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Families in Transition: a Changing Institution in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay

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**FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: A CHANGING
INSTITUTION IN ARGENTINA, CHILE AND
URUGUAY**

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Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies**

Abstract

Since the 1960s, the institution of the family has been changing in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Female labour force has increased, birth rates have dropped, divorce rates have risen and public acceptance of single parenthood and non-heterosexual lifestyles has become more prevalent. This thesis aims to examine these changes in the context of the 'second demographic transition' and to show how these rapid social and legal changes have been facilitated by the use of the family as a symbol during the dictatorial period, both for and against the regimes. The use of these symbols by the opposing forces of regime and resistance created a dialogue in which understandings of what it meant to be a father, a mother or a child were problematised, challenged, and transformed – and as these countries returned to democracy, the institution of the family also began to be democratised, with existing roles taking on new significance and new forms of family becoming destigmatised. By combining analysis of the dictatorial and transition periods with an examination of cultural representations of the family since the turn of the millennium, I will provide an overview of how this institution was understood, how these understandings were affected by the dictatorships and the resistance to them, and how the institution is understood in the Southern Cone today. I will also compare the situation in these three countries, explaining how and why the institution of the family has been understood differently and has changed differently across the different societies. This thesis will demonstrate how the once monolithic image of the family has been replaced by the concept of a diverse range of families, with different formations and different roles to suit varied lifestyles in an increasingly individualistic world.

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Introduction

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of great political unrest in the Southern Cone of South America. The period was characterised by state violence, and all three of the countries that I am studying experienced periods of dictatorship: Uruguay from 1973 to 1985, Chile from 1973 to 1990, and Argentina from 1976 to 1983. For me, the institution of the family is the defining symbol of this dictatorial period. The dictatorships used the family as a justification for their actions, saying that they were defending the good, Christian families of their nations; and as a symbol for their regimes, with the military leaders taking the role of the father figure and transforming their citizens into children, who were to be protected by someone who knew best, to be punished if they were recalcitrant¹. The family was a natural choice of symbol for the regimes: it is an instantly recognisable sign which is used 'routinely, normally without any need for reflection or self-awareness', and which is often seen as 'exemplifying the relationships of members of the nation in miniature' as 'society's smallest unit'². And yet these reasons also made the family the perfect symbol of the resistance to dictatorship: relatives of the detained, tortured and disappeared called into question the dictatorships' declared wish to protect the family by bringing into the public eye the devastating effects of state violence on real, flesh-and-blood

¹ Jo Fisher, *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance and Politics in South America* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1993), p. 109; Judith Filc, *Entre el parentesco y la política* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1997), pp. 47-48.

² Graham Allan and Graham Crow, *Families, Households and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1; Paul Gilbert, 'Family Values and the Nation-State', in *Changing Family Values*, ed. by Gill Jagger and Caroline Wright, (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 136-49 (p. 136); Salvador Minuchin, *Families and Family Therapy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1974), p. 47.

families³. Mothers, left out of the Father-Child equation of official discourse, took an unprecedented step into the public sphere to claim their own space as the true defenders of the family⁴. As democracy returned to these countries, it was the voices of the blood relations of those who suffered that were considered the most legitimate⁵. And even as, in recent years, the notion of who may be considered a victim of the dictatorships and who has a right to speak out has completely transformed, the narrative of the family has remained steadfast⁶. Anyone who stands in solidarity with the disappeared is now an honorary relative: then-President of Argentina Néstor Kirchner stated in 2003 that ‘we are the sons and daughters of the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo’⁷.

But what kind of family is being invoked by these various, often-conflicting discourses? A simple answer would be that they are invoking the nuclear family, sometimes known as the ‘traditional’ family: ‘a unit consisting of a husband and wife, and their children’; a family which often carries the implicit notion that there is a division of labour along gender lines, with ‘women’s mothering and men’s breadwinning’ being their principal tasks⁸. This form of family has traditionally been thought to be ‘basically the same everywhere’,

³ Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, ‘*Militant Motherhood Revisited: Women’s Participation and Political Power in Argentina and Chile*’, *History Compass* vol. 5, no. 3 (2007), pp. 975-94 (p. 981).

⁴ Beatriz Schmukler, ‘Introduction’ in *Madres y democratización de la familia en la Argentina contemporánea*, ed. by Beatriz Schmukler and Graciela Di Marco (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1997) pp. 17-26 (p. 26); Gwynn Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile: Familial Ideals, Citizenship, and Political Struggle, 1970-1990* (Pennsylvania: UP, 2011), p. 18.

⁵ Gabriel Bucheli, Valentina Curto and Vanesa Sanguinetti, *Vivos los llevaron: Historia de la lucha de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (1976-2005)*, coord. by Carlos Demasi and Jaime Yaffé, (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2005), p. 18.

⁶ Cecilia Sosa, *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina’s Dictatorship: The Performances of Blood* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2014), p. 18; p. 26.

⁷ Sosa, p. 18.

⁸ Faith Robertson Elliot, *The Family: Change or Continuity?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), p. 4; p. 1.

forming 'almost naturally and universally out of the conditions of human reproduction', with gender roles being 'instinctive and unlearned'⁹. This traditional concept of the family is one which 'goes beyond political allegiances of left or right': it is a symbol system that 'everyone knows', with its many different kinship forms being instantly 'recognised [...] in the local community and the wider society in which they live'¹⁰.

Certainly this was the concept of the family that the dictatorships believed that they were defending, and often it was the form of family invoked by the opposition as well: mothers took to the streets to defend their children because children were considered to be the mothers' responsibility, and because if their husbands were arrested the family could have been left without a source of income¹¹. Yet even as both the dictatorships and their opposition paid lip-service to the nuclear family, they were creating very different forms of family¹². The violence of the dictatorships led to the fracture of many nuclear families, with one or both parents imprisoned or disappeared; with grandparents, aunts or uncles raising the children; even, in some cases, with children being separated from their biological parents and raised by families loyal to the regime¹³. The

⁹ Robertson Elliot, p. 1; p. 15.

¹⁰ Gill Jagger and Caroline Wright, 'Changing Family Values', in *Changing Family Values*, ed. by Gill Jagger and Caroline Wright, (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 1-16 (p. 5); Allan and Crow, p. 1; Ronald Fletcher, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 3.

¹¹ María Del Carmen Feijoo, 'The Challenge of Constructing Civilian Peace: Women and Democracy in Argentina', in *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Jane S. Jaquette (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) pp. 72-94 (p. 77); Eva Eisenstaedt, *Padres de Plaza de Mayo: Memorias de una lucha silenciosa* (Buenos Aires: Marea Editorial, 2014), p. 39.

¹² Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard, *Revolutionising Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1995), p. 189.

¹³ Gabriel Gatti, 'Imposing Identity against Social Catastrophes: The Strategies of (Re)Generation of Meaning of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Argentina)', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 2012) pp. 352-65 (p. 360); Marcelo M.

dictatorships adulterated the very familial structures they attempted to 'defend'. The opposition, too, formed new and innovative relationships under the label of 'family', with members of relatives' associations across the Southern Cone describing how they feel as if their group is 'like a family' – creating families which are bound by experience, rather than genetic link – how their fellow members are 'brothers' and 'sisters', how, in the eyes of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, every disappeared person is the child of every mother¹⁴. And this collective motherhood is not exclusive to the relatives' associations: women in poor areas combatted the economic hardships of neoliberalism by moving their domestic tasks into the public arena, cooking for the neighbourhood and not just their own families¹⁵. During these turbulent years and the transition to democracy that followed them, the boundaries of what would be publicly acknowledged as a 'family' expanded widely; existing roles were redefined and reimagined, while the closed, 'private' institution became an incredibly important public reference point.

As these symbolic changes to the structure of the family proved that 'families are socially constructed rather than naturally or biologically given', that they are 'flexible, fluid and contingent', family forms were beginning to adapt and diversify in the societies of the Southern Cone¹⁶. Demographic change began in earnest under dictatorship, gradually undermining the official discourse of the nuclear family as new social norms began to take prominence. The regimes, with

Suárez-Orozco, 'The Treatment of Children in the "Dirty War": Ideology, State Terrorism, and the Abuse of Children in Argentina' in *Child Survival: Anthropological Perspectives on the Treatment and Maltreatment of Children*, ed. by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987) pp. 227-46 (p. 235).

¹⁴ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 44; Filc, p. 70; p. 27.

¹⁵ Fisher, p. 29.

¹⁶ Jagger and Wright, p. 3.

their narrative of tradition and patriarchal control, represented the past, calling upon a family form which was at that very moment changing; while the resistance also used the image of the nuclear family, we shall see throughout this thesis that they did so in new and innovative ways that better reflected social changes within the family structure. By adapting with the social changes, the groups aimed at opposing the dictatorships not only managed to remain relevant, but they may in fact have helped to influence social understandings of the changing institution of family.

It is important to state here that I am not proposing that demographic change has occurred because of the dictatorships and the resistance to them. The seeds of demographic change can be seen before the dictatorships, particularly in the case of Uruguay. What I am proposing is that this period, during which opposition to the dictatorships used the symbol of the family in new and revolutionary ways, has facilitated the acceptance of these changes in society, and helped these changes to take hold more quickly in the legislature of these countries. While the second demographic transition, which I shall explain in detail throughout the remainder of this chapter, took hold gradually in many European countries, the changes witnessed by the countries of the Southern Cone have been, in some cases, exceptionally fast¹⁷. In Chile, for example, the law allowing civil unions for same-sex couples came just a decade after the law for divorce: while Chile was one of the last few countries in the world to permit divorce, its stance on gay unions is progressive by global standards¹⁸. I am

¹⁷ Carlos Filgueira and Andrés Peri, *América Latina: los rostros de la pobreza y sus causas determinantes*, (Santiago de Chile: CELADE/UNFPA, 2004), p. 41.

¹⁸ Rocío Montes, 'Chile celebra las primeras uniones de parejas homosexuales', *El País*, 22 October 2015

proposing that the very public reimaginings of the family visible in the dictatorial and transition periods have helped legitimise the broader understandings of the family and expedited legislation that formalised these previously marginalised roles and family forms. Furthermore, cultural expressions in these countries have focused on these marginalised roles and helped to challenge the legitimacy of the patriarchal family as an all-encompassing image of family relationships.

In order to best understand how the family has changed during the periods of dictatorship and transition to democracy, we must first focus not on social understandings of family change but rather on the changes themselves. As such, I would like to present some demographic analysis which focuses on key areas of change in the familial institution. First, however, I would like to present a literature review which situates my work in its academic context.

Literature Review

My thesis examines how the institution of the family has changed in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay through a focus on three key fields: demographic change, resistance to dictatorship, and cultural expressions in these three countries.

Taken together, these three fields show a quantifiable picture of how much the family has changed; discuss how the family has been adopted as a political symbol and how this has affected understandings of the institution; and show how families are presented, questioned and challenged in cultural expressions.

In order to trace the demographic changes in this region, I have incorporated demographic data and the research of sociologists working on demographics in

<http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/10/22/actualidad/1445535590_295707.htm> [accessed 15 May 2016].

the Southern Cone. The majority of demographic research in this region focuses on one country in particular, and the research usually centres around the theory of the second demographic transition: a theory which, as I shall discuss in more detail later, lists a series of demographic changes which are often seen in developed, urbanised societies, such as a decreased birth rate, an increased instability of unions, and a longer life expectancy. Much of the demographic research in this region centres around this theory, whether it is to support or question this theory.

One key example is the work of Ximena Vera Véliz, whose work focuses on Chile, where she works in the *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas*. Her essay 'Hacia o en la segunda transición demográfica? Los cambios poblaciones de Chile desde un enfoque de género' (2012) critically examines the theory of the second demographic transition, analysing one by one the different factors involved in relation to the demographic changes occurring in Chile, such as the increasing life expectancy, the decreasing fertility rate and the increase in women in paid work, and discussing whether or not they support or challenge the theory. She discusses some criticisms of the theory (110), such as its vagueness and lack of mathematical basis. She also compares Chile's experience of demographic change with that of Western countries, discussing how in many ways Chile's situation is distinct because of Chile's gender inequalities, with Chilean women being less likely to work outside the home and much more likely to be doing the majority of domestic tasks (119-120). She does not, however, compare the situation in Chile to that of other countries in the Southern Cone.

Rodrigo A. Cerda's *Cambios demográficos: Desafíos y oportunidades de un nuevo escenario* also focuses in particular on the demographic changes affecting

women: namely, women's employment and education levels, the later ages at which women are having children, and the rate of contraceptive use. He compares women's experiences to those of previous decades, but also does a synchronic comparison to show that women with different economic resources and from different classes can have very different experiences to one another (9-10). He suggests that inequality between women of different classes is accentuated by the second demographic transition, meaning that women with a higher level of education and employment tend to have more access to contraceptives and are more likely to have fewer children in whom they can invest more time and resources, while women who come from poorer backgrounds are more likely to have low levels of education and employment, and less access to contraceptives, meaning that they are likely to have more children in whom they can invest less time, thus repeating the cycle (24). He also suggests that the ageing population will cause problems for new generations who have an increasing number of dependents to support (29).

Georgina Binstock's essay 'Continuity and Change: The Family in Argentina' (2008) examines how Argentina is experiencing demographic change. She takes a longer historical view, looking back to the 19th century and the Family Law of 1869, showing how women were designated as second-class citizens in the country's legislation, and how this influenced the way that family life continued in Argentina for the next century (155). She also mentions the influence of the Catholic Church on Argentina's values system, and how the largely European makeup of the country has meant that Argentina has mostly followed Western demographic patterns (151). And just as her work focuses solely on Argentina, the work of Uruguayan demographers Adela Pellegrino and

Wanda Cabella focuses almost entirely on Uruguay. Cabella's *El cambio familiar en Uruguay: una breve reseña de las tendencias recientes* (2007) gives a general picture of demographic change, systematically discussing the different changes related to the second demographic transition, showing how a decrease in marriage rates (8), an increase in divorce and in unmarried cohabitation (9), decreasing birth rates (10) and increasing life expectancy (11) have all contributed to creating a society in which only a third of households are nuclear families (11). She ties these changes to poverty, showing that demographic changes are much more pronounced among the economically privileged (12).

Their collaborative paper, *El envejecimiento de la población uruguaya y la transición estructural de las edades* (2010) takes a long view on demographic change, discussing the typical Uruguayan family from the end of the 19th century (3). The text predominantly compares the current Uruguayan demographic situation with earlier times, showing for example the sharp decrease in fertility rate of Uruguayan women from the start of the 20th century, falling from an average of six children per woman at the start of the century (5) to just two at the end (9), and cites mass immigration from Europe as being one of the key causes for demographic change (11). They show that this decrease in birth rate means that the age structure of Uruguayan society has been gradually transforming, with there being an increasing number of economically inactive older people and a decreasing number of children to replenish the work force, which means that a decreasing workforce will have to support an increasing number of dependents (13-18). They state that demographic change in Uruguay has been much more gradual than in other Latin American countries (23), although they do not compare Uruguay with other countries in any depth.

However, there are a few more comparative pieces. Miguel Villa and Daniela González's essay 'Dinámica demográfica de Chile y América Latina: una visión a vuelo de pájaro' (2004), mainly focuses on Chile, discussing the declining fertility rate (98-102) and the increasing life expectancy (105-110), but often compares the Chilean situation with that of other Latin American countries, particularly Argentina and Uruguay. The purpose of this comparison seems primarily to prove that Chile is not an atypical case in Latin America, and to show that in fact Chile has started the process of demographic change later than its Argentinian and Uruguayan neighbours (112). His conclusions, however, focus specifically on Chile and how the country must adapt in order to confront the new problems of an aging population (113).

The studies I have mentioned above show that Argentina, Chile and Uruguay have all been experiencing similar demographic changes, although there are differences in how these changes have manifested, as the studies above prove. However, this field is missing a fully comparative demographic piece, with no one particular focus, which can highlight and draw conclusions not only from the changes occurring in each individual country, but also from the differences between them. This thesis builds on the single-focus work by highlighting these differences, and explaining them in order to offer insight into the changing societies of these three countries and how the institution of the family has developed over time. Very little work has been done to show how family change ties to the broader historical events happening in these countries. Previous studies have described changes that are occurring – such as the increased female workforce due to the increased acceptability of mothers in the workplace – but rarely seek to explain such phenomena, such as *why* mothers are more accepted

in the workplace. I have conducted a demographic study which compares the countries' situations thoroughly and ties the changes they are experiencing with the social and historical moments in which these changes arise.

My work also examines resistance to dictatorship in these three countries, particularly resistance which is related to family and familial roles. Some areas of this topic, such as the relatives' associations, have been covered in detail. The *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* have been of particular scholarly interest. One key example of the literature surrounding the *Madres* is *Revolutionising Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* by Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard (1995), which not only tells the history of the organisation, but also examines the movement within its social context, analysing the tension between the revolutionary nature of their work and the traditionalism of their symbols. This is a question that is discussed in more detail by Diana Taylor, whose chapter 'Performing Gender: Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo' in *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality and Theatricality in Latin/o America*, edited by Taylor and Juan Villegas, (1994) discusses the theatricality of the *Madres'* symbols and public appearances. She examines the theatricality of the Argentinian *Junta* (277-283), and then shows how the *Madres* were able to site their protest within this context, both adopting and subverting the image of the *mater dolorosa* in order to achieve their aims (293-296). Rita Arditti's work on the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, particularly her book *Searching for Life: the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina* (1999), follows in much the same vein as Guzmán Bouvard's work, examining the history of the organisation and also its social context and impact. Another

Argentinian book, *Entre el parentesco y la política* by Judith Filc (1997), examines the use of family by both the relatives' associations and the Argentinian dictatorship itself, showing how the two ideologies' symbols intersect. She describes how the Argentinian *Junta* created an intricate public discourse which bound the domestic with the political, drawing parallels between the different sectors of Argentinian society and the different roles in a family, aiming to legitimise the regime (39). However, as she shows, the resistance to dictatorship soon adopted this dominant discourse for its own, very different aims: to legitimise the political action of the families of the disappeared (60).

In Chile, one major focus of the scholarship of resistance against dictatorship has been the work of the *arpilleristas*, who made patchwork scenes depicting the violence and terror of life under Pinochet. Marjorie Agosín has written several key texts on the subject of *arpilleras*, for example *Scraps of Life: Chilean Arpilleras* (1987) which is probably her best-known work. It focuses on the history of the *arpillera* movement, and shows its impact in spreading the word of the military's violence worldwide (83), as well as its financial impact on the families of the women involved. Jo Fisher is also very interested in the work that Chilean women did to counter the economic hardships of the regime: one chapter of her book *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance and Politics in South America* (1993) discusses the *ollas comunes*, community kitchens where Chilean women would work together to provide food for local people. Her book also looks at other resistance movements by women in other countries, including in Argentina and Uruguay. Meanwhile, Susan Franceschet's *Women and Politics in Chile* (2005) discusses Chilean women's political activism in general, discussing not only the *arpilleras* and the *ollas comunes* but also women's political activism

in less traditionally feminine ways, including mass protests, for example when 10,000 women protested at the Caupolicán theatre (71). What is particularly interesting about Franceschet's work is her discussion of women's activism in relation to feminism. While in Argentina and in Uruguay the relatives' associations eschewed the term, with some members actually stating that they are *not* feminists, in Chile the work of these women seems to have been much more closely understood as part of the female experience (68). Franceschet discusses the 'double militancy' of women who were simultaneously fighting against the dictatorship and against their subordinate position in society, and examines the ways in which the transition to democracy sought to assuage feminist demands without agreeing to radical legislative change (59). She shows that the transition, in its attempt to please a majority of people, once again sidelined feminist calls for reform, and that it is from this context that the celebrated image of the 'militant mother' came to be the defining symbol of female resistance under dictatorship (80).

In Uruguay, the book *Vivos los llevaron: Historia de la lucha de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (1976-2005)* by Gabriel Bucheli, Valentina Curto and Vanesa Sanguinetti tells the story of the three major Uruguayan relatives' associations and how they came together to form one unit. The book also discusses – in much more detail than the Chilean and Argentinian scholarship – the role that men have played in the work of the relatives' associations (28), and why the name *Madres* was used more for emotive reasons and to draw parallels between the Uruguayan and Argentinian movements than to accurately reflect the membership of the organisation (29-30). The story of

the movement traces its development from its humble beginnings to its increasing political weight in democracy.

The corpus of scholarly works has in the past focused for the most part on the resistance of women who are performing traditional duties in a revolutionary fashion. In recent years, however, there has also been an increasing scholarly interest in the activism and the attitudes of the post-dictatorship generation. One key text which has proven crucial in the understanding of the younger generation's attitudes is Susana Kaiser's *Postmemories of Terror* (2005). Using interviews conducted in the late 1990s, Kaiser has written extensively about the attitudes of younger people in Argentina towards their country's most recent dictatorship, investigating what young people know of that period from a range of different sources, including the school curriculum, teachers, their families, and the media. Kaiser discovered that the young people she interviewed – who came from a range of different backgrounds – often held opinions which questioned or even directly contradicted her own view of events: being second-hand witnesses, they were willing to accept information from a range of different sources and to form their own opinions, rather than simply repeating the opinions of those who had discussed the dictatorship with them (127-128). Kaiser was able to show that postmemory is not merely a carbon copy of earlier generations' memory, but that it can take on its own significance according to the social context in which the new generation are living (146). In a society which was still deeply divided on its militant past, younger people were exposed to voices which criticised both the violence of the government and that of the militants themselves, and their opinions often reflected this plurality of opinions (135-137).

Cecilia Sosa's *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship: The Performances of Blood* (2014) also examines the ways in which new generations understand and remember the events of the dictatorial period. She questions the ways in which the family is used as a symbol by the relatives' associations, showing how the symbol has been adapted in very non-traditional ways. She discusses the 'monopoly' that the relatives of the affected have on speaking about this time (18), and about how the members of the relatives' associations, which are founded upon the idea of biological relationships being key, have formed their own familial bonds with those who are *not* biologically related to them, but rather through their shared experiences of being relatives of the disappeared (24). She shows how the work of these associations has led the idea of family to be understood in a variety of different ways, and suggests that this non-traditional outlook has created a new space for LGBT voices to emerge in Argentina (26). In her conclusion she briefly ties the increasing acceptance of non-nuclear family forms to post-dictatorial activism (157). I expand upon this idea throughout my thesis, while also incorporating the influence of those who were activists during the dictatorships too: showing how the use of the family as a symbol of resistance questioned some of the more authoritarian aspects of the institution, and allowed for more freedom in the ways in which families were understood.

Ana Ros' *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production* (2012) also focuses on the younger generation and their ways of understanding the dictatorial periods. Her work is interesting because it mainly focuses on cultural production, aiming to catalogue the many, many different ways in which this era has been remembered

across a series of different formats, including film, novel, and *testimonio*. Her main focus is on the cultural production that has appeared since the turn of the millennium, as this incorporates the voices of the younger generation who did not directly witness these events. I too wish to focus on this period, but for slightly different reasons. I want to focus on texts that examine the family through the lens of change: texts that show the dictatorship period as it was, but with the awareness of what was to come. As I will discuss below, the development of social attitudes towards women means that although women may not have noticed their unequal treatment or the subtle and pervasive sexism that influenced their lives, they have become aware since, and the recent texts that deal with their role in society during the dictatorships are able to consciously tackle these themes. This is, I believe, the influence of the post-dictatorship generation: with the younger generation accepting and incorporating a greater number of opinions and voices into their own understanding of the period, new stories are able to emerge, ones that had been previously ignored or considered to not fit with the accepted narrative of events. One of those stories is that of the fathers of the disappeared, which is discussed in Eva Eisenstaedt's book *Padres de Plaza de Mayo: Memorias de una lucha silenciosa*, in which individual *Padres* give testimony as to their role in searching for their missing children: their work behind the scenes (30), their need to continue working to support their families (11), their difficulties in expressing their pain (29). This book gives crucial insights into the *Padres'* experience of this trauma, and ties this experience closely to social expectations of men and of fathers in particular as strong, distant and unaffectionate (16).

Cherie Zalaquett's essay 'Chilenas en armas' shows another rarely-seen facet of the dictatorships, examining the role that women played both in militant groups and the armed forces in Chile. She shows the gendered treatment of women in both of these organisations (548-549), and discusses how women's role in militant groups has been largely forgotten in democracy (548). Mauricio Cavallo Quintana's *Guerrilleras: la participación femenina en el MLN-T* is another recent account of the largely ignored role of women in militant organisations – in this instance, in Uruguay's *Tupamaros*. His book combines research with female militants' own testimony, revealing that while the *Tupamaros* were often treated differently due to their sex (88, 118), these women often did not have the awareness of gender politics that they now have, and they often did not feel that they were being discriminated against in any way (132).

Another recent trend in the field of dictatorship studies is to write biographies of militants, depicting their life before their militancy, explaining their motivations, and generally giving a human face to the name. Two particularly interesting examples of this are *Los padres de Mariana*, written by François Graña, and *Laura*, by María Eugenia Ludueña. In both instances, these militants have become posthumously well-known due to their relatives. The titular Mariana was a disappeared baby whose use on posters denouncing the regime made her one of the most easily-recognised victims of Uruguayan dictatorship. Many years later, after her identity was restored, she decided to go in search of answers as to who her parents had been. *Laura*, meanwhile, became well-known because her mother, Estela de Carlotto is president of the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*. Both biographies deal not only with the issue of humanising people who had been demonised by the dictatorships, but also with the question

of why they chose to have a child under such dangerous circumstances.

Testimony from those who knew these militants attempts to counter what the writers seem to feel is their readers' main preoccupation, showing the decision to have children as an emotional, innocent one, rather than one that was based on logic, and showing that the militants did experience moments of doubt or regret. I will examine this in more detail in my second chapter, which discusses female militancy and motherhood.

The final field of focus for my thesis is that of cultural expression in these three countries. There are certain texts which have become very well known in academic circles, with researchers often discussing them. A few examples of these are the novels *Los Topos* by Félix Bruzzone and *La casa de los conejos* by Laura Alcoba, while in film, *Los Rubios*, directed by Albertina Curri, and *No*, directed by Pablo Larraín, have both received critical attentions¹⁹. The nature of my thesis is to contribute to the debate by examining different kinds of texts, particularly ones that question or problematise commonly held beliefs about the

¹⁹ Some examples of recent scholarship on these pieces include:

Los topos: Alejandra Bernal, 'Alegorías subversivas de la memoria: una lectora comparativa de "En estado de memoria" de Tununa Mercado y "Los topos" de Félix Bruzzone', *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (October 2015), pp 13-27; Cecilia Sosa, 'Kinship, Loss and Political Heritage: *Los topos* and Kirchner's Death', *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship* (London: Tamesis, 2014), pp 129-50; *La casa de los conejos*: Karen Saban and Laura Alcoba, 'Un carrusel de recuerdos: conversación con la escritora argentina Laura Alcoba', *Iberoamericana*, Vol. 10, No. 39 (September 2010), pp 246-51; Swier, Patricia L., 'Rebellious Rabbits: Childhood Trauma and the Emergence of the Uncanny in two Southern Cone Texts', *Chasqui*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (May 2013), pp 166-80.

Los Rubios: Breckenridge, Janis, 'Performing Memory and Identity: Albertina Curri's "Los Rubios"', *Letras Femininas*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Winter 2008), pp 11-27; Miller Yozell, Erica, 'Re-mapping the Argentine Post-Dictatorship Narratives in Albertina Curri's "Los Rubios"', *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 39, No. 77 (January – June 2011), pp 45-63.

No: Polly J. Hodge, 'Maestros de la manipulación: Titiriteros de la memoria histórica en "No" de Pablo Larraín y "La niña de tus ojos" de Fernando Trueba', *Hispania*, Vol. 98, No. 3 (September 2015), pp 431-41; Alexis Howe, 'Yes, No, or Maybe? Transitions in Chilean Society in Pablo Larraín's "No"', *Hispania*, Vol. 98, No. 3 (September 2015), pp 421-30.

dictatorships and about the institution of the family. For example, *Something Fierce*, a memoir by Carmen Aguirre, a Chilean woman whose family were heavily involved in the resistance movement, is mostly written for a Western audience: it is written in English, and it explains terms and concepts which would be easily understood by Chilean audiences. However, the text's target audience aside, it is a fascinating piece which examines the relationship between a mother who is involved in active militancy and her children – it is for this reason that I have chosen to include this text in my thesis.

As we have seen in this literature review, certain related strands of scholarship have been studied in detail. Recent years have seen an abundance of texts which examine the demographic changes taking place in one of these countries, and there are also a few texts which are more comparative. What is lacking, and that this thesis aims to address, is a monographic piece which examines the demographic changes in all three of these countries in detail, giving explanations for the differences seen and tying these differences to the social and historical contexts of each of these three countries. This is one area which my thesis aims to cover: taking statistics from all three countries to give a detailed picture both of the diachronic changes in each country but also taking a synchronic view which compares the three countries. Furthermore, I discuss reasons for the changes, drawing explanations from the social and historical events taking place in these countries.

We have also seen that the relatives' associations have been the subject of much academic discussion, with many texts discussing their genesis, their symbolism and their history from dictatorship into democracy. However, this

academic interest has been at the neglect of other groups who do not fit the suffering mother paradigm. It has only been in the last few years that new voices have begun to emerge, offering different perspectives of family life under dictatorship. These voices have come from previously marginalised groups, such as the fathers of the disappeared, or the women who juggled motherhood with a militant lifestyle. I believe that these groups merit further discussion, and I believe it would be interesting to also discuss why they have previously been sidelined in academic discussion. I think that by examining these groups through the lens of motherhood and fatherhood theory, we may be able to gain some insight into why the *mater dolorosa* figure has been much more appealing – and why in recent years this figure’s domination of scholarly focus has slowly been eroding. I believe that the changes that we have witnessed in the institution of the family, which have made gender roles less prescriptive and allowed for a variety of different family forms, have also meant that other voices from the dictatorship period have been able to emerge. The same societal changes that lead us to question notions of, for example, feminine passivity, have allowed us to question the generalised notions of the dictatorships, such as the idea that men had little or no involvement in the work of the relatives’ associations: instead we see that the fathers of the disappeared often deliberately adopted a passive protective role to allow their wives to speak, but as this passive role was not in keeping with ideas of masculinity at the time, the importance of the role was often ignored. As we now start to see gender roles in a much more open way, so too are we able to see the nuances of family roles under dictatorship.

There has also been an increasing scholarly interest in the understandings and memories of the younger generations. As key figures from

the resistance to dictatorship begin to pass away, the question of how the events of the 1970s and 1980s will be remembered becomes more pressing. Some of the texts that discuss this, particularly Susana Kaiser's book, recognise that the younger generations' understandings may not always exactly align with those of the older generations; that they are able to draw their own conclusions using the broader range of evidence afforded to them by their temporal and personal distance from these events. I examine these generational differences further, drawing on postmemory theory to help me understand them, and to discuss how the younger generations' acceptance of a wider range of perspectives is tied to their acceptance of a wider range of family forms: in effect, they are accepting a new democratisation of voices and families.

I have shown both the gaps that I perceive in the scholarship that has been done to date, and the ways in which my thesis can fit into the fields which I have chosen to discuss. My thesis draws from several different types of scholarship, using demographic change as a lens through which to view social, historical and cultural phenomenon, and as a site where different fields fit together in one body of work, my thesis offers multidisciplinary connections that are necessary to understand the complex and adaptable topic of family.

The Second Demographic Transition

Since the turn of the millennium, sociologists from the Southern Cone have begun to tie demographic change in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay to the theory of the 'second demographic transition'. The second demographic transition is a theory outlined by European demographers Ron Lesthaeghe and Dirk van de Kaa in 1986, which suggested that Europe had begun a new stage of demographic

change²⁰. For millennia, pre-industrial societies maintained a stable population due to high death rates and high birth rates, but at the outset of the Industrial Revolution the situation began to change: death rates decreased thanks to an increase in the availability of food and due to scientific breakthroughs which revolutionised healthcare, hygiene and sanitation²¹. This brought about a period of sharp population increase: there were fewer deaths, but the birth rate was still high²². But industrialisation also brought with it urbanisation, an increase in the accessibility of education, and an improvement in the status and condition of women, which saw a decrease in the birth rate²³. The population began to stabilise.

Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa's model traces the changes that continue to occur after the population has begun to stabilise. The second demographic transition is characterised by the following phenomena:

- Substantial decline in period fertility, partly resulting from postponement of births, so that (estimated) cohort fertility of currently reproducing women is expected to reach a maximum value well below replacement
- Substantial decline in the total first marriage rate associated with an increase in mean age at first marriage

²⁰ Ximena Vera Véliz, '¿Hacia o en la segunda transición demográfica? Los cambios poblacionales de Chile desde un enfoque de género', *Revista Anales*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July 2012) pp. 107-25 (p. 110).

²¹ Rodrigo A. Cerda, *Cambios demográficos: desafíos y oportunidades de un nuevo escenario* <http://www.ine.cl/canales/sala_prensa/noticias/2007/agosto/pdf/RCERDA.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2014], pp. 4-5.

²² Cerda, p. 5.

²³ Rukmalie Jayakody, Arland Thornton and William G. Axinn, "Perspectives on International Family Change", *International Family Change: Ideational Perspectives*, ed. by Rukmalie Jayakody, Arland Thornton and William Axinn (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2008), pp. 1-18 (p. 4).

- Strong increase in divorce (where allowed) and in the dissolution of unions
- Strong increase in cohabitation, even in countries where this was not a traditional practice
- Strong increase in the proportion of extra-marital births
- Catalytic shift in contraceptive behaviour with modern means replacing traditional methods²⁴.

In other words, this transition is marked by a decrease in birth rate, an increase in the instability of unions, and an increase in the age at which marriage and childbirth take place.

This model was, as I have stated previously, one that was created to outline the demographic changes occurring in Europe. Yet in recent years sociologists from the Southern Cone have begun to notice similar phenomena occurring in their own countries. It is worth noting that the concept itself has been criticised by some as being too vague, or a series of generalisations rather than a scientific theory, while others see their countries fitting the model perfectly²⁵.

²⁴ Dirk J. Van de Kaa, *The Idea of a Second Demographic Transition in Industrialized Countries*, <http://www.ipss.go.jp/webj-ad/webjournal.files/population/2003_4/kaa.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2014].

²⁵ Véliz, p. 110; Filgueira and Peri, p. 39; Wanda Cabella and Adela Pellegrino, *El envejecimiento de la población uruguaya y la transición estructural de las edades* <http://www.fcs.edu.uy/archivos/Mesa_30_cabella_pellegrino.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2014], p. 23; Soledad Salvador and Gabriela Pradere, 'Análisis de las trayectorias familiares y laborales desde una perspectiva de género y generaciones', *United Nations Populations Fund*, May 2009 <http://www.unfpa.org.uy/userfiles/informacion/items/848_pdf.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2014], p. 3.

Methodology

In order to measure the theory against the current social situation in the Southern Cone, I decided to compile data on the following topics relevant to the concept of the second demographic transition²⁶:

- Birth rate per 1000 people
- Fertility rate – average births per woman
- Live births by age of mother
- Live birth rates by age of mother
- Marriage rates per 1000 people
- Marriages by age of groom
- Marriages by age of bride
- Divorce rate per 1000 people
- Divorces by length of marriage
- Participation in labour force by sex and age (from UN Statistics Division: Gender Info 2007)
- Participation in education (from UNESCO) and education funding (from OECD).

I wished to collect data from the pre-dictatorial period until the present day in order to be able to see which phenomena were occurring before the dictatorships in these countries, which phenomena (if any) were affected by the dictatorial period, and how the situation has changed since the transition to

²⁶ Unless otherwise stated, this information has come from UN Demographic Yearbooks.

democracy. I used Demographic Yearbooks from 1973, 1976, 1982, 1987, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009-10 and 2012 in order to extract information on these topics from each country in time intervals of approximately five years from the 1970s or slightly earlier until the present day.

Where statistics were provisional at the time of publication, I have used the more recent statistics. There was also, as can be expected, a differing level of attention given to different topics from different countries. This has meant that there is no information available for certain periods from certain countries under certain topics. I have chosen to maintain (where information is available) a five-year interval between statistics, as these intervals will show a generalised trend rather than showing small yearly variations. I have attempted to keep the space between intervals as regular as possible so that trends are more accurately depicted. The yearbooks themselves have also changed certain parameters. For example, prior to 1985 the yearbooks defined 'fertility rate' to mean 'number of live births per 1000 women between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine'. After this period, the yearbooks began to record the fertility rate as the average number of children born to each woman during the length of her fertile years. The second definition is, I believe, much more interesting for our analysis, but the changing definition means that this information is only available after 1985, meaning that half of the period of study is not covered. I have chosen to discuss both definitions of 'fertility rate' as they both contribute to the picture of changing experiences of maternity in these countries.

Gender Info 2007 has provided statistics regarding labour force participation, but these figures only cover the period between 1985 and 2005,

meaning that the dictatorship years (or in the case of Chile, all but the late dictatorship years) are not covered. However, even though these figures only cover a twenty-year period, they do depict some interesting trends, so I have chosen to include them. Statistics from UNESCO concerning education are even more limited: they provide a picture of recent years, with some comparison between 2008 and 1999. I will be using these figures to analyse the current state of education in these three countries and compare them to one another, rather than showing a historical perspective.

The following analysis shall be divided into certain sections: Education and Employment, Marriage and Divorce, and Fertility, and will examine change over time in each country as well as comparing national differences. While comparing national differences, I feel it would be useful to keep in mind the different populations of these three countries. According to The World Bank, the population of Argentina in 2014 was 42.5 million; the population of Chile was 17.8 million; and the population of Uruguay was 3.42 million²⁷.

Education and Employment

One major change in the Southern Cone in recent years has been an increase in female participation in tertiary education and paid employment, both of which are crucial to the concept of female emancipation. Carlos Filgueira and Álvaro Fuentes suggest that, in Uruguay at least, the 'breadwinner' system – whereby the male partner goes to work and the female partner takes care of domestic

²⁷ World Bank, 'Population' <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>> [accessed 3 March 2016].

tasks – may have ended forever²⁸. Education and employment have had a strong connection to an increase in women’s rights. We shall see in more detail later that female education and labour force participation affect many other aspects of family life, as they allow women access to the outside world: a higher level of education means that women are more likely to be able to become active in politics, making it more likely for gender issues – such as contraception and domestic violence laws – to enter the political agenda, and if these laws pass they allow even greater freedoms to more women. Furthermore, education and employment can lead to financial independence and, through monetary contribution to the household, bargaining power within the home. As Sylvia Chant notes, ‘in Santiago, Chile, men whose wives earn more than they do tend to assume a bigger share of reproductive work’: that is, the household chores and caring for the children²⁹. Andrés Peri adds that ‘no sólo la división de roles ha cambiado, sino que también lo han hecho la valoración de esos roles y los objetivos vitales de las personas’³⁰. He adds that there is a strong correlation between the likelihood of a woman working and her level of education: in Uruguay, a woman who has completed a university course is 90% more likely to work for financial remuneration than a woman with incomplete primary education³¹. However, Ximena Vera Véliz finds that, despite an increased

²⁸ Filguiera, Carlos with Álvaro Fuentes, ‘Sobre revoluciones ocultas: la familia en el Uruguay’, *CEPAL*, September 1996
<<http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/xml/6/10566/LC-R141%20.pdf>> [accessed 20 August 2014], p. 7.

²⁹ Sylvia H. Chant, and Nikki Craske, *Gender in Latin America* (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 2003), p. 186.

³⁰ Andrés Peri, ‘Dimensiones ideológicas del cambio familiar’, *Nuevas formas de la familia: perspectivas nacionales e internacionales*, (Montevideo: UNICEF/UDELAR, 2003), pp. 141-61 (p. 141).

³¹ Peri, p. 158.

likelihood of men participating in domestic tasks, this participation is neither universal nor equal to that of women: in Chile, 41.2% of employed men do domestic work, with an average of 2.8 hours of work a day; 75% of employed women do domestic work, however, and they put in an average of four hours a day³². Wanda Cabella also sees a disparity in the domestic work performed by men and women, and suggests that this is unlikely to change in the near future, as even the most recent generations still give a disproportionate amount of chores to their daughters, cementing from an early age the notion that the home is solely or mainly the responsibility of women and girls³³. But it is worth noting that saying that a woman works outside of the home does not necessarily mean that she is working an equal amount of time to that of a man: women are more likely, especially when they have young families, to take on part-time work or shorter hours. Soledad Salvador and Gabriela Pradere have found that in Uruguay, working women between the ages of thirty and sixty-five work on average ten to twelve hours fewer than men a week, with the average man in this age group working around fifty hours compared to the average woman's forty hours, which may explain the unequal amount of time spent on domestic tasks³⁴. However, we cannot say for certain that the one has caused the other: it is equally probable that women choose to take on fewer hours of financially remunerated work because they are expected to carry out the majority of the domestic tasks. The gender division of childcare work seems to be even more unequally distributed: in Uruguay, a woman is ten times more likely not to work

³² p. 121.

³³ Wanda Cabella, *El cambio familiar en Uruguay: una breve reseña de las tendencias recientes*, (Montevideo: UNFPA, 2007), p. 14.

³⁴ p. 31.

outside the home if she has had children³⁵.

But while the division of domestic tasks and work outside of the home is still, broadly speaking, defined by traditional gender roles (despite some obvious progress), the education landscape has changed significantly. In Argentina, Chile and Uruguay there is gender parity³⁶ or near-parity in both primary and secondary education, meaning that at the more basic levels of education there is no gender bias for or against women. In tertiary education, however, enrolment ratios in Argentina and Uruguay show a strong bias towards female enrolment: in Argentina there were 1.52 women to every one man in tertiary education in 2008. In Uruguay the gender difference was even greater, with 1.75 women to every man in 2008. In fact, this phenomenon has been noted all across Latin America. In the mid-1990s female enrolment in tertiary education reached parity with male enrolment in Latin America, and female enrolment has gradually increased and overtaken male enrolment. In 2008, the Latin American average was 1.25 women to every man. In Argentina and Uruguay, the percentage of the female population over 25 years of age with tertiary education is higher than that of the male population: in 2003 12% of men and 15.3% of women in Argentina had tertiary education; in Uruguay in 2008 7.5% of men and 11.3% of women did. The education life expectancy of women was also higher for women in these two countries: in Argentina in 2008 the average man was expected to spend 14.6 years in education while the average woman was expected to spend 16.6 years; in Uruguay, men were expected to spend fifteen years to women's 16.5. The amount of time spent in tertiary education by women was also

³⁵ Peri, p. 158.

³⁶ Defined by UNESCO as being a ratio of 0.997-1.03:1 in favour of either sex.

substantially higher: women's tertiary education was expected to last 4.2 years in both countries, while for men in Argentina tertiary education was expected to last 2.8 years, and in Uruguay 2.4 years.

But in Chile the situation is very different. In 1999 there were 0.91 women enrolled in tertiary education to every one man, and 1.01 women to every man by 2008. Although the gender gap has closed, the pace at which it has done so is much slower than the Latin American average, and far slower than in Argentina and Uruguay. The education life expectancy of women in Chile is slightly lower than that of men: in 1999, men were expected to spend 12.9 years in education while women were expected to spend 12.7 years, and in 2008 men were expected to spend 14.6 years to women's 14.4 years. However, the difference between the sexes is not at tertiary level: the primary and secondary education life expectation of men is 11.9 years to women's 11.7; tertiary education life expectancy is 2.8 for both sexes. This shows that if women get to tertiary education they are as likely as men to continue it, but that women are still less likely to complete secondary education. The percentage of women over twenty-five years of age with tertiary education is lower than that of men in the same age group: in 2007, 16.3% of men and 13.8% of women had tertiary education.

