. A statue of a stoic Allende now stands in front of *La Moneda*, the presidential palace in Santiago. I also discovered that it was also not uncommon for left-wing Chileans with ties to the past to hang photos of Allende in their houses.



Figure 4: A poster of Allende in my friend's house

Two of my friends had several portraits hanging in their living rooms, and Michael Lazzarra (2006:8), describes a similar encounter and reaction to those I had, when he visited a woman's home that had a photo of Allende. "How curious," he says, "that Allende's picture hung right there over their dining room table. It was almost as if he were communing with them."

In Valparaíso, I came across a unique place called *La biblioteca popular* ("The Popular Library"), which I can only describe as a small leftist bookshop-cum-folk museum-cum-grassroots community meeting place, where concerts and discussion forums are held. Here, Allende's presence saturated the atmosphere. Outside of the building, on the sidewalk that led up the tourist haven of Cerro Alegre, stood a life-sized, painted wooden cutout of Salvador Allende, his hand raised in salute and beckoning to everyone who passed.



Figure 5: Yuri and Allende.

A cutout of Victor Jara (to be discussed later) adorned the sign of the place, and Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's giant head looked out of the window pensively. These were all personas linked directly to the short years of a socialist Chile just before the coup, and seemed to be strategically placed together, sending the message that this was a site

dedicated to the memory of those years. When I entered, I was greeted by a short, stout man wearing a red communist cap. Calling himself *Compañero Yuri* (Comrade Yuri, in true communist fashion), the man told me that this was his private museum, open when he could

afford to be open, and run on a donation-basis. “This place is to preserve the memory of things that have been intentionally hidden or forgotten,” he said to me as he sized me up to see if I was a sympathizer, an enemy, or simply a clueless tourist. “I have old documents, books, photos...please look around and come back any time you want. The *Biblioteca* is also a *peña*, a community space in the style of the old gathering places, used to share folk music and culture, which existed everywhere in the sixties and seventies,” Yuri explained. This tiny but purposefully-constructed *lieux de mémoire*, dedicated to a history that had been carefully protected by collective memory from repression, had been created for the sole purpose of sharing that memory and history in a communal way.

Salvador Allende is also important in ways not strictly symbolic, but also legal. In May of 2011, nearly 38 years after Allende’s death, the ex-president’s remains were exhumed in order for an autopsy to be performed on his body by a biological anthropology department in Santiago (Youtube: 24 Horas, “exhumación allende,” May 23, 2011). The purpose was to determine, once and for all, the cause of Allende’s death. While many Chileans including Allende’s family believed that he committed suicide in an act of sacrifice, rebellion, protest and personal honor (an action already symbolic for Chileans⁴), some human rights groups and individuals continued to believe that he was assassinated out of cowardice and cruelty during the attack on La Moneda (BBC Mundo, May 23, 2011). Allende’s last words to the public, transmitted over radio from the presidential palace, supported the first conclusion that he committed suicide: “Placed at a historical crossroads, I will pay with my life for the loyalty of

⁴ Allende’s suicide was eerily similar to that of Chile’s 11th president, José Manuel Balmaceda, who, after losing in a long civil war [the Chilean civil war of 1891], committed suicide by shooting himself, rather than surrender to the new government. His reason for this act, according to letters he wrote shortly before his death, was that he would not receive an impartial trial, and simply out of love for his country (José Manuel Balmaceda; <http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/thehistoryofchile/p/08balmaceda.htm>.) Thus, Allende’s suicide held historical symbolism and was an act of honor recognized by many Chileans.

the people” (YouTube: “Last Words – Último Discurso Salvador Allende). However, his body could not be examined by his supporters to verify this at the time of his death, and people were forced to come to their own conclusion based on a few individual accounts as well as the opaque autopsy report released by the military (Bustamante, BBC Mundo, April 12, 2011).

Allende’s body was taken by the military and “quietly buried in an unmarked grave” in Viña del Mar, and his family went into exile (LA Times, September 6, 1990). It was not until 1990 that his family returned, and Allende’s body was moved to the General Cemetery in Santiago for a state funeral. While Allende’s widow and many of his family members expressed their belief that accounts of his death pointed to his taking his own life, suicide did not sit well with many of his followers who were determined to show that the ex-president had gone down fighting or had simply been brutally killed. Were this the case, many declared, amends would have to be made for allowing the public to be misled and history to be distorted (The Guardian, July 20, 2011). In 2008, a doctor charged with the task of reviewing the military autopsy report from 1973 issued a new report which announced that “the gunshot wounds were not consistent with a suicide and the shots had most likely been fired from two different weapons” (Barrionuevo, New York Times, May 23, 2011). In 2011, the controversy and disagreement that lingered surrounding Allende’s death erupted again as a new investigation began. The Allende family agreed to have a second autopsy done in the hope that it would clear the doubts that re-emerged within the politically and emotionally-charged atmosphere surrounding the doctor’s report. It was announced by the forensic anthropology department that analyzed his remains that Allende had indeed committed suicide while he was inside *La Moneda*, and the case now seems to be closed for good.

