

Introduction to the Trilogy



The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile

This trilogy, *The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile*, studies how Chileans have struggled to define the meaning of a collective trauma: the military action of 11 September 1973, when a junta composed of Augusto Pinochet and three other generals toppled the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende, and the massive political violence unleashed against perceived enemies and critics of the new regime.

The time frame under analysis corresponds to Pinochet's period as a major figure in public life—from 1973, when he stepped into rule as the army's commanding general in the new military junta, to 2001, when a Chilean court ruling on his health released him from jeopardy in criminal proceedings but completed his marginalization from public life. Many of the tensions and dilemmas analyzed for the 1990–2001 postdictatorship period, however, continued to shape national life and power after 2001. In this sense, “Pinochet's Chile” and its attendant memory struggles have remained a strong legacy, even as the person of Pinochet has receded.

The crisis of 1973 and the violence of the new order generated a contentious memory question in Chilean life. The memory question proved central to the remaking of Chilean politics and culture, first under the military regime that ruled until 1990, and subsequently under a democracy shadowed by legacies of dictatorship and a still-powerful military. As a result, the study of memory cannot be disentangled from an account of wider political, economic, and cultural contexts. Indeed, the making of memory offers a useful new lens on the general course of Chilean history in the last quarter of the twentieth century. To my knowledge, although excellent studies have established a reliable chronicle of basic political and economic events (some of them related to collective memory themes) under the rule of Pinochet, there still does not exist an account that systematically traces the long process of making and disputing memory by distinct social actors within a

deeply divided society, across the periods of dictatorship and democratic transition.

The memory question is not only a major subject in its own right; its history opens up the underexplored “hearts and minds” aspect of the dictatorship experience. We often see the history and legacy of recent dictatorships in South America, especially Chile, in terms of several now-obvious and well-analyzed aspects: the facts of brute force and repression, and the attending spread of fear; the imposition of neoliberal economic policy, and the corresponding dismantling of statist approaches to social welfare and economic development; the rise of a depoliticized technocratic culture, within and beyond the state, and its consequences for social movements and political activism; and the political pacts and continuing power of militaries that conditioned transitions and the quality of democracies in South America in the 1980s and 1990s. These are crucial themes (and many were not at first obvious). A superb social science literature has emerged over the years to analyze them—a key early wave on “bureaucratic authoritarianism” led by Guillermo O’Donnell among others, followed by more recent waves on transitions and democratization. This literature has also illuminated relationships between modernity, technocracy, and state terror—that is, South America’s version of a central disturbing issue of twentieth-century world history, posed forcefully by reflections on the Holocaust, and reinforced by regimes of terror and mass atrocity that arose in various world regions after World War II.¹

The history of “memory” enables us to see an additional aspect of Chilean life that is subtle yet central: the making and unmaking of political and cultural legitimacy, notwithstanding violent rule by terror. In the struggle for hearts and minds in Chile, the memory question became strategic—politically, morally, existentially—both during and after dictatorship. In this way “memory,” which by the 1980s crystallized as a key cultural idea, code word, and battleground, casts fresh light on the entire era of dictatorship and constrained democracy from the 1970s through the 1990s. Its study complements the fine scholarly analyses that have given more attention to the facts of force and imposition than to the making of subjectivity and legitimacy within an era of force. Indeed, the lens of memory struggle invites us to move beyond rigid conceptual dichotomy between a top-down perspective oriented to elite engineering, and a bottom-up perspective that sees its obverse: suppression, punctuated by outbursts of protest. In this scheme, the moments of protest render visible the frustration, desperation,

organizing, and resilience that often have an underground or marginalized aspect in conditions of repressive dictatorship or constrained democracy.