It is also worth pointing out that, regardless of gender ratios, the standard of education is clearly improving in these three countries, with the education life expectancy rising as more people complete secondary education and enter tertiary education. This implies that the standard of life is improving and, with more people able to take skilled jobs, will continue to do so. However, this progress may not continue unabated: in Chile students have staged a series of

protests demanding education reform, as Chile's university system is underfunded and oversubscribed³⁷. The student protests have been the biggest political demonstrations in the country since the return to democracy³⁸. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's 'Education at a Glance 2008' report, 47% of spending on all levels of education in Chile comes from private sources, of which 96% is household expenditure³⁹. However, when looking at spending on tertiary education, we find that 84% of all expenditure is from private sources⁴⁰. The report adds that 'at all levels of education combined, Chile has the lowest share of public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP among OECD and partner countries'⁴¹. What this means is that tertiary education is largely dependent on tuition fees, meaning that students who are unable to fund their education and whose families cannot give them financial assistance are much less likely to be able to access tertiary education. And the prices are ever increasing: Rodrigo Cerda finds that between 1989 and 2002 – that is, in the space of little over a decade – monthly university payments increased between fifteen and twenty times⁴². Carlos Filgueira and Andrés Peri add that poorer families have fewer resources to ensure that their children make the most of the education they can access⁴³.

³⁷ Veronica Smink, 'Las razones de las protestas estudiantiles en Chile', *BBC*, 10 August 2011

<http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/08/110809_chile_estudiantes_2_vs.shtml> [accessed 20 April 2014].

³⁸ Smink.

³⁹ Andreas Schleicher, 'Education at a Glance 2008', *OECD*

<<https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/41284038.pdf>> [accessed 13 March 2014], p. 251.

⁴⁰ Schleicher, p. 253.

⁴¹ Schleicher, p. 12.

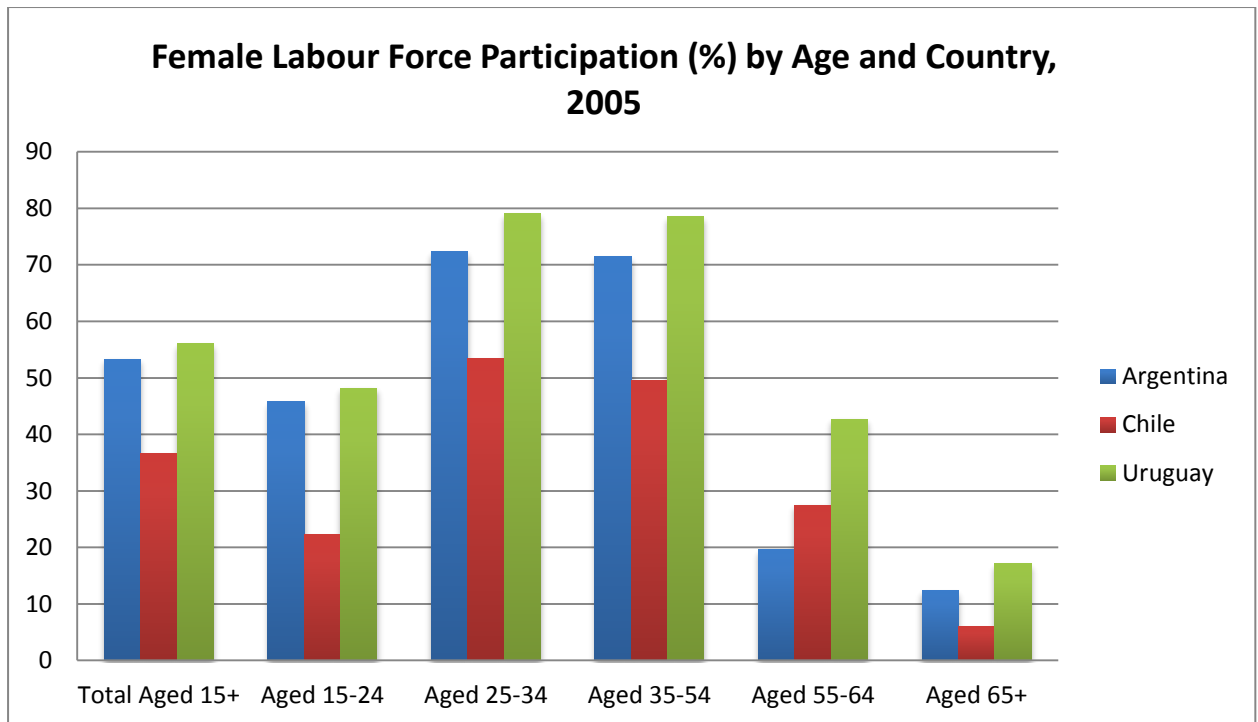
⁴² p. 10.

⁴³ p. 35.

Tertiary education is, therefore, class-dependent, and as it is often a requirement for better-paid jobs, social mobility is still difficult in Chile. The lack of public funding for education also explains why Chile has lower ratios of female enrolment in higher education: UNESCO's Global Education Digest 2010 states that 'while it is difficult to make generalizations, there is a tendency for poor families who cannot afford education for all of their children to invest their limited resources in boys rather than girls'⁴⁴.

This may be particularly true of Chile, where there is less of an expectation for women to go into paid employment than in Argentina and Uruguay, meaning that tertiary education for women may be seen as less of a priority. In 2005, just 36.6% of women over fifteen years of age participated in paid employment, compared to 53.3% of women in Argentina and 56.1% of women in Uruguay. But the differences are even more marked when examining the participation rate according to age. The difference between these countries is evident across all age ranges, as seen in the chart below, which compares the participation rate in 2005:

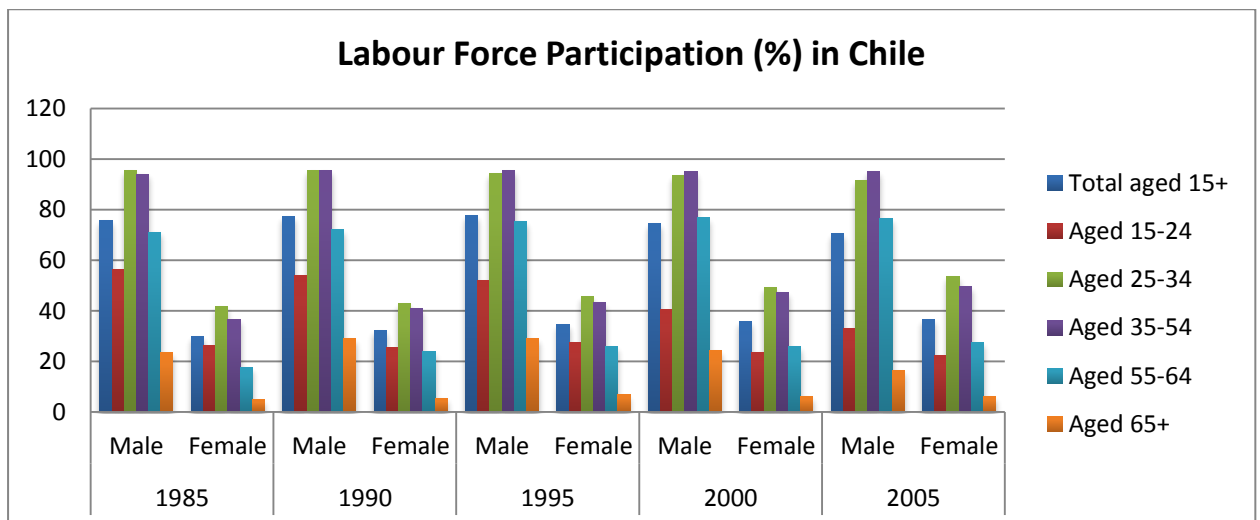
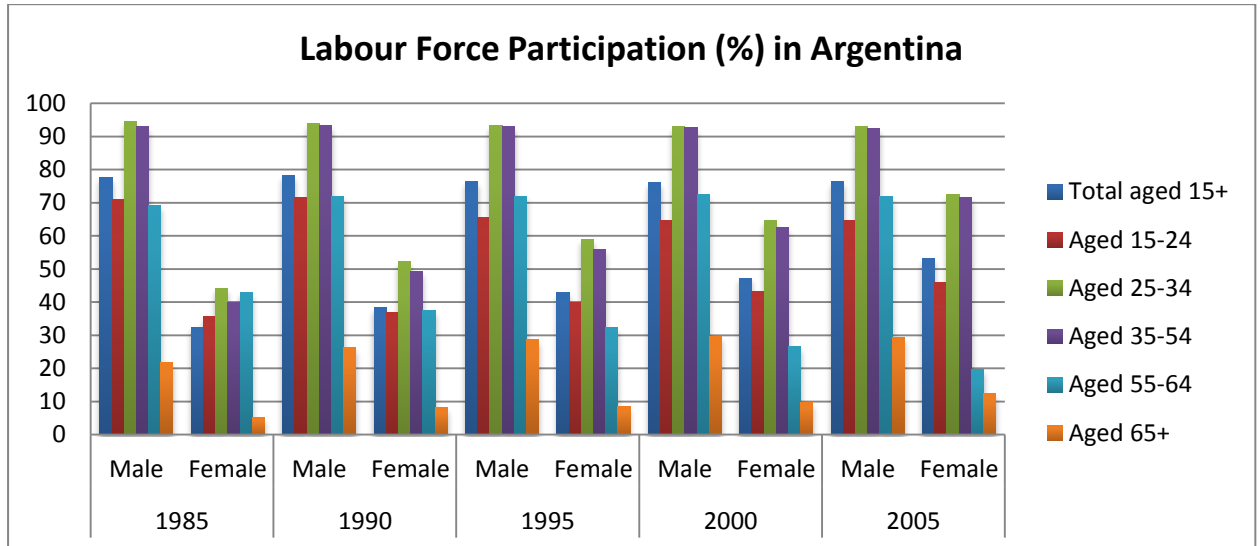
⁴⁴ Irina Bokova and Henrik Van Der Pol, 'Global Education Digest 2010', *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/GED_2010_EN.pdf> [accessed 13 March 2014], p. 47.

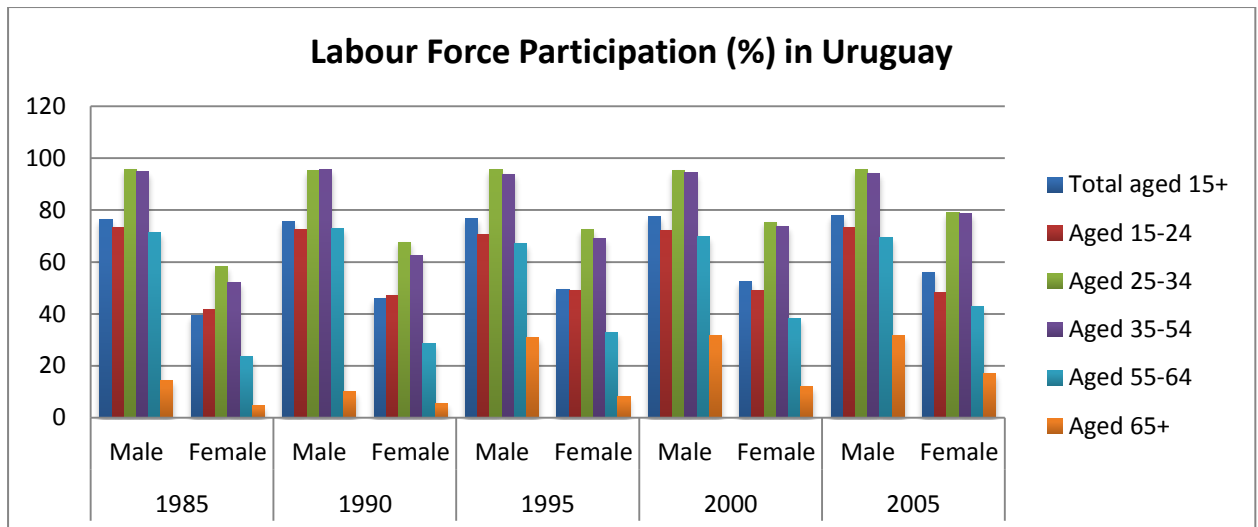


As we can see, the Chilean rate is much lower than that of Argentina and Uruguay. This implies that there is less of a cultural expectation of paid employment for women in Chile: only around a third of Chilean women receive financial remuneration for work. But as I have suggested previously, paid work can be vital to women's independence and emancipation. Higher financial dependence upon men by women may be one of the reasons that Chilean society can sometimes be more traditional in its treatment of gender issues than Argentina and Uruguay, although of course Chile's more traditional gender values also contribute to the fact that fewer women are in paid employment; I will discuss Chile's perceived traditionalism with regards to gender issues in more detail later in this chapter.

Irrespective of the obvious gap between the female employment rates of the three countries, one thing is true of all three of them: female employment has been steadily rising. Women are much more likely to be in paid employment now, while the numbers for men have stayed at around the same levels. The

following charts help to show how female labour force participation is closing the gap on that of male participation in each of the three countries:

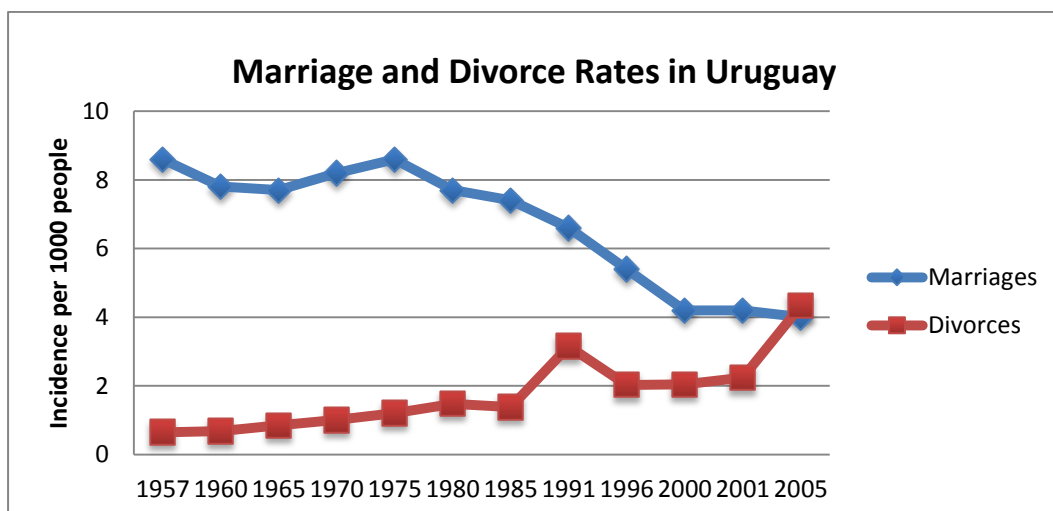




Marriage and Divorce

In all three countries, the rate of marriages has more than halved since 1970.

Uruguay's trajectory is perhaps the most interesting: in 1970 it was the only country in which it was possible to get divorced yet it had the highest rate of marriage, perhaps because people felt that, should the marriage fail, they would be able to leave the union and even remarry if they so wished. But while the marriage rate has more than halved in Uruguay, the divorce rate has increased dramatically. The chart below shows the trajectory of the two rates and how their dramatic changes have brought them ever closer:



Uruguay's much higher rate of divorce seems to be a cultural difference: divorce has been legal there since 1907, whereas Argentina and Chile have legalised divorce much more recently: 1987 and 2004 respectively⁴⁵. Due to its long history in the country, divorce is likely to be much less taboo in Uruguay: Carlos Filgueira and Álvaro Fuentes describe how the phenomenon has become 'cada vez más un fenómeno recurrente y normal de la sociedad'⁴⁶. But divorce in Uruguay may also have become much more prevalent in recent years due to an increased priority on women's rights. Between 1985 and 1991 we can see a spike on the graph where the divorce rate rose from 1.38 to 3.15. This sharp increase coincided with the establishment of the Instituto Nacional de la Mujer⁴⁷ in 1987, a government organisation that aimed to institutionalise Uruguayan women's struggle for equality, and it is possible that the increase in awareness of women's rights may have caused women to become more active in achieving these rights. An increase in women's participation in paid employment will have also affected the overall divorce rate: as we have seen, women have experienced a large rise in employment levels in all three countries, meaning that fewer women are financially dependent upon men, which allows them the freedom to live independently if they should wish to do so. This could also explain why the marriage rate has decreased: women are more able to make a living for themselves and therefore less likely to *need* to get married. Rodrigo Cerda points out that women who are not married or involved in a consensual union – that is,

⁴⁵ Georgina Binstock, and Wanda Cabella, 'La nupcialidad en el Cono Sur: evolución reciente en la formación de uniones en Argentina, Chile y Uruguay' in *Nupcialidad y familia en la América Latina actual*, coord. by Georgina Binstock and Joice Melo Vieira (Rio de Janeiro: Trilce, 2011) pp. 35-60 (p. 47).

⁴⁶ Filgueira and Fuentes, p. 25.

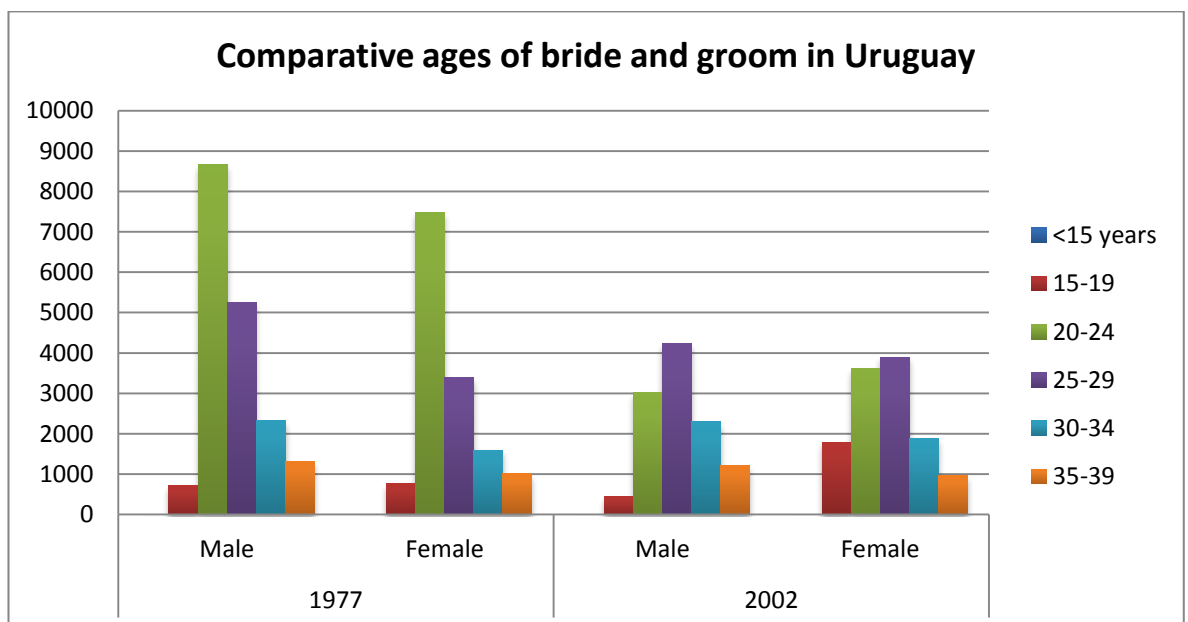
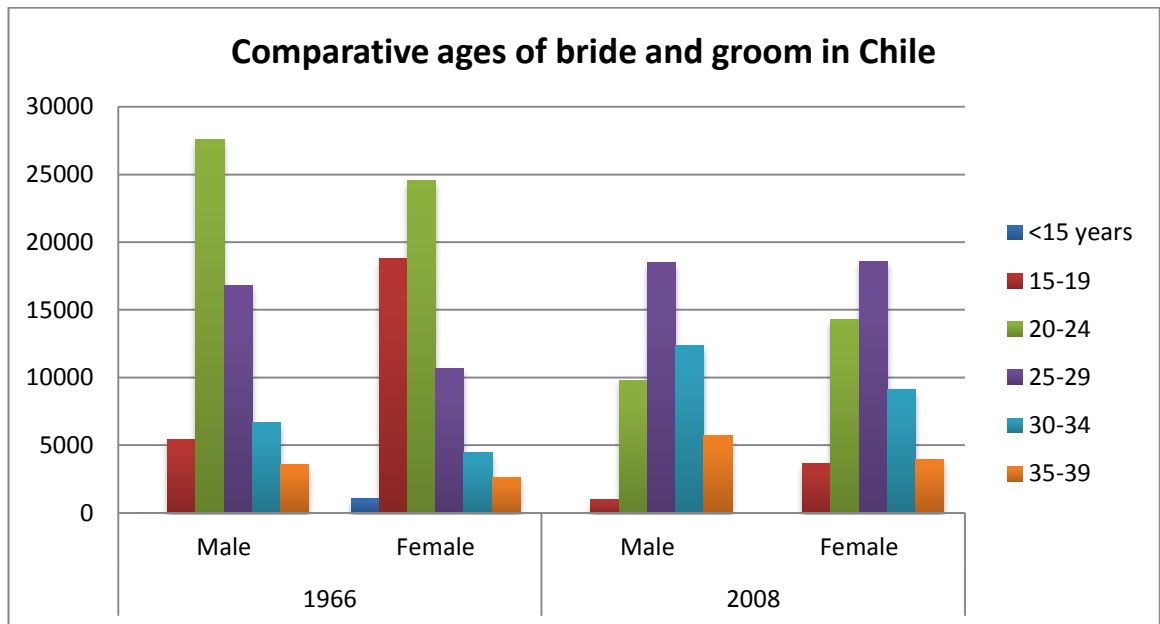
⁴⁷ This organisation became the *Instituto Nacional de la Familia y la Mujer* in 1992, before becoming the *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres*, its current incarnation, in 2005.

a sexual relationship outside of marriage – tend to have higher levels of education than those who are, and as we have seen, women with a higher level of education are much more likely to be employed in work outside of the home⁴⁸. An increase in female employment levels also explains why people are getting married later in life: women are now more likely to be in education or establishing their careers in their younger years, choosing to marry once they are more established. Increased unmarried cohabitation may also play a role: the increasing social acceptability of couples living together before they get married means that there is less pressure to marry, explaining the decreasing marriage rate, and if the couple does choose to get married, there is a higher social acceptance of deferring the union until both parties are at a stable place in their careers. Wanda Cabella suggests that pre-marital relationships are increasingly a ‘fase transitoria’ in young people’s lives, usually before they have children: she reports that in 2001, 75% of women with one child in Montevideo were married, as were 90% of women with two children or more, although this may not be universal to the whole Southern Cone: Ximena Vera Véliz states that in 2011, 68.9% of births in Chile occurred outside of marriage⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ Cerda, p. 9.

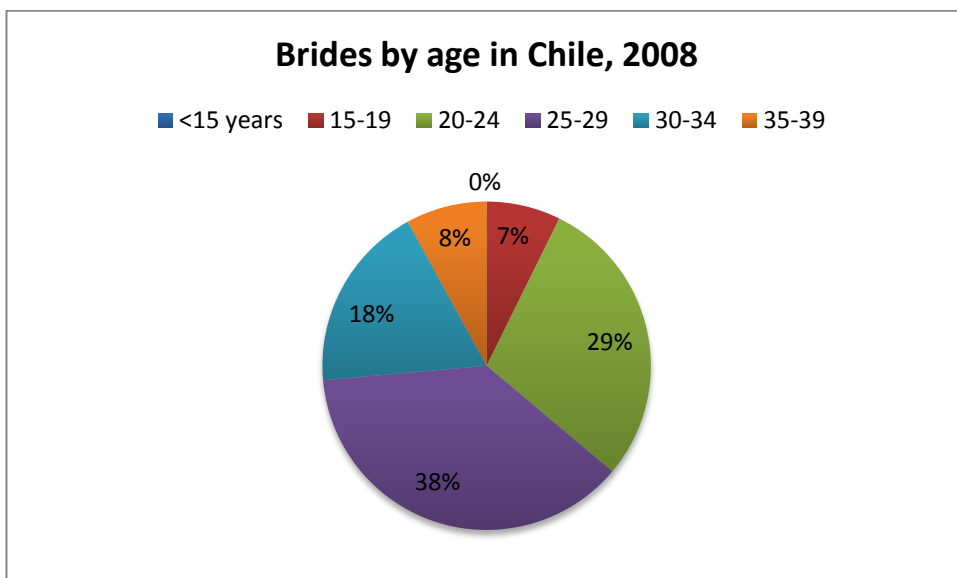
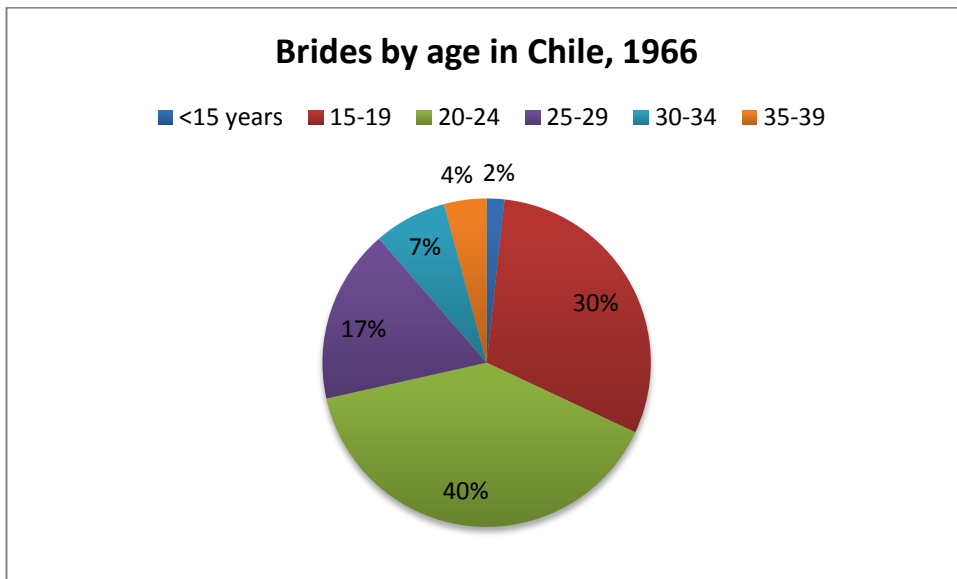
⁴⁹ Cabella, p. 9; Véliz, pp. 122-23.

Because of this, we can witness a decrease in marriages from younger groups (under twenty-fours) in favour of an increase in marriages later in life. There is still a gender gap in marriage age, with women tending to get married earlier than men, especially in Chile. The following charts show how women were more likely to get married earlier and less likely to get married later in comparison to men, although the gender gap is much less pronounced than it was:



However, what both charts show clearly is that over time both sexes have begun to marry later. In Uruguay we can see that where it was much more common to

marry between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, more marriages now occur within the twenty-five to twenty-nine age bracket. In Chile, the most common age to marry for both men and women was between twenty and twenty-four in 1966; it is now more common to marry between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine, although marriages in both the thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to thirty-nine age groups are increasingly common, as is evident from the following charts:



A later age of marriage can be explained by a general decrease in social acceptability of early marriages. Evidence of this can be seen in marital law. In Chile until 2004, the legal marriage age with parental consent was twelve for

females and fourteen for males. In 2004 the minimum age with parental consent was raised to sixteen for both sexes as part of the new divorce law⁵⁰. Uruguay also raised the legal marriage age with parental consent from twelve for females and fourteen for males to sixteen for both sexes in 2013, as part of the marriage reform which allowed gay marriage for the first time⁵¹. The inequality of these laws reflects the expectation that females would marry earlier than males, as we have seen above. On the other hand, in Argentina the legal age for marriage without parental consent was dropped from twenty-one to eighteen in 2009 and the minimum age with parental consent is sixteen⁵². Due to a lack of data, I have not been able to discuss Argentina's marriage age here.

The fact that the gap between men and women at the age of marriage is closing is also interesting, and I posit that the main reason for this may be women's increased participation in the labour force, particularly in Chile. As we have seen, Chilean women have traditionally been less likely to be in paid employment than women from Argentina and Uruguay, meaning that they have been more dependent on men. This means that in Chile, especially in 1966 when the percentage of women working would have been much lower than it is today, men would have to have established a career able to support both themselves and their wives before deciding to marry. But another reason may be linked to fertility. In recent years, contraceptive use has become more prevalent and there is more information available. This means that women are able to be sexually active with a

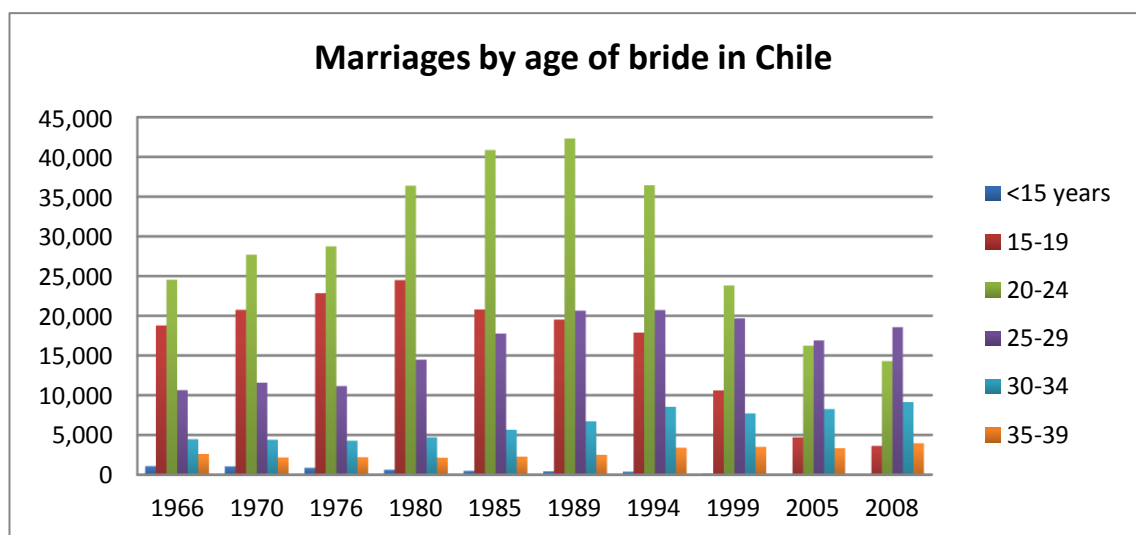
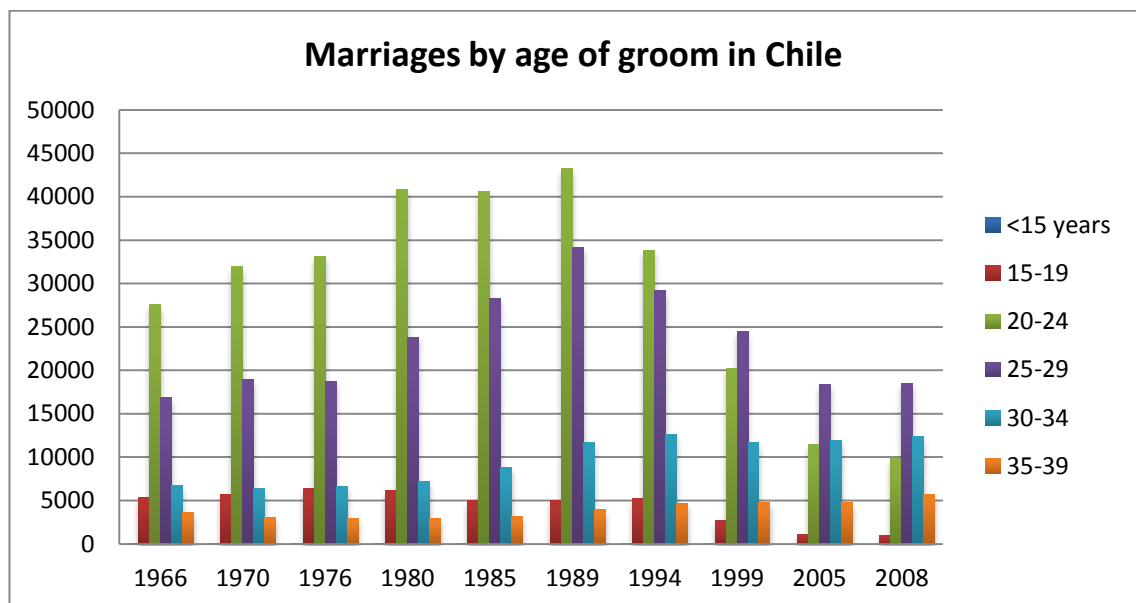
⁵⁰ Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 'Divorcio: ley fácil' <<http://www.bcn.cl/leyfacil/recurso/divorcio>> [accessed 20 March 2014].

⁵¹ Karla Gallardo, 'Uruguay aprueba matrimonio igualitario', *24 Horas*, 10 April 2013 <<http://www.24horas.cl/internacional/uruguay-aprueba-matrimonio-igualitario-597477>> [accessed 20 March 2014].

⁵² Laura Serra, 'Bajan la mayoría de edad a los 18 años', *La Nación*, 3 December 2009 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1207110-bajan-la-mayoria-de-edad-a-los-18-anos>> [accessed 20 March 2014].

decreased risk of pregnancy. Previously, when contraception use was lower and pregnancy a higher probability, women would have more reason to get married early, as they risked falling pregnant outside of marriage, which was historically more of a taboo than it is today.

Finally, I would like to discuss a curious phenomenon in Chile. Below I have made charts of marriages by age of groom and bride by year, in order to examine historical trends:



These charts show that marriage age did not steadily increase from 1966 to 2008: instead, we can see that in the 1970s and 1980s, the rate of young marriages actually *increased*, before declining steadily since the 1990s. This increase

coincides with the years of the dictatorship (1973-1990), a time in which the more traditional social values of the 'Chilean national family' were promoted: could it be because of this that we see a definite increase in marriages, particularly early marriages, during this period? If the accessibility of contraceptives also contributes to marriage age, this may also play a factor: as we are about to see, the dictatorships cut government spending on social programmes, particularly in sexual and reproductive health, which had consequences in many aspects of family life.

Fertility

Generally speaking, the crude birth rate (number of live births per 1000 people) has decreased in all three countries since the 1970s. The rate of decrease has been much more gradual in Argentina and Uruguay than in Chile. Yet as the chart below shows, Chile's rate dropped to below that of Argentina in the early 1990s and below Uruguay's in the mid 1990s; it then rose to very slightly above Uruguay's rate after the turn of the millennium. Interestingly, though, Chile's crude birth rate spiked in the early years of the dictatorship. As I have suggested previously, sexual health programmes were severely cut during the dictatorship, particularly in the beginning: Mala Htun notes that 'conservatives made some efforts to shut down family planning during the Pinochet dictatorship, but these were ultimately unsuccessful'⁵³. With these programmes pared down, women had less access both to contraceptives and to information about sexual health, explaining the sharp rise in births during these years. In fact, in 1978 there were even campaigns to 'dignificar y estimular la maternidad' after the dictatorship became alarmed by the

⁵³ *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies* (Cambridge: UP, 2003), p. 167.

rapid decrease in birth rate⁵⁴. However, once the contraceptive programmes were fully reinstated, the birth rate once again decreased.

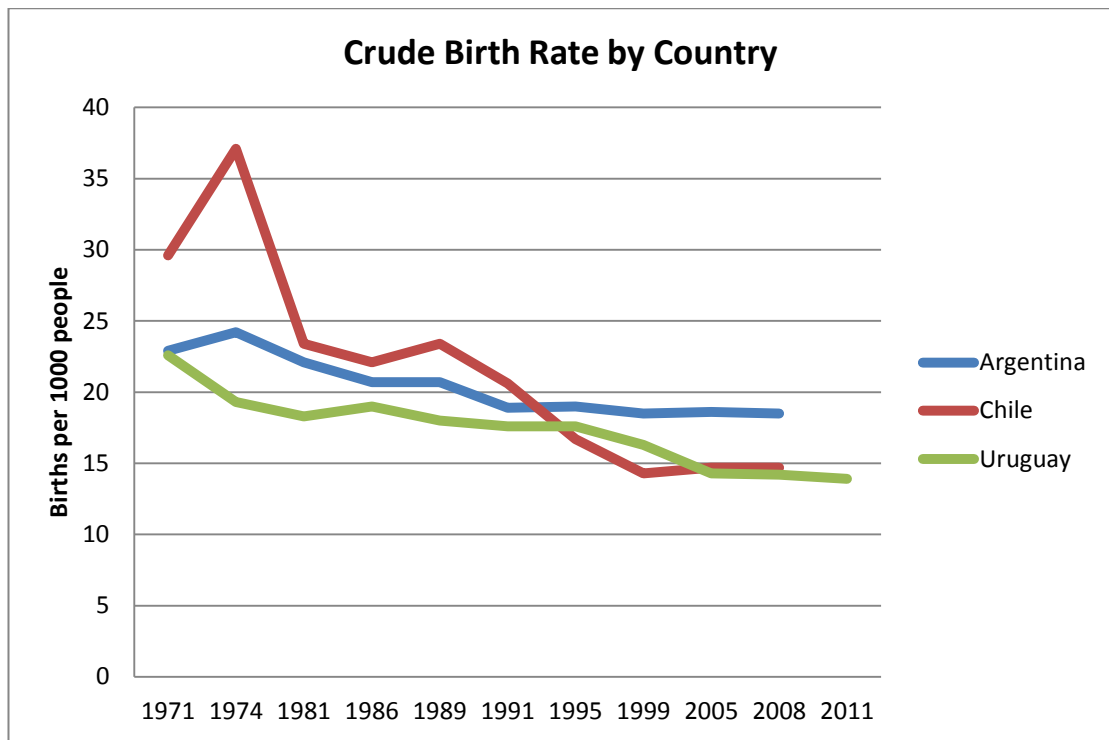
However, it is important to remember that while women have more control than ever before as to the number of children that they have, women from poorer backgrounds are still more likely to be the ones with more children, especially since elective abortion is illegal in Chile and Argentina (and has only recently been legalised in Uruguay): poorer women are less likely to be able to have access to birth control and private clinics⁵⁵. Adela Pellegrino reports that middle class and upper class women in Uruguay state that they would like to have or to have had one child more than they actually do, whereas women on lower incomes usually report wanting fewer children⁵⁶. Fascinatingly, Rodrigo Cerda finds that the fertility rate amongst women with university education in Chile had not dropped between 1960 and 2002, remaining at 1.9 children on average: it is amongst women with only a primary education that the real change has happened, with the rate falling from an average of 4 children to 2.8⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ Miguel Villa and Daniela González, 'Dinámica demográfica de Chile y América Latina: una visión a vuelo de pájaro', *Revista de Sociología de Universidad de Chile*, No. 18 (2004), pp. 81-116 (p. 96).

⁵⁵ Francisco Peregil, 'Uruguay legaliza el aborto', *El País*, 18 October 2012 <http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2012/10/18/actualidad/1350515928_579435.html> [accessed 20 March 2014].

⁵⁶ Adela Pellegrino, 'Uruguay: cien años de transición demográfica', *Migración y Desarrollo*, Vol. 1, No. 20 (2013), pp. 186-207 (p. 197).

⁵⁷ p. 10.



As well as fewer children being born in all three countries, the age at which women are giving birth is changing slightly. All three countries have experienced a slight increase in the percentage of children born to mothers on either end of the age scale: that is, to women under the age of twenty and over the age of thirty, while the percentage of births to mothers in their twenties has slightly decreased in all three countries. A higher percentage of women under the age of twenty are giving birth, suggesting that more young women are engaging in sexual activity than before, and that they may not be fully aware of the consequences. In fact, births to mothers under the age of fifteen have also increased. This may also be caused by a lack of easy access to contraceptives for young women: Htun notes that while ‘in theory, contraceptives are available to all women of child-bearing age’, the reality can be quite different: ‘there is considerable resistance to providing minors with contraceptives without parental authorisation’⁵⁸. However, at the same time we can see that women in their twenties are more likely to defer

⁵⁸ Htun, p. 167.

giving birth until later, suggesting that they are making use of contraceptive methods to allow them to control their lives and take the opportunity to complete their education and start a career before they have children. The fact that some women are deferring giving birth until later while others are giving birth early shows a clear divide in terms of education: in Uruguay women with only primary education have their first child on average more than five years earlier than women with university education (21.5 years of average compared to 26.9)⁵⁹. Mariana Paredes notes that pregnancy involves 'el arbitraje entre la profesión, la pareja y la biología', and for new generations of educated women, careers are becoming more of a priority⁶⁰. Ximena Vera Véliz adds that women who work outside of the home tend to have fewer children than those who are solely devoted to domestic tasks: she explains that the continued gender inequality of the division of domestic labour, as discussed above, means that women must weigh up the cost and benefit of having another child, knowing that the additional work will mainly fall to them and will come at the expense of both work and social life⁶¹. She believes that if Chile were a more gender equal country in terms of the division of labour, the birth rate would not have dropped so dramatically⁶².

We are also witnessing a decline in births to women over forty-five years of age. This suggests that older women are also taking control of their bodies and deciding when they have had the right amount of children for them. Many women, particularly women from lower-income households, had struggled to regulate the

⁵⁹ Cabella, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Mariana Paredes, *Viejos problemas para nuevas cuestiones: género, procesos de individualización y segunda transición demográfica* (2008) <http://www.academia.edu/5260579/Viejos_problemas_para_nuevas_cuestiones_genero_procesos_de_individualizacion_y_segunda_transicion_demografica> [accessed 20 August 2014], p. 10.

⁶¹ pp. 119-20.

⁶² Véliz, p. 121.

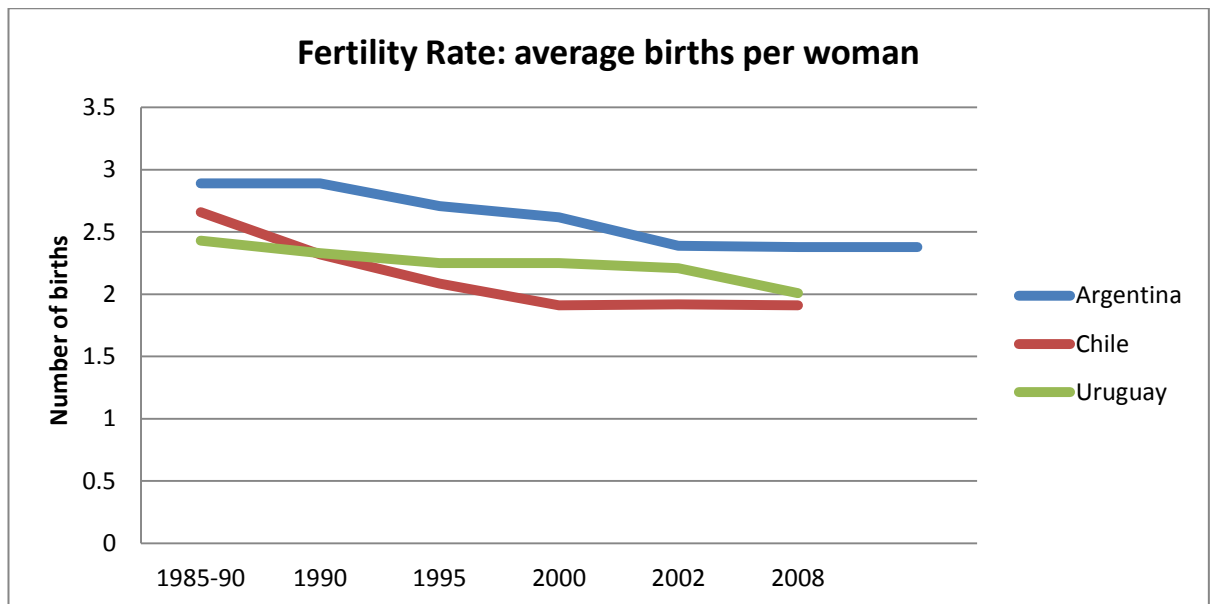
number of children that they were having in the 1970s, especially under dictatorship when the restrictions on family planning became more severe. Htun explains that in 1975 in Chile new regulations made it compulsory for every woman wanting to undergo a sterilisation procedure to have met all of the following criteria: 'over thirty years old, more than four children, a history of at least three caesarian sections, medical reasons justifying the operation, and the documented consent of their spouse', meaning that it would be incredibly difficult to actually qualify for the procedure⁶³.