The exhumation of Allende's remains was an act that perfectly demonstrated the human and social need for closure, and despite being the second time Allende's remains had been disturbed, was deemed necessary. As sociologist Juan Carlo Gorlier explains in his discussion of the construction of historical and social narratives, "humans feel the desire to know 'the Truth' about events in history that no one was there to witness" (Andelson 2011:3). In our search for truth, we often "lend a lot of importance to objectivity and coherence in the narrative of events," and we grasp for a truth that can be final, declared, proven (Andelson 2011:3). The demand for a second autopsy also acutely demonstrated that the image and symbol of Allende continues to hold meaning for some Chileans. As Carolina Tohá Morales, president of the *Partido por la Democracia* (the center-left political "Party for Democracy") expressed on Chilean national television during the exhumation itself, "after the exhumation, the truth about Salvador Allende's death will change from being one version among many to a judicial *truth*, established by the Chilean state and investigated as corresponds" (Youtube: 24 Horas, "exhumación allende").

Two other political figures who appeared in the same television report before the autopsy was conducted expressed very different feelings about Allende and the "truth" of his death. The president of the Chilean Communist Party Guillermo Teillier del Valle argued that "no matter which of the two [suicide or assassination] turns out to be true, it won't change the meaning of what Allende did. If they *had* murdered him, it would be an act of great cowardice. But either way, he gave up his life for a cause." Likewise, Jorge Arrate Mc-Niven – an ex-presidential candidate who attended both the 1990 and 2011 exhumation – echoed what del Valle and many others said on the day of the exhumation: "No matter what the result of the autopsy, we are dealing with a historical Chilean figure, who had a great effect on the country, who was a man of principles, who died heroically." Both Mc-Niven and del Valle seemed to have attended the

exhumation ceremony out of indelible and deep respect for Allende and his family, but were not invested in the “truth” about his cause of death. Similarly, very few of the Chileans I spoke to around the time of the exhumation did see the need for a second autopsy; some considered themselves to be leftists who respected Allende (whether they had been alive during his time or not), while others were right wing and felt a certain aversion toward the Marxist ex-president. Neither side, however, thought that re-examining his cause of death would change anything, and that it was best to just move on. Evidently, those who lobbied for the autopsy were a group of heavily-invested people who still felt the loss of Allende’s life was an unresolved and highly relevant issue. Some would argue that discovering Allende’s cause of death was not supported by enough people to be considered generally important to Chileans. However, I maintain that the extensive media coverage and public discussion of the event reveal that Allende *himself* is still an important symbol of both Chilean history and collective memory of the dictatorship.

Victor Jara in Public and Private Spaces

Another important symbol of collective memory in Chile is the figure of Victor Jara. Jara was a singer-songwriter, guitarist, theater director poet, and political activist of lower-class background who became well-known during the 1960s in association with the Chilean New Song Movement (a genre of Latin American music with a social conscience, left-wing political beliefs, and sometimes revolutionary ideas). He became considered a voice of the common people, whose dignity and worth he championed through his traditional folk music. Jara’s image can, like Allende’s be found in every tourist souvenir shop, on shirts, on murals, and in homes. His songs are still played in homes and on the radio, and countless artists, both Chilean and international, have sung his songs. Pieces written and performed by Jara such as “*El derecho de vivir en paz*” (“The Right to Live in Peace”) and “*A Cuba*” (“To Cuba”) revealed his leftist

leanings, but a more tangible threat in the eyes of the Chilean right wing was “Jara's growing identification with the leftist social movement led by socialist politician Salvador Allende. After visits to Cuba and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, Jara had joined the Communist Party” (Encyclopedia of World Biography). Notably, Jara also composed “*Venceremos*” (“We Will Triumph”), the theme song of Salvador Allende’s *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity) political movement.

It was both Jara’s well-loved and admired status in life, as well as his tragic death that allowed him to become an enduring symbol of Chilean hope, of collective memory, and of the pain surrounding the dictatorship. He was taken prisoner by Pinochet’s military forces, and humiliated, beaten, tortured, and finally killed in the Chile Stadium in Santiago on September 16, 1973 just a week after the coup (Encyclopedia of World Biography). It was reported by fellow prisoners that guards mocked Jara, suggesting that he play guitar for them as he lay on the ground with broken hands. After further beatings, he was machine-gunned, his body was dumped in the outskirts of Santiago and then taken to a city morgue where 44 bullets were found in his body (BBC News, 9/5/98).

Much in the same way that Che Guevara’s iconic portrait appears on shirts and in popular media and imagery, Jara’s face and words are still used by Chileans to maintain a connection to their past. Jara represents the hope of a better life for the poor, and he represents a time of great musical innovation and social activism in Chile. His poignant yet simple songs have the ability to bring back a rush of memories of his life and death to those who hear them. Several of my Chilean interviewees brought up Victor Jara and his music in their discussions of collective and individual memory. One man in his fifties recounted his memory of seeing Jara perform in one of the leftist musical *peñas* of the sixties and seventies. Another woman in her forties told me

that the memory of Jara triggers especially strong emotions for her. She explained, “Victor Jara sticks out to me stronger than many things about that era. I never got to see him while he was alive, but his presence is still alive, despite how much they tried to hide him as a symbol and destroy everything he created. They started playing him on a radio show called ‘Dimensión Latinoamericana,’ which was kind of clandestine, and that’s when I started listening to his music and really started identifying with it. It was the only station that played music that dared to talk about what was going on.”