Tracing the history of memory struggles invites us to consider not only the genuine gap and tensions between top-down and bottom-up perspectives but also more subtle interactive dynamics within a history of violence and repression. We see efforts of persuasion from above to shore up or expand a social base from below, not simply to solidify support and concentrate power from above; grassroots efforts to seek influence among, split off, or pressure the elites of state, church, and political parties, not simply to organize networks, influence, and protest among subaltern groups and underdogs; specific collaborations in media, human rights, cultural, or political projects that yield both tension and synergy among actors in distinct “locations” in the social hierarchy, from respectable or powerful niches in state, church, and professional institutions, to precarious or stigmatized standing as street activists, victim-survivors, the poor and unemployed, and alleged subversives. Memory projects—to record and define the reality of the Allende era and its culminating crisis of 1973, to record and define the reality of military rule and its human rights drama—ended up becoming central to the logic by which people sought and won legitimacy in a politically divided and socially heterogeneous society that experienced a great turn and trauma.²

The repression in Pinochet’s Chile was large in scale and layered in its implementation. In a country of only 10 million people in 1973, individually proved cases of death or disappearance by state agents (or persons in their hire) amount to about 3,000; torture victims run in the dozens of thousands; documented political arrests exceed 82,000; the exile flow amounts to about 200,000. These are lower-end figures, suitable for a rock-bottom baseline. Even using a conservative methodology, a reasonable estimated toll for deaths and disappearances by state agents is 3,500–4,500, for political detentions 150,000–200,000. Some credible torture estimates surpass the 100,000 threshold, some credible exile estimates reach 400,000.³

The experience of a state turning violently against a portion of its own citizenry is always dramatic. In a society of Chile’s size, these figures translate into pervasiveness. A majority of families, including supporters and sympathizers of the military regime, had a relative, a friend, or an acquaintance touched by one or another form of repression. Just as important, from political and cultural points of view, Pinochet’s Chile pioneered a new tech-

nique of repression in the Latin American context: systematic “disappearance” of people. After the point of abduction, people vanished in a cloud of secrecy, denial, and misinformation by the state. Also important was cultural shock. Many Chileans believed such violence by the state—beyond margins set by legal procedure and human decency—to be an impossibility. Fundamentally, their society was too civilized, too law abiding, too democratic. In 1973, many victims voluntarily turned themselves in when they appeared on arrest lists.⁴

The Chilean story of memory struggle over the meanings and truths of a violent collective shock is part of a larger story of “dirty war” dictatorships in South America. During the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of the Cold War, ideas of social justice and revolution sparked significant sympathy and social mobilization. Urban shantytowns were populated by poor laborers, street sellers, and migrants in search of a better life. Many rural regions evinced systems of land tenure, technology, and social abuse that seemed anachronistic as well as violent and unjust. Educated youths and progressive middle-class sectors saw in the young Cuban revolution either an inspiring example or a wake-up call that argued for deep reforms. Presidents of influential countries such as Brazil and Chile announced agrarian reform—an idea whose political time had finally arrived. On the fringes of established politics, some middle-class youths began to form guerrilla groups, hoping to produce a revolution through sheer audacity.

Not surprisingly, proponents of deep change—whether they considered themselves “reformers” or “revolutionaries”—ran up against entrenched opposition, fear, and polarization. The obvious antagonists included the socially privileged under the status quo, that is, wealthy families and social circles under fire in the new age of reform, middle-class sectors who either identified with conservative social values or were frightened by possible upheaval, and notable landowning families and their local intermediaries in rural regions facing agrarian reform. There were unexpected antagonists, too, including persons of modest means and backgrounds. Some poor and lower middle-class residents of urban shantytowns, for example, proved nervous and interested in order as they saw polarization unfold, were dubious about the viability of grand reforms, or had aligned themselves on one side or another of the political squabbles among competing reformers and revolutionaries.⁵

Most important for the political and cultural future, however, the antago-

nists included militaries whose doctrines of national security, consistent with the ideology of the Cold War, came to define the internal enemy as the fundamental enemy of the nation. In this line of thinking, the whole way of understanding politics that had arisen in Latin America was a cancerous evil. The problem went beyond that of achieving transitory relief by toppling a government if it went too far in threatening the military forces' institutional cohesion or interests, or if it went too far in upsetting the status quo, mobilizing the downtrodden, tolerating self-styled revolutionaries or guerrillas, or sparking economic crisis or social disorder. The "political class" of elites who worked the body politic had become addicted to demagoguery, and civil society included too many people addicted to the idea of organizing politically to end injustice. The result was fertile ground for the spread of Marxism and subversion that would destroy society from within.