However, there may be another reason for the sharp decline in fertility after the age of forty-five: the women who were registering the births may have in fact been raising the children of their young daughters, protecting them from the taboo of having a child outside of wedlock: a 2015 Channel 4 documentary about abortion in Chile showed one example where a woman was raising her teenage daughter's son as her own⁶⁴. As the number of women having children outside of marriage has increased, the taboo surrounding it has decreased, which would mean that fewer women would feel it necessary to raise their grandchildren as their own children. This may also help to explain the slight increase in births to teenaged mothers that we have seen above.

Despite a slight increase in births to teenagers and women over thirty, the overall fertility rate of women in all three countries has declined, meaning that the average number of births per woman has declined:

⁶³ p. 167.

⁶⁴ Guillermo Galdos, 'Chile: The Country Where All Abortion is Illegal', *Channel 4 News*, 14 August 2015 <<http://www.channel4.com/news/latin-americas-abortion-shame>> [accessed 20 August 2016].



As this chart shows, the fertility rate has slightly declined for all three countries, with that of Chile even dipping slightly below two. Chile's decrease has been the most dramatic of the three: in the 1950s, there were on average 5.1 births per woman, and Chile's very high birth rate in the 20th century contributed to massive population growth: the population rose from around 6 million people in 1950 to around 17.8 million today⁶⁵. It is important to remember that a birth rate of below 2.1 is considered a sub-replacement fertility rate – that is, the new generation will not be populous enough to replace the previous generation, leading to population decline. Both Uruguay and Chile have reached this rate⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Véliz, p. 108.

⁶⁶ Pellegrino, p. 186; Véliz, p. 117.

Findings

Family life has changed significantly in the Southern Cone since the 1970s. The number of women in tertiary education and the amount of time they spend in education has increased, as has female participation in the labour force. Marriage rates have decreased and divorce rates have increased. A higher percentage of longer marriages are being terminated than ever before, showing that the taboo surrounding divorce is lifting. Couples are getting married later and very early marriages are becoming less socially acceptable, with the minimum age requirement for marriage being raised in Uruguay and Chile. Fewer children are being born and a higher percentage of children are being born to teenaged mothers and mothers in their thirties.

In all of these sectors, several trends are becoming evident. Women are becoming more independent and are consequently seeing an increase in their rights and in their ability to control their own bodies and their own futures. People are beginning to have more choice in family matters: divorce is now legal in Argentina and Chile, meaning that non-functioning unions may be ended, and couples have more say over when they have children and how many they have. In Argentina and Uruguay, same-sex couples may now marry and adopt children, and Chile has recently legalised same-sex civil unions.

I have also noticed that Chile is going through a much more rapid development process than Argentina and Uruguay in many senses. Several sociologists have suggested that Argentina and Uruguay's early modernisation was connected to their wider contact with the outside world. Adela Pellegrino states that international trade in these two countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries opened them to 'mentalidades y comportamientos "modernos"', an

opinion shared by Miguel Villa and Daniela González⁶⁷. However, Pellegrino adds that the majority of the vast number of European immigrants who came to these countries in the 19th and 20th centuries came from poor areas, particularly in Italy and Spain, where the fertility rates were still high, and concludes that ‘parece evidente que para que los cambios innovadores arraiguen debe existir el caldo de cultivo necesario en la sociedad’⁶⁸. Meanwhile, Chile’s demographic change has been much more sudden, and any potential influence of immigration more muted: in 2002 immigrants made up just 1.2% of the population, while in Montevideo in 1963 they comprised 13.5% of the total⁶⁹. While Chile remains the more conservative of the three countries in terms of female education and labour force participation, the country has seen a marked decrease in fertility rates and early marriages. In the 1970s, Chile was consistently the most conservative of the three countries, and it has generally trailed behind Argentina and Uruguay in terms of liberalising reform. But in recent years Chile has begun to catch up with the other two countries in terms of reform, and its figures are often equal to or greater than those of Argentina and Uruguay.

It is also crucially important to note that these changes are not universal. What we are witnessing are trends – a tendency towards certain behaviours over other, once more common, behaviours; while the statistics show us a general overview of the demographics of the country, they do not tell the whole story. As we have seen, demographic change affects different groups differently. Men’s roles have changed less radically than women’s, both inside and outside of the home, but poorer women have experienced a much smaller change in their lives than more affluent women, particularly women with tertiary education. Although steps are

⁶⁷ p. 188; Villa and González, p. 88.

⁶⁸ p. 189.

⁶⁹ Véliz, p. 110; Cerda, p. 14; Cabella and Pellegrino, p. 11.

being made towards gender equality, equality is much more accessible for women from higher social strata, meaning that social inequality between *women* has become much more pronounced than the inequality between men and women who come from more affluent backgrounds. Furthermore, this change is self-perpetuating: women who come from poorer backgrounds are less likely to be able to access the education required to win them the better-paid jobs. They are also less likely to be able to afford contraception, meaning that they are more likely to have more children and therefore more work within the home, discouraging them from seeking any paid employment at all. Their families will therefore have fewer resources to share amongst more people, meaning that the next generation will also be less likely to have access to higher education which may have helped them to break the cycle of poverty. The gap between the quality of life experienced by the poorer and the more affluent therefore increases with each subsequent generation, and this situation is exacerbated by the inadequacy of governmental support: the dictatorships pared down many social programmes to the bare minimum, and dismantled systems of support for the most vulnerable members of society⁷⁰. As we have seen, key social institutions such as the education system or the family planning programme are either increasingly requiring private subsidies or are failing to be universally accessible, meaning that vulnerable people are falling through the cracks. And the fact that all three countries are experiencing a surge in older people means that government spending is spread even thinner: there is a smaller percentage of economically active people supporting an ever-growing group of dependents. What is more, one answer to this problem – an increase in female participation in the labour force – would be most easily brought

⁷⁰ James D. Henderson, Helen Delpar and Maurice P. Brungardt, *A Reference Guide to Latin American History* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000) p. 255.

about with an investment in education, but to do so would require further government spending.

After financial crises during the dictatorship years, often caused by ‘inept [...] national economic management’ and the implementation of neoliberal economic policies based on open market ideals of economic freedom and a lack of government regulation and intervention, the economic environment has changed significantly⁷¹. Key national resources have been privatised and systems of social support dismantled, particularly those which might support the families most deeply affected by economic hardship or by demographic change⁷². The dictatorships aimed to promote more traditional families and a more self-reliant lifestyle. However, this neoliberal system has proven unstable: Argentina in particular has suffered greatly, with an economic crash at the turn of the millennium and, more recently, defaulting on its debts in 2014⁷³. Poverty has soared, as has economic inequality. Although, as María Alejandra Silva points out, recent economic statistics cannot be trusted, studies from the Universidad Católica Argentina suggest that in 2014, 27.5% of the population was living in poverty⁷⁴. And as we have seen, poverty exacerbates the effects of demographic change, widening the division between rich and poor, essentially creating an underclass of

⁷¹ Henderson, Delpar and Brungardt, p. 255.

⁷² Peter Calvert, ‘Privatisation in Argentina’, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1996), pp. 145-56 (p. 153).

⁷³ Benjamin Dangl, *Dancing with Dynamite: Social Movements and States in Latin America* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2010) pp. 59-60.

⁷⁴ María Alejandra Silva, *Políticas públicas, familia y niñez: un estudio de caso*, <http://www.rediberoamericanadetrabajoconfamilias.org/ponentes/pdf/arg_silvamarialaalejandra.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2014]; Francisco Jueguen and Martín Kanenguiser, ‘Según la UCA, la pobreza subió el año pasado al 27,5% de la población’, *La Nación*, 26 April 2014 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1685315-segun-la-uca-la-pobreza-subio-el-ano-pasado-al-275-de-la-poblacion>> [accessed 20 August 2014]. The latter adds that INDEC, the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos*, claims that poverty is at about 4%, showing the unreliability of economic statistics from Argentina at this time.

people who simply do not have the resources to escape their situation, who are trapped from birth by economic determinism.

However, some demographers believe that demographic change may also be the key to eventually reducing poverty, as the cultural forces driving demographic change can be seen in all sectors of society⁷⁵. Private lives are going through a process of modernisation, whereby social expectation gives way to modern values of individual fulfilment, freedom and privacy⁷⁶. Where the first demographic transition is characterised by normativity, with mortality and fertility declining due to wider-picture, governmental programmes and influence, the second demographic transition's continued decline in fertility and mortality, alongside the increase in divorces and the postponement of marriage and childbirth, stem from personal choice⁷⁷. There is a decreased acceptance of social pressure – be it from family members, or religious or social institutions – concerning decision-making in personal issues, which allows for a wider spectrum of potential life choices: same-sex relationships lose their taboo, as do consensual unions, and there is also less stigma attached to illegitimacy and divorce⁷⁸. What we are witnessing is, essentially, a democratisation of family structures, accompanied by a lack of judgement as to which structures are 'correct' and which are not. And this democratisation is not only occurring on a society-wide level (that is, in terms of which types of family are considered acceptable), but also within the family: there is a decreased acceptability of physical and psychological abuse, as evinced by mass protests against domestic violence across the Southern

⁷⁵ Cerda, p. 29.

⁷⁶ Paredes, 2008: p. 4; Véliz, p. 111; Cabella and Pellegrino, p. 24.

⁷⁷ Filgueira and Peri, p. 50; Mariana Paredes, 'Los cambios en la familia en Uruguay: ¿hacia una segunda transición demográfica?', *Nuevas formas de la familia: perspectivas nacionales e internacionales*, (Montevideo: UNICEF/UDELAR, 2003), pp. 73-101 (pp. 74-75).

⁷⁸ Filgueira and Peri, p. 40.

Cone, meaning that the more vulnerable members of the family are protected, and, as we have seen above, decision-making and domestic labour are more evenly shared between members than previously⁷⁹.

However, what is most interesting about this process is that it began to occur at a time when these countries themselves were certainly not democratic: during the recent dictatorships. I believe that the demographic changes in these countries at the time, along with resistance movements which used innovative family structures as their foundation, helped to contribute to the ultimate failure of the dictatorships. At a time when these cultures were leaning towards increased choice, individuality and freedom, the dictatorships were trying to impose a culture of homogeneity, normativity and obedience to a rigid model based on tradition, alienating a large proportion of their populations. As Graham Allan and Graham Crow state:

the state is not powerless to influence the character of family life and the nature of the relationships that develop between people who are linked by kinship. If it is to be successful in this though, it needs to do so in ways which are sympathetic to the global changes occurring which influence the understandings individuals have about the character and possibilities of family life [...] The shifts there have been in cultural understandings of moral and appropriate family relationships have been ones which emphasise democracy allied to individual rights and collective responsibility. There is no prospect of imposing a family system in which

⁷⁹ La Voz, '#NiUnaMenos: por qué marchamos contra la violencia de género', 3 June 2016 <<http://www.lavoz.com.ar/ciudadanos/niunamenos-por-que-marchamos-contra-la-violencia-de-genero>> [accessed 20 August 2016].

male or any other form of autocracy rules⁸⁰.

In other words, the state *is* able to influence family forms, but it must recognise and directly address the social trends which are shaping the family – something which the dictatorships did not do.

In some ways, this was a missed opportunity for these regimes, as many of the demographic changes were based on neoliberal-friendly ideas – the decision to postpone starting a family, for example, is usually explained as allowing a woman to establish a career, and the neoliberal economic model ‘relies heavily on women’s waged labour’ – but while neoliberalism has survived the dictatorship period, the traditional family model being promoted by the dictatorships has taken a serious blow, in part due to its connection with the violence, oppression and censure of the regimes themselves⁸¹. By tying their narrative into an already increasingly unpopular family structure – the patriarchal nuclear family – the dictatorships allowed for unflattering comparisons between the two, meaning that the dismantling of one would necessitate the dismantling of the other. And while the crisis of the dictatorships gave women a political importance to an extent that had not been seen before in the Southern Cone, aided by the regimes’ blind spot towards women’s political activity in the role of mothers, it was the increased education of women and the increased equality between the sexes – both part of the second demographic transition – which ensured that women’s influence did not die with the dictatorships.

Essentially, the dictatorships chose to use the family as a symbol to reinforce

⁸⁰ p. 14.

⁸¹ Nancy Fraser, ‘How feminism became capitalism’s handmaiden – and how to reclaim it’, *The Guardian*, 14 October 2013 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>> [accessed 20 March 2014].

their power without truly understanding the changes that the family was undergoing at the time, allowing their symbol to be appropriated and turned against them and, ironically, potentially accelerating the rate of demographic change due to the link established between the traditional patriarchal family and social and political oppression. This idea shall be examined in more detail in the following chapter.

Demographic Change and Cultural Expression

As I have stated above, the preceding section about demographic change has been vital to shaping our understanding of how the institution of the family has changed over the past few decades. This statistical analysis provides the backdrop to the cultural changes occurring during and after the dictatorships in a quantifiable, concrete way, and has informed the rest of this thesis by showing that demographic change did not stagnate in the socially conservative climate of the dictatorships, but, as I shall show, was in fact driven forward by the use of non-traditional familial forms as a symbol of resistance to the dictatorships. By setting my thesis at the juncture between demographic data, historical and social analysis and cultural expressions, I am able to provide a picture of family change in the Southern Cone which complicates binary notions of progressive and conservative, and shows that the foundations of radical change can be traced to a time in which the status quo fervently opposed such change. The texts that I have chosen bridge the gaps between demographic change and the use of the family as a symbol, comparing the reality of these countries with the dominant narratives of this tumultuous period and finding unanticipated links between conservative dictatorships and radical family change. The institution of the family emerges in this period as a site of tensions, in which conservative family forms present in

revolutionary ways and revolutionary families in conservative ways, and the cultural expressions arising from the landscapes of family change show that the boundaries between dictatorship and democracy, and dictatorship and opposition, are not as clear-cut as we might imagine.

In the rest of this thesis, I will turn my focus to an in-depth analysis of three different aspects of resistance which have helped to redefine the institution of the family in these countries. The first chapter, *Mothers and the Fatherland*, shall represent the older generation, the parents of the generation of the disappeared, and will focus on the role of the father in particular, examining the often forgotten role of the fathers of the disappeared and comparing this to the image of the symbolic father as presented by the dictatorships. This chapter will then examine the conflict between male and female, and masculine and feminine, in the Chilean novel *El desierto* by Carlos Franz, exploring the masculinisation of dictatorial violence in contrast to the feminisation of resistance. I will argue that the fathers of the disappeared helped to undo the image of violent masculinity by taking a supportive, often unseen, role in resistance and helping their wives to step into the public sphere in order to counter the symbolic father image created by the dictatorships.

The second chapter, *Revolutionary Mothers*, will move onto the protagonist generation, the generation of the disappeared, and mainly focus on the role of the mother – namely the young mothers who combined activism with motherhood, who tried to strike a balance between the need to look after their children as well as possible and their belief that their resistance to dictatorship would create a better world for their children to live in. I will examine the memoir *Something Fierce* by Carmen Aguirre, the daughter of a Chilean mother who resisted the Chilean dictatorship at any cost, and the film *Infancia clandestina*, directed and co-

written by Benjamín Ávila, whose mother was disappeared during the Argentinian dictatorship alongside his baby brother. These works have been written by people who experienced their mothers' activism and its consequences first hand, and their insight into the struggle that these women experienced will challenge patriarchal understandings of the role of mother. I will tie the struggle for a balance between domestic life and public life to that of everyday women in a period when most mothers did not work outside of the home, and demonstrate how this fight for a public voice helped to advance the idea of the working or publicly active mother.

Finally, in the third chapter, *Children and Memory*, I shall discuss the younger generation, the children of the protagonist generation, and how their activism during the transition to democracy has helped to widen the public understanding of who has a right to air an opinion about the dictatorships, and to challenge perceptions considered unshakeable by earlier generations. I shall show that as those who personally experienced the violence begin to pass away, new voices emerge to ensure that the entire post-dictatorship generation remembers what happened, and that as the boundaries of victimhood widen, so do the boundaries of the family. I will examine the novel *Las cenizas del cóndor* by Fernando Butazzoni, discussing the figure of the illegally appropriated child of militants and examining how this figure has led to new questions about the meaning of family. I will also discuss how the new generations can hold new opinions about the dictatorial period, including new understandings of the roles played by different actors during this time.

The texts I have chosen to discuss are particularly interesting because they all bridge the gap between dictatorship and democracy, between a traditional system and the new opportunities afforded by demographic transition. All of them

were written since the turn of the millennium looking back at the military regimes, and all of them therefore contain a tension between normativity and liberty, between social expectation and personal freedom. All of these texts undermine the 'official story' of the dictatorships by giving voices to the marginalised and pushing new, and at the time stigmatised, family forms into the spotlight, challenging the supposed superiority and universality of the patriarchal family. All of them emphasise the importance of the individual and the family in resistance to a much larger social and political regime, which is shown in its immutability to be clumsy, slow-learning and eventually fallible, while the adaptability of the family – especially along the lines described by the second demographic transition – allows for much more resilience.

Overall these three chapters will represent the trinitities of family in this era: Father, Mother, and Child; older generation, protagonist generation, younger generation; tradition, revolution, consolidation; *justicia, verdad, memoria*.

Chapter 1 Mothers and the Fatherland

In 1985, as he stood trial for crimes committed during the Argentinean dictatorship, including murder and torture, Emilio Massera, naval officer and leading participant in Argentina's 1976 coup, said from the stand: 'estamos aquí porque ganamos la guerra de las armas, y porque perdimos la guerra psicológica'⁸². In his understanding, the population of Argentina could not be controlled merely by the fear of violence, but by a complex psychological narrative – one which, he conceded, the military had eventually lost. Without controlling the minds of the people, the military could not command the power necessary to retain control over the country. And this is true in Chile and Uruguay as well: once the people were given the opportunity to vote in plebiscites, the continuation of the dictatorships depended upon the extent to which the population ascribed to the ideology of the regimes. The majority – although not a vast majority – did not, and democracy was eventually restored to these three countries.

This chapter is going to analyse the complex familial narrative employed by the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, examining how the patriarchal family became a symbol of the nation in Argentina and Chile, with ideological beliefs replacing consanguinity as a sign of belonging or not belonging to the 'national family'. I will then show that the organisations of the families of the disappeared, particularly the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, ran a successful counter-propaganda campaign and turned the tide against the regimes. I will analyse how they systematically picked apart the military's ideology and how their struggle led to motherhood, which had been traditionally located in the private sphere, taking a place in the public arena. Then I will examine a topic which has been very rarely

⁸² Frank Graziano, *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality and Radical Christianity in the Argentine 'Dirty War'* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), p. 51.

touched upon: the role of male relatives of the disappeared in resisting the dictatorships, and how their actions paved the way for radical new understandings of gender and equality. Finally, I will analyse the Chilean novel *El desierto* by Carlos Franz, examining gender and family in his narrative, which situates an apocalyptic war between good and evil, order and chaos, ancient goddesses and the modern patriarchal church, into a microcosmic story of a small city in northern Chile during and after the dictatorship. The novel invokes and subverts many of the ideas central to the dictatorial narratives of gender and family, and provides a fascinating insight into the foundations of their power.

Patriarchal Power

The dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s in the Southern Cone had strong ties to the capitalist west, particularly the United States. With the Cuban revolution in 1959 and Chile electing socialist Salvador Allende in 1970, the United States was afraid that socialism would spread throughout the continent, giving the USSR influence right on their doorstep in the heart of the Cold War⁸³. As such, the dictatorships had an economic interest, and in the case of Uruguay and Argentina where civil unrest had been growing, there was also the intention of quelling the violence before the countries dissolved into chaos. But the regimes, rather than basing their power in economic or social terms, were based on an ideological foundation of patriarchal family. This was in no way unusual for Latin America – dictatorial regimes in the region had been couched in patriarchal imagery since the times of Spanish rule, and this imagery had been carried through independence and to the modern day. Elizabeth Dore explains how traditionally in Latin America

⁸³ Clara Kardonsky, 'Reseña Histórica' in *Arpilleras da resistência política chilena*, ed. by Roberta Bacic, (Sao Paulo, Pinacoteca do Estado, 2011), pp. 10-13 (p. 10).

'politicians' legitimacy and relations of civil society were constructed along patriarchal or familial lines', adding that 'patriarchal authority was a central tenet of the Spanish colonial legal system⁸⁴. Under this system, society was hierarchically structured: a paternalistic leader ruled over his 'children' in the nation, while within the home the father ruled over his children as the 'state's representative within the household'⁸⁵. However, in this system, the power of the father and of the leader are interdependent: the father's legitimacy stems from his role in representing the state, and the leader's legitimacy stems from his role as a 'national father'. They are both, in a sense, a surrogate for the other. As such, this interdependency is only effective in a patriarchal environment, where the symbol of the Father⁸⁶ is one that is still equated with absolute and unquestioned power. And in the Southern Cone in the 1970s, the Law of the Father was in fact already beginning to erode. As we have seen in the introductory chapter, the Southern Cone had begun to experience huge social and demographic change: women had better access to education and were taking their place in the workforce. The introduction of family planning centres and easily accessible contraceptives had allowed women the chance to take control over their fertility, and large numbers of women were choosing to limit their family size and focus on their careers. As women had begun to provide for their families financially, the 'traditional basis of legitimacy' for the Father figure, which was 'based on the fulfilment of male

⁸⁴ 'The Holy Family: Imagined Households in Latin American History', *Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Elizabeth Dore (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), pp. 101-17 (p. 107); (p. 108).

⁸⁵ Dore, p. 108.

⁸⁶ Capitalisations are used throughout the chapter to distinguish between a flesh-and-blood father and the symbolic Father, and likewise a flesh-and-blood mother and the symbolic Mother, and a family and the symbolic Family.

responsibilities as the sole support of the family' was being chipped away⁸⁷. In order to be able to base their regimes on patriarchal control, the dictatorships would also have to reinforce this increasingly fragile patriarchal control. Therefore, the military discourse would simultaneously underline the patriarchal family as 'the centrepiece of social stability' – and as such, the only true form of the family – and present the dictatorships as merely an 'intensification of the patriarchal order'⁸⁸. Elizabeth Jelin explains how 'rituals of power in the public sphere' served to reinforce the image of an 'active/empowered masculine subject', making the patriarchal family 'more than the central metaphor of [the] regimes', but instead its 'literal reality'⁸⁹.

In Foucauldian theory, 'power and discourse are interrelated [...] discourses both reflect and reproduce power relations, while power produces discourses': Foucault states that 'in order to gain mastery' of something 'in reality, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language'⁹⁰. As such, publicly performed gender roles simultaneously both reflect and create gender relationships in society, meaning that public displays of hypermasculine militarism during the dictatorships served to 'shap[e] not only the construction of desired

⁸⁷ Ricardo Cicerchia, 'The Charm of Family Patterns: Historical and Contemporary Change in Latin America', *Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Elizabeth Dore (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), pp. 118-33 (p. 125).

⁸⁸ Dore, 1997: p. 101; Mary-Beth Tierney-Tello, *Allegories of Transgression and Transformation: Experimental Fiction by Women Writing Under Dictatorship* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 6.

⁸⁹ *State Repression and the Struggles for Memory*, trans. by Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatuvia (London: Latin American Bureau, 2003), p. 78; p. 82.

⁹⁰ Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood: Discourses and Experiences* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 11; David Delaney, *Law and Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 259.

masculinities but the whole order of gender relations'⁹¹. This discourse sought to define the roles of every member of the 'national family' by outlining what was to be expected from men, women and children, and to couch these roles in natural terms, based on the 'assumption that everything that comes from nature is necessarily good'⁹². The reinforcement of the patriarchal system primarily stemmed from the control of women. There was 'a significant gendered component' to military ideology, which aimed to redirect women's roles away from the public sphere and back to 'the house and home'⁹³. The goal was to 'marginali[se] women, thereby reinforcing patriarchal control over women's bodies, reproductive labour, and the family'⁹⁴. In the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, where neoliberal economic policies were stripping away key state support for families, the domestic work of women, which is usually 'unremunerated and unacknowledged or under acknowledged' was to play a key role in filling the gaps left by these pared-down services, and in combatting the economic crises by 'trying to find affordable clothes and food, and mending and making their own clothes'⁹⁵.

Under a patriarchal system, as Elizabeth Badinter explains, 'the human being had become a precious commodity for the State, not only because he produces wealth but also because he is the basis of its military power': if children

⁹¹ David H. J. Morgan, 'Theatre of War: Combat, the Military and Masculinities' in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, (London: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 170-85 (p.170).

⁹² Aminatta Forna, *Mother of all Myths: How Society Moulds and Constrains Mothers* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 19.

⁹³ Mala Htun, *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce and the Family Under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies*, (Cambridge: UP, 2003), p. 19; Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, 'Militant Motherhood Revisited: Women's Participation and Political Power in Argentina and Chile', *History Compass* vol. 5, no. 3 (2007), pp. 975-94 (p. 976).

⁹⁴ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 976.

⁹⁵ Dara Z. Strolovich and Erica Townsend-Bell, 'Sex, Gender and Civil Society' in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, ed. by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola and Laurel S. Weldon, (Oxford: UP, 2013), pp. 367-89 (p. 378); Erin E. O'Connor, *Mothers Making Latin America: Gender, Households and Politics Since 1825* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2014), p. 256.

are the key resource of a neoliberal state, they need the investment of time and resources to help them to grow, and with a decreased state apparatus, this investment was to come from the labour of women⁹⁶. To encourage this labour, dictatorial imagery called upon the 'morally superior yet submissive and self-abnegating mother'⁹⁷. The implication, of course, was that women who did not sacrifice their own desires – for education, for a career – in order to look after their families were going against nature; they were unnatural, immoral, abhorrent. While the dictatorships seemed to praise mothers highly, this 'lip-service', as Elia Geoffrey Kantaris sees it, was actually a system of control: on the other side of this coin lay the threat of being labelled a 'bad mother', a label which, in a society where 'women are basically recognised and valued only as mothers', meant losing all sense of identity⁹⁸. Yet even the role of 'good' mother is one lacking in subjectivity; Luce Irigaray describes a mother as 'someone who makes the stereotypical gestures she is told to make, who has no personal language, who has no identity'⁹⁹.

Mothers in Latin America are bound by the principles of *marianismo*: the feminine ideal, 'the belief in "female spiritual superiority"'¹⁰⁰. *Marianismo*, like its masculine counterpart *machismo*, is 'extreme and problematic'¹⁰¹. Jean Radford describes how 'the Mother is the fixed perfect image of the ideal', while in contrast

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Badinter, *The Myth of Motherhood: A Historical View of the Maternal Instinct*, trans. by Roger DeGaris, (London: Souvenir Press (Educational and Academic) Ltd, 1981), p. 125.

⁹⁷ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 986.

⁹⁸ *The Subversive Psyche: Contemporary Women's Narrative from Argentina and Uruguay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 210; Ximena Bunster, 'Surviving Beyond Fear: Women and Torture in Latin America' in *Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children and Human Rights in Latin America*, ed. by Marjorie Agosín (New York: White Pine Press, 1993), pp. 98-125 (p. 101).

⁹⁹ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 986.

¹⁰⁰ Francie R. Chassen-López, 'From Casa to Calle: Latin American women transforming patriarchal spaces', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol 9, No 1, Spring 1997, pp. 174-91 (p. 175).

¹⁰¹ O'Connor, p. 9.

'a mother is always what falls short of that image'¹⁰². Tellingly, the word *machismo* derives from 'macho', meaning male, whereas *marianismo* derives from 'Maria', the mother of Jesus: not all women, but rather just one highly idealised woman who is held up as an example to all women. The fact that she is a religious icon is also incredibly important: in 1970, 92% of all Latin Americans self-identified as Catholic¹⁰³. Serinity Young explains that 'religion teaches people what it means to be female or male when it expands gender symbols into narratives, laws, customs and rituals'¹⁰⁴. In Christianity, the feminine is presented in two polarised ways: Eve, the first woman, condemns humanity to suffering and mortality with her sin; Mary, the mother of Jesus, gives birth to the son of God, the saviour of humanity. Femininity is, in the words of Sherry Ortner, 'sometimes utterly exalted, sometimes utterly debased, rarely within the same normal range of human possibilities'¹⁰⁵. *Marianismo* is an ideal which 'does not represent women' and 'establish[es] an extreme model that normal women are unable to live up to'¹⁰⁶. Underneath this idealisation of motherhood lies a deep anxiety concerning the otherness and potential danger of women: women are, as Young shows, frequently presented as being connected to evil, darkness and chaos in religious texts, and in 'patriarchal mythology' as 'impure, corrupt, the site of discharges, bleedings, dangerous to masculinity': womanhood is inescapably corporeal, while masculinity attempts 'to

¹⁰² Jean Radford, 'My Pride and Joy' in *Balancing Acts: On Being a Mother*, ed. by Katherine Gieve (London: Virago Press, 1989), pp. 132-44 (pp. 143-44).

¹⁰³ Pew Research Centre, 'Religion in Latin America: Widespread Change in a Historically Catholic Region', 13 November 2014.

<<http://www.pewforum.org/files/2014/11/Religion-in-Latin-America-11-12-PM-full-PDF.pdf>> [accessed 27 August 2015], p. 26.

¹⁰⁴ *An Anthology of Sacred Texts by and about Women* (London: Pandora Harper Collins, 1993), p. x.

¹⁰⁵ Young, pp. xviii-xix.

¹⁰⁶ Young, p. xxv.

negate, to transcend the body'¹⁰⁷. And yet mothers are somehow able to escape these negative associations: 'the religion of Motherhood proclaims that all mothers are saintly'¹⁰⁸. These paradoxical notions are only able to continue side-by-side because 'the masculine imagination' categorises women, dividing them between 'good or evil, fertile or barren, pure or impure'¹⁰⁹. The fertility of women is an immense power, and by controlling the social narratives surrounding fertility, a patriarchal society is able to wield this power. Adrienne Rich, discussing gender symbolism in religious narratives, says that 'it is not from God the Father that we derive the idea of paternal authority; it is out of the struggle for paternal control of the family that God the Father is created'¹¹⁰. The Christian narrative with which all men, women and children in the Southern Cone would have been familiar places the Father at the head of the household and traps the Mother in the gilded cage of Mother-worship, condemned to chase forever an impossible, symbolic ideal of womanhood that has been constructed in order to exploit her labour for the benefit of the state. The dictatorships of the Southern Cone were able to take advantage of these already established symbols and social roles and merely intensify them for their own purposes. But although they were all drawing from the same source – the Christian, patriarchal family – all three regimes used these symbols in different ways, reflecting their own cultural differences. I will now examine in more detail how symbols of the patriarchal family pervaded the narratives of oppression in these three countries.

¹⁰⁷ Young, p. xxii; Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago Press, 1997), p. 34; Leonard Duroche, 'Male Perception as Social Construct' in *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, ed. by Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 170-85 (p.174).

¹⁰⁸ Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by HM Parshley, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 528.

¹⁰⁹ Rich, p. 34.

¹¹⁰ Rich, p. 67.

Patriarchal Power in Argentina

Argentina is a natural place to start, as the military regime in Argentina is well-known for the extent to which it used symbolism and public displays as a tool to control the populace: Diana Taylor describes 'the entire scenario of "national reorganisation"' as 'highly theatrical' in terms of the 'subtext or master narrative used by the military' to fit the population into predetermined and controlled roles¹¹¹. Prior to the Argentinian military coup, the country was in a state of crisis due to the weak leadership of Isabel Perón and the increasingly violent actions of the Montoneros, despite the fact that 'property and not people' was their main target¹¹². Richard Gillespie says that the Montoneros 'help[ed] to create a climate of insecurity and social disorder' and 'certainly became a factor in the military decision to [...] attempt a political solution to the Argentine crisis'¹¹³. Due to this increasingly unstable environment, the Argentinian military Junta adopted a narrative which clearly delineated the boundaries between 'good' Argentinian people and 'bad' subversive people, whose actions were threatening the country and its well-being; these people were to be excluded from the Argentinian national 'family'. Judith Filc examines at length how this narrative, which separated the 'padres, madres e hijos *sanos* de nuestro país' from the "'malos"' argentinos', was constructed¹¹⁴. The Junta saw it as their responsibility to return Argentina to its "'verdaderos" y "naturales" valores [...] encarnados en la tríada "Dios, Patria,

¹¹¹ 'Performing Gender: Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo' in *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality and Theatricality in Latin/o America*, ed. by Diana Taylor and Juan Villegas, (London: Duke UP, 1994) pp. 275-305 (p.275).

¹¹² Richard Gillespie, 'Montoneros: Soldiers of Perón' in *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. by Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo (Durham, Duke UP, 2002) pp. 377-385 (p.382).

¹¹³ Gillespie, p. 383.

¹¹⁴ *Entre el parentesco y la política* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1997), p. 35, emphasis in original; p. 69.

Hogar” and wished to ‘reaffir[m] the family as the base of our society’¹¹⁵. In order to do so, they constantly referenced the good, Christian family in public discourses: ‘los “valores morales esenciales argentinos” eran los de la cristianidad’¹¹⁶. The nation became defined as ‘una gran familia’, with the Father figure, the Junta, as its leader and moral compass; the citizens were depicted as ‘niños inmaduros que necesitaban un padre firme’, who could ‘distinguir el bien del mal’¹¹⁷. Frank Graziano discusses how the symbolism in the discourse of the Junta, including ‘the Natural Order [...], the depiction of society as a living organism [...] binary, archetypal oppositions [...] [such as] Good and Evil, Order and Chaos’ came from Medieval authoritarian rule, with the aim being to create a climate of ‘terror, blind faith, and absolute authority’¹¹⁸. He cites Emilio Massera stating that the Junta believed that ‘God has decided that we [...] should have the responsibility of designing the future’, and the symbol of the Father fits neatly into the pre-established patriarchal link between Father, Ruler and God seen in the Medieval imagery that the Argentinian dictatorship was adopting:

the authority of a king over his subjects, and that of a father over his children, were of the same nature [...] neither authority was based on contract, and both were considered “natural”. The king and the father were accountable for their governance to God alone¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁵ Filc, pp. 34-35; Jo Fisher, *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance and Politics in South America* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1993), p. 143.

¹¹⁶ Filc, p. 45.

¹¹⁷ Filc, p. 44; p. 47; p. 48.

¹¹⁸ Graziano, p. 12.

³⁸ Graziano, p. 12; Lorna McKee and Margaret O’Brien, ‘The Father Figure: Some Current Orientations and Historical Perspectives’ in *The Father Figure*, ed. by Lorna McKee and Margaret O’Brien (London: Tavistock Publications, 1982) pp. 3-25 (p. 15).

Judith Filc concurs that the symbolic connection made between the nation and a family established the Junta 'sobre bases "naturales"', stating that the 'fronteras nacionales estaban tan bien delimitadas como las paredes de la casa', but she points out that unlike a biological family, where the connection is inborn and for life, membership in the national Family 'dependía de la evaluación por parte del Estado-padre de la moral de los ciudadanos-hijos. Las fronteras de la nación-familia eran entonces fácilmente modificadas'¹²⁰. In an attempt to defend these symbolic values, the Junta made legislative decisions that affected real families, including vetoing a change in the *patria potestad* law which would have given mothers equal parenting rights, the closure of family planning centres and the censorship of morally unacceptable topics including the depiction of extramarital sexuality or the challenging of 'natural' gender roles¹²¹. The dictatorship also reinforced the importance of 'good' families in schools, through a programme of 'Educación Moral y Cívica' as well as a secondary school class on the family, the reasons for which were described in *La Nación*: 'la consolidación de la unidad familiar era la "etapa inicial para la obtención de una nación en paz"'¹²².

With a national discourse that centred morality in the family, the next logical step was to centre blame for the actions of the youth upon their upbringing. Television announcements 'intentaba[n] generar un sentido de responsabilidad y culpa en los padres acerca de la conducta de sus hijos'; the parents of subversives were 'padres que no habían podido proteger a sus hijos de la "corrupción" [...] eran "malos" padres'¹²³. One particularly memorable television announcement asked parents if they knew where their children were at this hour of the night: '¿Sabe Ud.

¹²⁰ Filc, p. 68.

¹²¹ Filc, pp. 68-69; Tierney-Tello, p. 142.

¹²² Filc, p. 37.

¹²³ Filc, p. 38; p. 52.

dónde está su hijo ahora?', even as thousands of families were searching for their disappeared family members¹²⁴.

The cynicism of this question betrays the hollowness of the use of the symbol of the Family by the Argentinian dictatorship: while the Family was sacred, real families often fell victim to state repression: the military were 'at once valorising and destroying the family'¹²⁵. Judith Filc explains how 'en muchos casos, los parientes eran secuestrados y torturados para extraerles información acerca de sus familiares [...]. Algunos padres eran obligados a pedirles a los hijos que confesaran sus "actividades subversivas"¹²⁶. As we shall see in a later chapter, the children of subversives were counted as part of the 'botín de guerra', kidnapped and given to military families to raise with 'the "right" kind of political thinking'¹²⁷. One judge, Delia Pons, told a family who were trying to get their children returned to them in 1978 that 'no pienso devolverles los hijos porque no sería justo hacerlo. *No tienen derecho a criarlos*'¹²⁸. The notion that a biological family had 'no right' to raise their own children may seem at first to directly contrast with the rhetoric of the Argentinian Junta, but as we have seen, mere biological links were not considered sufficient to confirm one's place in the Family: values, rather than blood relationships, defined membership in the group. The family home, too, was a hollow symbol for the dictatorship: it was held up as a symbol of safety and protection in comparison to the street, which was a site of 'inmoralidad', but the

¹²⁴ Edgardo Vannucchi, *Recordar y entender: carta abierta a los padres: la última dictadura militar 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires : Ministerio de Educación - Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2007), <http://www.elortiba.org/pdf/Gente_Carta-Padres.pdf> [accessed 17 July 2016], p. 21.

¹²⁵ Chassen-López, p. 188.

¹²⁶ p. 37.

¹²⁷ Filc, p. 37; Sue Lloyd-Roberts, 'Argentine Grandmothers Determined to Find "Stolen" Babies', *BBC Newsnight*, 4 April 2013

< <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-22004491> > [accessed 29 June 2015]

¹²⁸ Abel Madariaga (ed.), *La historia de Abuelas: 30 años de búsqueda* (Buenos Aires: Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, 2007), p. 28, my own emphasis.

searches of homes were undertaken with little respect for the supposed boundary between the 'private' and 'public' worlds: 'the home [...] became the target for repressive tactics'¹²⁹. The lesson, although not openly stated, was clear: those who stepped outside of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour as delineated by the dictatorship no longer pertained to the national Family, and the benevolent Father would become repressive in order to cut out subversion.

Patriarchal Power in Chile

Unlike in Argentina, the period directly preceding the military coup was a peaceful one: rather than intending to stabilise the country as in Argentina, the aim of the Chilean coup was to take control of the Chilean economy. Salvador Allende, who was elected in 1970, was the world's first democratically elected socialist leader, and his socialist policies were not universally popular. In December 1971 and October 1972, thousands of right-wing women marched through the streets of Santiago banging empty pots and pans and calling for military intervention to stop price rises and food shortages¹³⁰. The military coup intended to reintroduce capitalism to Chile and to undo the 'intolerable shortcomings of Allende's Peaceful Road to Socialism'¹³¹. As the political environment was different from that of Argentina, the rhetoric of the military was also different: it still had a familial basis, but instead of focusing on the control of the nation's wayward 'children', Chilean military discourse focused much more on the economy. Vast privatisation projects dissolved the majority of governmental social support, 'reducing the number of

¹²⁹ Filc, p. 94; Taylor, p. 286.

¹³⁰ Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburg: UP, 2009), p. 127; William Columbus Davis, *Warnings from the Far South: Democracy versus Dictatorship in Uruguay, Argentina and Chile* (London: Praeger, 1995), p. 178.

¹³¹ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 128.

State enterprises from 513 to barely more than 20'; in order to pick up the burden for these lost services, the dictatorship created 'a massive volunteer movement, based on the unpaid labour of women' which 'helped to cushion, however minimally, the impact of the military's economic policies'¹³². As I have discussed above in more general terms, the unremunerated labour of women was encouraged by reinforcing the traditional image of women as 'abnegada[s]'¹³³ (304). Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet called on women to 'excel in their 'inborn' responsibilities and expected them to 'serve others' in 'self-surrender''¹³⁴. She became head of the *Secretaria Nacional de la Mujer*, and under her leadership the *Centros de Madres* 'became the main vehicle for the diffusion of military ideology'¹³⁵. The *Centros* offered their members 'medical care, legal assistance, scholarships for her children's education, housing and food' as a reward for 'attending pro-Pinochet political events' while simultaneously seeking to 'demobilise and depoliticise women'¹³⁶. Wives of military men were heavily involved in the daily workings of the *Centros*, and their presence 'functioned as a mechanism of control and surveillance'¹³⁷. The military pared back contraceptive services and 'supported a pro-natalist doctrine' which aimed to make motherhood, and by extension, the home, 'women's primordial task'¹³⁸. Pinochet publicly thanked women for 'the technical contribution of the female professionals' but

¹³² Change, *The Military Ideology and the Dissolution of Democracy: Women in Chile* (London: Change International Reports, 1981), p. 15; Margaret Power, 'Defending Dictatorship: Conservative Women in Pinochet's Chile and the 1988 Plebiscite' in *Radical Women in Latin America: Left and Right*, ed. by Victoria González and Karen Kampwirth (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 2001), pp. 299-324 (pp. 305-06)

¹³³ Power, p. 304.

¹³⁴ Pieper Mooney, 2009: p. 135.

¹³⁵ Fisher, 1993: p. 179.

¹³⁶ Power, p. 307; Patricia Richards, *Pobladoras, Indigenas and the State: Difference, Equality, and Women's Rights in Chile* (Piscataway: Rutgers UP, 2004)

p. 37; Susan Franceschet, *Women and Politics in Chile* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005) p. 61.

¹³⁷ Richards, 2004: p.37.

¹³⁸ Pieper Mooney, 2009: p. 136; p. 143.

added that Chile should not forget ‘the anonymous work in the laboratory that is the home’ where women raise their children, ‘the future hope of the Fatherland’ and said that he believed it necessary to ‘deepen the consciousness of woman in herself and of society in the task that is hers’¹³⁹. The repeated reinforcement of women’s place as the home and their role as nurturer of her family led to women losing employment at a higher rate than men, and this disproportionality implies that this increase was not merely due to economic reasons, but rather a change in societal attitudes¹⁴⁰. Jo Fisher describes how the Chilean dictatorship attempted ‘to limit, if not eliminate, a public role for women’ and that ‘maternity benefits and labour rights were revoked’¹⁴¹. Employers could now ‘sack pregnant employees’ and had no obligation to ‘provide or subsidise childcare for female employees’, which complicated the possibility of employment for many women, leading them to leave their jobs and once more be financially dependent¹⁴². The responsibility for any economic shortcomings was nonetheless placed solely upon women: women were deemed, according to a 1974 editorial in *El Mercurio*, to ‘have the responsibility for the regulation of the family’s consumption [...] it is she who can create or discourage a fashion of superfluous expenditure’¹⁴³. And in a pro-Pinochet book published before the 1988 plebiscite, many problems that may have been attributable to economic issues, such as the 1982-83 economic crisis, where ‘even official unemployment was over 30%’ were instead attributed to ‘la inestabilidad familiar’, which was blamed for ‘el abandono, la mendicidad, la vagancia y la miseria a miles de pequeños’¹⁴⁴.