Two of my informants, both in their twenties, explained that the music of Jara and other musicians from the New Song movement had opened their eyes to the history of their country when they were younger, while their schools and families had treated the past as a taboo subject. “I think so many young people in Chile find out about what really happened [with the dictatorship] because they come across a CD of Victor Jara or Violeta Parra,” one of them said. In the words which perfectly captured the place that Jara holds in Chile today, Jara’s widow Joan told the public once that “they could kill him, but they couldn’t kill his songs” (BBC News, 9/5/98). Today, Jara’s songs are still everywhere in Chile and much of Latin America, just as his image is a ubiquitous visual symbol of collective memory. Collective memory as contained in the body symbol also reveals itself on a larger scale in Chile. The bodies of Jara, Allende, and thousands of other victims of the dictatorship now lie in and near consciously-constructed sites of memory in the General Cemetery in Santiago.

The Body in Tombs, Graves, and Memorials

I visited the *Cementerio General de Santiago* in January of 2012 to see the tombs of Allende and Jara, as well as the memorial for the “detained-disappeared” that had been

constructed in the 1990s. I wanted to find out if the burials and tombs of the dead were still places that people visited. Would I find that the dead victims of the dictatorship were remembered, or would they by now have been forgotten as the passage of the years brought new concerns and issues to the forefront of people's minds? My observations in the cemetery ended up going far beyond what I expected, and supports my argument that literal locations of human remains are a powerful type of *lieux de mémoire*.

I first visited the tombs of Salvador Allende and Victor Jara. Verdery argues that “ideas about proper burial figure even in today's present-day dead-body politics” (1999:44). As often occurs with bodies that have become political and social symbols, the decisions about where to bury the body, how to mark the grave, and which rights or procedures are proper to carry out at the time of burial, are often made collectively by a group for whom the burial is relevant. In the case of important public figures, there exists the idea that the body somehow belongs to the community, and the fact that graves of public figures are often visited by the public demonstrates the way in which collective identities, memories, and representations are created (Verdery 1999).

Allende's tomb was impossibly large – a monolithic structure of light grey marble, which had a small platform on the front side where people could speak or perform. A single but large vase of fresh flowers stood just under his name. On the back side of the tomb, there was a podium on a balcony that overlooked a large space where people could also stand to watch someone speak, and under the balcony was the resting place of the ex-president and several of his deceased relatives. The friend who accompanied me to the cemetery that day explained that the tomb was built as a sort of gathering place where speeches, and concerts related to human rights and the dictatorship could be (and were) held. How odd it was to imagine a concert in the middle of the vast cemetery, right on top of Salvador Allende's resting place. Still, given that

Allende's tomb was a site of memory, it seemed fitting that it should be used as a place of public commemoration.

The considerably smaller grave of Victor Jara was the second place of burial that the singer's body had rested in. Jara's body was first secretly buried by his widow Joan in a cement niche in the Santiago Cemetery, with no funeral, before she fled the country (BBC News, 12/5/2009). In 2009, 36 years after Jara's death, the investigation surrounding his murder was re-opened, and his body was exhumed for examination just as Allende's had been. It was then that Jara's widow, by that time 80 years old, decided to hold a public funeral. Thousands attended the funeral, and Joan Jara led the procession to the cemetery. Michelle Bachelet, the president of Chile from 2006-2010 who herself was tortured by the military during the dictatorship, stated to the public at the funeral that "finally, after 36 years, Victor can rest in peace" (BBC News, 12/5/2009). Jara was re-interred in a small cement tomb, not far from his original place of burial. As my friend said while we sat on a small bench positioned directly in front of the tomb, which was decorated with flowers and hand-painted notes (graffiti in any other setting except this touching one), "everyone, especially Joan, felt that the burial should be simple and that Jara should rest in the poorer part of the cemetery among the people, rather than in an ornate tomb." And indeed, the humble burial fit best where it was; notes left by people, tiny Chilean flags, a fragment of a mirror, and lyrics from his songs would have been out of place anywhere but there. In front of the wall of niches where Victor Jara was interred stood a row of four tall, abstract pieces of art, meant to commemorate the victims of the dictatorship. They swayed slightly in the breeze and made a ghostly, sad humming noise.

Collective Memory in Graves and Memorials: Patio 29

Beyond Jara's grave was a large area – known as “Patio 29” – with no tombs, where row upon row of rusty crosses stuck out of the ground. While it was once a mass grave where the military buried the bodies of hundreds of its victims, Patio 29 is now an empty plot that has been commemorated with signs explaining its history, thus converting it into a site of collective memory. One sign that stood next to this section of the cemetery said, “Patio 29 represents the horror of a pain that does not end. It represents the tireless struggle of the families to learn the truth, obtain justice, and create memory.” Another, larger sign nearby held a fuller explanation that read as follows:

“Patio 29 is an emblematic location of the human rights violations that occurred between 1973 and 1990; it is a testimony of the process carried out [by Pinochet's secret police] in order to hide the bodies of the people who were detained, “disappeared,” and politically executed during the military regime. Some of the graves marked NN [“No Name”] or Unknown were the only trace left for families to discover the whereabouts of their missing. These graves are a testimony of the politics of hiding the government's crimes against humanity, and are, for the same reason, symbols of the struggle for truth and justice so that NEVER AGAIN may the right to life be violated. July 2006.”



Figure 6: Patio 29, with the metal crosses marking where bodies once lay.