As military regimes displaced civilian ones, they defined a mission more ambitious than transitory relief from an untenable administration. They would create a new order. The new military regimes would conduct a "dirty war" to root out subversives and their sympathizers once and for all, to frighten and depoliticize society at large, to lay the foundation for a technocratic public life. To a greater or lesser degree, such regimes spread over much of South America—Brazil in 1964 (with notable "hardening" in 1968), Bolivia in 1971, Chile and Uruguay in 1973, and Argentina in 1976. Paraguay, ruled by General Alfredo Stroessner since 1954, followed a distinct political dynamic but aligned itself with the transnational aspect of the new scheme—"Operation Condor," a program of secret police cooperation across South American borders. To a greater or lesser degree, all these regimes also generated contentious struggles over "memory"—truth, justice, meaning.⁶

The Chilean version of struggles over collective memory is worth telling in its own right. It is a dramatic story, filled with heroism and disappointment on matters of life and death. It is a story of moral consciousness, as human beings attempted to understand and to convince compatriots of the meaning of a great and unfinished trauma and its ethical and political implications. It is a story that lends itself to serious historical research, because it has unfolded over a long stretch of time, because survivors and witnesses are still alive, and because it generated substantial and diverse documentary trails. Indeed, this trilogy draws on three streams of sources: written documents—archival, published, and, more recently, electronic—that constitute the traditional heart of historical research; audio and visual

traces of the past, in television and video archives, photojournalism, radio transcripts, and sound recordings; and oral history, including formal semi-structured interviews, less formal interviews and exchanges, and field notes from participant-observation experiences and focus groups. The “Essay on Sources” offers a more technical guide to these sources, as well as a reflection on oral history method and debates.

The Chilean version of the memory question is also worth telling because of its international significance. For better or worse, the long and narrow strip of western South America we call Chile has constituted an influential symbol in world culture in the last half century. As the model “Alliance for Progress” country of the 1960s, it constituted the Kennedy and Johnson administrations’ best example of a Latin American society that could stop “another Cuba” through democratic social reforms assisted by the United States. When Salvador Allende was elected president in 1970, his project—an electoral road to socialism and justice in a Third World society—exerted almost irresistible symbolism. The blending of a Western-style electoral political culture with socialist idealism and economic policies had obvious resonance in Western Europe and its labor-oriented parties, and it provoked extreme hostility from the Nixon administration. The David-versus-Goliath aspect of relations between Chile and the United States proved compelling across the conventional fault lines of international politics. Allende’s Chile drew sympathetic attention not only among radicals, social democrats, and solidarity-minded activists in the West but also in the Soviet bloc countries and in the “Non-aligned Movement” then influential in the Third World and the United Nations. Chile, a small country determined to achieve social justice by democratic means, against odds set by a monstrous power spreading death and destruction in Vietnam, stood as the beleaguered yet proud symbol of a wider yearning.

After 1973, Chile continued to occupy a large symbolic place in world culture. For critics and admirers alike, the new regime became a kind of laboratory, an example of early neoliberalism in Latin America and its power to transform economic life. Most of all and most controversially, Pinochet and the Chile he created became icons of the “dirty war” dictatorships spreading over South America. For many, Pinochet was also the icon of U.S. government (or Nixon-Kissinger) complicity with evil in the name of anti-Communism.

In short, the symbolic power of Augusto Pinochet’s Chile crossed national borders. For the world human rights movement, as Kathryn Sikkink

has shown, Chile's 1973 crisis and violence constituted a turning point. It marked a "before" and "after" by galvanizing new memberships in human rights organizations such as Amnesty International; by sparking new organizations, such as Washington Office on Latin America; by spreading "human rights" as an international vocabulary and common sense—a public concern voiced in transnational networks from the United Nations, to churches and nongovernmental organizations including solidarity groups, to influential media and political leaders including the U.S. Congress. The symbolism of Pinochet and Chile's 1973 crisis proved more than a short-lived blip. For many (including baby boomers in Europe and the United States, who became politically and culturally influential in the 1990s) it had been a defining moment of moral growth and awareness. The symbolism was reactivated in October 1998, when London police detained Pinochet by request of a Spanish judge investigating crimes against humanity. It has been reinforced by the precedent set by his arrest for international human rights law.⁷

What has given memory of Chile's 1973 crisis and the violence it unleashed such compelling value? As a story in its own right, and as a symbol beyond its borders? The answers are many, and they include the value of work undertaken by many Chileans in exile—to mobilize international solidarity, to work professionally on themes of human rights, to build circuits of political dialogue, with Europeans and North Americans as well as among themselves, about the meaning of the Chilean experience. Among many valid reasons, however, one cuts to the core. Chile is Latin America's example of the "German problem." The Holocaust and the Nazi experience bequeathed to contemporary culture a profoundly troubling question. How does a country capable of amazing achievement in the realm of science or culture also turn out to harbor amazing capacity for barbarism? Can one reconcile—or better, disentangle—the Germany that produced and appreciated Beethoven and Wagner from the Germany that produced and appreciated Hitler and Goebbels?