¹³⁹ Change, p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Franceschet, p. 63.

¹⁴¹ 1993: p. 11.

¹⁴² Fisher, 1993: p. 179.

¹⁴³ Change, p. 16.

¹⁴⁴ Franceschet, p. 65; Sí Campaign, *¡Sí! Pinochet* (Santiago: Editorial Sí Limitada, 1988), p.

The Chilean regime, as we can see, based its power upon 'economic modernisation and social conservatism'¹⁴⁵. The ideals of the self-sacrificing Mother were used to try to replace state services with volunteer ones, while women were encouraged to remain within the home and to keep a careful eye on their families' finances. Despite new legislation making it harder for women to find and retain work, particularly if they had children, financial difficulties within the home were deemed the fault of women, as were many economically driven social issues. Women were presented as both the cause of and the solution to societal and financial problems, and as we shall see later, large numbers of Chilean women responded by taking matters into their own hands.

Patriarchal Power in Uruguay

In Uruguay, the situation was quite different: although the regime did maintain a belief in the patriarchal family, as evinced by the introduction in 1972 of a new 'Educación Moral y Cívica' class in which 'hablaban contra el feminismo, de la familia y de la autoridad del padre', these ideas rarely surfaced in military discourse¹⁴⁶. The omission of patriarchal ideology from general public address may be explained in relation to Uruguay's gender culture. Uruguay has a long history of liberalism with regards to gender roles and family policy: as I have mentioned in the introductory chapter, divorce was legalised in 1907, 80 years before its legalisation in Argentina in 1987 and almost a century before Chile in 2004, but interestingly the law was changed in 1913 to allow for unilateral divorces to take place, but only at the request of the woman – in the words of the

88.

¹⁴⁵ Htun, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ Liv Eide, *Mujeres, dictadura y resistencia en Uruguay (1973-1984)*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bergen, 2001), p. 42.

then President José Batlle y Ordóñez, ‘no queremos otra cosa que la liberación de la mujer dentro del matrimonio’¹⁴⁷. This was a truly exceptional case; in most other cases and other countries, the man’s word was law inside his home. The gradual erosion of patriarchal control within the household was further demonstrated in 1946, when the *Ley de Derechos Civiles de la Mujer* was approved: it stated that ‘la mujer y el hombre tienen igual capacidad civil’, that ‘la mujer casada tiene la libre administración y disposición de sus bienes propios’ and ‘la patria potestad será ejercida en común por los cónyuges’¹⁴⁸. The change to the *patria potestad* law is especially crucial. *Patria potestad* was, in the words of Elizabeth Dore, ‘the centrepiece of patriarchal law’: it meant that ‘all male household heads [...] exercised legal authority over their wives and children, and represented family members in the public domain’¹⁴⁹. This law ‘bound sons and daughters to obey their father and wives their husband’; disobedience could even lead, in some cases, to imprisonment¹⁵⁰. As such, the inequality of gender relationships in the home was not merely a cultural one, but was actively enforced by the state. By changing this law to allow *patria potestad* to be ‘ejercida en común por los cónyuges’, the focus changed from paternal rights – the right of the father to control his family – to parental partnership: the responsibility of both parents to look after their children. And it may be because of this legislative difference between Uruguay on the one hand and Argentina and Chile on the other – where mothers were given equal parental rights in 1985 and 1998 respectively¹⁵¹, notably only *after* the dictatorships had ended – that the Uruguayan dictatorship did not utilise the

¹⁴⁷ Wanda, Cabella, ‘La evolución del divorcio en Uruguay (1950-1995)’, *Notas de población*, vol. 67/68 (1998), pp. 209–245 (p. 219).

¹⁴⁸ Eide, p. 35.

¹⁴⁹ p. 108; p. 106.

¹⁵⁰ Dore, p. 108.

¹⁵¹ Htun, p. 7.

symbol of a benevolent Father dictator: the idea of a family headed exclusively by the father was an outdated one. This meant that a regime which couched its power in purely patriarchal terms would be looking thirty years into the past, which would threaten its relevance, and as I have explained in the introduction to this chapter, the dictatorships depended on the majority of the population ascribing to their ideals. Uruguay even became a signatory of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, while still under military rule¹⁵². Furthermore, Uruguay was a more secular nation than its neighbours: in 1970, the World Religion Database found that 91% of Argentinians and 76% of Chileans self-identified as Catholics, compared with 63% of Uruguayans¹⁵³. Uruguay has a long history of laicism, with the 1917 constitution establishing the definitive separation of Church and State¹⁵⁴. As such, the image of the patriarchal family – an image of the family which is based on 'the Holy Family of Nazareth' – is one which would not be relevant to the country's culture: it would seem an inorganic imposition to insist upon this family image as the basis of the dictatorship's power, and may have even undermined the authority of the regime¹⁵⁵.

As we can see, all three countries make reference to the patriarchal institution of the Family, but each did so in a different way, reflecting their precise political environment. In Uruguay, the Family was not frequently referenced: there was an attempt to educate adolescents in traditional values, but the gesture was rather limited by the social context of Uruguay, which had introduced *patria*

¹⁵² Sylvia Chant with Nikki Craske, *Gender in Latin America* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2003), p. 30.

¹⁵³ Pew Research Centre, p. 27.

¹⁵⁴ Carmen Asiaín Pereira, 'Religion and the Secular State: Uruguayan Report', 2014 <<http://www.iclrs.org/content/blurb/files/Uruguay.1.pdf>> [accessed 3 September 2015], p. 770.

¹⁵⁵ Change, p. 5.

potestad compartida decades earlier, and which was markedly more progressive than its neighbours. In Chile and Argentina, while efforts were made to encourage the (re)adoption of patriarchal familial structures, through the complication of working conditions for women, a decreased accessibility of contraceptives and the censorship of other family types in popular media, the priority was to use the Family as a symbol, a vehicle for the interests of the regimes. In Chile, the focus was on economic stability in the wake of Salvador Allende's socialist government, while in Argentina the focus was on social stability after a period of increasing unrest. Yet it is important to highlight that this symbol was a hollow one: the well-being of real families paled in importance compared to the prominence of the national Family, and the regimes did not hesitate to adopt policies that seemed contradictory, with Chile's public services being pared down even as General Pinochet declared his intentions to eradicate poverty and infant malnutrition, and Argentina's military committing acts of violence even as they publicly called for calm and peace. There is probably no more obvious indication that real lives were secondary to the interests of the nation than the decision – by both the Chilean and Argentinian Juntas – to send pregnant women to the Antarctic to give birth: the idea being that children born in the Antarctic would help to cement these countries' claim to this territory. In 1978, the first child born in this region was Emilio Marcos Palma, son of an Argentinian military man¹⁵⁶. In 1984, Chile followed suit when Juan Pablo Camacho was conceived and born there¹⁵⁷. The idea

¹⁵⁶ Radio Cable, 'Argentina y Chile hicieron nacer bebés en la Antartida para reclamar el territorio', 11 December 2008 <<http://www.radiocable.com/bebes-antartida775.html>> [accessed 3 October 2015].

¹⁵⁷ Camilo Bravo, 'Chile en la Antártica: a treinta años del primer chileno nacido en el fin del mundo', *24 Horas*, 25 November 2014 <<http://www.24horas.cl/tendencias/espectaculosycultura/chile-en-la-antartica-a-treinta-anos-del-primer-chileno-nacido-en-el-fin-del-mundo---1506774>> [accessed 3 October 2015].

of sending a seven-month-pregnant woman to give birth on a military base in one of the least hospitable environments on earth shows a distinct lack of concern for the welfare of both mother and child: they were, to the regimes, merely pawns to be used for the national interest.

Women's Resistance

Michel Foucault states that 'where there is power, there is resistance'; Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon describe how 'for Foucault, whenever power is exercised, a resistant discourse emerges which is empowering for different groups of people'¹⁵⁸. In the Southern Cone, where the military dictatorships used their power to repress and control, the discourses of resistance often mirrored and drew upon the discourse of oppression. Deborah Lupton and Lesley Barclay, describing how dominant discourse shapes gender identity, explain that

because there are a number of ways of constructing subjectivity, a range of competing discourses and meanings upon which we can draw in understanding the social and material world and ourselves, spaces are produced for individuals to oppose, reject or transform what they perceive to be constraining or reductive subject positions¹⁵⁹.

Despite the patriarchal discourse, which pushed women to the margins, women soon emerged as protagonists of the resistance against dictatorship, with

¹⁵⁸ Mark G. E. Kelly, *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 107; Alsop, Rachel, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon, *Theorising Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 83.

¹⁵⁹ Lupton and Barclay, pp. 11-12.

most public resistance organisations being led by women, including many of the relatives' associations¹⁶⁰. While the regimes labelled women as 'apolitical' and connected women with the supposedly private sphere of family and home, they were highlighting women's responsibility for the welfare of this sphere, and in their defence of 'everyday life issues', women became 'the most formidable [...] opponents of the new masters'¹⁶¹. With the private realm increasingly under attack by agents of the regime, 'private roles [became] public issues', and women placed themselves in the frontline of protest¹⁶². But the identities that they adopted in resistance were not merely those of women: they were the identities of wives and mothers, whose justification for stepping outside of their apolitical role lay in their relation to others. Their protests were centred on their families because there was a biological obligation to fight for them: unlike a political organisation or a community, either of which could dissolve, 'nadie puede dejar de pertenecer a una familia. Una familia [...] no deja de existir'¹⁶³. Furthermore, motherhood was one of the only social roles available to women: 'a woman essentially lived for someone and something else – i.e., her family and the nation' – and motherhood was the 'most socially rewarding' option 'in a society that values mothers almost to the exclusion of all other women'¹⁶⁴. Their mobilisation protested, ostensibly at least, actions by the dictatorships that would 'upset the balance of the family and thus

¹⁶⁰ Mary Green, 'Dialogue with Chilean novelist, Diamela Eltit' in *Feminist Review* no 79, (2005) pp. 164-71 (p. 167).

¹⁶¹ Carina Perelli, 'Putting Conservatism to Good Use: Women and Unorthodox Politics in Uruguay, from Breakdown to Transition', in *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Jane S. Jaquette (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) pp. 95-113 (p. 104).

¹⁶² Richards, 2004: p. 39.

¹⁶³ Filc, p. 99; Juan M. Pérez Franco, 'Dinámica familiar y represión política' in *Infancia y represión: Historias para no olvidar*, ed. by Loreto Alamos et al (Santiago: Editorial ARGE Limitada, 1992) pp. 145-165 (p. 162).

¹⁶⁴ Power, p. 304; Taylor, p. 294; Cynthia L. Bejarano, 'Las Super Madres de Latin America: Transforming Motherhood by Challenging Violence in Mexico, Argentina and El Salvador', in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol 23, No 1 (2002) pp. 126-150 (p. 131).

society as a whole'¹⁶⁵. Women's actions, especially when justified by family needs, were 'less likely to be considered as "politically" motivated' than men's, as women were able to 'mobilise "apolitical" identities of mother and carer', which made women's mobilisation safer than men's, although it is important to remember that women still faced terrible danger, including 'sex-specific forms of torture, rape and murder'¹⁶⁶. Their 'basis for mobilisation' lay in the very same 'traditional gender expectations' that the regimes themselves called upon, and as such they adopted the role that Elsa Chaney has labelled 'supermadre': 'if a society assigns only one honourable vocational option, then any deviance from the norm apparently must be justified in terms of the valued universal model'¹⁶⁷. In other words, these women were only able to justify their political actions by relating them back to the dominant patriarchal discourse that exalted mothers: in order to stay within the acceptable boundaries of female behaviour, these women had to adopt and appropriate the image of the Mother for their own purposes. The concept of 'women's use of maternal responsibilities to justify engagement beyond the domestic sphere' has been termed 'militant motherhood', and it is a complex and seemingly paradoxical one: it is founded upon patriarchal notions of motherhood as the site of caring and domestic labour, but it simultaneously adapts and questions some of the central tenets of motherhood, namely its private and domestic setting¹⁶⁸. Andrea O'Reilly sees motherwork as 'a political act' whose results are not seen merely in the private sphere, but also 'in the world at large'¹⁶⁹. By taking their private grief and rage into the public sphere, women in the

¹⁶⁵ Strolovich and Townsend-Bell, p. 376.

¹⁶⁶ Fisher, p. 109; Chant and Craske, p. 27; Richards, 2004: p. 39.

¹⁶⁷ Strolovich and Townsend-Bell, p. 376; Change, p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 975.

¹⁶⁹ Andrea O'Reilly, *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering* (Toronto: Demeter Press, 2006), p. 15.

Southern Cone were able to call upon maternity's 'historical dimension', which is 'explicitly distinguished from an individual one', to escape the 'insilio de puertas adentro' and to collectivise maternity¹⁷⁰. They recognised that motherhood, when wielded as a collective interest, 'was a source of power' and not merely a tool to oppress and constrain individual women¹⁷¹.

In the following section, we shall see how women were able to use their maternal role collectively to challenge dictatorial discourse, exposing the violence behind the narrative of a national Family. I shall show how women's resistance reflected but subverted the discourse of the nation, and how, just as the dictatorships celebrated family values while destroying real families, women's mobilisation both adopted the symbols of patriarchal motherhood while simultaneously reshaping motherhood from a private institution to a public force. Then I shall show how women's actions in defence of practical gender interests – 'household, family and public welfare' – managed to transform women's strategic gender interests – 'targeting female subordination instituted by patriarchy'¹⁷².

Resistance in Argentina

As I have stated above, the main tool of the Argentinian dictatorship was its complex narrative and use of symbols to clearly define who was and was not a member of the Argentinian national Family. The key to resisting the dictatorship therefore lay in undermining this master narrative and revealing the brutal truth that lay behind it. The principal public resistance to the military Junta came from

¹⁷⁰ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 987; Lucía Edelman and Diana Kordon, 'Resignificación del rol materno y protagonismo social' in *Sur, dictadura y después: Elaboración psicosocial y clínica de los traumas colectivos*, ed. by Diana Kordon, Lucila Edelman, Darío Lagos and Daniel Kersner (Buenos Aires: Psicolibro Ediciones, 2010) pp. 173-183 (p. 178); p. 174.

¹⁷¹ Chant and Craske, p. 10.

¹⁷² Chassen-López, p. 182.

the families of the detained and disappeared, particularly the *Asociación de Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, whose struggle against tyranny became known around the world, becoming ‘a pioneering example after which similar movements modelled themselves’ worldwide¹⁷³. The organisation had simple beginnings: the *Madres* met while searching for their missing children, and believed that they could achieve more as a group¹⁷⁴. Their first walk around the square took place on the 30th April 1977, and while it was largely ignored by local press, foreign press began to take note¹⁷⁵. In November 1977, a group of women whose daughters had disappeared while pregnant broke off from the *Madres*, and formed their own organisation, which would eventually become known as *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*: their primary aim was to find their missing grandchildren¹⁷⁶. Not long afterwards, the *Asociación* was shaken by the kidnapping of twelve members, three of whom – Esther Ballestrino, María Ponce de Bianco and the group’s then-leader Azucena Villaflor de Vicenti – were tortured and killed¹⁷⁷. However, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* were not daunted by this violence, and the organisation began to grow: their protests in 1978 during the Argentinian World Cup brought recognition, and support, from groups across Europe; in 1980, the *Madres* began to publish their own newsletter; and in 1981 they began ‘marchas de resistencia’, which were 24-hour-long walks around the square¹⁷⁸. After the return to democracy, the group split in two, with one group retaining the original name and continuing to meet and protest, and the other group, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora*,

¹⁷³ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 985.

¹⁷⁴ Filc, p. 63.

¹⁷⁵ Filc, p. 62; p. 63.

¹⁷⁶ Filc, p. 64.

¹⁷⁷ Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 983; Vladimir Hernández, ‘¿Por qué Madres y no Padres de Plaza de Mayo?’, *BBC Mundo*, 10 June 2011

<http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/06/110609_argentina_padres_plaza_de_mayo_vh.shtml> [accessed 29 June 2015].

¹⁷⁸ O’Connor, p. 208; Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 983; Filc, p. 63.

believing that they could make more of an impact by ‘ke[eping] connected to [...] political negotiations’ and leaving behind the ‘apolitical position of militant motherhood’, which the *Asociación* still clung to¹⁷⁹. When compensation was offered to the families of the disappeared, the *Línea Fundadora* accepted the payment, while the *Asociación* refused it: they still call for the ‘aparición con vida’ of the disappeared, and believe that to accept compensation would be to accept that their children were dead¹⁸⁰.

In order to understand why the *Madres* have had such a lasting impact on the public imagination, and how they ‘succeeded in seriously damaging the Junta’s legitimacy and credibility’, we must understand their use of symbols ‘que permitían poner en cuestión la ideología dominante y crear [...] nuevos discursos’ which could confront and challenge ‘la ‘verdad’ del Estado’¹⁸¹. The *Madres* chose to centre their entire group identity on the very symbol that the state was using as the foundation of their rule: the Family – they identified themselves in accordance with their biological link to the victims of the regime: ‘eran “madres de”’¹⁸². Judith Filc considers ‘el uso de las mismas metáforas del discurso dominante con el significado opuesto’ to be ‘un aspecto fundamental del discurso opositor de los familiares’¹⁸³. But their acceptance of the social role of motherhood gendered the use of the symbol of the Family: motherhood, ‘the feminine ability to conceive and nurture life’ was ‘juxtaposed to the masculine pursuit of death’; it was still considered ‘una responsabilidad de la madre’ to ‘mantener a las familias unidas en

¹⁷⁹ Vladimir Hernández, ‘¿Por qué hay Madres de Plaza de Mayo que no buscan a sus hijos?’, *BBC Mundo*, 30 April 2012
<http://www.bbc.com/mundo/movil/noticias/2012/04/120426_argentina_madres_plaza_mayo_vh.shtml> [accessed 29 June 2015]; Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 984.

¹⁸⁰ Hernández, 2012.

¹⁸¹ Taylor, p. 290; Edelman and Kordon, p. 176; Filc, p. 103.

¹⁸² Filc, p. 103.

¹⁸³ Filc, p. 70.

una atmósfera de amor y cuidado’, and they drew their strength from this social expectation¹⁸⁴. The glorification of the symbol of the Mother became a key tool for the *Madres*: they repeatedly used symbols of pregnancy and birth as a sign of the ‘unidad física entre madre e hijos’, and claimed a physical link with their children even ‘después del secuestro’¹⁸⁵. They wore white headscarves, which evoked the Virgin Mary, while Hebe de Bonafini, now leader of the *Asociación*, ‘has been known to demonstrate in her bedroom slippers to underline the hominess, and thus nonthreatening aspect, of their movement’¹⁸⁶. Morality was ‘del lado de los familiares, cuya lucha es la lucha por la vida’: their peaceful protests and symbols of maternity contrasted with the ‘force and the weapons of the military’ and had a ‘powerful emotional appeal’¹⁸⁷.

The movement of traditional maternal symbols into the public sphere has been termed ‘la socialización de la maternidad’, and it brings with it new and revolutionary understandings of family relationships¹⁸⁸. Beatriz Schmukler explains that ‘maternalidad social’ involves the care and love of motherhood, but rejects ‘el aislamiento y la devaluación de la mujer madre’; the group reacted to the invasion of public spheres ‘by reclaiming as their own the streets and a plaza’, and creating ‘un hogar fuera del hogar’¹⁸⁹. However, their rejection of the isolation of motherhood did not simply involve bringing maternal problems into the public sphere: the *Madres* also redefined what it meant to be a mother when they

¹⁸⁴ Stacey Schlau, *Spanish American Women’s Use of the Word* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 2001), p. 174; Filc, p. 74.

¹⁸⁵ Filc, p. 74; p. 75.

¹⁸⁶ Chassen-López, p. 181; Taylor, p. 295.

¹⁸⁷ Filc, p. 78; Marcelo Bergman and Mónica Szurmuk, ‘Gender, Citizenship, and Social Protest: The New Social Movements in Argentina’ in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*, ed. by Ileana Rodríguez (London: Duke UP, 2001) pp. 383-401 (p. 390); Fisher, 1993: p. 135.

¹⁸⁸ Filc, p. 86.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Introduction’ in *Madres y democratización de la familia en la Argentina contemporánea*, ed. by Beatriz Schmukler and Graciela Di Marco (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1997) pp. 17-26 (p. 18); Bergman and Szurmuk, p. 390; Filc, p. 102.

proclaimed themselves as ‘mothers of all of the disappeared’ – ‘todos los desaparecidos son hijos de todas las Madres’, which breaks from the purely biological definition of family¹⁹⁰. The *Madres* considered each other ‘hermanas’, bound not by blood ties but by ‘la experiencia política’; this shared experience of ‘sufrimiento y [...] lucha’ distinguished them from ‘cualquier madre’ and justified ‘el uso de la máyuscula en la palabra madre’¹⁹¹. They also challenged the roles of family by defining themselves as the product, at least in a political sense, of their own children, who become ‘figuras paternas, los portadores de la “semilla”, padres de sus propios padres’: the notion that ‘nuestros hijos nos parieron’ symbolised the *Madres*’ second birth into the ‘mundo “real”, fuera de la paz del hogar’, where they would take part in ‘a struggle inspired by the ideals of their children’¹⁹².

Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite some radical new understandings of family ties, the symbols of the *Madres* are still very much ‘sosteniendo la ideología dominante sobre la familia’, which they consider ‘como la imagen de la familia ideal’¹⁹³. Diana Taylor highlights the paradox that ‘even as they took one of the most daring steps imaginable in their particular political arena, they affirmed their passivity and powerlessness’; she describes how they ‘challenged the military but played into the narrative [...] both parties were re-enacting the same old story’¹⁹⁴. And it is true that the *Madres* ‘are not interested in eliminating maternity as gender identification’; they are not a feminist group¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹⁰ Alicia Partnoy, ‘Textual Strategies to Resist Disappearance and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo’ in *Representing Humanity in an Age of Terror*, ed. by Sophia A. McClennen and Henry James Morello (West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2010) pp. 221-231 (p. 222).

¹⁹¹ Filc, p. 85; p. 27; p. 75.

¹⁹² Filc, p. 83; Edelman and Kordon, p. 174; Filc, p. 84; Fisher, 1993; p. 134.

¹⁹³ Filc, p. 103; p. 71.

¹⁹⁴ Taylor, p. 295; p. 301.

¹⁹⁵ Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard, *Revolutionising Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de*

Nevertheless, they have used the traditional image of the Mother in a revolutionary way: by 'politicis[ing] marianismo' they are able to 'challenge and disrupt the patriarchal social and political structures on which *marianismo* rests: religion, government, armed forces'¹⁹⁶. The *Madres'* struggle to defend the rights of the 'children' of the nation 'reveal[ed] the hypocrisy of a government that sought to glorify maternity and yet took their children from them': the Family, used by the state as justification for the violence of disappearance was shown to be its 'ultimate victim', with the 'stability, structure, and privacy' of the institution 'deeply affected'¹⁹⁷. And while the *Madres* 'are more prepared to respond to a crisis than to institutionalise a durable model of participation', their actions have meant that 'mothers, flesh and blood women, are now more free to act and take to the streets'; their home is now 'a negotiated space'¹⁹⁸. Furthermore, the *Asociación* have been able to use the authority that they have gained through their political activism to spread their influence to other spheres: they have founded a university, a radio station and even constructed social housing, which has led to some critics suggesting that the organisation 'perdió su esencia'¹⁹⁹.

Although, as I have said, the main focus of female resistance in Argentina centred around the symbolic battle between the military Junta and the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, there were also a few economic organisations that are worth a brief mention. Jo Fisher says that Argentina did not see 'collective solutions to the problem of growing poverty'; these groups were common in Chile and Uruguay as

Mayo (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1995), p. 187; Fisher, 1993: p. 25; Taylor, 1994: 291.

¹⁹⁶ Schlau, p. 176.

¹⁹⁷ Tierney-Tello, p. 7; Guzmán Bouvard, p. 35.

¹⁹⁸ María Del Carmen Feijoo, 'The Challenge of Constructing Civilian Peace: Women and Democracy in Argentina', in *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Jane S. Jaquette (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) pp. 72-94 (p. 78); Taylor, p. 301.

¹⁹⁹ Hernández, 2012.

we shall see, but in Argentina they were 'virtually unknown', as 'economic crisis arrived later in Argentina'²⁰⁰. However, the fall in quality of life towards the end of the dictatorship did inspire the foundation of one very interesting organisation: the trade union of housewives. In the context of disillusionment following the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War, a group of middle-class women from Buenos Aires called for a '24-hour shopping strike': in July they formed the *Sindicato de Amas de Casa* in order to 'protest against the rising cost of living'²⁰¹. Their activism called attention to the economic difficulties in the country and inspired other women to act: there were 'empty pot marches' in the south of the country, and a nationwide 'don't buy on Thursdays' movement²⁰². Their actions worried the agents of the dictatorship, who tapped the phones of the women involved and threatened them: 'as we were walking down the street they'd drive slowly alongside us in the green Ford Falcons without number plates that they used when they kidnapped people'²⁰³. After democracy was restored, in 1984, the *Sindicato de Amas de Casa de la República Argentina* (SACRA) was formed, this time considering housewives not 'as consumers, but as workers'²⁰⁴.

Their activism was, in some ways, very radical: they stated that 'the whole of society benefitted from the work of housewives' and that housewives should be considered 'workers with rights, not as wives and mothers carrying out their work out of love and duty', which called into question some of the central tenets of social understanding of family²⁰⁵. The group argued that as workers, housewives

²⁰⁰ Fisher, 1993: p. 142; Jo Fisher, 'Gender and the State in Argentina: The Case of the *Sindicato de Amas de Casa*' in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, ed. by Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux (London: Duke UP, 2000), pp. 322-345 (p. 338).

²⁰¹ Fisher, 1993: p. 145; p. 146.

²⁰² Fisher, 1993: p. 147.

²⁰³ Fisher, 1993: p. 147.

²⁰⁴ Fisher, 1993: p. 150.

²⁰⁵ Fisher, 2000: p. 326.

deserved all of the benefits available to public sector employees, such as ‘wages, health insurance system [...] and pension’, and they had some successes: in 1987, it was ruled that the housewife’s work had a value ‘at half the monthly wage of a husband in paid work’, which was a major step towards societal recognition for domestic work²⁰⁶. The union’s health insurance scheme was also very popular, leading to a ‘spectacular increase in membership’: their claimed membership would place them ‘among Argentina’s largest’ unions, with figures reported to be around ‘five hundred thousand women’ – although Jo Fisher is sceptical, referencing ‘more sober estimates of approximately fifty thousand’, but says that this would still make it ‘a potentially significant bloc within the organised trade union movement’²⁰⁷. However, the union was also problematic: many unions believed that the concept of a wage for housewives would hinder their fight for a ‘family wage’, while feminist groups feared that it would ‘reinforc[e women’s] ties to the home’, complicating their entrance into paid labour outside of the home²⁰⁸. SACRA was able to combat the notion of housewives as ‘inactive and passive’ and of domestic work as isolated and a labour of love rather than ‘real’ work, but it did not ‘challenge the very notion of women as housewives’, and in fact reinforced the idea that domestic work was the sole responsibility of women; if men were to take on household work, it could ‘leave women redundant’²⁰⁹. Ultimately, SACRA was unable to win its fight for a wage for housewives, although the union ‘achieved some success [...] in raising public awareness of housework’²¹⁰.

There are some parallels that can be drawn with the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*: both organisations called upon traditional, patriarchal notions of a woman’s

²⁰⁶ Fisher, 2000: p. 326; p. 336.

²⁰⁷ Fisher, 1993: p. 155; p. 157; 2000: p. 332.

²⁰⁸ Fisher, 2000: p. 332; 1993: p. 155.

²⁰⁹ Fisher, 2000: p. 334; 1993: p. 156.

²¹⁰ Fisher, 2000: p. 336.

work and did not challenge the gender binarisms upon which these notions lay, but through forming a group and making their activism public, they were able to transform how their role was understood and resist marginalisation. Neither group had a large impact on how the average Argentinian woman lived her life, but their activism gave women a voice and combatted the traditional invisibility of women in public²¹¹. These women proved that through collective action women could make their voices heard, and even if the content of their message was not particularly revolutionary, the form it took certainly was.

Resistance in Chile

According to Frohmann and Valdés, resistance to dictatorial power in Chile took three main forms: 'human rights groups, economic survival organisations, and feminist groups'²¹². The main human rights group was the *Agrupación de Familiares de los Detenidos Desaparecidos*, which was formed by a group of women who met each other while searching hospitals and prisons for their missing children; they were assisted by the *Comité Pro Paz* (later the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*) and the group was founded formally in 1975²¹³. The *Agrupación*, which was 'made up almost entirely of women' organised peaceful protests, including hunger strikes, such as 'La Huelga de Hambre Larga' in response to the 1978 Amnesty law, which involved around one hundred people²¹⁴. They also

²¹¹ Fisher, 2000: p. 338.

²¹² Richards, 2004: p. 38.

²¹³ AFDD, 'Presentación de la Agrupación de los Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (AFDD)', <<http://chileddhh.blogspot.co.uk/p/agrupacion-de-detenidos-desaparecidos.html>> [accessed 3 October 2015]; Elías Padilla Ballasteros, *La memoria y el olvido: Detenidos desaparecidos en Chile* (Santiago: Ediciones Orígenes, 1995), p. 46.

²¹⁴ Marjorie Agosín, *Scraps of Life: Chilean Arpilleras*, trans. by Cola Franzen, (London: Zed Books, 1987), p. 3; Jennifer G. Schirmer, "'Those Who Die for Life Cannot Be Called Dead": Women and Human Rights Protest in Latin America' in *Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children and Human Rights in Latin America*, ed. by Marjorie Agosín (New York: White Pine

sought to spread the message of what was really happening in Chile, which they achieved through the distribution of *arpilleras*.

Arpilleras were patchworks made from scraps of cloth, often the clothes of the disappeared which depicted daily scenes from life under dictatorship: poverty in the shanty towns, military violence, and protest²¹⁵. The women gave their *arpilleras* to friendly organisations such as the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* or the Communist Party, which distributed them abroad and gave the proceeds to the women who had made them²¹⁶. These *arpilleras* had a huge impact – both in the lives of women, by ‘creating a grassroots export’ which helped women whose husbands were unemployed, imprisoned or disappeared to ‘pay the [...] bills’ – and in spreading the truth about the dictatorship abroad: they were able to take their personal stories and perspectives and ‘carry [them] across the world’²¹⁷. Marjorie Agosín, who has spent decades documenting the work of the *arpilleristas*, describes these women as ‘living traditional lives [...] moved to political activity by problems of a personal nature’; they used the ‘typically feminine tasks of sewing and embroidering’ to create their pieces²¹⁸. But despite using traditional tools, the work that they created was revolutionary in nature: they were ‘the only dissident voices existing in a society obliged to silence’, and the women who worked on them formed revolutionary new relationships²¹⁹. Each workshop was ‘a family,

Press, 1993) pp. 31-57 (p. 47).

²¹⁵ Marjorie Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: the Arpillera Movement in Chile* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 33; Agosín, 1987: p. 83.

²¹⁶ Jacqueline Adams, *Art Against Dictatorship: Making and Exporting Arpilleras under Pinochet* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), p. ix

²¹⁷ Roberta Bacic, ‘Introduction’ in *Transforming Threads of Resistance: Political Arpilleras and Textiles by Women from Chile and around the World*, coord. by Leah Wing (Massachusetts: UMass Amherst UP, 2012), p. 2; Roberta Bacic, ‘The Art of Resistance, Memory, and Testimony in Political Arpilleras’ in *Stitching Resistance: Women, Creativity and Fibre Arts*, ed. by Marjorie Agosín (Tunbridge Wells: Solis Press, 2014), pp. 65-72 (p. 69); Agosín, 2008: p. 19; Bacic, 2014: p. 69.

²¹⁸ 1987: p. 10; p. 11.

²¹⁹ Agosín, 2008: p. 45.

replacing in considerable measure the family that was lost when family members disappeared' and the women found that their work and the community atmosphere of the workshops gave them confidence in their personal lives: one woman described her isolation and resignation in the face of domestic violence, saying that after joining the workshop she 'learned to have friends and to speak up at the meetings'²²⁰. And *arpilleras* workshops were not the only community activity that resisted the dictatorship and helped women to gain confidence in their home lives: the same phenomenon has been witnessed in relation to economic activism at the time.

As I have stated above, the Chilean dictatorship was marked by economic hardships, and the regime dramatically reduced state services, a move which 'intensified [women's] work in their homes and communities' as they tried to fill the gaps²²¹. Ann Matar says that 'the community is viewed as an extension of [women's] role as caregivers', and that 'popular economic organisations and protest[s] against the economic crises' were 'in defence of their traditional roles'; the women were demanding 'the right to care for their families', as economic difficulties meant 'the inability to fulfil their traditional obligations'²²². These women were adopting the conservative gender narrative of the dictatorship and using it to justify their actions, which were often in open defiance of the regime: they were claiming for themselves the role of 'defenders of the values of the family', a role which the military believed was theirs²²³. The economic organisations set up by women included *talleres productivos*, workshops where

²²⁰ Agosín, 1987: p. 72; 2008: p. 53.

²²¹ Chant and Craske, p. 164.

²²² 'Desde la protesta a la propuesta: the Institutionalisation of the Women's Movement in Chile', in *Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Elizabeth Dore (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), pp. 84-100 (p. 86); p. 94; Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 979.

²²³ Franceschet, p. 65.

they could make and mend clothing and household items; *ollas comunes*, which were shared kitchens; and *comprando juntas*, shopping collectives which allowed women to pool their resources and buy in bulk, saving money²²⁴. But there was a political element to these organisations, too: one woman who worked in an *olla común* told Jo Fisher, ‘the kitchen had to be visible because it was a form of protest, to show there was hunger in our country [...]. Journalists began to come to see the kitchen’²²⁵. However, the display of hunger and economic difficulties was not their only radical act: although they were acting in defence of their traditional maternal roles, the methods they were using were new and challenged some of the principal traits of the patriarchal maternal ideal: namely, that motherwork belonged in the isolated domestic sphere. As the women began to spend more time with women who shared common experiences, they found themselves feeling more confident about talking about their personal lives, and the economic organisations often expanded to include ‘workshops on sexuality, family relations and personal development’ as well as ‘childcare [and] health’²²⁶.

This newfound sense of community, along with an educational programme, meant that women began to challenge not only the authoritarian rule of the dictatorship, but also the authoritarian nature of their home lives. They recognised that the patriarchal structures that the dictatorship was founded upon stemmed from the traditional, patriarchal Chilean ideal of Family, and they began to adopt the slogan ‘Democracy in the Country and in the Home’, connecting ‘military [violence] to domestic violence’²²⁷. *Movimiento Feminista*’s 1983 manifesto declared that ‘the family is authoritarian’ and highlighted the many ways in which

²²⁴ Franceschet, p. 65.

²²⁵ 1993: p. 31.

²²⁶ Franceschet, p. 66; Fisher, 1993: p. 37.

²²⁷ Fisher, 1993: p. 185; Pieper Mooney, 2007: p. 981.

women suffered discrimination, including 'female political participation and representation, work [...] the welfare state, education, family relations, legislation and violence against women'²²⁸. As recognition of the political power that groups of women could have begun to grow, more women found that they could overcome their 'fear of getting involved in politics' by adhering to 'the norms defined by their gender ideology'; that is, by centring their activism in their 'role as mothers'²²⁹. The 1980s saw an 'intense period of women's resistance and public demonstrations', known as *Las Protestas*, which 'helped pave the way towards redemocratisation'²³⁰. In December 1983, for example, 10,000 women gathered at the Caupolicán Theatre in Santiago to protest the dictatorship, 'despite the fact that a significant police presence was outside' – this moment signalled the birth of the peaceful protest group *Mujeres Por la Vida*, and was 'the largest display of opposition to the dictatorship up to that point'²³¹. Women were also 'extremely active' in the No campaign in the lead up to the 1988 plebiscite, using the patriarchal belief in women's 'moral voice' to emphasise the human rights issues of the regime and show how it 'threatened the integrity of the family'²³².

While working towards democracy, many female activists recognised the potential for 'gendering the transition': calling for significant, lasting change in the transition period²³³. Feminists were able to 'place their gender-based demands on the public agenda', calling for legislation such as 'quotas for women in decisionmaking and reproductive choice' that would bring about a "more democratic" democracy' than before the dictatorship, where the home, as well as

²²⁸ Franceschet, p. 73; Matear, p. 87.

²²⁹ Franceschet, p. 65.

²³⁰ Pieper Mooney, 2009: p. 158.

²³¹ Franceschet, p. 71; Richards, 2004: p. 42.

²³² Franceschet, p. 78.

²³³ Franceschet, p. 59.

the family, would be truly democratic.²³⁴

Resistance in Uruguay

Just as the Uruguayan dictatorship was notably distinct from those of Argentina and Chile through its lack of use of the symbol of the Family as a justification for its rule, so too was the Uruguayan resistance notably distinct from that of Argentina and Chile. As in Chile, ‘women’s groups’ such as *ollas comunes* and shopping collectives were set up to mitigate the effects of neoliberal economic policy, and as in Argentina the main protest to dictatorship came from family members of the detained and disappeared, but unlike in these two countries, the membership of the relatives’ groups resisting the dictatorship were not exclusively or almost exclusively female²³⁵. Despite the notion, also prevalent in Uruguay, that human rights were a ‘female’ issue – ‘en el tema Derechos Humanos los hombres no están nunca [...] eso es cosa de mujeres’ – the family groups protesting the dictatorship were much more mixed than in the other two countries²³⁶. As we have seen above, the Uruguayan dictatorship was the only one to not make a strong appeal to the gender roles of the past, which cited the family in the female sphere of responsibility; this would, as I have explained, been an archaic notion in a country that had adopted *patria potestad compartida* decades earlier. As such, the responsibility to defend family members who were victims of the regime was not

²³⁴ Franceschet, p. 59; Matear, p. 87.

²³⁵ Perelli, p. 107.

²³⁶ Gabriel Bucheli, Valentina Curto and Vanesa Sanguinetti, *Vivos los llevaron: Historia de la lucha de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (1976-2005)*, coord. by Carlos Demasi and Jaime Yaffé, (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2005), p. 28.

It is worth noting that this is a direct quotation from Oscar Urtasun, a male member of Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos: this idea has been internalised, but it evidently does not reflect the actual makeup of the organisation.

seen as an exclusively female role. Firstly I will give a brief history of the relatives organisations in Uruguay, then I will discuss their gender dynamics.

The group now known as *Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos* had a much more complicated formation than that of Chilean and Argentinian relatives' groups. Due to various difficulties, including the fact that many disappeared Uruguayans had been kidnapped abroad, and the large number of exiles who had left Uruguay in the early years of the dictatorship, the efforts to find out information about missing loved ones were dispersed and often isolated²³⁷. The small number of victims also contributed, as did the notion, propagated by the dictatorship, that 'esas cosas no pasan en Uruguay'²³⁸. Gradually, three distinct groups formed. The first was a group of relatives of Uruguayans disappeared in Argentina, as many Uruguayan militants had fled to Argentina at the start of the Uruguayan dictatorship: the meetings by these relatives, mostly mothers, eventually led to the formation of the *Madres de Uruguayos Desaparecidos en Argentina* in 1979²³⁹. The second was a group of exiled Uruguayans who gathered to call international attention to their disappeared relatives in Uruguay: in Paris in 1978 they formed the *Agrupación de Familiares de Uruguayos Desaparecidos*²⁴⁰. The final group, *Familiares de Desaparecidos en Uruguay* was formed in 1983 with the help of the *Servicio de Paz y Justicia* (SERPAJ)²⁴¹. SERPAJ members were the first to see the possibilities of

²³⁷ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 18.

²³⁸ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 41.

²³⁹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 22.

²⁴⁰ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 22.

²⁴¹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 22. The formation dates of these groups should not be taken as a definitive beginning of their actions but merely as the date when these groups were formalised: members of the group for the disappeared in Argentina began meeting informally as early as 1976 (p. 22).

combining the search of the different groups, which began in 1983²⁴². By this time, resistance to the Uruguayan dictatorship had begun, and the Uruguay-based relatives were active participants in protests and demonstrations as they tried to counteract the 'franco desconocimiento de la gente' regarding the issue of disappearances in Uruguay²⁴³. They also began to give informative talks, and their walks around Plaza Libertad on Friday evenings, which had begun on a small scale in 1981 became 'un verdadero símbolo de la lucha por los Derechos Humanos' as more and more people joined²⁴⁴.

After democracy was restored, *Madres y Familiares* turned their attentions to the new *Ley de Caducidad*, a law which gave perpetrators of human rights abuses during the dictatorship immunity from prosecution²⁴⁵. They formed the *Comisión Nacional Pro-Referéndum* along with SERPAJ and other human rights activists; its aim was to collect the 555,000 signatures (25% of the electorate) needed to call for a referendum, and despite the immensity of the task, after ten months they were able to hand in over 630,000²⁴⁶. Only 42% of people voted to annul the law, but the group continued their activism, which included campaigning for a memorial to be set up in 1998 and searching for the missing children of the disappeared in conjunction with the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, which we shall discuss in further detail in the final chapter²⁴⁷.

The group has become 'un permanente desafío al olvido y la impunidad', which continues to campaign for public awareness and for justice²⁴⁸. However, this group is interesting not only for its actions but also its makeup: male members

²⁴² Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 31; p. 39.

²⁴³ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 47; p. 33.

²⁴⁴ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 49; p. 33; p. 52.

²⁴⁵ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 63.

²⁴⁶ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 64; p. 67.

²⁴⁷ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 70; p. 86; p. 78.

²⁴⁸ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 9.

have played an important role in the organisation, a fact which the prominence of the name *Madres* may belie. There were several reasons to name the organisation *Madres y Familiares*: one being that mothers have had an ‘amplio y histórico predominio’ in the group²⁴⁹. However, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* had a large influence: of the three original factions, only the one for the disappeared in Argentina made reference to *Madres* in its name, and the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* have been ‘un referente permanente’; the walks around the Plaza Libertad were an ‘imitación’ as the Uruguayans tried to emulate the success of their Argentinian counterparts in achieving local and international recognition of the situation in Uruguay²⁵⁰. But there were other, more symbolic reasons: the feeling that a reference to motherhood made their fight for human rights ‘una tarea siempre legítima’; that the figure of the Mother suggests ‘el contenido esencial de la vida y de su preservación’; that ‘pudo parecer más difícil lesionar públicamente los derechos de una madre’, which would make their work easier and perhaps afford them some element of protection; because, in the words of María Ester Gatti, ‘una cosa es una madre y una cosa es un padre’: the mother would always be considered more connected to the child²⁵¹.

Yet despite the fact that the organisation was ‘casi todas mujeres’ and that several male members have mentioned how ‘me costó un poquito entrar’, men have played an important role in the group: one example is that of Ademar Recagno, whose ‘militancia más activa’ than his wife’s proved that the fathers did not always feel ‘resignados’²⁵². The story of Javier Miranda is of particular note. He joined the group when his father disappeared; he was still in school and he felt the

²⁴⁹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 8.

²⁵⁰ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 8; p. 33; p. 29.

²⁵¹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 30; p. 56.