Katherine Verdery explains the significance of the dead in the maintenance of collective memory when she says that “manipulating physical remains is a visceral and visual experience that seems to offer true access to the past” (Verdery 1999:113). She argues that “reburials revise the past by returning names to the nameless and perhaps endowing these

revisions with [new] feelings” (1999:115). I walked through the graves that had been empty since the bodies were moved to the wall of niches that stood on the other side of the cemetery next to the memorial in 1991. As Michael J. Lazzarra (2006:19) reports, “no government official attended the ceremony” of exhumation and reburial, as at this point in the transition to democracy the government purposefully allowed its interest in memory to “wane.” Some of the crosses did indeed still have “NN” painted on them, but most were too rusted and worn for me to see anything at all. The few hundred graves, while impressive, were nothing next to the thousands of other unidentified bodies that were buried in caves, in mountainous regions, incinerated, or dumped into the sea by the military. In Patio 29, which now only holds the memory of the victims, the military regime’s obvious lack of respect for the bodies of the dead was obvious. Moving on to the memorial for the disappeared, I found a different sort of site of memory that stood in stark contrast to the haunting Patio 29.

Collective Memory in Graves and Memorials: The Memorial of the *Detenidos-Desaparecidos*



Figure 7: The wall of names of the disappeared at the memorial.

The word *desaparecido*, “disappeared,” is at once a verb, an adjective, and a noun in Chile. It began when the Pinochet regime detained people, who were then never seen again by their families. They disappeared. It was also used to refer to the act itself, as in “the police ‘disappeared’ my husband,” almost as if by dark magic. Finally, *los*

desaparecidos, “the disappeared,” are the countless people whose bodies have never been found.

The word continues to be used, even though by now most families have given up hope of ever seeing their lost loved ones again. It is a, in a sense, a symbolic way of speaking which forces everyone to remember that these people's stories were never concluded, and that their bodies were not properly laid to rest as Allende and Jara finally were (Verdery 1999:48).

The memorial in the General Cemetery of Santiago, the same cemetery where Patio 29, Victor Jara, and Salvador Allende lie, is both a shrine for the dead and a burial site. One part of the memorial holds the tombs of the bodies that were once in Patio 29. Some of the niches have names printed on the front while others are blank. Whether they hold bodies of unidentified victims or are simply empty, waiting for more bodies to be found and given a proper burial, it is a sobering sight that underscores the unresolved side of this history. The other part of the memorial is a large, marble wall with thousands of names of the executed prisoners and the "disappeared." A small fountain and rock wall surround the front of the wall; among the stones and decorative plants on the wall sit at least twenty framed photos of lost family members, some of which were clearly very young. A few candles, burned and melted down to the wick, are stuck to the wall, and some notes and letters lie under stones. They are not simply photos and letters, but memories which are shared with everyone who visits the memorial. While one could argue that each one is an individual memory, the tokens also symbolize a collective act of remembrance, healing, and lingering pain.

While many Chileans certainly appreciated the careful construction of the memorial in the cemetery, it became clear over time that the issue was not concluded just because an official site had been created. By no means did the establishment of such locales of collective memory "put an end to the competition among the interpretations of the past," but rather it allowed for a "symbolic struggle over public hegemony" to be re-enacted (Roniger and Sznajder 1999:215).

Today, while the issue is not as raw as it once was, it still emerges in moments like the student movement or Allende's exhumation. Thus, the persistent questions surrounding the purpose and effects of these sites of commemoration demand that we ask: is it enough? How do such sites fit into a picture in which political and social attempts to move toward reconciliation often conflict with the inconclusiveness of the pending justice process? Finally, what do memorials and other *lieux de mémoire* mean to Chileans, with all of their different and sometimes opposing interpretations of the past? The *desaparecidos* memorial both acts as a place for collective healing and as a reminder that there may never be a complete healing as long as the bodies of the victims remain missing and legal justice is never done. In the final section of my paper, I explore individual narratives as another type *lieux de mémoire*, contained within the minds of the living. I offer my findings as possible answers to my many questions, and I compare my own observations on collective memory, the student movement, and the current state of politics in Chile with the views of Chileans I interviewed.

Part Three: Collective Memory in Personal Discourse

Sites of memory – from social movements to cemeteries to the discourse of individuals – can simultaneously present various facets of what people consider to be the truth. Consider Halbwachs' (Whitehead 2007) assertion that “the individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory.” This is the case for many left wing Chilean students who used images of Allende in their marches, or those who feel emotion at hearing Victor Jara's music, or for the very conservative Chileans wistfully wishing for Pinochet's return. Still, the way in which individuals, when given the opportunity to fully explain

themselves, express their opinions on an issue related to collective memory is often more nuanced than the way in which the issue is presented or performed in public. The following interviews reveal that collective memory of the dictatorship is still personally relevant to many Chileans. But what of those who insist they never think of Allende, Pinochet, or the dictatorship? They, too, are inevitably touched by the discourse surrounding them, but might still consider themselves less involved in the active maintenance of collective memory on a personal level.

Observing public discourse and sites of memory are important parts of participant-observation, but to really understand why the Pinochet era remains so present in modern day Chilean society requires exploring a third important body or reservoir of collective memory. The final *lieux de mémoire* I explore in this paper is a body of discourse gathered from one-on-one interviews which often support, but sometimes contradict the conclusions I present in parts one and two of this paper. Rather than allow this to confuse my thesis, I suggest that the diversity of opinions, narratives, and expressions of collective and individual memory revealed in the interviews helps demonstrate the overall diversity of Chilean attitudes toward the past and present. Moreover, the fact that every person I spoke with had an opinion about all of the issues at stake supports my thesis that the Pinochet dictatorship continues to live on in the present. Finally, I reiterate the fact that the people I was able to interview were, for the most part, politically leftist. Thus, their reflections mostly align with the particular collective memory of the Pinochet dictatorship that I have explored in my thesis. However, collective memory in Chile does take many forms, and there are many different ways that Chileans think about their past and present and the connections between them. Although the limited scope of my research

did not allow me to explore them, I wish to remind the reader that there can be many contrasting forms of collective memory of the same issue – and Chile is no exception to this.