In the case of Latin America, tragic historical patterns and international cultural prejudices may incline the foreign citizen-observer to view violent repression and the overthrow of elected civilian governments as in some way "expected"—part of Latin America's "normal" course of history. After all, Latin America has not been notable for the resilience of democratic institutions, nor for hesitation about using strong-arm methods of political rule.

In the case of Chile, however, both Chileans and outsiders believed in a myth of exceptionalism. Chile was, like other Latin American societies, afflicted by great social needs and great social conflicts. But it was also a land of political and cultural sophistication. Its poets (Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda) won Nobel Prizes. Its Marxist and non-Marxist leaders were veterans of a parliamentary tradition resonant with Western Europe. Its intellectuals worked out respected new approaches to international economics with the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America. Its soldiers understood not to intervene in the political arrangements of civilians. In Chile, social mobilization and turbulence could be reconciled with the rule of law and competitive elections. The political system was democratic and resilient. Over time it had incorporated once-marginalized social sectors—the urban middle class, workers, women, peasants, and the urban poor. Its leaders and polemicists knew how to retreat into the conserving world of gentleman politicians, where cultural refinement could be appreciated, a drink or a joke could be shared, the heat of verbal excess and battle pushed aside for another day. In this clublike atmosphere, personal confidences were reestablished to navigate the next round of conflict and negotiation. Compared to other Latin American countries, military intervention was rare and had not happened since the early 1930s. Chile’s “amazing achievement,” in the Latin American context, was precisely its resilient democratic constitutionalism.

Not only did the myth of democratic resilience finally break apart under the stresses of the 1960s and early 1970s. The country also descended into a world of brutality beyond the imaginable, at least in a Chilean urban or middle-class context. The assumed core of Chile, civilized and democratic and incapable of trampling law or basic human decency, would not resurface for a very long time. What happened after the military takeover of 11 September 1973 was more shocking than the takeover itself.⁸

Beyond the argument that a history of memory offers insight into the “hearts and minds” drama, still present and unfinished, of Pinochet’s Chile, a brief statement of how I specifically approach memory—what I am arguing against, what I am arguing for—may be useful. Two influential ideas hover over discussions of memory in Chile. The first invokes the dichotomy of memory against forgetting (*olvido*). In essence, memory struggles are struggles against oblivion. This dichotomy, of course, is pervasive in many studies of collective memory in many parts of the world and not without

reason. The dialectic of memory versus forgetting is an inescapable dynamic, perceived as such by social actors in the heat of their struggles. In regimes of secrecy and misinformation, the sense of fighting oblivion, especially in the human rights community, is powerful and legitimate. In recent years, influential criticism of the postdictatorship society of the 1990s has invoked the dichotomy of remembering against forgetting to characterize Chile as a culture of oblivion, marked by a tremendous compulsion to forget the past and the uncomfortable. A second influential idea, related to the first, is that of the Faustian bargain. In this idea, amnesia occurs because the middle classes and the wealthy, as beneficiaries of economic prosperity created by the military regime, developed the habit of denial or looking the other way on matters of state violence. They accept moral complacency as the price of economic comfort—the Faustian bargain that seals “forgetting.”⁹

The interpretation in this trilogy argues against these ideas. The dissent is partial; I do not wish to throw out the baby with the bathwater. At various points in the analysis, I too invoke the dialectic of memory versus forgetting and attend to the influence of economic well-being in political and cultural inclination to forget. The problem with the memory-against-forgetting dichotomy, and the related idea of a Faustian bargain, is not that they are “wrong” or “untrue” in the simple sense. It is that they are insufficient—profoundly incomplete and in some ways misleading.

What I am arguing *for* is study of contentious memory as a process of competing selective remembrances, ways of giving meaning to and drawing legitimacy from human experience. The memory-against-forgetting dichotomy is too narrow and restrictive; it tends to align one set of actors with memory and another with forgetting. In the approach I have taken, the social actors behind distinct frameworks are seeking to define that which is truthful and meaningful about a great collective trauma. They are necessarily selective as they give shape to memory, and they may all see themselves as struggling, at one point or another, against the oblivion propagated by their antagonists.