²⁵² Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 28; p. 29.

group was ‘un viejerío’: when he describes how the members ‘hablaban como viejas, que tenían actitud de viejas’ and how they organised meetings for when he had school – ‘¡bien de viejas, que no tienen nada que hacer!’ – he highlights how out of place he felt, and how little they understood one another²⁵³. However, this attitude changed: later, when he refers to a café where all the ‘viejas’ went, he adds ‘cuando digo las viejas me incluyo’; he also speaks with admiration about the legacy of ‘mujeres que han sido capaces de incidir en la historia de un país’²⁵⁴. He eventually became a key member of the group, and in 2000 when President Jorge Batlle agreed to meet some members to discuss an investigation into the dictatorship (which would become the *Comisión para la Paz*), Miranda was one of the first people chosen²⁵⁵. He became a well-known public figure in the fight for human rights in Uruguay: in 2010 he was named Uruguay’s Director Nacional de Derechos Humanos, and in August 2016 he was elected President of the Frente Amplio²⁵⁶. His story has shown that the notion that human rights is a ‘female issue’, one which men avoid, is not necessarily true: there is also a space for men’s activism in this domain.

As we have seen, the relatives’ associations’ resistance to the dictatorships strongly reflected the context of the dictatorships themselves. In Argentina, where the main propaganda tool of the regime was the master narrative which depicted the Junta as benevolent Fathers of the nation, the major form of public resistance

²⁵³ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 43.

²⁵⁴ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 74; p. 100.

²⁵⁵ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 90.

²⁵⁶ El Cambio, “Camino a la Presidencia del FA”, 30 March 2016 <<http://www.elcambio.uy/camino-a-la-presidencia-del-fa>> [accessed 8 August 2016]; El Observador, “Javier Miranda es el nuevo presidente del Frente Amplio”, 4 August 2016 <<http://www.elobservador.com.uy/javier-miranda-es-el-nuevo-presidente-del-frente-amplio-n951119>> [accessed 8 August 2016].

came from a group of mothers, whose very public marches helped them to claim for their own the role of protectors of the country, and which revealed the true brutality of the regime. Their actions, and the later actions of economic organisations set up to resist dictatorship and to defend the rights of housewives in democracy, were at once revolutionary – in the sense that they were collectivising and making public the traditionally private role of motherhood – and also traditional – in the sense that they were calling upon their role of Mother, and reinforcing the notions of motherhood as a sacred, but subordinate, role.

Similarly, in Chile, where the dictatorship's propaganda was primarily founded on economic discourse, women used their traditional roles as housewives and mothers, and their traditional tasks such as cooking and sewing, to undermine this discourse, but the collective, public way in which they did so made their work revolutionary. In Chile, much more so than in Argentina, the women used this work as a starting point from which they could make social changes for their sex. Through creating education programmes in local community organisations, women were able to question their subordinate social role and recognise the patriarchal structures upon which the dictatorship was founded.

Meanwhile, in Uruguay, where the dictatorship did not directly call upon the symbol of the Family as a basis for its power, the work of the relatives' associations was not as gendered as in Argentina or Uruguay. Although the organisations were still predominantly run by mothers, and the symbol of Mother was called upon, men played a much more central role in active resistance than elsewhere. Their participation showed that human rights and the wellbeing of the family are not the sole responsibility of women, but that men can also play a role. However, their participation also raises questions about the reactions and responses of men in Argentina and Chile whose family members were affected by

dictatorial violence, and what we can learn about the role of men in society from these actions.

Fathers and the Fatherland

Men's participation in the relatives' associations of Chile and Argentina has been largely ignored, and has only come to light in recent years²⁵⁷. In 2010, four fathers of the disappeared in Argentina were awarded the Azucena Villaflor prize – a prize honouring those who fight for human rights – which was 'la primera vez que recibieron reconocimiento como padres'; this, along with a documentary called *Padres de la Plaza: 10 Recorridos Posibles*, released the same year, was the first public recognition of the efforts of the fathers in Argentina, and it is only since 2010 that they have been in the public eye²⁵⁸. One possible reason for the apparent invisibility of the fathers in the relatives' resistance effort is their numbers: one Chilean woman who was interviewed by Jo Fisher said that unemployed men whose wives found work would sometimes take care of their children or 'come to the [communal] kitchen to help out', but she conceded that they were 'the minority'²⁵⁹. Marjorie Agosín reports that many husbands 'prefer not to become involved'; they justify this by saying that 'there are some things that men do not do'²⁶⁰. This attitude, combined with the tendency for women to 'take on a greater role [...] in a crisis period' means that women in these organisations heavily

²⁵⁷ Roni Strier, 'Fatherhood in the Context of Political Violence: Los Padres de la Plaza', *Men and Masculinities*, Vol 17, no 4 (2014) pp. 359-375 (p. 360).

²⁵⁸ Iris Howorth, '¿Dónde están los Padres de la Plaza de Mayo? La militancia de los Padres de los Desaparecidos en comparación con las Madres', *Independent Study Project Collection*, Paper 937 (2010) <http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/937> [accessed 3 October 2015], p. 34; p. 18.

²⁵⁹ 1993: p. 34.

²⁶⁰ 1987: p. 9.

outnumbered men, and therefore the men were less visible²⁶¹. Indeed, some men did not value the efforts of community projects and disliked their wives' participation: women working in an *olla común* discussed how 'some men don't let their wives out of the house to work with us', while others 'didn't like the idea that their wife wasn't cooking the food just for them'; many of these men were unemployed and felt 'ashamed' that they were unable to provide for their wives, instead staying 'at home waiting for the women to bring them something'²⁶². Gender expectations dictated both what men felt that they could contribute to these community projects, which were founded upon work traditionally seen as 'feminine', such as cooking and sewing, but also their reactions to their wives' participation, with some resenting the fact that their wives were not entirely focused on their own households: this led to 'big fights'²⁶³.

Meanwhile, in Argentina, men's decreased visibility in these organisations may be due to the roles that they chose to take. Some of the *Padres de Plaza de Mayo* have described their roles in terms of support, saying that despite the perception, 'siempre habían estado', 'siempre están, siempre apoyan', but that 'the fathers never took a combative position like the Mothers did [...] we just accompanied them'²⁶⁴. The *Padres*' role was in the margins: they were 'usually purposely located on streets around the square in order to protect the Mothers' security'²⁶⁵. Some *Padres* mention an economic reasoning behind their perceived non-participation: 'con mi señora dividimos la tarea: yo seguía trabajando, ¡tenía que trabajar! [...]; ella iba a golpear las puertas', especially since 'en esa época

²⁶¹ Cicerchia, p. 125.

²⁶² Fisher, 1993: p. 34.

²⁶³ Fisher, 1993: p. 34.

²⁶⁴ Howorth, p. 22; p. 29; Strier, p. 370.

²⁶⁵ Strier, p. 370.

muchos padres eran el único sostén del hogar'²⁶⁶. Others mention less famous groups with whom they work: Julio Morresi 'milita con Familiares', which has not gained the same level of recognition as the *Madres* – he believes that this is due to 'la potencia que tuvo como símbolo el grupo de Madres'²⁶⁷. These men concede that the idea of a *Padres* group 'will never work' as when the men gathered 'empezamos a discutir de política y de fútbol [...] decidimos más bien mantenernos cerca de las madres, pero sin constituirnos en nada'²⁶⁸.

Gender roles in Argentinian culture also played a part in the lower participation rates of men and their supporting roles: it was perceived that 'the children belong with the mother' and that the raising of the child is 'producto de la madre: la comida, la atención de sus necesidades'; men therefore may have felt that it was not their place to lead the search for the children²⁶⁹. The fathers 'también sufrimos', but outward signs of grief were considered less socially acceptable for men than women: their feelings are, Eva Eisenstaedt explains, traditionally 'procesados en forma diferente'²⁷⁰. And this expectation rang true in many cases: where the *Madres* felt free to share their pain with one another, their husbands 'vivieron todo de una manera más introspectiva', perhaps pushed into doing so by the 'imagen del hombre que no llora o manifiesta su dolor'²⁷¹. This unexpressed pain had major consequences: Suárez-Orozco describes how these men 'often [went] into major narcissistic depressive states and develop[ed] high morbidity and death rates'²⁷². In order to regain some sense of control in their lives

²⁶⁶ Eva Eisenstaedt, *Padres de Plaza de Mayo: Memorias de una lucha silenciosa* (Buenos Aires: Marea Editorial, 2014), p. 39; Hernández, 2011.

²⁶⁷ Howorth, p. 27; Hernández, 2011.

²⁶⁸ Strier, p. 370; Hernández, 2011.

²⁶⁹ Strier, p. 370; Eisenstaedt, p. 89.

²⁷⁰ Hernández, 2011; Eisenstaedt, p. 16.

²⁷¹ Hernández, 2011.

²⁷² Taylor, p. 292.

after the trauma of a disappeared child, many fathers 'return[ed] to their traditional and *safe* roles as breadwinners', and found that this was able to help occupy their minds during the day²⁷³. On the other hand, the *Madres*, who were often housewives, had no such distractions – 'mi señora [...] estaba todo el día en casa esperando' – as such, they lead the search for their children and 'refused to give up hope'²⁷⁴.

Masculinity and Fatherhood

However, having examined the roles that men took in response to economic hardship and military violence during the dictatorships, and explained that these responses were often shaped by social gender roles in Argentina and Chile, it is worth delving deeper into the social construction of masculinity in order to fully understand the ways in which men resisted dictatorial oppression. Feminist theory has long analysed the construction of female gender roles and how 'the feminine is a response to official representations', but recent theoretical approaches to gender have also begun to analyse how masculinity, too, is a product of social conditioning²⁷⁵. Harry Brod explains that gender, for both men and women, is 'continually constituted in ongoing contestations over power', with patriarchy being not only a system by which men dominate women but also a form of domination 'among different groups of men and between different masculinities'²⁷⁶. As with women, there is a distinction to be made between the

²⁷³ Strier, p. 369, my own emphasis; Howorth, p. 27.

²⁷⁴ Howorth, p. 27; Fisher, 1993: p. 105.

²⁷⁵ Green, p. 168.

²⁷⁶ Harry Brod, 'Pornography and the Alienation of Male Sexuality' in *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, ed. by Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) pp. 124-140 (p. 125); Michael Kaufman, 'Men, Feminism and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power' in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications, 1994) pp. 142-163 (p. 145).

unchanging, bodily aspects of sex and the varying, socially constructed gender identity, which is based on 'the way those bodies are understood' and the 'ways (male) persons are expected to behave' in accordance with the social understanding of these physical traits²⁷⁷. However, despite this similarity, the way in which the male subject develops masculinity through a 'process of socialisation' is rather different from the way that a female subject develops femininity²⁷⁸.

Femininity comes from 'the lived, female bodily experience', shaped by the corporeal condition of women (that is, their potential for maternity), whereas masculinity is shaped by difference to women: Michael Kimmel states that masculinity 'is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is'²⁷⁹. The upbringing of sons is different to that of daughters: mothers 'see their daughters as more like an extension of the self, while their sons are more likely to be perceived as 'other' and are pushed towards differentiation'; as such, the female self is developed as 'a "self-in-relation"' whereas the male sense of self is 'a self that tends to deny relatedness', that is defined by its absence of female traits²⁸⁰. For Kimmel, the Oedipus complex is a defining moment in the development of a boy's masculinity: a moment where he is forced to break his 'identification with and deep emotional attachment to his mother' in order to take the father as his 'object of identification'²⁸¹. This moment, when the boy 'internalises the paternal law' allows him to 'have an autonomous ego and experience himself as an independent subject'; that is, independent from his mother, with whom he had previously

²⁷⁷ Wil Coleman, 'Doing Masculinity/Doing Theory' in *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, ed. by Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) pp. 186- 200 (p. 187).

²⁷⁸ Coleman, p. 187.

²⁷⁹ Lupton and Barclay, p. 10; 'Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity' in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications, 1994) pp. 119-141 (p. 126).

²⁸⁰ Lupton and Barclay, p. 27.

²⁸¹ 1994: p. 126.

identified²⁸². This action leads to the rejection of 'nurturance, compassion and tenderness' as embodied by the mother, which leads to the suppression of these behaviours in his own actions 'because they will reveal his incomplete separation from mother'²⁸³. The depreciation of these characteristics within himself will then lead him to 'devalue all women in his society, as the living embodiments of those traits in himself he has learned to despise'²⁸⁴. R. W. Connell adds that male children, like female children, are 'in a position of weakness vis-à-vis adults' and therefore obliged to 'inhabit the feminine position', which leads boys to experience an 'internal contradiction between masculinity and femininity', between 'striving for independence' but while being in a position of 'submission'²⁸⁵. And this position of submission is a remembered one: for Don Conway-Long, male violence is 'often a reaction to the underlying psychological reality of the child's experience of overwhelming female power' – men feel the need to exert their control when they feel most powerless²⁸⁶. This powerlessness often stems from the masculine ideal, defined in Robert Brannon's 1976 rules of masculinity:

- (a) No sissy stuff: avoid all behaviours that even remotely suggest the feminine.
- (b) Be a big wheel: success and status confer masculinity.
- (c) Be a sturdy oak: reliability and dependability are defined as emotional distance and affective distance.
- (d) Give 'em hell: exude an aura of manly aggression, go for it, take risks²⁸⁷.

²⁸² Badinter, p. 282.

²⁸³ Kimmel, 1994: p. 127.

²⁸⁴ Kimmel, 1994: pp. 127-28.

²⁸⁵ 'Psychoanalysis on Masculinity' in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications, 1994) pp. 11-38 (p. 18).

²⁸⁶ 'Ethnographies and Masculinities', in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications, 1994) pp. 61-81 (p. 74).

²⁸⁷ Michael Kimmel, 'After Fifteen Years: the Impact of the Sociology of Masculinity on the

These traits, as with the feminine ideal of *marianismo* discussed above, are romanticised notions, which the majority of men ‘cannot possibly live up to’, but they nonetheless hold ‘a powerful and often unconscious presence in our lives’, leading men to perceive themselves to be powerless even while holding actual ‘(if latent)’ power²⁸⁸.

Despite the fact that men hold power on a societal level, men often do not feel personally powerful, even though their upbringing has led them to expect to feel powerful²⁸⁹. Masculine power is based on control: the control of others, ‘on our own unruly emotions’ and ‘material resources around us’, but as humans who ‘all continue to experience a range of needs and feelings that are deemed inconsistent with manhood’, men see these needs and feelings as a sign of weakness²⁹⁰. Masculinity is by its very construction fragile: it is ‘born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine’; it becomes, therefore, impossible to ever definitively achieve, making it ‘unresolved [...] subject to eternal doubt’ and in need of ‘constant validation’²⁹¹. Michael Kaufman notes the paradox inherent in hegemonic masculinity: men are ‘prisoners of the fear’ that they are powerless, and thus must exert their power; their need to control their emotions leads these emotions to ‘gain a strange hold over us’ – men become controlled by their need to control²⁹². It is perhaps because of this that militarism remains a masculine ideal: ‘the uniform absorbs individualities’ and returns men to the

Masculinity of Sociology’ in *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, ed. by Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) pp. 93-109 (p. 100).

²⁸⁸ Kaufman, p. 144; Scott Coltrane, ‘Theorising Masculinities in Contemporary Social Science’ in *Theorising Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications, 1994) pp. 39-60 (p. 55).

²⁸⁹ Kimmel, 1994: p. 136.

²⁹⁰ Kaufman, p. 145; p. 148.

²⁹¹ Kaufman, p. 127; Kimmel, 1990: p. 100.

²⁹² p. 149.

feeling of a powerful group rather than the powerless individual²⁹³.

The paradox of being simultaneously powerless and powerful is one that we also witness in relation to fatherhood. The patriarchal Family is a hierarchical institution, with the Father at the top: as Judith Filc notes, 'en la familia tradicional no son "todos iguales", antes bien, los roles implican diferenciales de poder ocultos'²⁹⁴. The different tasks traditionally assigned to men and women have an implicit distinction in their value, with 'feminine' labour being seen as less valuable; furthermore, women's reproductive tasks mean that they have fewer opportunities to access paid labour outside of the home, as even working women have 'nearly total responsibility for children'²⁹⁵. But although the Father takes on a reduced practical role in the upbringing of his children, 'his symbolic function remain[s] essential': with Western societies being patrilinear, his surname gives children their identity, making paternity 'the coin of family relations' which is more about the 'position of father' than about the 'father-son or father-daughter relationship'²⁹⁶. However, just as men hold power as a group but may not be powerful individually, the symbol of the Father is a powerful one but individual fathers may not be, or feel, particularly powerful.

Daniel Gil, describing Lacanian understandings of fatherhood, distinguishes between three forms of father: the real father, that is, the flesh-and-blood father; the symbolic father, that is, the law and ideals; and the imaginary father, the social

²⁹³ Morgan, p. 165-66.

²⁹⁴ Filc, p. 86.

²⁹⁵ Alfredo Estrada, 'Aprendiendo a crecer. La construcción de género y la militancia política' in *Familia, Género y Terapia: una experiencia de terapia familiar sistémica*, ed. by Alfredo Estrada, Mónica Hering and Andrés Donoso (Santiago: Ediciones Codepu, 1997), pp. 21-44 (p. 25); McKee, p. 121; Nancy Chodrow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 5.

²⁹⁶ Badinter, p. 281; Martin P.M. Richards, 'How Should We Approach the Study of Fathers?' in *The Father Figure*, ed. by Lorna McKee and Margaret O'Brien (London: Tavistock Publications, 1982) pp. 57-71 (p. 70).

imagination of the 'obsceno y feroz' figure that a father can be²⁹⁷. The three forms work together: the real father transmits the law of the symbolic father with the support of the imaginary father, whose power and fear legitimises the real father²⁹⁸. However, as the social understanding of the parental role has moved in recent times 'from authority to love', the importance of the Father figure in general fell, and the Mother became central while he 'gradually retired to the sidelines'²⁹⁹. Women's role in childcare 'has been taken for granted', whereas male involvement is less expected, as 'no one has ever, even up to the present day, claimed that a father's love constitutes a universal law of nature'³⁰⁰. In the patriarchal Family, the Father figure represents law and authority, but as Elizabeth Badinter explains, the symbolic importance of the role 'is such that the flesh-and-blood father is too often forgotten'; while 'the symbolic mother is not enough' for the Family, the symbolic Father can suffice, and the real father 'can stay away all day long, punish and love from afar, without damage to the child'³⁰¹. While women are expected to identify with their families and their domestic labour, men are 'encouraged to construct their self-identities as masculine subjects through their work role', meaning that there is little space for the father in the domestic sphere of the patriarchal Family: his place, as has so often been stated, is in the public sphere³⁰².

As the symbol of the Father began to suffice in the Family, to the detriment of real fathers, so real fathers found that the symbol of the Father had marginalised their role in the dictatorships. Where the military took on the role of the Father,

²⁹⁷ Daniel Gil, *Paternidades* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2013), p. 8.

²⁹⁸ Gil, p. 11. To give a contextualising example, the military dictatorship (the real father) transmits the ideas and laws of the country (the symbolic father) through the fear of dictatorial violence (the imaginary father).

²⁹⁹ Badinter, p. 118.

³⁰⁰ Chodrow, p. 3; Badinter, p. 114.

³⁰¹ p. 282; p. 287.

³⁰² Lupton and Barclay, p. 2.

and mothers resisting the military claimed the role of Mother, real fathers found that there was little room for them in the social imagination, which may explain their marginalisation in the relatives' associations. Furthermore, the actions of the regimes often threatened the masculinity of the male citizens, rendering them weaker and less able to resist: in Chile, as we have seen, men felt 'shame' at their unemployment, as the 'ability to bring in a decent wage is still part of the masculine ideal'³⁰³. Men whose children had been affected by dictatorial violence found that their role as the 'main protector of the physical security of his children' had been 'seriously challenged'³⁰⁴. For Roni Strier, the search for their disappeared children meant the public display of 'their helplessness' and of the 'defeat of their fatherhoods by the dictatorship' as the very act of searching was a recognition that these men were not in control of their families' safety³⁰⁵. In the context of this loss, 'even the meaning of their role as providers has totally changed,' becoming 'just marginal' in the interests of the family³⁰⁶. Strier describes the position of a father of a disappeared child as being one of 'futile fatherhood', a fatherhood without power, and it is little wonder that so many men experienced their loss in a solitary and insular way, as they felt both culpable and vulnerable³⁰⁷. Once again, we see that the symbol of the male role (as personified by the military regimes) is powerful, but it can lead to feelings of powerlessness for individual men.

However, as Strier points out, this 'overt denigration' helped to usher in a new form of fatherhood: 'one focused on a subordinate role of companion to their wives'³⁰⁸. They were liberated from the 'masculine need to assert their authority,

³⁰³ Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2007), p. 106.

³⁰⁴ Strier, p. 365.

³⁰⁵ p. 368.

³⁰⁶ Strier, p. 369.

³⁰⁷ Strier, p. 372.

³⁰⁸ Strier, p. 368; p. 373.

to prove self-control, to protect, and to be self-reliant'; instead, they were able to construct a 'new, intimate, personal fatherhood [...] which transcends the boundaries of established local masculinities'³⁰⁹. The dictatorships' association of their rule with the patriarchal family and the masculine ideal cast these in a negative light, in which they were associated with violence and oppression; new forms of masculinity were therefore more appealing to those who rejected the violence of the regimes. The power of the roles taken on by female activists may also have encouraged their husbands into new forms of masculinity: Elizabeth Badinter believes that the 'new experience of fatherhood is largely attributable to the influence of women' – as women adopt a more active role outside of the home, they necessitate male assistance inside the home³¹⁰. Both she and Daniel Gil observe men taking on roles that 'antes eran consideradas como exclusivamente maternas': men have been found in recent years to be 'in many cases willing' to embrace a variety of aspects of childcare³¹¹.

As we have seen in the introductory chapter (p. 20), Chilean men 'whose wives earn more than they do tend to assume a bigger share of reproductive work', which suggests that if women assume a role more traditionally considered that of the Father (such as being the breadwinner), then men are willing to take on tasks more traditionally considered those of the Mother (namely, domestic work and childcare)³¹². Indeed, flexibility in familial roles and an increased male interest in childrearing can be large steps towards gender equality. Scott Coltrane finds that societies 'where men develop and maintain close relationships with young children [...] tend to conceive of men and women as inherently equal', possibly

³⁰⁹ Strier, p. 373.

³¹⁰ p. 325.

³¹¹ Badinter, p. 322; Gil, p. 11; Richards, 1982: p. 63.

³¹² Chant and Craske, p. 186.

because male involvement in the domestic sphere is 'a symbol of the sex-gender relations within a particular family structure'³¹³. With women's and men's roles becoming less distinct, the patriarchal Family is giving way to variety of family forms, none of which is inherently better than the others, providing that the child is raised in a safe and caring environment³¹⁴. As the countries of the Southern Cone become more secular, the patriarchal Father figure fades away – as we have seen above, this symbol had already lost its power in widely secular Uruguay – and the 'death of the Father' has allowed men to adopt roles that would have been impossible for 'el padre del patriarcado'³¹⁵.

We have seen how the actions of female activists under the dictatorships were at once traditional – in the sense that they used their traditional, societally acceptable roles as women – and revolutionary – as they moved these traditional roles into the public sphere and drew attention to the fact that the dictatorships were not actually defending the Family, as they were hurting real families. Furthermore, we have seen how, in Uruguay where gender relations were more advanced than in Chile and Argentina, the dictatorship chose not to adopt a strongly patriarchal narrative, and because of this the relatives' resistance to the regime was much more obviously gender-mixed. On the other hand, in Argentina and Chile, men were more likely to take a marginal role in resisting the dictatorships, or even to suffer their hardships in a solitary manner, as the patriarchal image of masculinity was threatened by the economic difficulties and the violence of the regimes. As I have shown, masculinity is an identity that is constructed in the negative, in relation to the feminine; as such, it is inherently

³¹³ Coltrane, p. 49; McKee, p. 121.

³¹⁴ Gil, p. 4.

³¹⁵ Gil, p. 6; p. 11.

vulnerable, and although collective masculinity may be an identity of power, individual masculinity is often connected to feelings of powerlessness. Fatherhood, too, is a powerful and yet powerless role: the symbolic power of the Father had become so powerful in patriarchal society that it had made the real fathers all but redundant within the home, limiting their usefulness to that of economic provider and protector. Yet in the difficult context of the dictatorships, real fathers found themselves unable to fulfil even these roles: the economic situation in Chile and the violence in Chile and Argentina left many men feeling incapable of performing the duties that they were socially expected to fulfil. This denigration of the role of the father, ironically performed by regimes which celebrated and founded themselves upon the symbol of the Father, pushed men to the margins and meant that they took a lesser role in relatives' associations, if any role at all.

However, it may be that the fact that these relatives' movements were led by women was revolutionary not only for women but also for men. By not being present, or by being in support behind the scenes, they were enabling their wives' political acts, but also playing a supporting role that was revolutionary for these men. Women taking the reins required men to hand them over, which signalled the start of a more equal partnership; it is even more radical when we consider that this was happening among the middle-aged or older generations, as they were the ones old enough to have adult children who had disappeared. This change may not have been very widespread and it was by its very nature not easily visible – as the revolutionary fact was that men were *not* visible in these groups' acts – but it reflects a wider move towards marriage and parenthood becoming an equal partnership rather than a system of sexist oppression. In Argentina and Chile the unequal position of the mother in the family was part of the legal system, as seen in the *patria potestad* law which granted fathers full and exclusive rights over their

children. In both of these countries this law was changed to *patria potestad compartida*, allowing mothers equal rights over their children, just a few years after the end of the dictatorships: as we have seen above, this happened in 1985 in Argentina, two years after the dictatorship ended; in Chile, it happened in 1998, eight years afterwards.

This action is highly symbolic, marking a move from a society in which women were expected to take care of the children but had no say over their future to one where both men and women are expected to play a role in decision-making and childcare; in other words, both rights and responsibilities are shared out more equally among the parental partners. And it seems that the fact that this change occurred so soon after the end of the dictatorships is no coincidence. During those difficult years, mothers had proven themselves capable of defending their children and providing for them, even under the threat of terrible retribution and, albeit on a smaller scale and in a more marginalised way, men had proven themselves capable of taking a supporting role to their wives' actions and a more affectionate and hands-on role at home. Furthermore, the connection of the dictatorships to the patriarchal Family, which had been so vital in founding the basis of the regimes in Argentina and Chile, proved highly damaging for the patriarchal system: once the regimes fell into disrepute to the general public, so too did the patriarchal system upon which they were founded. The violence of the regimes became intertwined with the violence of patriarchy, and activists were soon campaigning for an end to the latter as well as the former. These struggles were occurring in public and on a wide scale, and it is little wonder that they had such an impact on the social understanding of family.

El desierto

I would now like to shift my focus to analysing how gender roles and patriarchy are represented in the 2005 Chilean novel *El desierto*, which was written by Carlos Franz. This novel is of particular interest because of its use of the fictional northern Chilean town of Pampa Hundida as a microcosm of the politics of dictatorship: through the use of just a few characters, Franz is able to encapsulate an incredibly detailed analysis of gender relationships, social conflict and patriarchal violence during the regime. The novel has been very well received, with Mario Lillo Cabezas describing how it ‘aborda los años del régimen militar y del retorno a la democracia de manera frontal’, which suggests ‘un nuevo paradigma, una nueva etapa respecto de la novela de la dictadura’³¹⁶. He explains that in the years following the dictatorship, the quest to find the ultimate narrative of the Chilean dictatorship was considered ‘asignatura pendiente’, but that since the publication of *El desierto*, ‘el panorama crítico devino menos escéptico o pesimista en este ámbito’³¹⁷.

The novel tells the story of a military prison camp in the Atacama Desert. The story follows two main plotlines, which alternate by chapter: in one, we hear the story of the city and the prison camp in 1973; in the other, we hear the story of a young woman, Claudia, daughter of a former resident of Pampa Hundida, who travels there in 1993 to discover the truth about her mother’s past and to meet her father for the first time. As the story unfolds, we uncover contradictory and confusing facts about the early months of the dictatorship, leaving us continually guessing about the nature of the secret that the city is trying to hide. But eventually we discover the truth: that Claudia’s mother Laura, who at the time had been the

³¹⁶ Mario Lillo Cabezas, *Silencio, trauma y esperanza: Novelas chilenas de la dictadura 1977-2010* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 2013), p. 44.

³¹⁷ Lillo Cabezas, p. 15.

local judge, had helped to hide an escaped prisoner from the military camp. Enraged by the town's apparent complicity with the enemies of the dictatorship, the major in charge of the camp, Cáceres, steals the cathedral's religious icon, the focus of an incredibly lucrative local festival, and threatens to destroy it if the prisoner is not returned. A council of ten local men decides to send Laura to appease him: when she attempts to do so, he tortures her until she reveals the prisoner's location and then rapes her. But torturer and victim come to an agreement: if she returns to sleep with him, he will save one prisoner's life for each encounter. Horrifyingly, she later discovers that instead of releasing the prisoners, he has been executing them and disappearing their bodies in the desert. Appalled and feeling complicit in these executions, and having just discovered that she is pregnant, Laura flees the city. Twenty years later, despite Laura's attempts to prevent Claudia from discovering what had happened, the truth is revealed. Cáceres disappears, presumed dead, and the two women once again leave, abandoning the city to be swallowed up by its own guilt at having sacrificed Laura. The novel calls upon Biblical and pagan stories, and combines intimate, personal struggles with a wider conflict between good and evil.

The complexity of the novel – which is not merely rooted in the historical moment but also examines more universal topics such as good and evil, order and chaos, man and woman – means that every scene and character is imbued with a series of meanings. Laura is repeatedly connected to the saintly figurine of La Patrona – Cáceres calls her 'patroncita', and tells her 'usted y la Patrona se parecen: tan jovencitas, tan hermosas las dos'³¹⁸. Seeing the figure up close, Laura is struck by its tears and its smile, the ambiguity of which she describes as 'el misterio de un

³¹⁸ Carlos Franz, *El desierto* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2005), p. 57; p. 56. Further references to this edition are given in the text with the abbreviation ED.

dolor tan intenso que no se distingue del placer' (ED, p. 56). The next time that she sees the 'llorosa y sonriente' (ED, p. 236) figure, she is about to experience the 'orgasmo negro' (ED, p. 268) of her rape, a feeling that she is 'viva en medio de la muerte' while 'en medio de sus lágrimas, la Patrona sonreía' (ED, p. 269): at this moment she feels 'como si yo fuera la propia imagen de la Patrona' (ED, p. 268). Her connection to this symbol of *marianismo* shows her as the archetypal woman: a *mater dolorosa* figure who is condemned to suffer without recourse to justice, and who, in a strange way, appears to find some enjoyment in her suffering – an idea which we will discuss in more detail later.

However, this is not her only symbolic significance in the novel. Laura is, in many ways, the epitome of the new Chile of the early 1970s. She is young, intelligent, 'con tanto brillo' that she has the potential to change the country, having recently been named a judge, 'la más joven en la historia de todo el servicio' (ED, p. 16), which was 'uno de esos gestos de locura que eran la razón de esos tiempos apasionados' (ED, p. 107). We are told that these are special, revolutionary times, an 'época temeraria y revuelta, cuando parecía que el futuro había llegado y la juventud era su propietaria' (ED, p. 16). It is fitting that a young, 'maternal' (ED, p. 192) and clearly exceptional woman should be the image of the new moment in Chile, where Salvador Allende's election showed the possibility for 'algo que no se había hecho antes'³¹⁹.

However, this connection between Laura and the new Chile takes on a more sinister note when she is confronted by the figure of Cáceres, who is a symbol of Chile's patriarchy. He is obsessed with history, particularly that of his own family:

³¹⁹ Dalia Ventura, 'Por qué el golpe de Estado en Chile es tan emblemático', *BBC*, 11 September 2013 < http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/09/130906_chile_11_septiembre_golpe_emblematico > [accessed 20 August 2015].

'los Latorre y los Cáceres hemos montado en la caballería de la República desde la Independencia', and as he tells her this, Laura is struck by the notion that his emptiness is 'como si él fuera sólo el acompañante de sí mismo, de alguien mucho más antiguo que su edad' (ED, p. 237), perhaps his great-grandfather, whose portrait hangs in his home. When he greets her, he uses the first person plural, telling her 'te esperábamos', which she considers 'natural', as she sees his cause reflected in 'todo un linaje' (ED, p. 237), 'esa dinastía militar' (ED, p. 238). However, the time for military dynasties is clearly over; he is mired in 'mediocridad', having had the bad luck of fighting only in 'una guerra sucia y en ella la humillante destinación de carcelero' (ED, p. 238). Yet in this 'guerra sucia', he seems to have found his place: as soon as he arrives, the people of the city fearfully pledge their allegiance – 'babeaban sus agradecimientos por el "movimiento militar que ha salvado a la patria"' (ED, p. 52). When Laura goes to protest the 'violación a [los] derechos constitucionales' (ED, p. 53), he answers her with a voice that 'suena como si el propio Dios padre [...] hablara' (ED, p. 57), an image that is repeated when he is next in a position of complete control: the torture and rape scene, where 'la voz me llegaba desde arriba, tan alta y ausente que parecía caer desde el cielo mismo. Como si me hablara Dios padre' (ED, p. 243). He rules over the city, governing with terror; later he reflects that '*fui el derecho*' (emphasis in original), asking, '¿o ya se olvidaron los cobardes desmemoriados que yo fui la encarnación del Estado, de la civilización, en estos páramos?' (ED, p. 67). The times of justice and revolution and progress, as symbolised by Laura, were overrun by the powers of violence and tradition in 'esa edad de hierro' (ED, p. 67), and this is where the scene of Laura's rape becomes highly symbolic.

During the dictatorship, Chile was often depicted as a body, but as Ricardo Trumper and Patricia Tomic note, it was 'a sick body', whose image was used to

'excuse the regime's unwarranted cruelty'; a body 'struck by cancer'³²⁰. Cancer, which can spread, requires "'radical" treatment'; Pinochet was quoted in 1973 as saying that rights and freedoms would be reintroduced to Chile 'when we get rid of the Marxist cancer' – but first, urgent 'surgery was to be performed on *La Patria*' to cure her of her terrible disease³²¹. But of course this healing is far from nurturing; it is violent, 'without anaesthesia [...] pain as medicine'³²². This metaphor appears in the novel too, when Martínez's father insists that 'nadie amputa miembros enfermos en la calle, sin anetesia' (*ED*, p. 220). And when Laura and Cáceres – the new Chile and the old patriarchal system – meet alone, Laura becomes the body upon which all of the violence and hatred of the dictatorship is inflicted.

The text's climax is a battle in microcosm between these two figures who epitomise all of these symbolic dichotomies, which comes in the form of a scene of torture and rape. Laura has come to ask Cáceres to stop executing prisoners, breaking the city's complicit silence which 'sonaba a aplauso' (*ED*, p. 85), but Cáceres soon demonstrates that breaking the silence will have little effect: when she says that 'si me toca, gritaré' his reply is that 'tantos han gritado aquí' (*ED*, p. 241). Having tortured Laura into speaking against her will, telling him where the prisoner is hiding, the rape scene, when Laura has threatened to shout, is almost entirely silent, with the characters communicating with 'looks': 'el peso de una sola mirada [...] fue suficiente', 'sin necesidad de una orden explícita [...] me desnudé' (*ED*, p. 265). Laura suggests that they have a connection after he tortures her, 'tal

³²⁰ 'From a Cancerous Body to a Reconciled Family: Legitimising Neoliberalism in Chile' in *Transgressing Borders: Critical Perspectives on Gender, Household and Culture*, ed. by Susan Ilcan and Lynne Phillips, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1998) pp. 3-18 (p. 6).

³²¹ Trumper and Tomic, p. 7; p. 8.

³²² Ricardo Trumper, "'Healing" the Social Body: Silence, Terror, and (Re)conciliation in Neoliberal Chile', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January – March 1999), pp. 1-37 (p. 17).

era nuestra intimidad [...] que él ya no necesitaba disciplinarme más [...] yo era su orden' (*ED*, p. 264), but the silence also serves to make the scene ambiguous. How, for example, does she discern that she is to remove her clothes from only a 'look'; how does she know that 'debía tumbarme de espaldas, y abrir las piernas' from Cáceres' touch 'con el dedo' (*ED*, p. 267)? Laura specifically tells us that he does not threaten her, 'sin necesidad de orden alguna [...] me desnudé' (*ED*, p. 266), she repeats, echoing her words cited above, although she does say that if he did threaten her with the ruler which he had been beating her with and then 'en vez de azotarme nuevamente con ella, simplemente me la hubiera ofrecida para que la besara', she believes that she would have venerated the instrument of torture: 'yo la hubiera besado' (*ED*, p. 265). When she tries to stop him from raping her, she says that she 'hice un esfuerzo final para rechazarlo con mis piernas, pero mi cuerpo había perdido la lucha mucho antes', and she soon experiences an 'orgasmo negro' (*ED*, p. 268).

This rape scene is ambiguous, with no clear line being drawn between willing participation and coercion. Franz's decision to include reference to an orgasm is particularly problematic, as it implies that although Laura has been raped she has also 'enjoyed' it on some level; the rapist/victim relationship seems at times more like a sadomasochistic arrangement. Laura seems confused by what happens: on the one hand, she tells the reader in no uncertain terms that 'me violó' (*ED*, p. 290). She is clearly deeply hurt by what has happened, sensing a psychological break between herself and 'la otra' who 'a partir de ese momento usó mi cuerpo de disfraz y mi rostro de máscara' (*ED*, p. 260) to hide from others what had happened to her. The language she uses to describe the rape is also unambiguous: she compares Cáceres' knife to '[e]l arma que me penetraba' (*ED*, p. 268), and describes his penis with the language of death: it is 'la torre de una

ciudad prohibida, o la atalaya de un campamento de prisioneros, o el mástil de un barco lleno de muertos' (*ED*, p. 266). Even twenty years later, she struggles to write about what happened to her, 'la mano se ha negado a escribir' (*ED*, p. 241). However, she states that 'yo había deseado sufrir, había deseado ser víctima' (*ED*, p. 375) and tells herself that 'no hay sujeción [...] que no sea la expresión de un deseo de someterse al poder' (*ED*, p. 378). She seems truly ashamed to admit that there was an attraction between them, describing 'intimidación' as a 'palabra [...] impronunciable y sin embargo necesaria' (*ED*, p. 450) when thinking about their connection. The topic is so taboo to her that she reminds herself 'sobre lo que no es posible hablar es preferible callar' (*ED*, p. 380).

Their relationship is difficult for the reader to understand. Cáceres is depicted as powerful, as demonstrated by his repeated connections to a 'Dios padre' figure, and as violent, as seen when he overpowers Laura with 'un golpe certero, limpio y fulminante' (*ED*, p. 241), but her feelings towards him are unclear. The chapters of the novel that have come from Laura's letter to Claudia often show sympathy towards him. She feels that she senses in him something that goes beyond his powerful, harsh exterior: 'un presentimiento de abyección' (*ED*, p. 30). He is often struck by melancholy, tenderness or weakness in her descriptions of him: 'su extraño tic nervioso' (*ED*, p. 236), 'me llevó a imaginar el cuerpo del niño flaco, debilucho' (*ED*, p. 265); he seems to be the embodiment of the 'diablo peregrino y penitente' for whom 'tanto mal resultaba insoportable' (*ED*, p. 167). She describes his 'voz de novio pusilánime, o de niño flaco' (*ED*, p. 323), his 'ojos taciturnos, o acaso adoloridos' which 'me miraban como si los hiriera verme', and even calls him 'un dolor forrado en piel humana' (*ED*, p. 55). Yet even her earlier descriptions of his behaviour seem to show that he is not in fact a shy, vulnerable man: when she shouts at him in the church, he 'no se inmuta, sonrío apenas' (*ED*, p.

57) and, to assert his control over the situation and over her, he stops referring to her as 'usted' (ED, p. 56) and belittles her by calling her 'patroncita' (ED, p. 57), with the diminutive suffix. Laura is particularly surprised by the exchange herself, explaining 'he usado ese tono de autoridad con él [...] y él me ha llamado "patroncita"' (ED, p. 57). Here, in their very first meeting, he has established his authority over her, and their relationship continues in this vein. When she next sees him, having followed Mario to the brothel, this control over her begins to take an erotic form, with her noticing how 'él se llevó un dedo a los labios, suavemente, como si lo besara [...] y a la vez me ordenara silencio' (ED, p. 80). His power is clear here, as he talks of death 'con una intimidación de enamorado' and 'como si la hubiera penetrado' (ED, p. 82). She later describes him as a 'verdugo' and even 'la propia muerte' (ED, p. 269). In direct contrast to Laura's connection to La Patrona, Cáceres the torturer becomes the Devil. He is continually connected to Venus, '(cuyo otro nombre no nos es posible decir)'; the Latin for 'el que trae la luz' (ED, p. 145), is Lucifer. He is described at one moment as a 'sombra orlada de llamas' (288), and in the desert he and Laura walk on 'la llanura roja del Apocalipsis' (ED, p. 318).

The fact that Laura's voice comes to the reader through mediation by two men – Mario, her husband, who is revealed to be the one telling the story, recounting some chapters as if he were an omniscient narrator, and reading Laura's letter in the other chapters – and Franz himself, may complicate the way in which her story is told. Mario suggests that he knew about the arrangement between Laura and Cáceres, '(pretendamos que yo siempre supe lo que se supone que debía ignorar)' (ED, p. 459), so he may have manipulated her recounting of the rape scene to imply that she had enjoyed it or had unclear feelings about it in order to assuage his own guilt at not having acted to help her. On the other hand, the

problematic elements of Laura and Cáceres' relationship could come from Franz's own understandings of power and gender dynamics in heterosexuality, or they could stem from their roles as archetypal man and woman. Cáceres is characterised by power, violence and military might; she is maternal and caring: we see through her relationship with the 'nervioso' (35) Mario, the 'retrasado' (142) Iván and her involvement in the hiding of the fugitive that she has an urge to protect the weak. Their connection can be read as an extension of a male-female relationship within a patriarchal context, with the weaker woman submitting to the power of the stronger man, and – in accordance with the symbol of the 'suffering mother' – finding some pleasure in her suffering.

It is clear Franz wanted the text to be read along gender lines, as all of the male characters with power and agency (that is, excepting the prisoner and Iván) misuse it. The ten councillors who come to beg Laura to intervene in the executions are compared to the 'diez justos' needed to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: 'un ángel ofrece salvar a una ciudad, si alguien es capaz de encontrar diez justos en ella' (*ED*, p. 216). And when the councillors send Laura to appease Cáceres, allowing him to rape her so that he will agree to stop the executions, she becomes an innocent sacrifice, like the virgin daughters of Lot, who were offered to the crowd in Sodom to protect Lot's male houseguests:

I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof³²³.

But their motives for convincing her to intervene are not strictly moral – their

³²³ Genesis 19:8.

willingness to sacrifice Laura to retrieve la Patrona, without which there is no lucrative Diablada, shows their avarice. The church has made ‘más de doscientos millones’ (ED, p. 418) from the festival in a single year, and they need La Patrona to fund their plans to build ‘El Complejo de Adoración más grande del Continente’ (ED, p. 158) and to reap the financial rewards.

The lawyers, Benigno Velasco and Tomás Martínez Roth, also have selfish motives. Velasco, Laura’s former law professor and now Minister of Justice, begins to expound the reasons why Cáceres should not be prosecuted: ‘el bien y el mal ya no lucharían entre sí: se sentarían a la misma mesa y pesarían sus intereses. Nuevos tiempos que requerirían nuevos jueces’ (ED, p. 282). But he is not driven by a sense of duty towards the people of Pampa Hundida: he calls them ‘provincianos ingenuos’ and says they ‘¡[...]quieren apagar un incendio echándole gasolina!’, warning that ‘las pequeñas escaramuzas de esta provincia podrían transformarse en una guerra de nivel nacional’ (ED, p. 284). Laura sees through his attempt to close the case, saying that ‘el gobierno prefería que el incendio nunca hubiera existido’ (ED, p. 284); he is trying to conceal these crimes and prevent the country from confronting its uncomfortable recent past.