The Student Movement and Current Politics

I discussed the student movement with thirteen of my sixteen informants. Eight were strongly in favor of state-funded education at all levels. Most people agreed that the movement was not only made up of left wing students (though it had been started by them). All but one of my younger informants took it for granted that all Chileans should benefit from state-funded education, and did not go to great lengths to explain why they supported the idea. Older Chileans who were perhaps a bit more distanced from the student movement gave simple reasons for their support of the movement and its goals. A TV producer argued that “Chile is living with a socio-economic project [including education] imposed on it since the seventies, and it was basically designed by four members of the military junta that overthrew Allende, and no one else. People believe this must change” (Interview 8). This viewpoint demonstrated a popular belief among leftist students that the Pinochet regime continued to be a burden on society. Another Chilean, a professor, argued that “there are people who can’t pay for university, and it’s an unfair system” (Interview 5). He was also in favor of the student movement in general, saying, “I think that the student movement was wonderful. It had been many years since a movement like this has occurred. In the end, I think it has served to shake the national consciousness...but I also think it caused the divisions in the country to resurface.” However, while he was aware that the student movement was opening space for older political divisions to be brought up, he also vehemently argued that because the student movement was at one point supported by 80% of Chileans which

proved that the “terrible, black-white division in [Chilean] society” was not the most important issue at stake.

Another informant (a student who was my age) was in favor of the movement because she believed in fighting “for future generations” (Interview 6). “Imagine seeing the same thing happen again for the same reasons in the future,” she said. “And imagine having to tell your kids, ‘yeah...I didn’t really participate in the student movement for free education in my years.’ No! Even if it doesn’t work this time, I want to be able to tell my children, ‘in my time we did so much to change things, and it didn’t work. Now it’s your turn to take the baton!’” This sentiment was expressed many times by various people throughout my interviews. The Chileans I spoke to explained that “the youth of today weren’t only fighting for a better education now, but for one that is better for the future generations” (Interview 1). Others spoke about the movement as “shaking the national consciousness (Interview 5), “demanding change in the face of social discontentment” (Interview 9), and as a vehicle through which Chileans could “consciously learn from the past in order to move forward” (Interview 5). This belief in embracing the potential of collective memory and history to serve as a social and cultural lesson for Chileans was also expressed many times throughout my interviews.

At the same time that they expressed hope and renewal, however, many of my informants made it clear that social discontentment and political disillusionment were widespread and strong in Chile. Steven S. Volk (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva 2005:33) explains political apathy in Chile as the result of capitalism when he argues that “the drive to privatize social functions [in Chile] is both furthered by and in turn helps encourage the development of an apathetic and disengaged citizenry.” One informant explained that “most young people are usually thinking about something totally different from the dictatorship, or even current politics. I think they are

thinking more about money, profit, buying things...and that is a consequence of [the neoliberal politics of] the dictatorship” (Interview 3). A third interviewee argued that “the people who truly want to change this so-called democracy have very little possibility of expressing themselves because the state heavily manipulates information to favor the economic and strategic interests of the country” over the social interests (Interview 8). Many of the Chileans I talked to explained that during the 1980s, many Chileans had withdrawn from politics out of fear or because it only seemed to divide people. It was just now, some believed, that the new generation was showing that Chile had distanced itself enough from the dictatorship era to become politically active once again.

Regarding the movement in particular, some were hopeful but a few were not. “The student movement started with a small group of people who said ‘we can’t go on like this,’ and then it grew and grew, and now all of Chile is agitating for changes,” one of my informants explained (Interview 9). One said, “Not that many people vote in Chile, and I think the youth is the least-participatory group. Today a lot of people do something that was unheard of in 1976 – they declare themselves apolitical. And I don’t plan on voting until I feel like it will help, because...it’s paradoxical...we are free to express ourselves and free to vote, but in the end we really don’t have the tools to change things. Just look at the student movement. It was the biggest movement since Pinochet’s time and it hasn’t really changed anything yet” (Interview 2). Others who were directly involved in the movement expressed a more hopeful opinion that it was strong enough to finally lead to real changes in legislation. They believed that the movement had not, in fact died completely, but that it was “in process” and would “return with more strength” in the near future (Interview 5).

Whether or not they were hopeful that politics in Chile would really change because of the student movement, all of the opinions expressed so far have been generally supportive of the movement's goals. However, this was not the case with every person I interviewed. Two of my more conservative informants, both of whom came from families that prospered during the dictatorship, stated that they were not in favor of free education because "there simply can't be equality for everyone. He who works and tries harder will always (and rightly so) receive more than he who doesn't" (Interview 9). One argued that "the country can't just give away everything for free" because it leads to freeloaders. In the particular case of education and the student movement, they believed a state-funded education system would lead to students taking complete advantage of the government money by being lazier than they already were. They also compared private and public schools and universities (the public universities do have some scholarships and financial aid), arguing that the private schools "demand a lot from their students, [who] meet the expectations," whereas in the public schools, "all the students do is complain about the work and...don't give any effort." One woman expressed anger when she said that "the poorer people expect handouts, the lower government is corrupt and doesn't use the money from the state in the best way, and in general I believe that everyone is taking advantage of the system." *Las cosas regaladas, nada valoran*, "free things aren't worth anything," she said to me. The general sense I got from my two conservative informants was that their opinion was common among the Chilean middle class conservatives who lived a comfortable life only because of their hard work and money-conscientiousness. The same informants argued that the Pinochet regime, which had among other things sought to root out communism and socialism in Chile, had done "some good things and some not-so-good things,"

but focused on the fact that it had “pulled Chile out of an economic hole and allowed it to become one of the most developed countries in Latin America” (Interview 9).