Historicizing memory in this way blurs an old conceptual distinction, given a new twist by the distinguished memory scholar Pierre Nora, between “history” as a profession or science purporting to preserve or reconstruct the unremembered or poorly remembered past; and “memory” as a subjective, often emotionally charged and flawed, awareness of a still-present past that emerges within a community environment of identity and

experience. Insofar as the historian must take up memory struggles and frameworks as a theme for investigation in its own right—as a set of relationships, conflicts, motivations, and ideas that *shaped* history—the distinction begins to break down. The point of oral history research becomes not only to establish the factual truth or falsehood of events in a memory story told by an informant but also to understand what social truths or processes led people to tell their stories the way they do, in recognizable patterns. When examining the history of violent “limit experiences,” moreover, the historian cannot escape the vexing problems of representation, interpretation, and “capacity to know” that attach to great atrocities. Conventional narrative strategies and analytical languages seem inadequate; professional history itself seems inadequate—one more “memory story” among others.¹⁰

The metaphor I find useful—to picture memory as competing selective remembrances to give meaning to, and find legitimacy within, a devastating community experience—is that of a giant, collectively built memory box. The memory chest is foundational to the community, not marginal; it sits in the living room, not in the attic. It contains several competing scripted albums, each of them works in progress that seek to define and give shape to a crucial turning point in life, much as a family album may script a wedding or a birth, an illness or a death, a crisis or a success. The box also contains “lore” and loose memories, that is, the stray photos and mini-albums that seem important to remember but do not necessarily fit easily in the larger scripts. The memory chest is a precious box to which people are drawn, to which they add or rearrange pictures and scripts, and about which they quarrel and even scuffle. This trilogy asks how Chileans built and struggled over the “memory box of Pinochet’s Chile,” understood as the holder of truths about a traumatic turning point in their collective lives.

When considering the consequences of such memory struggles for politics, culture, and democratization, I argue that Chile arrived at a culture of “memory impasse,” more complex than a culture of oblivion, by the mid-to-late 1990s. The idea of a culture of forgetting, facilitated by Faustian complacency, is useful up to a point, but it simplifies the Chilean path of memory struggles and distorts the cultural dynamics in play. The problem turned out to be more subtle and in some ways more horrifying. On the one hand, forgetting itself included a conscious component—political and cultural decisions to “close the memory box,” whether to save the political skin of those implicated by “dirty” memory, or in frustration because memory poli-

tics proved so intractable and debilitating. It is this conscious component of “remembering to forget” that is often invoked when human rights activists cite a famous phrase by Mario Benedetti, “oblivion is filled with memory.” On the other hand, memory of horror and rupture also proved so unforgettable or “obstinate,” and so important to the social actors and politics of partial redemocratization in the 1990s, that it could not really be buried in oblivion.¹¹

What emerged instead was impasse. Cultural belief by a majority in the truth of cruel human rupture and persecution under dictatorship, and in the moral urgency of justice, unfolded alongside political belief that Pinochet, the military, and their social base of supporters and sympathizers remained too strong for Chile to take logical “next steps” along the road of truth and justice. The result was not so much a culture of forgetting, as a culture that oscillated—as if caught in moral schizophrenia—between prudence and convulsion. To an extent, this was a “moving impasse.” Specific points of friction in the politics of truth, justice, and memory changed; the immobilizing balance of power did not simply remain frozen. But travel to logical “next steps” in memory work proved exceedingly slow and arduous, and the process often turned back, as in a circle, to a reencounter with impasse between majority desire and minority power.

The impasse has unraveled partially since 1998. It remains an open question—a possible focal point of future struggles—whether memory impasse will prove so enduring and debilitating that it will eventually yield, for new generations in the twenty-first century, a culture of oblivion.

A brief guide to organization may prove useful. I have designed the trilogy to function at two levels. On the one hand, the trio may be viewed as an integrated three-volume work. The books unfold in a sequence that builds a cumulative, multifaceted history of—and argument about—the Pinochet era, the memory struggles it unleashed, and its legacy for Chilean democracy since 1990. On the other hand, each volume stands on its own and has a distinct focus and purpose. Each has its own short introduction (which incorporates in schematic form any indispensable background from preceding volumes) and its own conclusions. Each reproduces, as a courtesy to readers of any one book who wish to understand its place within the larger project and its premises, this General Introduction and the Essay on Sources.