Martínez Roth, on the other hand, does want to prosecute Cáceres – at first. He has filed various cases against him without any success, so he has now filed against the whole town for ‘el delito continuo de profanación’ (ED, p. 96), as the town has replaced the figure of La Patrona, destroyed in 1973 by Cáceres, with a replica. He believes that if this case went to trial, ‘nadie podría ocultarse [...] El pueblo tendría que revelar el resto de lo que sabía’ about the crimes committed in the city during the dictatorship (ED, p. 97). But his actions are not driven by a desire for justice. Laura can recognise another motive behind Martínez’s work: ‘era tan previsible: como la ambición de su época, como el oportunismo a los veinte

años, como el gran futuro que le aguardaba' (*ED*, p. 311). He believes that this case will make him famous – 'saldría hasta en la television' (*ED*, p. 97) – and she recognises his 'ambición' (*ED*, p. 188) and his 'egoísmo' (*ED*, p. 191); he is even willing to attempt to seduce her, 'la madre de su pretendida' (*ED*, p. 191) to get her to agree to his case being put on trial. However, when the Minister for Justice attempts to convince him to drop the trial, he completely changes his mind, appearing to Laura like a ventriloquist's dummy: 'había algo en la mandíbula del joven que pareció mecánico, casi como en el muñeco de un ventrílocuo' (*ED*, p. 309), mindlessly parroting the Minister's rhetoric, 'le decía a ella el ministro, por boca de Tomás' (*ED*, p. 311). Laura, struck by the speed of his change of heart, asks him: '¿se dio cuenta de todo esto al mismo tiempo que el ministro le ofrecía una candidatura a diputado?' (*ED*, p. 311). While we have seen the council members, particularly Mamani, explain how using Cáceres as a scapegoat would benefit everyone in the city – 'alguien debía ser quemado para que todos los demás sintieran que Dios los había escogido para sobrevivir' (*ED*, p. 169) – as it would allow them to construct the city of worship on the site of the prison camp where Cáceres is currently living, '(ruinas que todos preferiríamos desaparecidas, reemplazadas por el complejo de nuestro futuro esplendor)' (*ED*, p. 168), the admission of selfish motives by the Minister and Martínez is much more striking as it comes from two people who are tasked with upholding the law.

On the other hand, the few major female characters have good intentions and sympathetic portrayals. Claudia is presented as a naïve, rebellious teenager: we are told that she has dyed her hair a ridiculous 'violento color zanahoria' (*ED*, p. 208) in order to do 'todo lo posible por negar' (*ED*, p. 209) that she looks like her mother. She is petulant, 'insistiendo en llamar [a Laura] por su nombre, en quitarle el título de madre' (*ED*, p. 368), and 'arrogante' (*ED*, p. 230). Nevertheless, her

intentions are moral and, unlike those of Martínez Roth, transparent: Claudia's fight to discover the truth is inspired by a true sense of justice, rather than selfish ambition: 'yo quiero hacer justicia [...] y hacerla en un lugar donde valga la pena [...] Yo quiero luchar por los más pobres e indefensos en un país pobre e indefenso' (ED, p. 20). When Martínez reveals his change of heart to her, she is furious, calling him a '¡cobarde, traidor de mierda!' (ED, p. 359), and refuses to give up her own fight. Meanwhile, la Rosita takes on considerable risk by helping to hide the escaped prisoner in her brothel, 'bajo [Cáceres'] cama' (ED, p. 244) – the bravery of which directly contrasts with the cowardice of the men of the council, who do not want the prisoner to be hiding in their town. And the 'matrona' who Laura goes to see for an abortion is a sympathetic, maternal character, looking after a 'docena' of children, 'algunos [...] adoptados', and calling Laura 'mijita' (ED, p. 425). She is associated with the natural world, her work table smelling of 'especias y a limón' (ED, p. 424), and her way of life is distinctly non-Christian, with her explaining how, despite her large family, she is 'siempre soltera' (ED, p. 426); how, despite her age, she still works occasionally as a prostitute, as no young woman knows 'lo que sabe esta vieja *diabla*' (ED, p. 427, my own emphasis); how she pours out the rest of Laura's wine cup 'para la Pachamama' (ED, p. 429).

Throughout the novel, Franz references Pachamama and Moira, ancient goddesses, and contrasts them favourably with the images of Christianity. The matron, follower of Pachamama, is shown to have the power over life and death, stating that she has 'ayudado a venir al mundo a casi toda esta ciudad, pobres y ricos, justos y pescadores' and that 'también sé cómo impedir que vengan al mundo' (ED, p. 427). Meanwhile, the Christian God is seen to be impotent: '¿cuál pasaje de la Biblia es ese donde un ángel ofrece salvar a una ciudad, si alguien es capaz de encontrar diez justos en ella?'[...] 'Génesis, 19. Pero la ciudad

no se salvó' (*ED*, pp. 216-17) or a false God: '¿si su imagen no lo era, necesitaba Dios ser verdadero?' (*ED*, p. 117). His critique of Christianity is also a gendered one: Franz highlights the irony that the culture worships the figure of a woman who represents chastity and motherhood (La Patrona) while simultaneously forcing a woman (Laura) into a situation in which she will be raped and falls pregnant. As we have seen above, the image of the Mother was an ideal that real women could never hope to emulate, causing them to be denigrated as lesser.

There is, both in the novel and in the societies of the Southern Cone, a gulf between the worship of the feminine ideal and the actions of the society with regards to women. The feminine is subordinate to the masculine: Franz demonstrates this by showing how Laura is repeatedly compelled to obey Cáceres: 'traté de resistirme a ir [...] una curiosidad o una premonición más fuerte que yo misma [...] me arrastró' (*ED*, p. 29). She is instantly both drawn to him and repelled by him, feeling like his horse which he is 'tranquilizándo[lo], al tiempo que lo amenazaba' (*ED*, p. 29), and feels that the horse's attempts to escape its box reflect '*otra cosa* dentro de mi misma [...] que pujaba por salir de mí' (*ED*, p. 32, emphasis in original). She feels 'como el caballo queriendo ir tras su amo', describing 'mi deseo incontenible, mi urgencia inexplicable de seguir al mayor de caballería al interior de la iglesia y enfrentarlo aunque no sabía, aún, para qué' (*ED*, p. 53). Even when she appears to have control over him – when during the rape scene she takes hold of his knife and raises it over him – he is the one who is truly in control; he calls her bluff by demanding that she 'hazlo [...] ahora, ahora' (*ED*, p. 268), and when she hesitates, he takes it away easily. She is on the side of good and the law; she is bound by rules of conduct that do not permit her to actively harm, which for Cáceres is a weakness that he is able to exploit to his advantage.

In the context of the dictatorship, this feminine weakness and victimisation

may seem to make sense: despite the fact that the majority of the direct victims of dictatorial violence were men, dictatorial crimes feminised their victims as ‘they were transformed into passive, impotent and dependent beings’³²⁴. However, the repeated references to female goddesses Moira and Pachamama show that the idea of the weak and victimised woman is a cultural one, and one tied to Christianity. If the dictatorships feminised victims, religion victimises females: ‘the language of theology excludes the voice of women almost completely’, explains theologian Mary T. Malone, and ‘when women are present, it is often in an apologetic, trivial, accidental or even hostile way’³²⁵. While pagans worshipped female goddesses – Moira, Pachamama, ‘el espíritu femenino que soplabá sobre las aguas aun antes que ningún Dios las creara’ (*ED*, p. 279) – the Christian religion imposed upon the Americas by colonisers sublimated the worship of maternal goddesses by making the divine female the subject of a masculine god, as with Mary and La Patrona. In the same way, the dictatorships, which aggrandised traditionally masculine traits, imposed their rule upon the subjects that it feminised. The dictatorships were therefore able to use religious discourse and ideas about the traditional family to form the basis of their rule, as we have seen above.

Franz is drawing a contrast between cultural tropes and what he perceives to be the reality. While the Judeo-Christian tradition blames humanity's fall on women – which is not unique to Christianity: ‘traditions from other parts of the world also attribute the earthly problems of human beings to some primordial mistake by a woman (Pandora)’ – Laura is the official who suffers most from the city's bargain with Cáceres, and she has the least reason to feel guilty, as she attempts to protect the prisoner even as she is being tortured, whereas the other

³²⁴ Guzmán Bouvard, p. 38; Jelin, p.79.

³²⁵ Mary T. Malone, ‘Women in Theology’, in *The Furrow*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (April 1999), pp. 217-225 (p.218).

officials make no attempt to protect her, but rather send her to Cáceres knowing 'cómo la mira el comandante' (*ED*, p. 221) in order to serve their own interests³²⁶. And their interests are far from altruistic: they want 'los millones de pesos en limosnas' and for Cáceres to execute prisoners 'discretamente' rather than 'al lado nuestro' (*ED*, p. 219), so that they will be able to ignore their occurrence. While patriarchal tradition aligns reason and order with masculinity, and corporeality and chaos with femininity, the novel shows how death and violence are tied to masculine ideals while life and justice are linked to feminine ideals.

As we have seen, women played a crucial public role in resisting the dictatorships, finding strength in combining their efforts. In the novel, it is the moment when Laura and Claudia, who have been fighting throughout and have seen each other as being 'en otro mundo' (*ED*, p. 27), join 'en un abrazo tan insondable que Laura sintió por un instante que su hija volvía a fundirse con ella [...] eran una sola carne de nuevo' (*ED*, p. 453) that they are able to escape from the torment of the past. Now experiencing solidarity and empathy for each other for the first time, they escape the city and return to Germany, while retribution comes for the other characters. Cáceres, the most evil character, is most likely killed in a stampede at the prison camp, but the others, the ten 'justos' who protect themselves by sacrificing Laura, seem to escape punishment. Mamani, drawing on the mythology of the Diablada festival, states that 'sólo cuando hallaran y sacrificaran al diablo verdadero, los demás podrían quedar seguros de que eran inocentes' (*ED*, p. 167). However, in the Epilogue, it is revealed that since Cáceres' death, the city has been all but 'tragada por el desierto' (*ED*, p. 461), and that those who have remained are in 'el limbo [...] en donde no hay absolución ni condena' (*ED*, p. 468), forced to remember the crimes that they helped to bring about. Far

³²⁶ Young, p. xix.

from being found innocent, those who participated, even in a small way, in the crimes of the dictatorship are sentenced to remember and to live with their guilt.

Franz's novel is complex and has many layers of meanings. For the purposes of this chapter, I have mainly focused on the gender narrative. *El desierto* celebrates the bravery of women who resisted dictatorship and patriarchal oppression, and rejects the tradition that elevates masculinity above femininity as the possessor of reason and goodness. The author highlights the violence and control of the patriarchal system, drawing connections between the gendered power structures of Christianity and the oppression of dictatorship, while showing his reader that patriarchy is cultural, rather than natural, and that as such it can be rejected. The family at the centre of the story – Laura, Claudia and Cáceres – undermines the traditional nuclear family, becoming a bastardised version of the holy trinity, with Cáceres as a cruel and violent father, Laura a powerful mother, and Claudia being a *female* child who represents hope for the future. Mario, who takes on the role of Joseph as a stand-in father, offers to 'interponer[s]e' (ED, p. 46) but in actuality allows Laura to defend her own interests. Examining these roles in relation to the families that we have seen in the earlier sections of the chapter, we discover that they are quite familiar. Cáceres, like his fellow military men, takes on the role of the imaginary Father: a source of immense power but also of violence and fear. Laura takes on the role of the militant mother, fighting her own battles despite the enormous danger that this puts her in, but having the revolutionary nature of her struggle partially lost by the adherence to the patriarchal ideology of women as submissive, suffering mothers. And Mario takes on the role of the real father, whose task is to step aside to allow the mother her place on the public stage. In Franz's novel, as in reality, the real mother stands up to the imaginary Father, and she defeats him once and for all.

Chapter 2 Revolutionary Mothers

Since the 1980s, the term 'militant motherhood' has been applied to women who have used their maternity as a reason to mobilise against military dictatorships. These women have been celebrated for their transcendence of the apoliticism imposed upon women, and particularly mothers, in patriarchal societies, and for the successes achieved by their public mobilisation. Yet much less has been said about the women who mobilised against military dictatorships *in spite of* and not *because of* their maternity – the women in militant organisations who had to juggle family life with their ideology; who had to defy the expectations of their (almost exclusively) male superiors in these organisations, whose ideas about maternity were rarely more revolutionary than those of the dictatorships themselves; the women who underwent torture in prison while pregnant, gave birth unaided, saw their newborns taken away with no idea what their fate would be. At a time when, as we have seen in the introductory chapter, women were beginning to take an ever larger role in the world of work, these militant women were experiencing the ultimate struggle for a work-life balance, and yet the radical steps that they took have rarely been discussed. There are several possible reasons why the struggle of these women under dictatorship is less well known and less often discussed than that of the 'militant mothers'. One possible reason is that women were not often recruited into resistance organisations. In Chile, this may be the case – The *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación* (1996) found that women who were executed or disappeared during the dictatorship constituted around 6%, while the *Comisión Nacional de Prisión Política y Tortura* found that 12.5% of

reported cases of torture were against female victims³²⁷. However, estimates suggest that around 25% of the Uruguayan resistance group MLN-T (*Tupamaros*) was female³²⁸. In truth, it may be due to the increased visibility of the militant mothers – it is easier to miss the undercover work of a woman in the Argentinian group *Montoneros* than it is to miss a group of mothers circling the Plaza de Mayo – one of Buenos Aires’ largest squares, in front of the government palace. And we must also consider the emotive and not always positive memories that these revolutionary groups provoke. Although they were fighting against brutal dictatorships, the methods of the groups in doing so have often been questioned. Certainly they were armed, and certainly they committed acts that affected the civilian population as well as military targets: human rights lawyer Dr Victoria Eugenia Villarruel says that there were many ‘víctimas inocentes’ of armed left wing groups, including children³²⁹. Susana Kaiser, when talking to young Argentinian people about what they know about their country’s dictatorship, discusses the notion of the ‘Two Devils’: the idea that in the 1970s the country was caught between ‘the extreme right and the extreme left’ – that is, the military and the revolutionaries. Indeed, the Argentinian dictatorship is often referred to as a ‘guerra sucia’; or a ‘war against subversion’³³⁰. She cites one young girl who summarises the popularly held belief that ‘both sides were responsible [...] there

³²⁷Elizabeth Lira, ‘Mujeres detenidas desaparecidas: Chile 1973-2010’ in *Mujeres: historias chilenas del siglo XX*, ed. by Julio Pinto Vallejos (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2014), pp. 141-73

³²⁸Lindsey Blake Churchill, *Imagining the Tupamaros: Resistance and Gender in Uruguayan and US Revolutionary Movements, 1960s – 1980s* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Florida State University, 2010)

<<http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:181885/datastream/PDF/view> > [accessed 8 August 2016].

³²⁹La Nación, ‘Sobre el silencio y el dolor de los inocentes, no tenemos futuro’, 25 April 2010 < <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1257599-sobre-el-silencio-y-el-dolor-de-los-inocentes-no-tenemos-futuro> > [accessed 7 August 2016].

³³⁰ *Postmemories of Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 25.

are guilty parties on both sides'³³¹. In Argentina this belief is more popular than in Uruguay or Chile, possibly due to the widespread destruction by left-wing revolutionary groups in this country: Villarruel states that in Argentina during the period of 1969 to 1979, 17,382 people were affected by left wing violence in Argentina, with 1094 losing their lives³³². Although the scale of these actions does not match the violence perpetrated by the military in response, it is clear why these organisations may stir up bad feeling, and cultural production discussing their membership in any detail (including the female membership) may have been seen by some as glorifying terrorists. A final reason to consider is that of time. Many aspects of life during dictatorship have only come to light in recent years due to the difficulty that those who lived through these experiences have had with vocalising their history. Often it falls to the new generations – those who did not directly experience the dictatorships' oppression or who did so as children – to voice these stories, or to ask the questions that have not yet been asked: we shall return to this idea in the final chapter.

One such example is the story of Mariana Zaffaroni. Her parents, Maria Emilia Islas and Jorge Zaffaroni, were militants in the Uruguayan organisation *Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo*, and when they were disappeared in Argentina in 1976 their daughter, then just 18 months old, was also taken. Her surviving family published her photograph widely as they searched for her, and the image of her innocent smiling face became 'emblemática' in Uruguay³³³. Mariana, living in Argentina under the false name Daniela Furci, only discovered the truth of her past

³³¹ Kaiser, p. 26.

³³² La Gaceta, 'Un libro reúne historias de las "otras" víctimas del terrorismo', 29 February 2016 < <http://www.lagaceta.com.ar/nota/672582/politica/libro-reune-historias-otras-victimas-terrorismo.html> > [accessed 7 August 2016].

³³³ François Graña, *Los Padres de Mariana* (Montevideo: Trilce, 2011), p. 247.

in 1992, but it wasn't until the birth of her first child, in 2000, that her relationship with her biological family 'daba otro vuelco'; only then did she make her first trip to Uruguay, and finally in 2009 she sent out a message to all of the people she knew had connections to her parents, saying 'al fin llegó el día [...] QUIERO CONOCER A MIS PADRES'³³⁴. We can see from her story that it can be very difficult for victims of violence to be emotionally ready to discuss what has happened to them; it took Mariana 17 years from finding out the truth of who her parents were to actually want to find out about their story. It is because of the emotional difficulty of this task that almost all of the material discussing motherhood and revolutionary groups is very recent, as are the few cultural representations of revolutionary mothers.

This chapter will begin with a background on women's – and mothers' – involvement in revolutionary groups. We shall see that women in these groups were treated differently in the three different countries, and that the way that the revolutionary groups received and perceived women's contributions was much more profoundly connected to gender relationships in their countries at large than their revolutionary rhetoric suggested. We shall see how women's role in these groups ties in with feminist critiques of patriarchal understandings of motherhood, and how theories of work-life balance, which as we have seen in the introductory chapter were becoming more important as women took an increasing role in the world of paid labour, can also be applied to the balance between family and ideology. Then, we shall apply this theory to two cultural responses to motherhood and revolution: the 2011 Argentinian film *Infancia clandestina*, directed by Benjamín Ávila, whose mother was disappeared, and the 2011 memoir *Something*

³³⁴ Graña, p. 261; p. 7.

Fierce, written by Carmen Aguirre, whose mother and step-father were in the Chilean resistance.

The two pieces have some clear parallels: told from the point of view of eleven-year-olds returning from exile in 1979, they depict how their parents' subversive thought and actions created a sense of 'double life' between home and the outside world, which becomes the site of tension. In both pieces, it is the mother who comes under close scrutiny – and despite a large gap in time between the events being reported and the present day, there are still some obvious, sometimes unconscious, criticisms about the lifestyle their mothers have chosen, alongside a profound and undeniable sense of love and care. What this chapter will show is the incredible complexity and controversy surrounding militancy in revolutionary groups and motherhood – through the realities of women's life in revolutionary groups as compared with the ideology of those groups; through the treatment of pregnant prisoners as compared with the dictatorships' ideologies of the importance of motherhood, and through the depiction of both negative and positive feelings towards revolutionary mothers by their children, often intertwined. These women, as we shall see, took on incredible burdens for their beliefs and for their families, and although the context of their actions makes it very hard to understand and fairly judge them, we shall see that they are often judged, and not always fairly.

Women's Political Militancy

Argentina, Chile and Uruguay all had prominent organisations aiming to bring about socialism, the largest and best-known being the *Montoneros*, MIR (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*) and MLN-T (*Movimiento de Liberación Nacional – Tupamaros*) respectively. Although the majority of the members of

these organisations were male, female members did feature, sometimes in significant numbers. Despite the clandestine nature of the organisations preventing precise figures from being known, we can estimate that the figures of disappeared or detained people will be approximately proportional to the gender makeup of the organisations. As we have seen, women made up between 6-12% of Chile's revolutionary groups and around 25% of Uruguay's; around 28% of the disappeared in Argentina were female, which suggests that the groups there had a similar percentage of female involvement to that of Uruguay³³⁵. It is important to point out that despite the official narrative of these countries, and particularly of their dictatorships, being one of respect or even veneration of women, state agents treated female prisoners no less brutally than male prisoners: sometimes they were in fact more brutal, as they perceived the women to have ignored their natural 'moral superiority'³³⁶. As such, it is fair to surmise that women in these groups were arrested with the same frequency as men; that there was no 'holding back' due to their sex. Furthermore, there are documented cases of non-militant women being arrested due to their relationship with a male militant in order to force his cooperation, and these cases would raise the percentage of detained/disappeared women³³⁷.

Nonetheless, one pattern is immediately clear: Chile's female participation is much lower than that of Argentina or Uruguay: depending on the estimate, women seem to account for half or a quarter as many militants as in the other two countries. And it is likely to be no coincidence that Chile has traditionally been the

³³⁵ Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard, *Revolutionising Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1995), p. 38.

³³⁶ Churchill, p. 129; Francie R. Chassen-López, "From Casa to Calle: Latin American women transforming patriarchal spaces", *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1997) pp174-91 (p. 175).

³³⁷ Frank Graziano, *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality and Radical Christianity in the Argentine 'Dirty War'* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), p. 38.

more conservative of the three countries in terms of gender roles, with a significantly lower proportion of women in the workplace and a significantly higher birth rate, as we have seen in the introductory chapter (p. 28 and p. 40). Women's participation in these organisations, as we shall see, involved a complex dialogue between traditional values and revolutionary and feminist ones. These groups sprang up at the intersection between past and future, when all three countries were undergoing a significant change in attitudes towards women. Because of this, the participation of women in these organisations was very much tied to social understanding of women's identities and roles, and often betrayed an ingrained series of sexist beliefs and stereotypes.

In Chile, the participation of women in revolutionary groups has been even more unobserved than in Argentina and Uruguay. Cherie Zalaquett calls women's role in these organisations 'marcado por un vacío, un hueco'³³⁸. There is also the notion that the women in these organisations were not there due to their own politics, but rather that they were influenced by their brothers or their boyfriends³³⁹. This opinion, reflected in Chilean author Isabel Allende's novel *La casa de los espíritus*, diminishes the role women play to that of 'tag-along', of assistant, of background player. In one scene in this novel, the protagonist Alba, who is the girlfriend of Miguel, leader of a revolutionary group, gets her period while involved in a sit-in at the university. She is stated to have 'ningún interés en la política' and she joins the sit-in 'por amor a Miguel, y no por convicción

³³⁸ 'Chilenas en armas' in *Mujeres chilenas: fragmentos de una historia*, ed. by Sonia Montecino Aguirre (Santiago: Catalonia, 2008), pp. 547-69 (p. 548).

³³⁹ Leslie Perera Álvarez, "Incorporación de la mujer chilena y de las miristas en la vida cívica y social en la década de los sesenta", *Tiempo y Espacio* no 24 (2010), pp. 95-112 (p. 106); Zalaquett, p. 551.

política'³⁴⁰. Eventually she is told to leave, as 'no contribuyes en nada, al contrario, eres una molestia' – she feels 'una oleada de alivio' at hearing this, as she is 'demasiado asustada'³⁴¹. It is interesting that even a novel by a female and self-described feminist writer should adopt this idea of women as ultimately apolitical and driven by romantic rather than political ideals.

Women across the Southern Cone involved in political struggle had to undergo what Lisa Renee DiGiovanni labels a 'dual challenge': resisting the right-wing dictatorship while also fighting against the often ingrained sexism of their own militant groups³⁴². Nonetheless, we must recognise that the action of joining such a group was in itself a revolutionary step for many young women, allowing them a 'new avenue for political participation'³⁴³. Moreover, despite the 'manejos *machistas* en las cúpulas de organizaciones de izquierda', these women were still often freer than their non-revolutionary contemporaries. This was especially significant in Chile, where, as we have seen in the introduction, women's emancipation was less developed than in Argentina and Uruguay (p. 56). Chilean militant groups encouraged women to educate themselves and to discuss ideology; to dress in a more comfortable way, ignoring social pressures to comply with femininity; to leave the house and become integrated into a mixed group as – in name at least – an equal. Leslie Perera Álvarez describes how:

ser revolucionarias significaba estudiar, trabajar fuera del hogar, dejar de lado una personalidad sumisa de señorita para hablar fuerte en público,

³⁴⁰ Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus* (Mexico City: Random House, 2004), p. 336; p. 337.

³⁴¹ Allende, p. 341.

³⁴² Lisa Renee DiGiovanni, 'Memories of Motherhood and Militancy in Chile: Gender and Nostalgia in *Calle Santa Fe* by Carmen Castillo', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies: Travesía* vol. 21, no. 1 (March 2012) pp. 15-36 (p. 16).

³⁴³ Churchill, p. vi.

convencer a auditorios, aprender artes marciales, saber defenderse en discursos y también físicamente, no tener miedo al hombre, no tener miedo³⁴⁴.

That said, women in Chile had significantly fewer roles in leadership, and so were therefore still subject to the control of men³⁴⁵. But interestingly, women were still given active roles, not merely administrative ones: one militant describes how she 'organizaba sabotajes, voladuras de torres de alta tensión, apagones [...] y otras pequeñas acciones armadas'³⁴⁶. The magnitude of this can be seen in relation to attitudes surrounding women's roles in the armed forces.

Women were first admitted to the military in 1974, which was a huge step forward for women's rights, especially under a system that promoted the narrative of the woman in the home³⁴⁷. Yet there remained a profound fear of women defying their 'natural' state and encroaching into male roles: in order to reinforce their femininity, the military imposed strict rules upon female recruits – they were required to keep a stuffed toy in their barracks, to keep photographs of family members, and to wear makeup as part of their uniform³⁴⁸. These requirements even extended to colour of eye shadow: green for combat uniform and blue, pink or brown for dress uniform³⁴⁹. In the armed forces, women were only given support roles: their inclusion was intended to free up male soldiers for active roles, which 'reproduc[e] el rol subordinado en la vida civil'³⁵⁰. And as one female

³⁴⁴ p. 108.

³⁴⁵ Perera Álvarez, p. 104.

³⁴⁶ Zalaquett, p. 554.

³⁴⁷ Zalaquett, pp. 548-49.

³⁴⁸ Zalaquett, pp. 549-50.

³⁴⁹ Zalaquett, p. 550.

³⁵⁰ Zalaquett, p. 549.

lieutenant, María Cristina Gutiérrez, comments, having female soldiers on the front lines would have been seen as a hindrance:

si los hombres veían una mujer muerta, se desmoralizaban porque estaban viendo a su hermana o a su mama [...] Además su presencia provoca menor disuasión en el enemigo [...] Y también causó distracción entre sus pares. Es parte del hombre preocuparse de la mujer y si toman alguna de rehén, la unidad se abocaba a rescatarla disvirtuando su misión³⁵¹.

This quotation tells us a lot about attitudes towards women in combat roles. It seems that every justification for not permitting women active roles in the military forces is due to men and their attitudes, rather than any failure on the part of women themselves. The men described in this quotation are incapable of transcending their biological impulses to protect women, and will ignore everything taught to them during military training to blindly follow this imperative. This attitude is not only demeaning to men, but it also shows the low esteem by which women were held in the military.

In this context, the fact that women were permitted active roles in revolutionary groups such as MIR was even more ground-breaking. Moreover, some Chilean female militants did achieve very high status in their organisations. Cecilia Magni Camino, who was known as 'Tamara', played a role in organising the 1986 assassination attempt by the *Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez* and became a member of the national leadership, and Adriana del Carmen Mendoza Candia, known as 'Fabiola', dressed as a man and took part in the attack itself³⁵². In

³⁵¹ Zalaquett, p. 550.

³⁵² Zalaquett, p. 557.

contrast to the armed forces' narrative, which saw women as unfit for active roles, Fabiola was given a role in arguably the most important resistance action of the entire dictatorship, and while her sex could have been viewed as an obstacle because the operation required militants to dress as active soldiers, it was easily overcome by dressing her as a man. However, these women were somewhat rare exceptions to a generally male leadership. Their abilities proved that women were capable of taking on roles of high responsibility, yet their overall exclusion from them implies institutional sexism, albeit sexism which the female militants themselves did not recognise at the time³⁵³. It was always sustained that the dismantling of the patriarchy was to be deferred to the future, after the revolution had achieved its aims, or even that the revolution achieving its aims would remove the need for feminism altogether³⁵⁴.

In Argentinian militant groups, women's struggle was also seen as secondary to class struggle, and despite women's inclusion into armed roles, the official narrative often downplayed their involvement³⁵⁵. One document by the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP) praises women's role in the group, stating that their inclusion has led to better food, increased cleanliness and better morale now that someone is looking after them³⁵⁶. These women were treated, it seems, in terms of gender stereotypes – here, they play the role of surrogate mothers; but in other instances they were encouraged to exploit their sexuality, wearing miniskirts and high heels to create a distraction or to avoid suspicion, even though on a daily

³⁵³ Zalaquett, p. 552.

³⁵⁴ Zalaquett, pp. 553-54.

³⁵⁵ Karina Felitti, 'Poner el cuerpo: género y sexualidad en la política revolucionaria de Argentina en la década de 1970' in *Political and social movements during the Sixties and Seventies in the Americas and Europe*, ed. by Avital H. Bloch (Colima: UP, 2010) pp. 69-93 (p. 76).

³⁵⁶ Felitti, p. 74.

basis they were encouraged to avoid fashion³⁵⁷. As in Chile, women were rarely found in the highest echelons of command, and were discouraged from fighting for equality, as this was seen to distract from the more crucial class struggle³⁵⁸. However, unlike in Chile, where reasons for women being away from the front lines were usually centred around men's failings, and were sometimes ignored altogether as in the case of Fabiola, in Argentinian groups women were often excused as too weak for certain actions. The *Montoneros* also took a stance on male same-sex relationships, seeing gay men as too weak and feminine to be useful during missions, which is telling of the *Montoneros'* overall opinion on femininity and women's usefulness³⁵⁹. If gay men were too feminine, femininity was an undesirable and dangerous trait to have – which explained why women were often marginalised. But this stance against male homosexuality also reflects the *Montoneros'* strict moralistic code of conduct.

Sexuality was a much more controlled issue in the *Montoneros* than it was in MIR: while female Chilean militants described themselves 'muy libres, hicimos lo que queríamos con nuestros cuerpos y nuestras vidas', in the *Montoneros*, on the other hand, the concept of 'free love' was rejected in favour of a heterosexual, monogamous model, with infidelity being added to the list of forbidden acts in the 1975 *Código de Justicia Penal Revolucionario*³⁶⁰. Casual sex, abortion and infidelity were seen as petty bourgeois acts, which required condemnation, and couples had to have been together for more than six months before moving in together³⁶¹. Miriam Lewin, who was a member of the *Juventud Universitaria Peronista*, described how the 'discurso nacionalista de los Montoneros estaba en una extraña

³⁵⁷ Felitti, pp. 75-76.

³⁵⁸ Felitti, p. 74.

³⁵⁹ Felitti, pp. 81-82.

³⁶⁰ Perera Álvarez, p. 106; Felitti, p. 79

³⁶¹ Felitti, p. 92; p. 80.

sintonía' with that of the military: indeed, it seems that they coincided in many ways with their enemy's ideology³⁶². And one point of commonality between the military and the revolutionary groups was that their ideology concerning women was 'demasiado alejado de los cambios en las relaciones [...], la explosión de la sexualidad en la vida pública y la creciente presencia feminista'³⁶³: the revolutionary groups were socially conservative and founded upon deep patriarchal structures, just as the military was.

Gender relations in the *Tupamaros* were, on the surface at least, very different. Carina Perelli describes the *Tupamaras* as embodying 'a new way of being a woman'³⁶⁴. The *Tupamaros*, in contrast to the revolutionary groups of Chile and Argentina, categorically refused to believe that there was any difference between the value of male and female militants³⁶⁵. There was no division of labour along gender lines, but women were still encouraged to put aside their femininity and take on more 'masculine' traits such as aggression, showing that despite their more radical gender policy, the *Tupamaros* still 'supported the polarisation of masculine/feminine and active/passive, with feminine and passive as synonymous'³⁶⁶. A common saying among the *Tupamaros* was that 'una mujer y un hombre son iguales cuando tienen un arma de fuego en sus manos'³⁶⁷. Lindsay Blake Churchill has mentioned how this mentality sees a gun as a 'phallic equaliser': despite the narrative of equality, the group does see women as

³⁶² Felitti, p. 79.

³⁶³ Felitti, p. 82.

³⁶⁴ Carina Perelli, 'Putting Conservatism to Good Use: Women and Unorthodox Politics in Uruguay, from Breakdown to Transition', in *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Jane S. Jaquette (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) pp. 95-113 (p. 99).

³⁶⁵ Churchill, p. 103.

³⁶⁶ Churchill, p. 137.

³⁶⁷ Mauricio Cavallo Quintana, *Guerrilleras: la participación femenina en el MLN-T* (Montevideo: Arca, 2011), p. 54.

somehow lacking, as defined by their sex³⁶⁸. However, *Tupamaras* still enjoyed a level of freedom that many other Uruguayan women did not, both politically and sexually. Women's political participation was 'ignored or disparaged' by 'most of the Uruguayan left', but women were welcomed in the *Tupamaros*³⁶⁹; and although sexual politics within the group were by 'no means radical', still encouraging heterosexual, monogamous relationships, these women were nonetheless 'sexually liberated' in comparison with Uruguay in general, as the group supported premarital sexual relations³⁷⁰. And in some ways *Tupamaras* were treated with great respect – *Operación Estrella* is a good example of this.

In 1971, the leaders of the *Tupamaros* had to decide between breaking out female prisoners from Cabildo prison, or male prisoners from Punta Carretas. The work had already begun at Punta Carretas, but the security was lighter at Cabildo, and the overall operation would be easier to complete³⁷¹. Eventually the leadership decided that even though there were more male prisoners waiting to escape than female ones, the women should be released first³⁷². But moments like this were contrasted by a disrespect of female members in other instances. For example, literature surrounding the famed *rehenes* – male and female group members who were held apart and threatened with execution unless the *Tupamaros* obeyed the military's commands – was very biased towards the male prisoners, with their pictures published alongside personal information about them, while the women were not photographed; only their names were published³⁷³. The *Grupo de Apoyo a la Resistencia Uruguay* (GARU) published in its bulletin *Banda Oriental* information

³⁶⁸ Churchill, p. 140.

³⁶⁹ Felitti, p. 74; Churchill, p. 102.

³⁷⁰ Churchill, p. 105.

³⁷¹ Cavallo Quintana, p. 43.

³⁷² Cavallo Quintana, p. 43.

³⁷³ Churchill, pp. 92-93.

about the prison conditions suffered by *Tupamaros*, highlighting the lack of food, while for the *Tupamaras* the majority of their suffering was expected to stem from their lack of access to photographs of their children or engagement rings, as if emotional longing were somehow more harmful to female prisoners than physical deprivation³⁷⁴. Furthermore, when the *rehenes* were finally released after many years of captivity, the men held a press conference but neglected to inform or invite any of their female counterparts, despite them suffering the same treatment in prison³⁷⁵. Some male members also made controversial statements regarding their female colleagues, with Raúl Sendic, founder of the *Tupamaros*, describing women as ‘el reposo del guerrero’³⁷⁶. However, women generally felt respected in this group; they felt that they were not more discriminated against than in ‘otros espacios de nuestra sociedad’ and they in fact felt ‘gran respeto por parte de los compañeros’³⁷⁷. One militant, Marta Avella, explains that at the time, ‘la conciencia de la igualdad de género no se hallaba tan desarrollada como en este siglo’: these women may not have been as aware of gender bias against them, or may not have been as surprised or offended by it.

Overall, then, women in militant groups in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay felt no less valued or respected than women did generally in these countries, and they often felt that they had a purpose that helped them to escape the rigidity of their social roles. In all three countries, albeit to differing degrees, women were able to take part in active missions as well as administrative ones, and some particularly prominent women gave women lower down in the organisations something to aim for, knowing that if they were considered capable they would not be excluded.

³⁷⁴ Churchill, p. 94.

³⁷⁵ Cavallo Quintana, p. 88.

³⁷⁶ Cavallo Quintana, p. 118.

³⁷⁷ Cavallo Quintana, p. 132.

These women had to struggle against internalised sexism, against the expectation that they were only involved in militancy to follow a male loved one, against stereotypes of their gender identity and sexuality, and against occasionally being left out of important actions. But overall these women were happy with their treatment and they did not protest in a large-scale way to any restrictions they might have felt imposed upon them. Often they failed to see any unfairness at all – it is only when looking back from a 21st century perspective that the inequalities become highlighted.

Militancy and Maternity

However, the revolutionary groups' treatment of female reproductive capabilities and of pregnant women and mothers was much more evidently at variance with the societies in which the groups operated. As we have seen in the previous chapter, motherhood was venerated in these societies, even among the liberal left, as the pinnacle of female experience. However, militant groups in these countries strongly discouraged their members from becoming pregnant. In MIR, private matters were not to be discussed in public, which complicated having a dialogue about women's choices³⁷⁸. In the *Tupamaros*, maternity was seen to be a distraction from the actions of the group, with pregnancy in particular posing an obstacle to a woman's full realisation as a militant³⁷⁹. After the fourth month of pregnancy, a female militant was to be given purely administrative roles until months after the birth of her child³⁸⁰. *Tupamaras* were expected to be in full control of their fertility, and those who did become pregnant were often judged to

³⁷⁸ DiGiovanni, p. 32.

³⁷⁹ Churchill, p. 105.

³⁸⁰ Churchill, p. 119.

be irresponsible³⁸¹. In Argentina, maternity was given as a reason to limit women's roles within revolutionary groups, although the notion that a woman should be the primary caregiver was vocally rejected³⁸². Interestingly, in Argentina the rhetoric discouraging maternity within militant groups began to change, and in order to counter the attempt by the military to raise the birth rate of the more conservative sectors of society, revolutionary groups began to promote the notion of a 'guerra popular y prolongada', with militants raising their children as if within a miniature political cell, grooming the next generation to take over the fight³⁸³. In 1973 the *Montoneros* introduced the *Domingo Montonero*, a day set aside each week for militants to spend with their families, which shows the increasing acceptance of having a family in this dangerous context³⁸⁴. The danger to the children of militants was one of the reasons why pregnancy was strongly discouraged: combining militancy with raising children meant facing 'el peligro, el dolor de las separaciones, los pocos espacios lúdicos y de encuentro [...] experiencias nada gratificantes para los padres y, especialmente, para las madres'³⁸⁵.

However, in practice, women involved in these organisations still did become pregnant. The decision to start a family was a difficult one – one that balanced the aims of their militant groups with their own personal aims. As the length of their struggle increased, some women had to come to terms with the fact that they would ultimately have to decide whether or not to have children at all. Others found the peace of exile to be the ideal time to have children, only to find themselves in a difficult position when militant groups called for exiled militants to return to the fight. They then had to decide whether to take fewer responsibilities

³⁸¹ Churchill, p. 126.

³⁸² Felitti, p. 76; p. 82.

³⁸³ Felitti, p. 87.

³⁸⁴ Felitti, p. 81.

³⁸⁵ Felitti, p. 89.

within the resistance or to leave their children to be raised by others, and many women did indeed take on this second option. The *Proyecto Hogares* was a system whereby the parents of young children could leave them to be raised by sympathisers in Cuba while they returned to continue their struggle³⁸⁶. In some cases, children were raised in Cuba for ten years away from their parents³⁸⁷. There was also the possibility of leaving children with family members, such as grandparents or aunts or uncles – relatives who were not involved in the resistance in any way and would not endanger their children. Finally, there was the option to keep their children with them and continue in the resistance at the same time³⁸⁸. This was particularly difficult as it meant accepting that their actions could be directly endangering their children. The paths that women could take all had their obstacles: either a woman had to choose to not have children, which would have been a very challenging choice in a society that venerated motherhood to such a degree; or to leave her political convictions to one side; or to choose to abandon her children into the care of others, with very limited contact and involvement in their lives; or to choose to knowingly place them at risk. Societal pressures weighed in on all sides: a woman could feel pressured to have children by relatives and friends, to keep fighting by her fellow revolutionaries, and to be a ‘good mother’ by society all at once. And because of these contradictory but equally powerful pressures, female militants were caught in a trap of guilt no matter what choice they made. This is why many women felt intense guilt at having become pregnant in this dangerous situation.

³⁸⁶ Tracy Crowe Morey and Cristina Santos, ‘*Las Madres Guerreras: Testimonial Writing on Militant Motherhood in Latin America*’ in *Motherhood and War*, ed. by Dana Cooper and Claire Phelan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) pp. 61-83 (p. 71).

³⁸⁷ Crowe Morey and Santos, p. 71.

³⁸⁸ Crowe Morey and Santos, p. 71.

In María Eugenia Ludueña's biography of Laura Carlotto, the daughter of Estela de Carlotto, head of the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, she cites one militant who says that Laura 'estaba muy convencida de su militancia pero, por cómo hablaba, después que nació su hijo quizás me dio la sensación de que sentía un poco de culpa'³⁸⁹. Meanwhile, Mariana Zaffaroni's mother María Emilia Islas is said to have told a friend, 'estoy embarazada y nos alegramos pila [...] pero te das cuenta [...] este no es el momento, no es el momento', while a Chilean militant known as Ana describes her decision to have a child as 'casi una locura', explaining that her child 'creció con miedo'³⁹⁰. But testimonies from female militants also offer reasons why these women may have chosen to become mothers in the first place. Some sought 'una vida "normal"'; María Emilia Islas wrote that 'es imposible, casi infantil plantearnos tener un hijo [...] ¡pero sería tan lindo!', adding that 'uno no se puede autorreprimir en ese sentido porque nos convertiríamos en monstruos, inhumanos', while Ana explains 'quería tenerlo. Al final de cuentas somos mujeres y vivimos en función de eso'³⁹¹. It is interesting to note that these women are reproducing traditional discourses of maternity: even these young women themselves have ascribed to certain elements of contemporary patriarchal understandings of gender roles, choosing to have children in these circumstances because they felt it was their natural purpose as women.

However, it is also of crucial importance to remember while discussing women's *choice* to become a mother that not all women had the chance to choose their fate. During the dictatorships, access to birth control and information about

³⁸⁹ *Laura: vida y militancia de Laura Carlotto* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2013), p. 300.

³⁹⁰ Graña, p. 226; Zalaquett, p. 554; p. 556.

³⁹¹ Graña, p. 185; p. 186; Zalaquett, p. 554.

contraception became increasingly limited³⁹². The military governments wished to stop the decrease in birth rate in their countries and to emphasise family values, which meant encouraging women to 'not trespass beyond the door of the domestic domain' and to focus their attentions on their roles as wives and mothers³⁹³. As we have seen in the introductory chapter, the birth rate in all three countries had been falling since the 1960s (p. 40). In order to reverse this trend, the military governments reduced funding to family planning centres and restricted access to contraceptives. Sexual health programmes were severely cut during the dictatorships, particularly in the beginning: Mala Htun notes that in Chile for example, 'conservatives made some efforts to shut down family planning during the Pinochet dictatorship, but these were ultimately unsuccessful'³⁹⁴. With these programmes pared down, women had less access both to contraceptives and to information about sexual health, and there was a sharp rise in births during these years. However, once the programmes were fully reinstated, the birth rate once again decreased. Many women, particularly women from lower-income households, had struggled to regulate the number of children that they were having in the 1970s, especially under dictatorship when the restrictions on family planning became more severe. In 1975 in Chile new regulations made it compulsory for every woman wanting to undergo a sterilisation procedure to have met all of the following criteria: 'over thirty years old, more than four children, a history of at least three caesarian sections, medical reasons justifying the operation, and the documented consent of their spouse', meaning that it would be

³⁹² Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburg: UP, 2009), p. 143.