Collective Memory in the Student Movement

When I began to explore the topic of collective memory in the student movement, a few of my informants did not believe there was a connection between the two eras beyond the fact that the Pinochet constitution still determined education in modern Chile. About half of my interviewees, however, described the same symbolic and discursive links to the dictatorship that I had observed. One expressed his belief that “having people protest against issues that are concretely linked to the dictatorship era inevitably brings to the forefront feelings and memories and issues linked to the dictatorship. They are feeling the same repression (of course to a lesser degree), and they react in the same ways by protesting and using symbols of historical protests” (Interview 1). Another informant listed several symbols of collective memory: “You have the hammer and sickle showing up in the protests...that has been used for decades all over the world. Che Guevara – he’s an icon in Chile too. In Chile there’s a longing for the past that I think is almost sickening at times! You find the anarchist ‘A,’ another global icon that shows the desire to bring back the past. The students want this movement to have the same strength as the social movements from the 1970s,” he said (Interview 8). Although this particular informant was skeptical about the usefulness of old symbols of collective social memory being used in the modern student movement, most of my informants made it clear that the movement was using a *combination* of innovation and tradition to gain strength and popular support.

The *cacerolazo* was described as one of the most potent symbols of the sixties, seventies, and eighties in Chilean protests. “The cooking pot was defenseless, inoffensive, but a strong

symbol of the family – that which unites [us],” one man explained. “It was a symbol used by the woman who participated and protested in her own way...many times, the men would go off fighting in secret, and this was a form of protest unique to the woman of the seventies. It was – and still is – a strong way to make noise and declare discontent by taking an intimate symbol of the family and making it public, shared, common to everyone else who was angry. It was about making noise to be heard so that there would be change” (Interview 1). Another informant, a professor, explained that although the *cacerolazos* had a history that went even further back in time than the dictatorship, it now retains the anti-Pinochet, anti-neoliberal meaning it took on in the late 1970s, and is being used by students to “express discontent with the current government for its lack of interest in the student movement” (Interview 5). Another informant who personally took part in the *cacerolazos* said that “people want to relate what’s happening now with that time [the dictatorship]” (Interview 6). She continued, “It helps me to tie the two eras together by using symbols of the past because it makes me want to renew our efforts. It doesn’t make me afraid [to participate in the protests]. My generation is that of the ‘children of the dictatorship,’ and I’m not willing to let what happened during Pinochet’s time happen again. Making the connection to the past is important in order to learn from it, and the *cacerolazos* helped the student movement gather support!” Another informant suggested that the *cacerolazos* had been used because the Communist Party had called for it. “They were the same ones who did them in the eighties and Camila Vallejo [the de-facto leader of the student movement] did this time” (Interview 2).

The riot police were repeatedly identified as another important symbolic and physical connection between the dictatorship and the student movement. “Even the *carabineros*, the police force that controlled the movement, are symbols of reminiscence,” one man said

(Interview 1). “It continues to be a problem in Chile to talk of the armed forces, because they were the ones who initially carried out the coup. The special police force is very similar to the military in its uniforms and arms, and in their tactics of repression. They use lots of actions [like tanks, tear gas, and water cannons] who only effect is to bring the past to the present. The uniforms have a unique connotation, and those who choose to link themselves with the military are often not seen in the best way [by more liberal Chileans].”

My conservative host family, however, frequently expressed their dismay at the way the students were attacking police officers, but not the other way around. It seemed that people’s reactions toward violence committed against people depended a lot on their political ideology. Other people reacted strongly when I asked them about the repression of the student movement, saying that it had been overly violent, and that it had only encouraged the hooded *encapuchados*, the marginalized youth who vented their anger by causing violence on the student side of the marches, to increase their violence. One informant of mine drew a connection between the clashes at the marches when she described “Los Ochenta,” a new TV series depicting the 80s in Chile: “[The show] shows the protests during that time, and the water cannons and tear gas, and it’s *just* like now! It’s impressive how similar the images are!” (Interview 6) Indeed, the footage I had seen from *La batalla de Chile*, Guzmán’s famous documentary, showed strikingly similar scenes of protests to the ones I was seeing on the streets of Valparaíso.

Finally, I asked the people that I interviewed why they believed that seventies-era discourse – particularly the discourse that positioned “fascists” against “communists” – was still being used in Chile. In general, they believed that it is mostly an issue of misled reductionism and stereotyping that leads Chileans to continue to use such heated and divisive name-calling. In reality, the far-right Chileans are an insignificant presence in the country, and the Communist

Party is both small and no longer part of the political party registry (MercoPress 2010). One of my friends recounted an incident that seems to occur fairly frequently in Chile when she told me, “In school I once heard a girl say ‘Oh, all of those university students in the protests are all Reds [Communists].’ And some people have that perception of us! But they need to understand that there are lots of lefts within the general Chilean left. And other people talk about right wing people as if they were all fascists too, but they don’t stop to think that critics of the movement may not be against the movement’s goals, but its tactics.” She continued, explaining that “it’s easy to fall into the habit of abusing those terms and throwing them around, calling each other names just because the other person doesn’t agree with you. We have all begun to act in the way that the institution’s ideology tells us to” (Interview 6). This friend seemed to feel that Chilean politics, too, have a memory; they often pit the constituencies against one another by reverting to the discourse used by old political enemies in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. My right wing informants also expressed their unhappiness at people’s tendency to stereotype one another: “I’ve talked to people who asked me which ‘side’ I was on, and when I said ‘the right’ they immediately dismissed me and called me a *facho* [slang for fascist]. And then they get angry and accuse you of supporting the dictatorship. I didn’t even live through the dictatorship!” (Interview 9).