Book One, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998*, is a

short introductory volume written especially for general readers and students. It uses select human stories to present key themes and memory frameworks, historical background crossing the 1973 divide, and conceptual tools helpful for analyzing memory as a historical process. Its main purpose, however, is to put human faces on the major frameworks of memory—including those friendly to military rule—that came to be influential in Chile, while also providing a feel for memory lore and experiences silenced or marginalized by such frameworks. The “ethnographic present” of the book, the most “literary” and experimental of the three, is the profoundly divided Chile of 1996–97, when memory impasse seemed both powerful and insuperable. Pinochet’s 1998 London arrest, the partial unraveling of memory impasse and immunity from justice in 1998–2001—these would have seemed fantasies beyond the realm of the possible.

Subsequent volumes undertake the historical analysis proper of memory struggles as they unfolded in time. Book Two, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973–1988*, traces the memory drama under dictatorship. It shows how official and counterofficial memory frameworks emerged in the 1970s, and expressed not only raw power but also brave moral struggle—remarkable precisely because power was so concentrated—centered on the question of human rights. It proceeds to show how dissident memory, at first the realm of beleaguered “voices in the wilderness,” turned into mass experience and symbols that energized protest in the 1980s and set the stage for Pinochet’s defeat in a plebiscite to ratify his rule in October 1988.

Pinochet’s 1988 defeat did not lead to a one-sided redrawing of power but rather to a volatile transitional environment—tense blends of desire, initiative, constraint, and imposition. The most explosive fuel in this combustible mix was precisely the politics of memory, truth, and justice. Book Three, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989–2001*, explores the memory-related initiatives and retreats, the tensions and saber rattling, the impasse of power versus desire, that shaped the new democracy and its coming to terms with “Pinochet’s Chile.” For readers of the entire trilogy, Book Three completes the circle by bringing us back to the point of frustrating impasse, now traced as historical process, that served as an “ethnographic present” in Book One. But Book Three also spirals out from there—by taking us into the realm of accelerated and unexpected unravelings of impasse and taboo after 1998, and into historical conclu-

sions about memory and the times of radical evil that are, paradoxically, both hopeful and sobering.

An unusual feature of these books' organization of chapters requires comment. Each main chapter of a book is followed by an Afterword, intended as a complement that enriches, extends, or unsettles the analysis in the main chapter. At the extreme, an "unsettling" Afterword questions—draws limits on the validity of—a main chapter. Each book's numbering system links main chapters and corresponding Afterwords explicitly (the chapter sequence is *not* 1, 2, 3 . . . but rather 1, Afterword, 2, Afterword, 3, Afterword . . .). In an age of Internet reading, such lateral links may not seem unfamiliar. But my purpose here has little to do with the Internet or post-modern tastes. On the one hand, I have searched for an aesthetic—moving forward in the argument while taking some glances back—that seems well suited to the theme of memory. On the other hand, the Afterword method also draws out useful substantive points. At some stages, it sharpens awareness of contradiction and fissure by creating counterpoint—for example, between a lens focused on changes in the adult world of memory politics and culture, and one trained on the memory world of youth.

Above all, I am aware that in books about remembrance, which pervades human consciousness and belongs to everyone, something important is lost in the analytical selectivity that necessarily governs chapters about main national patterns or trends. The Afterwords allow the revealing offbeat story, rumor, or joke that circulates underground; the incident or bit of memory folklore that is pertinent yet poor of fit with a grander scheme; the provincial setting overwhelmed by a national story centered in Santiago, to step to the fore and influence overall texture and interpretation more forcefully. They are a way of saying that in cultures of repression and impasse, it is the apparently marginal or insignificant that sometimes captures the deeper meaning of a shocking experience.

A history of memory struggles is a quest, always exploratory and unfinished, to understand the subjectivity of a society over time. At bottom, this trilogy is a quest to find *Chile profundo*—or better, the various Chiles profundos—that experienced a searing and violent upheaval. Sometimes we find "deep Chile" in a chapter about the nation's main story. Sometimes, Chile profundo exists at the edges of the main story.