³⁹³ Change, *The Military Ideology and the Dissolution of Democracy: Women in Chile* (London: Change International Reports, 1981), p. 16.

³⁹⁴ *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies* (Cambridge: UP, 2003), p. 167.

incredibly difficult to actually qualify for the procedure³⁹⁵. Some militant groups even chose to fight the restrictions on family planning, with members of Chile's MAPU Lautaro breaking into pharmacies to steal contraceptives and share them out in the streets³⁹⁶. But in this context, with contraception being more difficult to obtain, it is not fair to assume that all female militants who became pregnant chose to do so, and with no safe, legal or affordable access to abortion, women who became pregnant did not have many options other than to have their babies.

In spite of the fact that women may not have chosen to become pregnant, and despite the culture of mother-worship in these countries, women who were pregnant were treated appallingly in prison. In her world-famous testimony of her time in Argentinian prison, Alicia Partnoy tells the story of a fellow prisoner, Graciela, who was arrested while pregnant. In the voice of Graciela, who has been disappeared, she recounts how she was tortured even on the way to the prison: 'they knew I was pregnant. It hadn't occurred to me that they could torture me while we were travelling. They did it during the whole trip: the electric prod on my abdomen'³⁹⁷. She describes how 'each shock brought that terrible fear of miscarriage [...] I think it hurt more because I knew he was being hurt, because they were trying to kill him'³⁹⁸. This complete disrespect for an unborn baby's life is a common theme throughout the Southern Cone: in Chile, evidence shows that despite knowing that these women were expecting children, officers and medics ordered that 'continuaran con ella las diligencias', 'siguió con las torturas y la corriente'³⁹⁹. In Uruguay, too, women were subjected to brutal torture, and were

³⁹⁵ Htun, p. 167.

³⁹⁶ Zalaquett, p. 563.

³⁹⁷ *The Little School*, trans. by Alicia Partnoy, Lois Athey and Sandra Braunstein (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1986), p. 53.

³⁹⁸ Partnoy, 1986: p. 54.

³⁹⁹ Lira, p. 163; p. 168.

particularly abused for combining motherhood with militancy. Cristina Correa reported that while she was not physically abused in prison, she was made to listen to recordings of women being punched in the stomach while ‘supuestamente embarazadas’, dangling the threat of corporal punishment in front of her⁴⁰⁰. On the other hand, the Uruguayan women interviewed in Graciela Jorge’s book, *Maternidad en prisión política*, found that far from being a reason not to torture women, the pregnancy was ‘el punto central de la tortura’; many women miscarried because of this⁴⁰¹. In all three countries, agents of the regime took it upon themselves to punish women for what they perceived as a transgression, as a debasement of the sacred role of motherhood, a ‘deviance from socially constructed gender norms’⁴⁰². As these female militants had put themselves and their children at risk of physical danger, the military ensured that this danger came to pass, even as they justified it by claiming they were punishing the women for putting their children in harm’s way.

However, aside from putting their children in danger, these women were also making two other transgressions against the conservative morals of the state: they were political in a society that emphasised the apolitical nature of women, and more importantly, their political activities detracted from their role as mothers, in the sense that it kept them out of the home and away from household duties. Female militants had to balance their home life with their political life just as women increasingly had to balance their home lives with their work lives. As we have seen in the introductory chapter, women’s participation in the labour force has been increasing since the middle of the 20th century, albeit at different rates in

⁴⁰⁰ Cavallo Quintana, p. 58.

⁴⁰¹ Graciela Jorge (coordinator), *Maternidad en prisión política: Uruguay 1970-1980* (Montevideo: Trilce, 2011), p.76; p. 15.

⁴⁰² Churchill, p. 106.

different countries. Chile has the lowest levels, with Argentina and Uruguay being similar, although Uruguay has consistently been ahead. And as women's employment has increased, questions are raised about women's work-life balance, just as they are with women's militancy. A woman who spends time outside the home is invariably faced with the threat of judgement, as rather than having her outside activities seen as potentially beneficial to the lives of her children – for example through an economic contribution to the household – there is the notion that the time dedicated to other activities is time taken away from her children.

Simone de Beauvoir discusses how society encourages a woman to give herself entirely to the upbringing of her child, seeking fulfilment solely from her relationship with her child and the child's achievements, taking these achievements on as her own⁴⁰³. But she sees this as ultimately unfulfilling – the child is an individual, and as such his or her aims will not necessarily coincide with those of the mother⁴⁰⁴. By becoming a martyr – sacrificing her own life goals for her child – she suffers, de Beauvoir argues, and these sufferings become 'a weapon that she uses sadistically', becoming a tyrant, since the only thing she has control over in her life is the life of her child⁴⁰⁵. She adds, compellingly, that it is very strange that society denies women access to the worlds of work and politics, while still conferring onto women the responsibility to raise children, the future workers and politicians – a role she calls 'the most delicate and the most serious undertaking of all'⁴⁰⁶.

Betty Friedan, writing fifteen years later in 1963, expressed a similar sentiment, saying, 'motherhood, under the Freudian spotlight, had to become a

⁴⁰³ Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H.M. Parshley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 528.

⁴⁰⁴ De Beauvoir, p. 528.

⁴⁰⁵ De Beauvoir, p. 530.

⁴⁰⁶ De Beauvoir, pp. 538-39.

full-time job and career if not a religious cult'⁴⁰⁷. This job becomes the entire focus of a woman's life, which is incredibly damaging; she adds that 'a woman today who has no goal, no purpose, no ambition patterning her days into the future, making her stretch and grow beyond that small score of years in which her body can fill its biological function, is committing a kind of suicide'⁴⁰⁸.

And this situation had not changed much by the time Adrienne Rich was writing in 1997: she laments how, 'under patriarchy, female possibility has been literally massacred on the site of motherhood'⁴⁰⁹. She emphasises the fact that motherhood is '*one part* of female process; it is not an identity for all time'⁴¹⁰. But she recognises that social attitudes mean that women are divided into two groups: 'polarised into good or evil, fertile or barren, pure or impure'⁴¹¹. The 'good' women are 'good' mothers – mothers who are willing to sacrifice everything in their lives for their children without complaint, seeing it as their duty and their purpose. The 'bad' women are those who do not do this: whether they choose to retain a career, splitting their time between their home life and their outside life; whether they choose not to have children at all; or whether they simply do complain about their socially-imposed role, choosing to fight against these constraints. The label of 'bad mother' is a threat hanging over any woman with children: a term with such a powerful, emotive meaning that it serves to keep women anxious and therefore under control. Rich suggests that men are 'haunted' by the notion of '*dependence on woman for life itself*'; the creation of an ideological burden upon women to be 'good mothers' keeps women in check and allows men – who have a

⁴⁰⁷ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 173.

⁴⁰⁸ Friedan, p. 293.

⁴⁰⁹ *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago Press, 1997), p. 13.

⁴¹⁰ Rich, p. 37.

⁴¹¹ Rich, p. 34.

disproportionate control over social values and practice – to also control the phenomenon of motherhood, the one role from which they have been biologically restricted⁴¹². Indeed, as Rich points out, ‘the vast majority of literary and visual images of motherhood comes to us filtered through a collective or individual male consciousness’ – our understanding of this exclusively female realm is often fed through *male* ideas of it, despite their obvious lack of experience in this realm⁴¹³. I would argue further that this means that most cultural understandings of motherhood come from the only perspective that a man can take in this relationship: that of the child. As such, society places a much higher weight upon the importance of the child’s fulfilment, even at the expense of the fulfilment of the mother. And because of this, cultural representations of mother-child relationships usually focus on the child’s wants and needs, which can make mothers unsympathetic figures. Western society insists that women are maternal, loving and self-sacrificing by *nature* – therefore any women who seem to defy this idea are *unnatural*, and therefore monstrous. Aminatta Forna sees ‘mother-blaming’ as ‘a displacement activity for all the problems we can do nothing about’, something to use as a deflection ‘every time there is a perceived social crisis’⁴¹⁴. Any problem with a child is to be blamed on some failing of the mother: whether it be that she was too absent or too overbearing, the criticisms contradict one another in order to fit any situation. She also asks a question that is of particular importance to understanding the difficulties of militant mothers: ‘if you are a mother, what is an acceptable risk?’⁴¹⁵. Any activity that a woman performs that carries any risk of endangering her life – or, while she is pregnant, her life and that of her child –

⁴¹² Rich, p. 11, emphasis in original.

⁴¹³ Rich, p. 61.

⁴¹⁴ Aminatta Forna, *Mother of all Myths: How Society Moulds and Constrains Mothers* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 15; p. 35.

⁴¹⁵ Forna, p. 108.

invites criticism and makes a woman a 'bad mother': by this definition, *every* militant with children becomes a bad mother.

But Andrea O'Reilly suggests a radical new approach: to divide the role of mother into two very different spheres: motherhood and mothering. Motherhood, she argues, is the label given to the patriarchal idealised notion of a woman's self-sacrifice for her children, while mothering is profoundly different: the act itself, founded in reality, and potentially damaging to this idealised notion. She sees mothering as 'exposing, tracking, and eventually countering the ways that patriarchal motherhood, as both institution and ideology, normalises and naturalises oppressive motherhood as the best and *only* way to mother'⁴¹⁶. She describes how motherhood works to 'constrain, regulate and dominate women and their mothering' by allowing a male-dominated society to define and regulate the relationships between mothers and children, while mothering works to empower women by allowing women to define their own relationships with their children, and even sometimes prioritising their own desires over those of their children⁴¹⁷. Empowered mothers, she argues, 'insist upon their own authority as mothers and refuse the relinquishment of their power as mandated in the patriarchal institution of motherhood': they are the makers of their own destiny, refusing the labels and constraints of the institution⁴¹⁸. And this is the role that female militants with children seem to have adopted: as Tracy Crowe Morey and Cristina Santos suggest, the act of fighting for a better future for *all* children, rather than just aiming for the best for their own children, puts them at risk of being judged to be 'bad biological mother[s]', but this is outshone by their role as 'good

⁴¹⁶ Andrea O'Reilly, *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering* (Toronto: Demeter Press, 2006), p. 13.

⁴¹⁷ O' Reilly, p. 13.

⁴¹⁸ O' Reilly, p. 47.

ideological mother[s]' who are 'mothering in a communal sense' by providing for all of the children of the nation⁴¹⁹. These women were truly radical in their understanding of their role as mothers, but sadly this revolutionary way of performing mothering has been eclipsed by a social and a cultural criticism of the danger that their children were exposed to by their decision to play a role in revolutionary groups.

Cultural Representations of Revolutionary Motherhood

It is only recently that the understanding of revolutionary mothers' choices has begun to change. Almost all of the work focusing on mothers' roles in militant groups has come in the past decade, and this work has begun to question the notion that these women are exclusively either 'good' or 'bad' mothers, instead seeing a middle path where these women make both good and bad choices. The revolutionary mother was the subject of extreme criticism under dictatorship, receiving particularly brutal treatment in prison for stepping outside of the bounds of acceptable behaviour for a mother, but recent cultural representations of revolutionary mothers have been more sympathetic. It is important to point out that both *Infancia clandestina* and *Something Fierce* were written only after their writers had become parents themselves. As we saw in the case of Mariana Zaffaroni, becoming a parent seems to have strengthened the understanding of the difficulties that the revolutionaries have gone through and how difficult it can be to be a parent, under any circumstances, and has encouraged their children to reach out and understand their parents' lives better. Natalia Oreiro, the actress who

⁴¹⁹ Crowe Morey and Santos, p. 72.

plays the mother, Cristina, in *Infancia clandestina*, discusses how her role was difficult to play ‘porque todavía no había sido mamá’ and that the role required her to ‘manejar la dulzura y la violencia al mismo tiempo, transmitir ambas a la vez’⁴²⁰. She adds that the film ‘no habla ni bien ni mal. Sólo cuenta cómo eran los militantes en su cotidianeidad’, recognising that these deeply personal stories are imbued with ambivalence and nostalgia by their writers⁴²¹. The mothers take on a particular importance in these stories, and their motivations and responsibilities are questioned far more profoundly than those of the father or father figure, which suggests that mothers are still perceived to be the focal point of the family in terms of caregiving, but their representations are nonetheless sympathetic to the struggles of these revolutionary women. The next section of this chapter will be devoted to examining in detail the mother-child relationships presented in *Infancia clandestina* and *Something Fierce*, and to discussing the ambivalence with which these mothers are depicted. Both portrayals display a fine balance between criticism of these women’s actions and a profound love for them and identification with their ideals.

Revolutionary Motherhood in *Infancia clandestina*

Benjamín Ávila’s 2011 film *Infancia clandestina*, which was Argentina’s submission for the 2013 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, tells the story of Juan, an eleven-year-old boy whose parents are important members of a left-wing revolutionary group. The story is loosely based on Ávila’s personal story: his

⁴²⁰ Victoria Pérez Zabala, ‘La doble vida de Juan’, *La Nación*, 15 September 2012 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1508554-la-doble-vida-de-juan>> [accessed 22 January 2015].

⁴²¹ Pérez Zabala.

mother and infant brother were disappeared in October 1979⁴²². The film, which Ávila co-wrote with Marcelo Müller, mostly focuses on a short period in the spring of 1979, in which Juan's family returns to Argentina and resumes their revolutionary activities. Moments of danger are alternated with quotidian scenes of family and of Juan's first love, but as the film progresses the former become more prevalent, leading to the climax when Juan's mother Cristina is detained by the police.

From the very first moments we can see that the film is an intimate portrait of family life: the opening shots are all close-ups – of Juan's, Cristina's and Juan's father Horacio's faces; of Juan's hands, of their feet as they walk to their door. The conversation, too, is quotidian and familiar: seven-year-old Juan complains that he needs to go to the toilet while his mother says that she told him to go before they left. But then the style subtly changes: the first long-distance shot, seen over Horacio's shoulder, shows a car in the distance approaching, and the mood instantly changes. The slow pace of the scene is immediately broken: Horacio calls his wife's name and pulls out a gun; an unseen figure in the car starts shooting at them; Cristina pulls a gun from her handbag and pushes Juan to the ground. The film suddenly switches to animation: shown from Juan's perspective on the ground, we see his parents returning fire at the speeding vehicle, and one bullet hitting his father in the leg. The animation is made of quick cuts between static images rather than a flowing piece, showing Juan's confusion and fear, overlaid by the sounds of his father shouting and his mother's panic when she sees that Horacio has been hit. This opening scene sets the tone for the film in several ways. Firstly, we see the fear and the disorientation that certain external forces cause

⁴²² Revista Cabal, 'Entrevista a Benjamín Ávila, director de "Infancia Clandestina"' <<http://www.revistacabal.coop/entrevista-benjamin-avila-director-de-%E2%80%9CInfancia-clandestina>> [accessed 22 January 2015].

when they enter the familial realm. The shooters and the driver of the car are dehumanised, being depicted merely as hands and silhouettes, while the family's faces are picked out in detail to show their fear and sadness: Juan and his mother's faces are particularly focused on. Similarly, we do not hear a sound from the attackers, merely the mechanical sound of the car speeding by and the sounds of the guns, while Juan's parents' voices are a constant through the scene, again humanising them. This reflects the feeling throughout the film of 'us versus them', that is, the family, of detailed and relatable characters, against a mostly unseen and secretive enemy. This binarism, along with the animated bursts that occur whenever moments of violence happen, shows that the film will be told from the perspective of Juan. The director's choice to focus on small, quotidian details like the rain on the car windows and the face of Cristina reflected in the windscreen show that this history is a very personal one, and the focus on her face during the aftermath of the attack shows that she is the focal point of the narrative: as we shall see, she plays a much more important role in Juan's story than his father, whose role is almost entirely eclipsed by that of Juan's paternal uncle, Tío Beto. But what is also very interesting from this first scene is Cristina's role in it. Far from being a scared victim, Cristina reacts quickly and definitively in the face of danger. She coolly pushes Juan to the ground, out of the way of the gunfire, while pulling her gun out of her handbag with the other, and while Horacio shouts obscenities while returning fire, she is silent except to say his name, remaining calm even in a dangerous situation. She is clearly an experienced militant, which is highlighted by the fact that the position from which both parents fire is the same: obviously a product of training. The smooth action of her pulling a loaded gun from her handbag is a very powerful one: the juxtaposition of the weapon and the feminine fashion item, along with her long hair which she flicks out of the way as she turns

to see the car coming, subtly defy the ideological binarism of the butch militant and the feminine temptress, which were the two major contemporary stereotypes of revolutionary women in the Southern Cone: she retains her femininity while also showing herself a capable fighter⁴²³. But the scene also has a larger purpose: it serves to make the viewer immediately aware that Juan's parents' actions put him at risk, as their enemies clearly do not care about shooting at children.

The effect of the attack on the family is clear: the next images, also in the same pictorial style, show family pictures from Brazil in 1975, and as the first scene also took place in 1975 we understand that the family took very little time in leaving the country. Immediately after the shooting we can hear Cristina saying – although the sound seems drowned out, reflecting Juan's shock – 'Horacio, ¿qué hacemos? Vámonos, ¡de puta madre!', which suggests that they had already been thinking of leaving. Certainly the fact that Horacio's reaction to seeing people in a car near their house is to pull out a gun shows that they were aware of the potential threat, and the film explains that 'grupos parapoliciales comenzaron a perseguir y asesinar miliantes sociales y revolucionarios' in 1974. The family photographs then depict Mexico in 1976, Cuba in 1978 and then, in 1979, Juan with a baby, showing that the family has grown. The style then returns from animation back to live action, and to close-up, with the opening shots showing just the mouths of Juan's parents as they record a tape for him explaining their decision to return to Argentina and what he has to do. The tape forms a voice-over, overlaid onto scenes of Carmen and Gregorio, friends of Juan's parents, taking Juan and his baby sister Vicky across the Argentinian border. The voice-over seems strange, interspersing adult themes and ideas with childhood memories: Cristina explains that they are returning to Argentina because 'bueno, entendemos que es el

⁴²³ Churchill, p. 106.

momento para continuar con nuestra lucha', yet their explanation of the story of Che Guevara traveling under false identities refers to Juan's 'dibujos [...] preciosos' and how 'te causó mucha gracia que se afeitó la cabeza como si fuera pelado'. This strange mixture of childhood and adulthood is a running theme throughout the film, complementing the binarisms of home and outside world, family and the state. When the family is reunited, they sit in the shed and question Juan on his false identity while Cristina counts bullets and Horacio holds Vicky. Juan reaches to pick a bullet up and Cristina casually tells him, 'esto no, sabés que no'. This emphasises the constant threat of danger even under the roof of the family home, where a child is supposed to be safe. It also makes the audience aware that Juan is, despite his youth, carrying a huge weight on his shoulders. He has to do all that he can to fit in, despite having lived abroad for a long time. The family certainly notice the difference in climate after Cuba, with Juan commenting, '¿qué frío, no?', Horacio saying, 'te vas a cagar de frío' and Cristina noting that he misses 'el calorcito'. Juan's accent is also more suited for Cuba than Argentina. Although Beto is joking when he says that Juan's accent 'nos va a matar', its difference to the distinctive accent of Buenos Aires does not go unnoticed, even by his young classmates, who repeatedly correct his *yeísmo*. He is required to hide his true identity and go by the name Ernesto, claiming that he is from Córdoba. He is also required to hide the fact that his ideological education at home is very different from the official narrative being taught at his school. This does create tension. Horacio tells Juan that 'la bandera con el sol fue la bandera de guerra', saying that in their house 'la que nosotros tenemos es la original' – then, when Juan is given the 'honor' of raising the flag in school, he refuses, saying 'no quiero [...] no voy'. One of the boys in his class asks him confrontationally if 'no te enseñaron en tu provincia ser patriota' and the two boys fight. When Beto comes to the school to remedy the incident, claiming that

Juan refused due to shyness, he asks him privately what his real reasons were. Juan explains, 'es la bandera de guerra. La usan los milicos'. Clearly, this negative opinion goes against the official narrative of the school: outside of the headmistress' office there is a military bust. Beto explains that it is stupid to fight 'por una cosa así', but he too emphasises the importance of their fight to Juan, affectionately calling him 'soldado' and telling him, 'y ahora a lustrar', which is part of his training.

Danger is also present in other ways. Juan is shown a secret hiding place in the shed and told, 'cualquier cosa que pase, vení por acá'. When the family has a meeting with other revolutionaries, it takes place inside the family home – in order to hide their location, they are brought in with blindfolds on, and this precaution shows the risk that they are taking by having the meeting there. Juan and Vicky stay in a different room, although Juan is able to watch through the partly-opened door as his father commands the group and his mother hands out guns and magazines, once again showing her expertise as she removes the magazines and checks the chambers are empty. When Beto tells the group, 'vamos a recordar los compañeros caídos en la lucha revolucionaria', we can see the danger of their operation, but so can Juan. When the name 'Gregorio' is mentioned, we can see Juan whisper 'presente' alongside the others, showing that he is aware that the man who brought him into Argentina has since died.

Yet despite the moments of danger there are also tender moments between family and friends. After the meeting, the group goes outside into the garden to enjoy an *asado* and share wine and laughter before retiring to the shed to pack boxes of bullets, money and revolutionary literature. We see short clips of personal moments: a couple kissing, Cristina comforting her baby, a couple embracing while asleep, Horacio comforting a crying young man. This montage is overlaid by the

sound of Cristina gently singing the tango 'Sueño de juventud', the images of which bookend the montage and show Juan watching his mother with affection and her looking at him and smiling warmly when she sings 'tus ojos hermosos'. The idealistic image of his mother in this scene is repeated later, when she, Juan and Vicky are in the park. Once again, the scene is a series of close-ups, giving it an intimate feel, and the sunshine and their casual positions stretched out on the grass show that they feel safe and happy. Juan asks Cristina about how she fell in love with his father and her response is a role-reversal of gender expectations: she says, laughing, 'yo me enamoré enseguida, pero tu papá me lo hizo muy difícil [...] me llevó como dos meses a conquistarlo'. She then intuits that he is asking because he likes a girl, saying, '¿y vos? [...] ¿Qué te pasa?' before teasing him, 'te gusta una compañerita'. She tickles him, reminding him that he is 'mío, mío, mío, mío' and they both laugh. The scene shows their closeness and highlights the importance of her role in his life: his father is not present and is never seen in a similarly loving scene with Juan. It also emphasises that Cristina is a caring person who loves her family deeply. In the next scene, when Beto returns hurt from a failed mission, Cristina once again proves herself caring, insisting 'déjame ver' and tending to his leg while Horacio interrogates him about what happened: '¡contáme todo, Beto!' However, just as her concern for her husband in the opening scene was juxtaposed with her evident ability as a fighter, in this scene once she hears sirens approaching she once more returns to her role as a militant: she rushes her children to their 'escondite' in the shed and then runs out again to help Horacio and Beto defend the house, rather than choosing to hide too. But once the sirens have passed, she quickly returns, cheerfully taking Vicky into her arms and asking Juan if he is alright while reassuring him that 'no pasa nada, no pasa nada'.

However, her characterisation is complex: the love and affection with which she is presented is repeatedly contrasted with her stricter side. One morning in school, Juan's classmates all begin to sing happy birthday, and he starts to join in until he realises that they are singing to him. When he gets home he frantically digs out his passport and tells Cristina, 'hoy es mi cumpleaños'; that is, the birthday of Ernesto, his secret identity. She asks him if anyone in school said anything and he says 'hay fiesta el sábado', explaining that 'todos los chicos [...] me preguntaron '¿cuándo hay fiesta, fiesta, fiesta?' y [...] me salió'. Cristina is irritated, responding, '¡de puta madre! ¿No podrías contestar otra cosa?' She is clearly in a difficult position, explaining that they have important things to do and 'no estamos para fiestas', but seems not to realise that he too was in a difficult position: it would be hard for him to think up a reason on the spot as to why his family did not want to celebrate his birthday. Beto, on the other hand, seems much more understanding, saying that 'no es tan grave, es un cumpleaños de chicos'. He offers to get Juan a piñata and when Cristina asks, 'y la torta, ¿quién la hace?' he responds, 'yo'. When Horacio hears about the party, he is also concerned: he tells Juan that he agrees that there should be a party, but that 'tenés que ayudarnos a controlar todo todo el tiempo', and when Juan distractedly agrees, he says angrily, 'esto es importante, esto es *serio*.'

Beto clearly has a more relaxed outlook than Juan's parents. When he opens the van to reveal his present to Juan – Juan's maternal grandmother Amalia – Beto and Horacio argue. Despite the emotional reunion, with Amalia's comment of '¡qué grande que estás!' suggesting that they haven't seen each other in a long time, Horacio is angered by Beto's actions, telling him that 'esto va en contra de todas las medidas de seguridad', even though Amalia was brought in wearing a blindfold. Beto asks him, '¿cuando vas a disfrutar que estamos acá, que estamos juntos?'

adding that 'esto también es necesario y es importante. Si no, ¿qué sentido tiene todo lo que estamos haciendo?' He also questions Horacio's motives, stating, 'te jode tener suegra, qué sé yo, no haber tenido una familia'. He believes that if Horacio has chosen to have a family under these circumstances, he must recognise that he has to balance his militancy with his family life.

This argument also arises after the party, although this time it is Amalia criticising Cristina, and the fight is much more drawn out than the one between Horacio and Beto. This scene is vital to understanding the adults' motivations, but especially those of Cristina. The argument begins when Cristina tells her mother 'no podés contarle a nadie que nos viste, que estamos acá, nada': Amalia responds, '¿ustedes no pensán en quedarse, no?' She admits that she is not 'en condiciones de discutir con ustedes acerca de [...] lo que ustedes hacen', her discomfort made clear in her hesitation and the vague terms in which she speaks, but she is fearful, explaining that 'la situación del país no es cierto' and that she does not understand 'por qué volvieron en este momento justamente al país'. Cristina leaps up and enthusiastically kisses her, but Amalia's reaction of surprise, along with her exclamation of 'ay', shows that she was not expecting that response; she feared that Cristina would be angered by her intervention. Instead, Cristina, who has told her mother how glad she is to see her, tells her 'te quiero mucho' and tries to change the subject by asking how her aunt is. Amalia responds, 'no quiero hablar de la tía' and Cristina, now no longer smiling, tells her 'y yo no quiero hablar de lo que vos querés hablar, mamá, ¿sí? No me lo hagas más difícil'.

This is the first time that Cristina has admitted that living a secret life is difficult for her, but it is clear that she finds her separation from her extended family painful: in the excitement she shows when she sees her mother emerge from the van, in the questions about her aunt, in her joy at introducing Vicky to her

grandmother for what we can only assume is the first time. Horacio notices the change in mood and tells Juan to go to bed, while insisting in a gentle, neutral tone that 'nosotros y los chicos estamos bien'. But Amalia is not convinced and nervously says that she wants to make a proposal: 'yo me llevo los chicos y ustedes...' Cristina's laugh interrupts her and she says, amused, '¿estás loca, mamá? Son mis hijos'. Amalia responds, 'son mis nietos', and Cristina's tone turns firm as she says, 'sí, pero son mis hijos. No te lo olvides nunca.' After Beto enters and breaks up the tension, Amalia tries again, this time directing her concerns to Horacio, 'vos sí podés entender lo que yo digo con respecto a los chicos'. His response is interesting: he tells her, 'sí, sí, Amalia, pero eso no va a pasar nunca.' It seems almost as if he agrees with her, but that he has already conceded to not sending the children away; in other words, he and Cristina have had this discussion before. In revolutionary organisations all aspects of the members' lives were subject to the command of their superiors, regardless of their personal relationship, and Horacio clearly outranks Cristina, as during their meeting he declared the house and the group under 'mis ordenes'. Yet he has not chosen to insist upon an issue that, as we shall see in the remainder of the scene, is clearly important to Cristina: it is almost as if she, as the children's mother, has outranked him in this one aspect, that he has conceded due to respect for her position. But it also may be out of sheer love for her, as we can see through how she speaks about him in the park with Juan, and how they hold onto each other as they dance at the party, that they have a very close and happy marriage, and while the film's perspective may be tinged with nostalgia due to Ávila's awareness of the imminent destruction of the family and his eagerness to remember the last moments they all spent together as happy, we never see the couple arguing with each other.

Nonetheless, some of Amalia's criticisms clearly echo the thoughts of Ávila himself. When Amalia counters Beto's insistence that the children are 'haciendo una vida normal' by asking if 'a vos te parece normal que un chico tenga un nombre de no sé quién, el cumpleaños de no sé qué fecha [...] ¡pobre pollito! ¿A vos te parece normal?' During the entirety of this series of questions the camera focuses on Juan's face as he hides in the corner, eavesdropping. His face remains serious, suggesting that he too feels this way, and as soon as she has finished speaking he turns his head to witness his mother's response. Later in the film, when the situation in the home becomes more difficult for him, he even attempts the childish rebellion of attempting to run away with his girlfriend María. His interest in his mother's response shows that he is curious to know how she would respond if he too raised these concerns, and as he has apparently guessed, she quickly turns angry. Cristina tells her mother that 'no soporto tu miedo', calling her a 'puta cagona' and saying that '¡en tu puta vida nunca hiciste algo por los demás!' Here we are witnessing a different kind of mother-child relationship, and just as Juan seems to have some unspoken criticisms of his mother's choices, Cristina does too – and when confronted by the potential loss of her children, she freely attacks her mother's apparent apoliticism, telling her '¡no tenés idea de cómo pienso!' She tells her that if something *were* to happen to her, as Amalia's repeated references to 'peligro' suggest, 'prefiero que mis hijos los críen todos mis compañeros antes que entregártelos a vos.' This reflects the idea that a revolutionary group is like a big family, taking responsibility over one another's children, and also suggests that Cristina prioritises the ideological education of her children over their personal comfort. Amalia, seeing the logical result of being brought up by militants, asks, '¿querés que tus hijos sean guerrilleros?', to which Cristina takes offence: '¿cuál es el problema que sean guerrilleros?'

Once again, Ávila reminds us that Cristina's decisions affect people who cannot speak for themselves: as she asks this question, he again focuses on the face of Juan. But the camera lingers on this shot while Cristina adds, '¿vos sabés cuál es el fin de ser guerrilleros?', evoking the paradox recognised by many militants that their children are both the reason for their fight and the reason not to fight. That Ávila shows Juan's face during these two questions shows that he is ultimately sympathetic to the difficulties that the revolutionary mothers, and his own mother, have had to go through. Cristina clearly wants the best for her children, and she believes that her struggle can help to create a better world for them. We can see that she is willing to make sacrifices for this to happen, both in the sense of missing her family and a normal life, and in the eventuality that 'me pasa algo'. But there is another paradox at play in this scene: she wishes to avoid her children being raised by the woman who raised her, as she believes that they are very different in their ideals, but at the same time she wants her children to become like her. This evinces the phenomenon that Lynn Sukenick calls 'matrophobia': a fear of turning into your own mother. Adrienne Rich says that this 'can be seen as a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mother's bondage, to become individuated and free', but while Cristina desires this for herself, she does not see it as a priority for her children, as she assumes she knows what is best for them⁴²⁴. She also fails to recognise that her upbringing did not define her ideals, as she has transcended her mother's apoliticism but she does not seem to believe that her children will be able to do the same.

However, despite their ideological differences, there is clearly a profound love between these two women: when Horacio suggests that it is time for Amalia to go home, Cristina launches herself into her mother's arms crying and promising

⁴²⁴ Rich, p. 236.

'que va a estar todo bien'. The scene ends with a voice-over taken from the tape Juan's parents made for him in Cuba, which highlights the ideological differences between Cristina and Amalia. Cristina recalls how 'cuando le dije que te ibas a llamar Juan [...] "¿Juan?" me decía, "seguramente [...] por ese Perón"', conceding that 'claro te pusimos Juan por Perón' and pointing out, '¿sabés que nunca te dijo Juan? Por eso te dice "pollo"'. Here we can see that even the most quotidian familial things have been touched by politics – Juan's alias Ernesto is no doubt a reference to Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, and Vicky's name is probably a reference to the revolutionary phrase 'hasta la victoria siempre' – and can have subtle but ultimately telling effect on familial relationships.

This conversation after the party is the last time that we see the whole family together. It is immediately followed by a touching scene between Beto and Juan in which Juan tells his uncle about his upcoming camping trip and about his sweetheart María, with Beto feeding him chocolate peanuts and giving him advice about love. The scene's style mimics that of Juan's conversation with Cristina in the park, being shot entirely in close-ups, which poses an aesthetic contrast to the distance shots of the previous scene, which served to show the reactions of the whole family during Cristina and Amalia's fight. Indeed, the final shot of the fight scene is a wide shot that takes in the whole kitchen, showing Juan standing with his back to the camera in the doorway seeing off Amalia while Cristina stands in a defensive position by the kitchen table and Horacio, at arms length, touching her arm to console her; by contrast, the conversation between Beto and Juan depicts the former reclined casually in a similar manner to that of Cristina in the park, and the focus of the scene is the two characters' faces, rather than their actions and body language. Cristina and Amalia's shouting is juxtaposed with Beto and Juan's whispering, and the light suggests that it is now early in the morning, where the

previous scene took place late at night. The scene is also entirely devoid of ideological narrative, and could be a touching conversation between any close uncle and nephew. It ends with an affectionate embrace, and the focus on Beto's face, with his closed eyes and slight smile, give the sequence a sense of melancholic nostalgia.

Immediately following this comes the camping trip sequence. Once again, the aesthetic feel of this section contrasts strongly to the one preceding it: it is lively, brightly lit in contrast to the dim grey light of the early morning, and full of action – children run, laugh and sing. María and Juan wander alone into the woods, appreciating the wide-open space and the natural beauty that surrounds them. The overall feeling is one of happy, innocent childhood, but even here there are some hints at the insidious nature of the dictatorship. The young sweethearts come across a burnt-out car, which suggests that this has been the location of more sinister events, and while their innocence is underlined by their reaction to their discovery – which is to jump on it and pretend to drive it – when Juan's friends appear and María runs off after them, Juan is left alone in the car, seemingly sad. Unbeknownst to him, the camping trip represents the end of his innocence.

After a sleepy bus trip back to Buenos Aires, Juan's reception by his family is jarring. Cristina leads him to an unknown car, looking around nervously. Her face and actions are stern, while Horacio seems withdrawn and reticent. Their faces, usually the focus of family scenes, are shown only partially and from behind, showing their inability to face him. Horacio tells him, 'tenemos que irnos unos días de la casa, por seguridad', only his eyes visible in the rear-view mirror. By way of explanation, an off-screen Cristina sighs, 'el tío Beto'. Juan is crushed. As they drive, they pass María walking home. The allegro piano music that accompanied their playing in the woods has now been replaced by sad, slow piano, and we can see

from Juan's solemn face that his whole innocent outlook has been shattered in mere seconds. In their new home, Juan listens in stunned silence as Horacio makes a toast to his brother. Finally he breaks his silence to ask what happened. A female member of the group tells him, 'estas cosas pasan', to which Juan sharply replies, 'yo sé. Pero quiero la verdad'. Even at this young age, Juan is intimately acquainted with death, but we can see that he is not equipped to handle it: he says, 'yo sí lo necesitaba vivo. ¿Quién se cree que es?' In the aftermath of Beto's death the already evident emotional disconnection between Juan and his father widens. Horacio's lack of understanding of his son's emotional maturity is clear in his recounting of Beto's death: he takes Juan at his word when he asks for 'la verdad', and tells him that Beto blew himself up with a grenade in the van along with a policeman in order to avoid being taken alive – a grisly and upsetting story. Later, when Juan is lying near-catatonic in his bed, Horacio comes to see him, but he is unable to offer words of comfort beyond 'yo también lo voy a extrañar', and even this comes after he has already told Juan that he is going away for a few days, in order to see if they can return home. Their interaction offers Juan little solace, and helps us to understand why it was Beto, and not Horacio, who Juan turned to for advice. Devoid now of a close male role model, Juan's only comfort is found in an extended dream sequence in which he is able to tell Beto about his camping trip in a scene that is eerily reminiscent of their last conversation, with Beto smoking and Juan eating chocolate peanuts. Their positions and the lighting are also similar, but the light is an ethereal green colour. As the dream progresses, Juan's anxieties become more and more prominent – first Beto asks him what he is going to do 'con la vida', warning him that 'yo ya no te puedo ayudar', which reflects Juan's fears for a future without the guidance of his uncle. But then it takes on a traumatic note, with police officers bursting in and shooting wildly into the room, with one shot

hitting Vicky's bottle and another hitting her doll, showing Juan's subconscious awareness of the danger of being born and raised in this environment. Beto grabs hold of Juan and falls to the floor, pulling the pin out of a grenade with his teeth while shouting 'nunca me agarran vivo' – Beto's reported last words. The style immediately switches to animation as Beto is shot at by policemen with monstrous faces, as he catches hold of one and as he explodes the grenade, killing himself and the policeman and destroying the van. Juan's horrified face is suddenly wearing Horacio's glasses, as he takes his father's role as witness to this carnage. The message here is clear: in telling the true story of Beto's death, Horacio has passed on the horror and the trauma of the situation to Juan, who feels as if he too had been a witness to this terrible event. The scene may even be suggesting that, by failing to protect Juan from the brutality of the regime, Horacio is dooming Juan to take his place and repeat his fate. Juan's subconscious uncertainty about his future is clear through Beto's questioning, and the attack by the police shows his fear of violence. Interestingly, we also see in the dream sequence a photo of Juan and María sitting in the burnt out car. Having discovered after the camping trip ended that Beto died in an explosion that destroyed his van, the symbol of a vehicle destroyed by fire is very evocative of Beto's fate, and Juan's vision of the photograph in the dream may further suggest his fear that his future will follow the same dangerous path as that of his parents.

However, Ávila is keen to demonstrate to the audience that despite the death of Beto and the absence of Horacio, who has left to see if it is safe to return home, the family can still represent safety and consolation. When Juan wakes up from his nightmare, Cristina is with him. She tells him that he has a fever, and in order to comfort him she takes him into the shower, holding onto him while he resists and cries out. Later, when she has calmed him, she holds him while he

sleeps, humming 'Sueño de juventud' gently. The camera pans out to show their living arrangements, which consist of two mattresses on the floor, with piles of personal items around. Clearly their revolutionary lifestyle has led them to discomfort and to emotional pain, but Cristina is still caring and affectionate, even as her husband seems to fall short in his ability to make his son feel safe.

The family are soon able to return to their home, but the emotional toll of Beto's loss is very evident, especially in the behaviour of Juan. As he is unable to go back to school and his parents are both very distracted, he becomes lonely and bored. He sits down under the kitchen table and uses the phonebook to call María. She commiserates him on the loss of his 'abuelo', showing that his parents have given the school a cover story to explain his sudden absence. When Cristina sees him under the table, she roughly pulls him out, shouting '¿CON QUIÉN HABLABAS?' When Juan tells her, both of his parents are perplexed: unlike Beto, who had always taken an interest in his personal life, they have not been paying much attention to him. This is particularly telling in Cristina's case, as we previously saw her teasing him that 'te gusta una compañerita'. Both parents are extremely angry that he has been using the telephone: Horacio calls the incident 'lo que faltaba' and asks him if he knows 'lo peligroso que es hablar por telefono'. When Juan concedes that he does, Horacio asks, 'entonces, ¿qué mierda te pasa?' Cristina reminds him that 'a la escuela no vas a ir más'. Here we see Juan's irritation bubble to the surface for the first time, as he shouts, '¿y qué mierda quieren que haga acá?' This is the first time that Juan has shouted in the film, despite the evidently stressful experiences he has had to endure and the fiery tempers of his family members. Throughout the film he has remained quietly obedient, and this is his first sign of defiance. Horacio tells him not to shout, explaining that 'esto no es fácil para nadie' and that he must 'tomar las cosas como lo que son', to which Juan quietly replies,

'es fácil decirlo'; but when Cristina turns to confront him – '¿cómo?' – he submissively responds, 'nada'. His parents are clearly struggling in their clandestine activities, but this scene shows that they have little sympathy for his problems, even though they have actively chosen this life that 'no es fácil para nadie' and he has not. Left alone with Vicky, he decides to rebel against this lifestyle: he fills his bag with clothes, takes his passport and some money, kisses Vicky goodbye and goes to see María.

This is the last sequence of the film in which we see Juan happy, and as it precedes the terrible climax, the scene is completely idealised. The music is light and playful, the sun is shining, and María and Juan go to the funfair and ride all of the rides in a flurry of bright colours and fast movements. But the speed of the rides and of the children as they run gives the scene a markedly transient feel, and indeed the spell is soon broken. In the surreal surroundings of the house of mirrors, Juan tries to explain to María that he is 'diferente' and that 'hay cosas que uno no entiende'. He shows her the money he has taken and tells her 'vamos a poder ir a donde queramos'. He is clearly anxious to break away from what must seem to him to be an inescapable fate, but his naiveté is evident when he tells her that he, a child, will be able to get a job and support them. María's reaction is one of confusion and sadness: beginning to cry, she asks him, '¿estás loco? ¿Cómo voy a dejar a mi familia? ¿Y tu familia?' The difference in their backgrounds is obvious – she feels safe and loved at home, while the tension and the danger that he is experiencing with increasing frequency in his daily life lead him to say 'los quiero mucho, pero [...] ahora quiero estar con vos'. Not understanding his situation, she runs away, leaving him to go home alone after all. His return home is overlaid by a voiceover by his father from the tape from Cuba. In it, his father reminisces about when he was a baby and tells him that now 'sos un hombre. Bueno, casi un

hombre'. The tone of his voice is gentle and loving as he tells his son that 'esta noche [...] estuve en tu habitación viéndote dormir' and that 'quiero que sepas que me encanta verte crecer'. This warmth is contrasted to the coldness of Juan's reception in the present: as he arrives at the house, Horacio opens the door and watches silently as he walks inside. There is love here – Horacio has no rebuke for his son – but sternness too.

The next morning Juan watches from the window as his father leaves the house. Horacio does not say goodbye to Juan, and this is the last time he sees his father. Later, when he is feeding Vicky while watching the news on television, he hears a report about the death of a senior figure in the *Montoneros* and looks up to see his father's face. He cries out as if he were a baby, '¡pa! ¡Pa!' but then, continuing the mixture of childhood and adulthood, he gets a handgun, sits in a chair facing the door, and prepares to defend himself and Vicky against any intruders. However, he in fact almost immediately falls asleep. In his dream he watches as children run into the shed and surround a dead body, calling out 'compañero Ernesto, presente'. Then they start singing the song they sang on the camping trip, and the camera pans around the table to reveal that he is lying surrounded by chocolate peanuts and that in place of his head there is a television, showing the photograph of Horacio's face from the news report. The image then changes, becoming the photograph from Juan's passport for his cover identity, Ernesto. Once again we can see Juan's anxiety that he is turning into his father and that he will also live a violent revolutionary life. Suddenly Cristina runs in, screaming '¡JUAN!', and he sits up and in shock points the gun at her. She pulls him into her arms and they cry together, the extreme close-ups of the scene highlighting their isolation and their grief.