Thus, some Chileans argued that the terms were useless anachronisms that only served to cause tension. Others argued that they represented a real division in Chilean society that was still alive because “there are still more extreme left and right wing sectors who continue to link themselves, perhaps erroneously, to the ideas of the dictatorship era” (Interview 1).

Furthermore, some Chileans from the left argue that there are still many people who were involved in the military regime, and who are still in government today. One person said that

“unfortunately, in many areas of our society, there are people in power who [engineered] the coup. They occupy public office, and continue to be socially active, but in an arrogant way. There is a need, in Chile, for conscientiousness...some people still need to realize that to really advance as a country, there has to be more expression of regret for what happened” (Interview 1). In many of my interviews, I got a strong sense that as much as Chileans wanted to “move on,” there existed the feeling that many things were still – even twenty-two years after the end of the dictatorship – unresolved.

Collective Memory of Human Rights

Most Chileans seem to have accepted that the *desaparecidos* will never return, that the chances that their bodies will be found at this point are small, and that those who were tortured by the Pinochet regime must live with their physical and emotional scars as best they can (Interview 12). Without exception, every person said that the human rights issues were still relevant in a cultural sense, but that they were only given importance in public spheres by certain groups of people – especially those who had been most personally affected. One of my informants insisted that it “isn’t discussed enough,” that the formal, public discussions that *are* held are sporadic and disconnected from one another, and that “the official media doesn’t touch the topic” (Interview 3). This person agreed that the memorial in the cemetery was an example of effort on the part of the state to move the country toward reconciliation, but said that it was not enough. They expected more public, state-sponsored recognition of “the truth” of the dictatorship’s crimes against humanity, and believed it was absolutely necessary to teach students in schools about the human rights abuses and the *desaparecidos*. Many Chileans, like this informant, are still unable or unwilling to reach even the point of grave acceptance of these issues, and continue to feel pain over the human rights violations committed and hidden by the

Pinochet regime, and concern that there has not been enough done on the part of post-Pinochet administrations to heal the country. Many believe that legal justice for the families of the missing, in the form of trials for those who perpetrated the crimes, is the most important step that must be taken for true reconciliation to begin.

A common and cautious sentiment which perfectly captured the uncertainty that many Chileans feel over the issue of the disappeared, was expressed by one of my informants when he said that “there is a torn feeling about wanting to continue creating a better Chile, but also having the feeling that it isn’t fair that there has been so little justice for the families who lost people” (Interview 1). Part of the problem seemed to be that certain sectors of public life, elementary education being the most important, have traditionally excluded discussion or acknowledgement of the dictatorship’s crimes. “In schools,” one informant said, “what you’re taught about the dictatorship depends a lot on the beliefs and ideology of your teacher. I have a cousin who received a bad grade on a quiz once, only because when the students were told to write down a list of Chile’s presidents in chronological order, she left out Pinochet because he was never elected as president” (Interview 6). Another informant said that “the dictatorship continues to be a taboo topic in schools. In history, they often teach about Chilean politics up to 1970 [when Allende became president], and then pick up again somewhere in the middle of the Pinochet regime, focusing on globalization. They don’t even teach about things that have clearly been proven, like the human rights violations. I really think that the schools are still governed by the protocol that the dictatorship left in place, which included not teaching the entire truth” (Interview 4).

When more left wing teachers *did* teach their students about the dictatorship’s human rights violations, various informants said, they would only tell a select group of students that

they trusted, though this occurred rarely (Interview 4). What tended to happen, in the schooling experiences of my younger informants, was that teachers would speak neutrally of the coup as a “military uprising,” and of the dictatorship as a “military regime,” in an attempt to “seem more objective and not ‘contaminate’ or politically influence [students’] thinking too much (Interview 4, 2). Another informant explained that “in school, [students] were taught about the dictatorship, but not *really* taught about it. They made it seem like a consensual process...and it was hard to learn the truth because a lot of families avoided the topic” (Interview 3). Finally, one of my informants who was about eight years older than the college-aged students I interviewed said that most classes in Chilean schools “explain the dictatorship period as just one of many other governments that Chile has had,” and that it is “generally only at the university level that students have finally gathered enough information from various places to allow them to have informed discussions about the dictatorship” (Interview 1). Thus, not only do many Chileans believe that Chile’s education system must be altered, if not completely redone; they also believe that it is so heavily permeated by the dictatorship ideology that schools are under pressure to not teach the history of the dictatorship. This lack of education on the Pinochet regime and its crimes against humanity is one more of many ways in which many of my informants felt that the issue had not yet been resolved.

Conclusion: Ideas for the Future and the Importance of Collective Memory

The interview discourse of my sixteen informants revealed many reasons – from the education of children to the unresolved human rights cases – for the still-raw feeling with which the dictatorship is often treated in Chile. At the same time, several of my informants spoke

hopefully of consciously moving forward, while allowing for the construction of widespread understanding of the full impact of the dictatorship. Most of my informants recognized the presence of important, familiar symbols of collective memory in their modern society, and they agreed that these symbols helped to constitute a thread of continuity in their culture, rather than act as a hindrance to healing. Most of them also wanted neither to forget and move on, nor to dwell on the sad past, but to act as engaged, informed citizens of a maturing democracy.

The other two sites of memory that I present – the student movement and the political and social afterlives of human remains – also align with the collective memory held by those I interviewed. Undoubtedly, many of the people I interviewed have interacted with and absorbed collective memory of the Pinochet dictatorship from these two sites of memory, as well as from others such as music, art, and literature. Thus, all sites of the collective memory that I have explored are in some way mutually informative and interactive. What of the other kinds of collective memory in Chile? For example, what of the people whose collective memory of Pinochet is filled with pride and love for him, think of him as *el tata* (grandfather), and believe that he allowed the country to become the successful and vibrant place that it is today? That collective memory, too, is strong in Chile although it is sometimes accompanied by a hesitation to express itself in a national and global society where human rights have become doctrine. I do not doubt, though I was unable to witness it myself, that this version of collective memory often comes into contact with the collective memory that I found expressed more openly in Chile. Chile will never have one collective memory of the dictatorship, but rather multiple collective memories which are maintained and passed on.

While the Pinochet regime attempted to ensure that its crimes were forgotten and covered up, many Chileans maintained alternative histories through actively developing and sharing a

collective memory that escaped the imposed amnesia that surrounded them. Indeed, Frazier (2007:255) explains that discursive hegemonies and counter-hegemonies are often simultaneously constructed and tell different versions of the same story. Because of the maintenance of collective memory by individuals the healing of the country began many years ago, and now seems to be at a stage where hope, if not yet resolution, has replaced fear. The Pinochet dictatorship continues in many ways to be present, and many individual hurts and losses remain unresolved, deserving justice, and forever destined to remain open wounds.

In response to a growing demand for the construction of a public space that would thoroughly teach the history of the Allende presidency and the Pinochet regime, the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago was completed in 2010 as part of a project sponsored by the government and inaugurated by President Michelle Bachelet. I visited the museum twice in the span of two months, fascinated and impressed by the way in which it managed to cover the private, human, emotional side of Chile's history from 1970 to today, as well as the political, legal, and public side. With a new museum dedicated solely to remembering a part of Chile's history that has been excluded from public arenas ranging from schools to national museums to the media, many Chileans no doubt felt what a friend of mine expressed when she said, "I think that kind of space is extremely good and healthy. The purpose of this kind of museum is to show another story...not an impartial one, maybe, but one told from a political stance that tells things as they really were."

This process of opening dialogue has been informed both by collective memory and by innovation. It was also perfectly demonstrated by the 2011 student movement. Sites of memory such as Allende and Jara's tombs, or the memorial for the *desaparecidos* in the cemetery, maintain collective memory in a different way, and encourage reflection on the past in ways that

might not have occurred with the student movement. The interviews, my final example of one reservoir of collective memory, provide yet another source of material that helps position the individual within their social setting. All three *lieux de mémoire* are distinct yet related. They are mutually enriching precisely because they present different reflections on collective memory in Chile, yet the various parts of each site of memory overlap and interact with one another.

I witnessed only a short period of time in Chile in which the new generation of left wing, politically-active students, the “children of the dictatorship,” showed that they are sufficiently removed from that period to be able to lead the country toward much needed changes. At the same time, some Chileans who lived through the dictatorship are passing on their knowledge of that time and encouraging the students to consider it and learn from it. The vibrant collective memory that I saw binding modern day Chile to the Chile of Allende and Pinochet’s time led me to feel the tangible weight of the time it takes for a people’s memories and emotions regarding a significant moment in its history to fade. Chile’s old political divisions remain, but renewal is also present and strong in those who are able to understand the equal importance of their country’s past, present, and future.

Appendix

While I cannot print the names of my informants for privacy reasons, I provide a short list of the interview numbers as cited in the paper, the sex and estimated age of the informant, their political tendency if known, and the date of the interview.

1. (Interview 1) Male, 29 years old. Left wing. Interviewed on 12/28/11
2. (Interview 2) Male, 24 years old. Left wing. Interviewed on 1/3/12
3. (Interview 3, etc.) Male, 25 years old. Marxist. Interviewed on 1/4/12
4. Male and Female, ages 22 and 23. Left wing. Interviewed on 1/6/12
5. Male, about 45 years old. Left wing. Interviewed 1/2/12
6. Female, 21 years old. Far left. Interviewed 12/29/11
7. Female, about 50 years old. Left wing. Interviewed 1/4/12
8. Male, about 55 years old. Far left. Interviewed 1/6/12
9. Female and male, about 40 years and 18 years. Interviewed 1/4/12
10. Male, about 40 years old. Political beliefs unknown. Interviewed 1/5/12
11. Female, about 75 years old. Far left. Interviewed April 2011.
12. Male, about 65 years old. Far left. Interviewed June 2011.
13. Two other interviews were conducted and are not used in my thesis paper, but provided general insight into the topics I was researching. They were:
 - a. Male, age 70. Political ideology unknown. Interviewed 1/3/12
 - b. Male, age 24. Moderate. Interviewed 1/1/12

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