But they do not have long to mourn together. Juan is burning revolutionary documents and family photographs in the shed when cars are heard pulling up outside. Suddenly Cristina runs out, gun in hand, shouting for Juan to '¡escóndete!' He rushes into the hiding place with Vicky and outside we can hear shots and the voices of men approaching. As the door opens, the style turns once more to animation. Images of the past – of Horacio holding Vicky, of Carmen and Gregorio, of his parents dancing at the party – are sprinkled amongst images of the present – of a man holding Vicky, of men with guns leading Juan out of the hiding place as he struggles against them, of one of the members of the group kneeling in front of a man with a shotgun. Juan sees María standing in the rain outside as he is put in a car, although whether she is really there or he is just imagining her is not clear. When the style changes back to live action, Juan is being interrogated by a police officer, played by Ávila himself. He is repeatedly asked his name, and he repeatedly responds 'Ernesto Estrada'. The officer crouches beside Juan and brings his face very close to Juan's – the audience's discomfort is accentuated by the extreme close-up, which prevents us from looking away. He asks Juan if '¿tu papá no se llama Horacio?', before sneering 'se llamaba', and he strokes Juan's hair before pulling his head into a position where he has to look for him. The entire scene is incredibly uncomfortable to watch, but Juan manages to resist and simply asks where his sister is. He is driven to his grandmother's house, still asking '¿dónde está mi hermana?', and the film ends with him standing on the doorstep in the dark – and when a voice inside the house asks who it is, he responds, reaffirming his identity: 'soy Juan'. An intertitle then reveals the personal nature of the film's narrative to its director:

dedicado a la memoria de mi madre

Sara E Zermoglio

Detenida - Desaparecida el 13 de octubre de 1979

A mis hermanos, mi padre, mis hijos.

Y a todos los Hijos, Nietos, Militantes

y a todos aquellos que han conservado la fe.

Then, as the credits roll, we are shown pictures from Ávila's childhood, particularly of his mother. The fact that this story is a personal one explains many elements of the film, particularly the relationship between Juan and Cristina and its centrality. In reality, Benjamín was only seven when his mother and his infant half-brother Diego were disappeared, so we can assume that Juan's criticisms of his mother's lifestyle come from an adult perspective⁴²⁵. Also, in reality Horacio was Benjamín's stepfather, which may explain why Horacio's relationship with Juan is colder than that of Cristina or Beto⁴²⁶. As we have seen, both Beto and Cristina have idealised scenes in which they talk one-to-one with Juan and demonstrate the closeness of their relationship, which serve to make their loss all the more poignant later. But Horacio has no such scene – the only times that we see him alone with Juan are when he is telling him to be careful at the party and when he silently lets Juan back into the house after the day at the funfair. Many elements of the film do indeed come from Ávila's life, the names of characters for example: Cristina's codename 'Charo' was Ávila's mother's nickname, while Juan's codename 'Ernesto' is very

⁴²⁵ Diego Lerer, 'Lazos de familia', *Clarín*, 22 March 2004

<<http://edant.clarin.com/diario/2004/03/22/c-00502.htm>> [accessed 15 January 2015].

⁴²⁶ Revista Cabal.

similar to Ávila's mother's middle name, Ernesta⁴²⁷. Another of Sara Zermoglio's codenames was María Estrada: Juan's girlfriend is called María and the family's adopted surname is Estrada⁴²⁸. Horacio was indeed killed in Munro in 1979, as presented in the film, and after Zermoglio was detained Ávila was sent to his grandmother's home, while his brother Diego was given to another family with whom he had no blood relation – he was located in 1984⁴²⁹. Ávila was then raised by his biological father, so it is interesting that he has chosen to present Horacio as his father despite the evident distance between them⁴³⁰. Juan is clearly upset by Horacio's death, but in general their relationship is not very close. This decision may have been taken in order to streamline the narrative, but it also has the important effect of pushing the mother-son relationship to the centre of the story. Horacio's coldness and strictness acts as a foil to Cristina's passion and tenderness, and makes her disappearance the climax of the story, while the effects of his death upon the family are given very little time: in reality, Horacio died around a month before Sara's disappearance, whereas in the film it may be a matter of hours or at most a day⁴³¹.

Infancia clandestina touches upon many of the issues which I have mentioned above. Firstly, it is Cristina, the mother, whose behaviour is most scrutinised: in the scene after the party, she is even interrogated as to why she is keeping her children in this dangerous environment. We can see from Horacio's response to Amalia's questions that he apparently also has concerns, but that

⁴²⁷ Abuelas, 'Casos resueltos: Diego Tomás Mendizábal Zermoglio', <<https://www.abuelas.org.ar/caso/mendizabal-zermoglio-diego-tomls-242?orden=c>> [accessed 15 January 2015].

⁴²⁸ Abuelas.

⁴²⁹ Revista Cabal.

⁴³⁰ Juliana Rodríguez, 'Infancia Clandestina: "esta película tiene años de gestación"', *La Voz*, 29 September 2012 <<http://vos.lavoz.com.ar/cine/infancia-clandestina-esta-pelicula-tiene-anos-gestacion>> [accessed 22 January 2015].

⁴³¹ Abuelas.

Cristina – alone – has made the decision to keep the children with them. During this scene we see her justifying her actions based on motives other than her children's welfare: she wishes to raise her children inside of her ideology and encourage them to continue her fight; she also wants to keep them with her for personal, emotional reasons, as she enjoys having them around. Horacio's reasons for agreeing to this are never questioned, nor any justification offered.

Furthermore, she is presented at times as unempathetic to Juan's difficulties at living a clandestine life at such a young age: she is irritated when Juan tells her that he will be having a birthday party, and angry when she sees him talking to María on the telephone, seeing him as putting the family in danger with his actions while not confronting the fact that *she* has put *him* in danger with her own actions, while he is just acting like the child that he is.

However, her portrayal is not an unsympathetic one: Ávila shows that he recognises that the true danger stems not from Cristina but from the agents of the state, who are presented in a dehumanised, sinister way through their depiction as shadowy figures in the car, and through Ávila's own portrayal of the interrogator, who is uncomfortably close and threatening towards Juan. The agents of the state are the ones who truly endanger the children, as they do not hesitate to shoot at Juan, while Cristina, Horacio and Beto take precautions to keep the children safe, including building the hiding place for them. And Ávila shows that Cristina has good intentions: when she asks her mother if she knows what the objective of being militants is, the close-up on Juan indicates that she is doing it for him. Cristina is presented as a loving mother throughout most of the film, with her relationship with Juan being much closer and more affectionate than the relationship between Horacio and Juan; Ávila idealises her through intimate scenes such as the scene in the park or when she comforts Juan after Horacio's death. Her

character combines love and attention to her children with her more serious political side, and while she may at times struggle to find the perfect balance between these two disparate roles, the idealised way in which she is portrayed shows that Ávila recognises these difficulties and is not trying to criticise her.

Revolutionary Motherhood in *Something Fierce*

Carmen Aguirre's 2011 memoir *Something Fierce* has, on the surface at least, several points of commonality with *Infancia clandestina*. Aguirre's story, like Ávila's, begins in 1979 as she begins the return south after years in exile in North America. She too is eleven and has a younger sister, Ale, who she often has to look after while her mother and her stepfather Bob are engaged in their revolutionary activities. Like in *Infancia clandestina*, the relationship between mother and child is central to the narrative, and is presented in an ambivalent manner, with criticisms over the danger of her revolutionary lifestyle balanced with love for her. Like Ávila, Aguirre has waited until after she became a parent to tell this story, and her own experiences as a parent have likely contributed to her opinions of her mother's actions. But unlike *Infancia clandestina*, which takes place over a short period of time in the spring of 1979, *Something Fierce* takes place over the course of years, showing Carmen's development from an exiled child in Canada into a young woman who herself decides to join the resistance. And it is perhaps because the memoir tells the story from the perspective of a young woman as well as a child that the text allows for open criticism of her mother and her stepfather's lifestyle, while Ávila's film has merely implied criticism. Furthermore, there are many sections of the text where criticism is not openly stated, but can be construed from the context.

In her memoir, criticisms of her mother and stepfather fall into two categories. On the one hand, there are judgements levelled at their ideology. They often act in ways which are entirely contrary to their stated beliefs, and it is left to young Carmen⁴³² – and through her eyes, the reader – to decide which beliefs are genuine. The disapproval aimed at her guardians in this way tends to be implied rather than outwardly stated, and it is ambiguous as to whether Aguirre is intentionally highlighting their actions or whether her judgement has crept unconsciously into the text. At times, as we shall see, this judgement seems to manifest merely as a vague discomfort for her; at others, she seems much more aware of the ideological hypocrisy of her guardians.

She also levels criticisms at them for physically endangering her and her siblings, or for being negligent. These complaints tend to be much more clearly expressed: indeed, one might even argue that Aguirre sees this as the only negative impact of their actions upon her life, although we shall see that their ideological ambivalence also has a profound effect on her, even if it is one that she does not necessarily always recognise herself. The two issues are largely diachronic, with the earlier chapters of the memoir dealing with ideological issues and the later chapters, when she is an older teenager and the resistance's fight becomes more urgent and time consuming, dealing with the neglect and the threat of physical danger. As such, I believe it would be fruitful to divide my analysis of the novel into these two sections, even though there may be some overlap in chronology.

From the very beginning of the memoir, Aguirre shows that her upbringing was unconventional. On the very first page, her mother calls for a 'firing squad to

⁴³² When referring to the character – that is, the persona presented by the author as a younger version of herself – I shall call her 'Carmen'. When referring to the author and authorial intent, I shall call her 'Aguirre'. It is important to make a distinction between the two voices.

the woman hater who invented heels', setting her character up as a feminist and an independent thinker, one who considers women with 'feathered hair and heavy perfume' to be 'fucking idiots', and who 'always called the private parts of the body by their proper names'⁴³³. Her style is practical: 'she was usually dressed in frayed jeans with patches on the ass and a pair of old clogs' (*SF*, p. 2), and her lifestyle is informed by her ideology, with Carmen thinking back to when she 'formed the folk group Revolución' and when she had 'addressed a crowd' (*SF*, p. 4) of like-minded people. Her stepfather Bob is similarly passionate about politics, describing himself as a 'revolutionary with a capital R' (*SF*, p. 6), and their friends are often victims of torture, 'with crooked spines, missing an eye or their balls or nipples or fingernails'; Carmen and Ale's lifestyle has been far from 'mainstream' (*SF*, p. 7), and their mother informs them that they are 'in the resistance' rather than simply 'in solidarity with the resistance' (*SF*, p. 5). Despite having lived in exile in Canada for five years, the family is set apart from Canadian culture and the 'imperialist North', even as this ideological stance is shown to be hard for the two young girls to take – Carmen wistfully thinks about how she wants to belong somewhere, 'but it couldn't possibly be here, because the North was the forbidden place of belonging' (*SF*, p. 2). However, even in this opening chapter, where the family's revolutionary politics are set at odds with that of North American consumerist culture even as they seek to appropriate it now in order to not raise suspicion – 'I'd never seen her eat a Big Mac before. McDonald's was the ultimate symbol of imperialism, so we had always boycotted it' (*SF*, p. 3) – insidious doubts begin to creep into the narrative.

⁴³³ Carmen Aguirre, *Something Fierce* (London: Portobello Books, 2011), p. 1; p. 9; p. 10. Further references to this edition are given in the text with the abbreviation *SF*.

Carmen's mother, known as Mami in the text, explains that the girls must make sacrifices and 'give our lives to the people' in order to help '[fight] for a society in which all children have the right to a childhood' (*SF*, p. 8). While Carmen sees this as a positive thing, saying that 'I wanted to fight for the children, for the people of the world' (*SF*, p. 8), the reader can immediately see the irony in Mami insisting that her daughters make sacrifices to fight for the right to a childhood. The girls will, throughout the course of the text, be repeatedly moved around, put in harm's way and forced to confront terrible realities of torture and suffering, all while being criticised for what moments of childhood they can snatch. But this is justified by Mami as being 'nothing compared with the majority of children in this world' (*SF*, p. 8) – in this opening chapter, which establishes the nature of the family's life, we can already see that Mami does not necessarily prioritise her daughters over her ideals. Yet, as the narrative progresses, we shall increasingly see a gulf form between her and Bob's stated ideals and their actions.

The first signs of this arrive early, in just the second chapter. The family have moved to Lima, and Carmen is confronted by a reality she has never witnessed before. She describes how 'Lima kneed me in the gut' – she is shocked by the poverty and the difference to her previous life in Vancouver, by the 'Indian peasant ladies', by the 'beggar children missing arms and legs' (*SF*, p. 11), by the smell of 'sewers and diesel' (*SF*, p. 12). But the most moving sight for her is a young boy begging in the street. He has seen her eating a chocolate bar and asks if he can have one. She says, 'his eyes had hooks that wouldn't let me go' (*SF*, p. 15), but she refuses due to ideological reasons. Her mother, she explains,

would disapprove of me buying the little boy a chocolate bar, because that would be charity, and we didn't believe in charity. Charity was vertical,

keeping the relationship between the haves and have-nots intact. We believed in revolution [...]. A classless society was what we were fighting for (*SF*, p. 15).

Instead, she 'leaned down and kissed the boy all over his round face' (*SF*, p. 15). This course of action, obviously, has not helped the boy in any way, and the statement that 'we didn't believe in charity' seems cold and uncaring, especially in light of the fact that the family has supposedly come to South America to help the poor and especially poor children. But Aguirre exculpates her younger self by including a rather callous anecdote from her time in Vancouver. She recalls how she had once come home from school with a collection box for UNICEF and asked for a donation. Her uncle Boris, who has been mentioned previously as a member of the group 'Revolución', responds to her request by stating that he would 'rather take a shit in the little box of coins' (*SF*, p. 15), an extremely abrupt and seemingly inappropriate response. But Carmen's mother finds it humorous rather than crude, as she 'had fallen to the floor laughing' (*SF*, p. 15). Aguirre seems to wish to present this anecdote as a funny one, saying 'I laughed too', but the reasons for her laughing seem different to those of her mother: 'the image of my uncle, who was five foot five and weighed over three hundred pounds, trying to balance his big behind over the teeny box was just too much' (*SF*, p. 15). Her amusement, then, comes from a childish enjoyment of the scatological, while her mother appears to be laughing at the message itself. But there is a subtle, perhaps even unintended, criticism here. Even if Aguirre is trying to defend this story as being an amusing one, her mention of her uncle being 'five foot five' and weighing 'over three hundred pounds' shows that he is vastly overweight: he is clearly wealthy enough to eat to excess, yet he is unwilling – despite his ideals – to help support a charity

that wishes to feed starving children. Even as a young child, she has been encouraged to believe the ideology but to act contrary to it.

But Carmen does not accept this course of action for long. Feeling guilty for not giving anything to the little boy, she waits until her mother and sister are asleep before 'pry[ing]' her mother's handbag 'from her grip' (*SF*, p. 16) – which suggests that she feels that her mother is holding on very tightly to her money – taking a coin and creeping out of the hotel to buy a chocolate bar for him. She asks, 'why couldn't the revolution just hurry up and win? Couldn't it see that the teeny boy was hungry?' (*SF*, p. 16). Tellingly, she uses the same word – 'teeny' – to describe the boy as she does the box. She is drawing a connection between the two types of charity, suggesting a human face for the people UNICEF is trying to help, but most of all, she is implying that her family's ideology is 'tak[ing] a shit' on the little boy. Her compassion is clear, and this vignette serves to show that even at this early stage in the narrative, her thoughts and ideas can be vastly different from those of her family. As the narrative continues, we shall see these fractures grow ever greater as this compassionate, idealistic girl struggles to reconcile her mother and stepfather's words with their actions.

Money and class are probably the most prominent sites of tension between words and actions in the memoir. Having stayed in 'a hotel for rich people in Lima' (*SF*, p. 12) awaiting the arrival of Bob, the family now move on to Bolivia, where they shall stay for some time. It is on this journey to Bolivia that Carmen begins to learn about the practical realities of class difference. She notes that rich and poor people have very different understandings of the same concepts in Peru, stating that:

if you looked up the word *bathroom* in the Poor Peru dictionary, the definition would be: “just over the hill there”. If you looked it up in the Rich Peru dictionary, the definition would read: “marble room with gold taps and its own servant to keep it sparkling” (*SF*, p. 23).

But despite the apparent flippancy of the latter definition, Carmen is not merely being facetious: she explains that ‘I’d been in a Rich Peru bathroom in Lima, when we’d gone to a fancy restaurant on our last night there’ (*SF*, p. 23). And it is with this at the front of her readers’ minds that Aguirre presents her next ideologically suspect anecdote.

She explains that ‘Bob got into an argument with another passenger’ on the bus they are travelling on, a man she describes as a ‘loud, big-city guy’ (*SF*, p. 27). The two men disagree over whose fault it is that Bob was hit in the chin by the seat in front of him, while Bob was ‘holding ten kilos of onions in his lap [...] and clutching a baby to his chest’ (*SF*, p. 27). The baby, she explains, is another passenger’s – he is holding the baby ‘as a favour for one of the standing women’ (*SF*, p. 27). But here the story begins to turn uncomfortable – the woman who is standing has feet ‘swollen to the size of cantaloupes’ (*SF*, p. 27), which sounds incredibly painful, yet Bob’s favour to her is to take her baby from her, rather than to offer her his seat, even for a while. And here Aguirre adopts a technique that we shall see repeated through many moments when she feels uncomfortable with the events she is recalling: she demonises the opponent until they are indefensible, in order to make the person she is defending appear the obviously righteous choice. She says that the ‘big-city guy’ accused Bob of ‘being a pretentious hippie come to help lazy Indians with their shit-stinking babies’ (*SF*, p. 28), and the latter part of this statement is so strikingly offensive that it serves to deflect attention away

from the earlier part, the insult levelled at Bob. In truth, there may be some veracity to the suggestion that Bob is a 'pretentious hippie', but the opportunity to consider this is buried under an undeniably offensive comment placed in the mouth of Carmen's opponent. Bob decides to respond to this comment by threatening to fight him at the next stop, and her mother 'jumped in and shouted that we'd take their whole family on', preparing Carmen for a fight against 'these racist, social-climbing sons of bitches' (*SF*, p. 28). This description is very interesting. Throughout this short snapshot, Aguirre has repeatedly referred to the class of this family, referring to the man as a 'big-city guy', and her mother here calls him 'social-climbing'. Certainly their class is mentioned more often than their racism, and it seems to be the true crux of the matter, as otherwise, the statement that they are racist would be enough to condemn them. There is a deeply rooted resentment here towards these apparently bourgeois opponents, which would of course be natural and expected of socialist revolutionaries, if it were not for their own obvious economic privilege. Aguirre has reminded the reader just before this confrontation of her family's ability to treat themselves to dinner in a 'fancy restaurant' with its decadent marble and gold bathroom, so Carmen's mother and stepfather denouncing the wealth of another person is more than a little hypocritical, and Bob's native city of Vancouver would probably qualify him as even more of a 'big-city guy' than this other man, as Canada is a rich country and the stories that we have heard of the only big South American city that Carmen has seen so far, Lima, do not paint it as a necessarily affluent place. And it seems that Aguirre is aware of this hypocrisy, as she then further discredits this nameless opponent by showing him as he 'kicked and spat on' (*SF*, p. 29) an Indian man who is carrying his suitcases. Furthermore, the build-up to the physical confrontation,

which does not in fact occur, serves to draw the reader's attention away from the woman and her baby, neither of whom are mentioned again.

Moreover, this is not the only time that Bob acts poorly on public transport. Some time later, when Ale and Carmen are catching a train to visit relatives in Chile, Bob discovers that an Indian woman and her children have taken their place. He asks her to move and when she refuses, he threatens to have her 'forcibly removed' (*SF*, p. 58) and calls for the police. The woman is intimidated into moving, although Aguirre does not present her as a victim, saying that she leaves 'swearing under her breath' (*SF*, p. 58), as if to soften his actions. But once again we can see that she does not agree with him: she opines 'we could have shared our seats with the lady' and describes his actions as 'soul-destroying' (*SF*, p. 58). Nonetheless, she justifies his behaviour by saying that he is 'acting like the big-city guy he'd argued with on the bus back in Peru', in order to 'hold [their] beliefs inside' and avoid 'being caught' (*SF*, p. 58) as socialists. Aguirre's language in this explanation highlights her wish to defend him: she says he is 'acting' and that this behaviour is a 'tactic', before assuring her reader that 'I could see that it cut Bob to the quick' (*SF*, p. 58), although aside from this statement from a biased observer there is no evidence to suggest that is the case.

Once they arrive in Chile, Aguirre once again resorts to demonising people whose ideology she does not agree with in order to make her reader respond in the way she wishes. Carmen and Ale go to their great-grandmother's house and meet her and their great-aunts. The women are rich and have three servants, and are clearly antagonistic towards the 'Commie' ideology – Aguirre responds by presenting them as racist, referring to the 'cholas who relieve themselves in the street' (*SF*, p. 67), and describes them as 'masturbat[ing] to the portrait of [Pinochet] that hung in their house', which Aguirre presents as true, although the

fact that 'Mami had explained all of this to me' suggests that she is trying to ensure that her children do not listen to the opinions of people who she sees as 'the enemy [...] in the heart of your family' (*SF*, p. 66). Meanwhile, in Bolivia, Bob and Mami have moved house – when the girls return, they find that they have moved into a new, more affluent area. Their house is 'a mansion' compared to their old home and, curiously, it is owned by 'an old Nazi couple' (*SF*, p. 81). Yet while associating with supporters of Pinochet is presented to the girls as bad, even when they are your own family, living in the house of, and paying rent to, an old Nazi couple is 'a good thing, according to Bob': his reasoning is apparently that 'it made our cover better than ever' (*SF*, p. 81). Of course, this sounds like a weak excuse, and Aguirre is quick to distance herself from it by highlighting that she is merely parroting what Bob himself has said.

Mami and Bob are also happy to send Carmen to a school where she is a classmate of Pinochet's niece, even though this association clearly distresses Carmen, who longs to be back in Canada 'where my best girlfriends came from hippie homes. None of them complained about the dirty Indians or the cholas or the backwardness of their fucking country' (*SF*, p. 82). Nonetheless, this new area and new school means that she finds herself increasingly associated with people whose lifestyle is supposedly completely alien to her. Even before she moved into the large new house, she felt that 'my nighttime life was separate from my daytime one' (*SF*, p. 49); now, as the gap between ideology and action increases even wider, Carmen finds herself increasingly torn. She says that people who live in her lane are 'business people', while people from the neighbouring alleys 'were working people with white-collar jobs'; she adds that the 'alley kids were never invited to the rich kids homes' (*SF*, p. 83), and it is important to note that as someone who lives in 'our new lane' (*SF*, p. 80), she is now counted among the 'rich'.

Interestingly, she is willing to ignore the 'racist remarks against the Indians' that are used by her new friend Lorena (despite Lorena's own grandmother being Indian), focusing instead upon her 'best qualities' (*SF*, p. 83). And while Carmen still fears that her visit to the cinema to see a film called *Ice Castles* will provoke Bob 'to lecture me about cultural imperialism and how Hollywood exported ridiculous versions of middle-class North America' (*SF*, p. 95), the family in general seems to be settling into a very comfortable lifestyle.

Upon returning from a period in Vancouver with her father, Carmen discovers that the family has moved again, into a house called Sunnyland. Carmen finds her new lifestyle problematic, referring to the fact that they have a maid and a frail old man who polishes their floors as making her feel 'sick' (*SF*, p. 103). She says that she does understand the 'rationale' behind it, as 'people gossiped about moneyed families who didn't have servants, wondering what they were trying to hide' (*SF*, p. 103), and this latter part is phrased in this way so that Aguirre can remind the reader that her family has a lot to hide: they must appear 'middle-class and mainstream' (*SF*, p. 105). Yet Aguirre clearly finds the situation uncomfortable, as she returns to justify it again a few pages later, explaining that 'Nati [...] was paid triple the going rate, had weekends off and worked only half-days' (*SF*, p. 105): this statement seems all the more apologetic for being so out of context – it comes just after mentioning in passing that Nati irons her jeans. But while the maid may be an important cover for the family's actions in Bolivia, Bob's newfound 'ties with the ruling class' (*SF*, p. 103) are harder to justify, as is the fact that 'the minister of defence had Bob over to his office for tea and sweets every week' (*SF*, p. 104). However, this connection does help Bob, as it allows him to be freed from prison after being arrested. But he is not arrested due to revolutionary activities, but rather because he starts a fight with a Bolivian couple over a free refill of a

lighter. Aguirre tries to present Bob in a good light during this exchange, saying how Bob was 'promised' the refill and that he was met by abuse, with the woman calling him 'a fucking gringo' before she 'lunged at him' – the police are called and Bob is arrested 'on the spot' (*SF*, p. 105). However she does call the incident 'a mistake' and says that 'if Bob hadn't already befriended the minister, no doubt they'd have done a background check on him, and that would have been the end of it all' (*SF*, p. 105).

Despite, or perhaps because of, the family's new prosperity, and their connections to powerful and sometimes dangerous people – such as Luis García Meza Jr., son of the ex-dictator of Bolivia, who goes to Carmen's new school – two young revolutionaries are brought to the house to teach Carmen and Ale how they are supposed to act. One of them, Rulo, warns them not to 'let our bourgeois tendencies get the better of us' (*SF*, p. 113). Carmen is surprised by the rigor of the training, as she is more accustomed to the 'meetings with Uncle Boris in Vancouver. He'd [...] reward us with trips to McDonald's and Playland, the local amusement park' (*SF*, p. 113) – apparently forgetting that 'McDonald's was the ultimate symbol of imperialism, so we had always boycotted it' (*SF*, p. 3). Their other teacher, Soledad, criticises the girls' 'obsession with popularity and Hollywood standards of beauty' (*SF*, p. 106) and tells them that it is 'causing [their] parents great concern' (*SF*, p. 107). This critique of their bourgeois lifestyle, which seems hypocritical in the light of Mami and Bob's attendance at 'cocktail parties' (*SF*, p. 104) at the US Embassy, clearly stays with Carmen. When she goes on a trip with her friends to Lorena's family's home in Coroico, she is 'taken aback' to see the home: 'a large cement floor was sheltered by a tin roof held up by four posts, but there were no walls': the girls are to sleep in 'barracks-style cots [...] topped with burlap mattresses stuffed with hay' (*SF*, p. 121). This is, naturally, quite a

culture shock to a girl raised in cities and currently living in affluence, but she is struck by an enormous sense of guilt at her own surprise: 'I heard a voice in my head say, "Not up to your middle-class standards?" It belonged to Bob, and it cut me to the quick' (*SF*, p. 121). Despite Carmen's trip being, in terms of the narrative itself, almost a diversion from the storyline, this section serves to highlight why Aguirre chose to dedicate a chapter to it. This is the first time in which we see Carmen away from her revolutionary upbringing for any stretch of time, and yet she has clearly internalised her family's ideals, and their criticisms. Her extreme guilt at her reaction to Lorena's family's home also comes from her recent 'training' with Soledad and Rulo, but the rest of the chapter shows it to be unjustified. She quickly becomes 'an old pro at washing in a basin', and even when more of Lorena's family members arrive and everyone is forced to sleep 'three to a cot', she still sees it as a 'magical place' (*SF*, p. 122). Indeed, when storms cut off the town and mean that the girls have to stay for an additional week, she wishes 'it would stay that way forever' (*SF*, p. 123). And in fact she appears to find sticking to her ideals to be easy: despite chicha being passed around, 'I didn't drink any, faithful to the vow I'd made back in Canada' (*SF*, p. 122). The reader can understand when she expresses how 'incredible' she feels at being able to be 'happy-go-lucky for a change' (*SF*, p. 123), as recent events have shown that her mother and stepfather are trying to reconcile the difference between their ideology and their actions by holding Carmen and Ale to very high standards – ones that are beginning to register, in Carmen at least, as a source of anxiety.

Ale and Carmen are living, as I have said, in a confused situation: they live in privilege and mix with the rich and powerful, yet they are consistently told by Mami and Bob, and their associates, that they do not belong and that they cannot let their lifestyle affect them. This is a hard task for two young teenagers, and in the

next chapter we see the two very differing results of this confusion. First we discover that Ale is dating Luis García Meza Jr., son of Bolivia's last dictator. She is twelve or thirteen years old, and clearly impressionable: when talking to Carmen she mentions how 'the terrorists are gaining strength in Chile', apparently forgetting that her family is supporting them, although Carmen dismisses these new ideas of hers, saying 'Ale spoke like this only since she'd started to date Luis García Meza Jr.' (*SF*, p. 128), and adding that 'Ale had started dating Luis for the fame it brought, but I knew it wouldn't last' (*SF*, p. 129). Carmen, meanwhile, is dating Fermín, a member of the Altiplano Kings, a group who play revolutionary music and give out pamphlets. But while Ale repeats her new boyfriend's ideas without criticism, Carmen becomes very critical of her new boyfriend. She complains that 'all they did was intellectualise' and that she is 'tired of being told how great the revolution was' (*SF*, p. 128). Even Rulo and Soledad consider her too critical, saying that 'people like the Altiplano Kings were necessary for the revolution; unwittingly, they were spokespeople for the likes of us' (*SF*, p. 128). But Carmen is not convinced: 'it still bothered me that the people who were risking their lives had given up the right to speak while mestizo, middle-class, artsy-fartsy people claimed the title of revolutionary for themselves' (*SF*, p. 128).

Aguirre is quick to point out that 'of course, it wasn't so simple': for one thing, 'the Altiplano Kings *were* taking a risk by speaking out and playing their music' (*SF*, p. 129, emphasis in original). She also adds that 'Fermín came from a lower-middle-class home', which she says is evident in 'his only pair of school slacks, washed and ironed so many times they shone' (*SF*, p. 129). She falls short, however, of pointing out the irony in Carmen's words – Carmen is, of course, much better-off than the 'lower-middle-class' boy she is criticising, and although she does not admit to being mestiza while living in Bolivia, where many people are

Indian, when she moves to Argentina she does mention how 'I was ashamed to be mestiza in a country full of whites' (*SF*, p. 148): it seems that she is only self-aware when *she* is the one with less privilege. But the fact that the reader can see the irony in Carmen's words so clearly – her race, for example, has not been stated at any point yet, but is obvious from the picture of the author on the inside cover of the book – shows that this section has a purpose beyond merely pointing out the hypocrisy of a fourteen year-old. Carmen is criticising this young, middle-class, mestizo boy because she sees herself in him: she is projecting the criticisms she hears directed at herself onto another person, perhaps even to alleviate her own burden. That Soledad and Rulo, so critical of her, can see merit in him only serves to further her need to criticise him: she is, through vocalising the words that they have aimed at her, proving that she agrees, that she believes and has internalised their ideology. Carmen has stated that she finds Soledad 'condescending' (*SF*, p. 113) and 'stern' (*SF*, p. 110), yet she does try to seek her and Rulo's approval: at one point she is described as 'nodding furiously, trying to compensate' (*SF*, p. 111) for something Ale has said. And the reason for this, although somewhat obscured, becomes clear when we consider how Soledad introduced herself: by telling Carmen and Ale that she was there to teach them, as their behaviour 'was causing our parents great concern' (*SF*, p. 107), which deeply hurts Carmen, who finds it 'hard to look them in the eye, knowing we'd let them down so badly' (*SF*, p. 117). At the heart of this lies an enormous inability to communicate within the family. When Soledad reports how 'the couple from the kiosk [...] – who were friends again with Bob – had reported that Ale and I were wasting our summer days [...] with gangs of kids' (*SF*, p. 106), the reader can trace the channels that this criticism has come through: the couple reported to Bob, who reported to Soledad, who administers the chastisement. We can see that Mami and Bob are outsourcing their

familial responsibilities, and this reveals how, on a profound level, the family is not functioning properly. But this is not merely the case on an ideological level.

Although the gulf between action and theory has left Ale and Carmen confused as to where they really stand and how they are really to act, and – in Carmen at least – inspired a profound self-consciousness and anxiety, Mami and Bob’s revolutionary lifestyle has had other effects on the lives of their children. It is at this point that I would like to turn my analysis of the memoir to examining the ways in which Mami and Bob’s choices lead to the neglect and the endangerment of their children.

As I have previously stated, there is some overlap between the two spheres of criticism, as arguably the family is in danger from the very moment they return to South America. Certainly Aguirre seems to feel that way, as in the first chapter the reader has already learnt that ‘there was a story we had to memorise’ (*SF*, p. 5), as ‘to say the wrong thing to the wrong person is a matter of life and death’ (*SF*, p. 8) and ‘you don’t want to risk your life or the lives of others’ (*SF*, p. 4). Mami justifies her decision to put her daughters in harm’s way by explaining that, although ‘there are many other women going back to join the resistance and they’ve left their kids behind or sent them to Cuba to be raised by volunteer families’ (*SF*, pp. 5-6), she believes that ‘children belong with their mothers [...] we’ll all be together, the way we’re meant to be’ (*SF*, p. 6). Aguirre presents this statement without comment, but several anecdotes mentioned throughout the first chapter serve to create an impression in the reader that the decision to take her children into the resistance is not a wise one. For one thing, the resistance work that her parents have been doing seems to distract them from their parental duties. Aguirre tells us how Ale, at the age of eight, ‘had run away from home’ but her parents had been ‘too busy printing *Victoria Final* [...] the monthly newsletter

they put out' (*SF*, p. 3). Both the fact that Ale chose to make a 'bold attempt at a new life' (*SF*, p. 3) and the fact that her parents were too busy to notice show that they have been neglecting their daughters. Similarly, Mami's assertion that 'children belong with their mothers' (*SF*, p. 6) is undermined by Aguirre's recollection of how, when her parents separated, her mother went to 'live with some other women in a communal apartment' (*SF*, p. 3) and how strange it felt to meet her somewhere, 'the way you meet a stranger' (*SF*, p. 4). Carmen and Ale have been living with their father and his new partner, and the move to South America means they must say 'goodbye to [their] father, who was staying behind' (*SF*, p. 3). Carmen seems distressed at this: when her mother tells her that she cannot 'send letters or postcards to anybody', she thinks of 'the stationery from Chinatown in my carry-on bag', given to her by her father 'with explicit orders to write often' (*SF*, p. 8). Throughout the early chapters Carmen's anxiety at not being able to see her father is mentioned repeatedly: she is 'thinking of Papi' (*SF*, p. 16), thinking 'again about my father' (*SF*, p. 19); when she is finally able to write to him she says 'I cannot tell you how much I miss you' (*SF*, p. 44); later she adds again, 'I missed Papi' (*SF*, p. 82) and remembers 'my father, left behind to celebrate Christmas without us', feeling 'devastated by the image of Papi standing at the end of the airport tunnel' (*SF*, p. 99).

It is only when she is fourteen, three years after the start of the narrative, that her parents make 'a new deal', agreeing that Ale and Carmen 'would go back and forth between them until we came of age' (*SF*, p. 100). For the first three years, however, she and her sister are taken away from their home and their father by a mother who has not been living with them. Her mother has made this decision for them, but it does not seem to be in their best interests. In Lima, Mami and Bob begin to take trips out of the hotel, leaving Ale and Carmen with the instructions 'to

keep the noise down and not to open the door to anyone' (*SF*, p. 17). However, Carmen is concerned about one instruction told only to her:

if twenty-four hours pass and we don't come back, call this number and say you're with the Tall One and Raquel. Then hang up. Within an hour someone will knock on the door. Answer it, and then you and Ale go with that person (*SF*, p. 18).

These security measures are understandably alarming to an eleven-year-old girl. In the early chapters of the narrative, agents of state repression are an invisible, yet ever-present threat. Carmen witnesses no actual violence, but she is made aware of its possibility by the rigorous security measures her mother and stepfather take. The winding path that the family takes from Peru to Bolivia is, she recognises, 'to throw the secret police off the scent' (*SF*, p. 27), and despite her youth she seems hyperaware of their circumstances: when the family is stopped at a checkpoint, she feels 'a shard of terror' at recognising the looks on Mami and Bob's faces: 'they were carrying something [...] dangerous in their packs' (*SF*, p. 30). She is also acutely aware of the possible consequences of what they are doing: she 'remembered Uncle Jaime [...] They said before he was shot by the firing squad, his tongue and testicles were burned black' (*SF*, p. 30). She also imagines the future that she is being groomed for: 'Ale and I would have to learn to fight [...] My aim was really bad [...] I'd be tortured with electric shocks and sent to the firing squad like my father's best friend, Jaime' (*SF*, p. 16). At this young and impressionable age, the horror stories have seeped through into her consciousness and despite Mami and Bob's attempts to shield the girls from the truth, such as 'talking in hushed tones' (*SF*, p. 17), they are constantly subjected to the aftereffects of

torture. Trinidad, who lives with the family in Bolivia, has a habit of 'every so often' getting up and lying on the floor, which is treated as 'the most normal thing in the world' (*SF*, p. 46). She reminds Carmen of the exiles who she had met in Canada, 'direct from the concentration camps'; they have 'broken bodies' and 'there was always someone who was crying uncontrollably' (*SF*, p. 46). Naturally, this creates a cloud of confusion and fear for the girls, and it is because of this that Carmen is drawn to 'sit quietly at the top of the stairs and listen to the adults talk' (*SF*, p. 48) in order to find out answers. But in fact being more informed only contributes to her fear. When the girls go to visit their family in Chile, Carmen finds herself gripped by extreme dread as they cross the border – with Trinidad, as Mami and Bob are banned from entering the country. Even though their crossing is not eventful, Carmen's anticipation that something bad may happen gives her 'a sick, cold feeling in the pit of [her] stomach and made [her] sweat – only the sweat was ice' (*SF*, p. 61). These young girls have such a close relationship with fear and pain that the expectation of being caught is burying them in insurmountable terror.

It is easy to understand, then, when Carmen sends her mother a letter from Chile saying that she would rather stay with her grandparents. As well as fear, Carmen feels 'loneliness [...] since we'd begun our underground life' (*SF*, p. 36) and Ale has admitted 'I don't care about the struggle' (*SF*, p. 38). Furthermore, Carmen still longs for a place to feel at home: she feels that 'I didn't exist [...] in this country, or in the exile countries of Bolivia or Canada. I didn't exist anywhere anymore' (*SF*, p. 73). Instead, Carmen longs for the life they have been given a glimpse of in Limache: 'we weren't expected to be brave and mature and revolutionary. We could just be kids [...] the most important thing was us, and my grandparents would do anything to keep us out of harm's way' (*SF*, p. 77). Carmen feels that she and Ale would have a better life elsewhere, away from their mother, but her

mother does not heed their concerns. She writes back: 'I am deeply hurt and disappointed by the letter I received from you. How do you think a mother feels when her daughter tells her that she would rather live with her grandparents?' (*SF*, p. 77). And this seems to be the end of the discussion: the very next line has Carmen sat in 'the window seat of the plane' (*SF*, p. 77), returning home. In order to quash her mother's 'hurt and disappointment', Carmen finds herself putting her own needs after those of her mother. Nonetheless, we can see that the possibility of staying in Chile is one that she carries with her throughout her childhood: much later, we see her imagining 'my Plan B life, the one in which Ale and I had remained with our grandparents in Chile' (*SF*, p. 138) and the thought is so upsetting that '[I] choked back tears' (*SF*, p. 139). But the girls do stay with their mother: she makes Carmen feel guilty for suggesting a different life, and they return to Bolivia. Aguirre seems to want to soften this anecdote: she makes sure to mention that when they are reunited, Carmen 'realised how much I missed her' (*SF*, p. 79), and her feeling 'anxious to dispel the tension between us' (*SF*, p. 80) also serves to show that she does not resent her mother's dismissal of her request.

However, even with Aguirre's mitigation, criticisms of her mother's selfishness do creep into the narrative. As soon as they have returned from Chile, Mami tells the girls that she is pregnant. Aguirre is careful to only attribute positive responses to her younger self, saying that 'I adored babies' and that she 'jumped up to feel my mother's belly', but placing criticism in the mouth of Ale, who says to Carmen in secret 'it was crazy to have a baby underground' (*SF*, p. 80). It begins to become apparent that Mami may not fully appreciate the gravity of their situation. When there is a military coup in Bolivia, it is Carmen who 'wondered if we were hiding any documents or goods' (*SF*, p. 88), while Mami responds to 'shooting right outside our gate' with 'a laugh attack' (*SF*, p. 89). Later, when Mami has given birth

to a son, Lalito, and while her daughters are staying in Canada, Mami and Bob return home one day 'to find the apartment had been raided [...] Nothing had been taken, but the message was clear: we're watching you' (*SF*, p. 104). But the pair choose not to flee; 'Bob and Mami had simply stepped up security' (*SF*, p. 105). Aguirre is beginning to be less accepting of her mother's behaviour: she describes how her mother 'had *insisted* on bringing her daughters with her, and not only that, on having another baby while living underground' (*SF*, p. 100, my own emphasis). The word 'insisted' suggests that Mami is being stubborn – at this point in the narrative, Trinidad is telling Mami that she will have to send her daughters back to Canada, as the dictatorship in Bolivia is too dangerous for them. She is presented sympathetically – 'Mami's voice broke' (*SF*, p. 100), 'she cried and cried as we walked hand in hand' (*SF*, p. 101) – but also perhaps as selfish, not wishing to 'choose between motherhood and revolution' even when 'the current situation was too dangerous' (*SF*, p. 100). Mami seems unable to understand or empathise with her daughters' situation, and Carmen does begin to feel resentment towards her mother. When she is delayed from returning home from Coroico, she thinks:

Mami and Bob would be beside themselves with worry, I knew, but now maybe they'd understand what it felt like for Ale and me to have our parents disappear for days or weeks on end, with no clue about when they were coming back, scared they might be dead or were being tortured somewhere (*SF*, p. 123).

And when her mother's friend Adriana says, 'I cannot imagine being raised in exile', Carmen is shocked by her empathy: she is 'split open, guts hanging out, knowing that if I didn't gather up my insides and stuff them back in I'd cry so long

and hard there'd be nothing left of me' (*SF*, pp. 125-26). Her language is so raw, so emotive and corporeal even now – this feeling is fresh in her mind. But as yet, Carmen's letter from Chile has been the only vocalised questioning of her mother's authority.

This changes when Carmen's grandmother comes from Chile with a birthday cake for Carmen's fifteenth birthday. As soon as she arrives, she asks 'with a twinkle in her eye' (*SF*, p. 136) where Carmen will be celebrating her *quinceañera* party. Carmen's mother responds that they will be having it at home, in what her grandmother describes as a 'tiny living room', explaining that Carmen has 'decided not to go all out' (*SF*, p. 136). But we can see that this is not really the case: it is Carmen's mother who has a problem with *quinceañera* parties, describing them as 'so bourgeois', while Carmen, who reassures her grandmother that she thinks 'quinceañeras are kind of dumb anyway' has 'lied' as 'there was no way I was going to let Mami and Bob down by asking them to be a princess for a day' (*SF*, p. 137). Once again, Carmen's fear of disappointing her mother and stepfather leads her to suppress her true feelings. Her grandmother is very upset, taking to bed with altitude sickness, although Aguirre asks herself 'if her illness was really caused by grief, the bitter pain of having her grandchildren grow up in exile and reject the rituals she had so painstakingly devoted herself to' (*SF*, p. 137). But despite this perhaps dismissive view of her grandmother, Aguirre shows that the woman is astute, and willing to stand up for her opinions where young Carmen will not, or cannot.

She notices 'early in her visit' that Lalito is 'so scared he stuck close to his mother all day', which Aguirre explains as being due to the trauma of 'constant disappearances by his parents'; she says that he 'clung to [his mother] like a little monkey, sitting on her lap even when she peed' and that when Bob was away,

'Lalito walked from room to room calling 'Papá? Papá?' and looking under the bed and in the closets' (*SF*, p. 138). Lalito is extremely affected by his parents' lifestyle, perhaps even more so than Carmen and Ale, despite them being much older and more capable of understanding the danger of their situation. Aguirre does not allow her mother a direct defence of her actions: she merely says that she mutters 'something about my grandmother not understanding the choices the modern woman was forced to make' (*SF*, p. 138). Her grandmother's response, however, is a direct, impassioned speech, in which she tells her daughter 'I know all about the modern woman', reminding Mami that she wouldn't be where she is today without being pushed by her own mother, and finally asking, 'at what point did the modern woman lose respect for motherhood and, above all, for the children of this world? Explain that to me' (*SF*, p. 138). Once again, Aguirre gives her mother no space to respond. She merely tells us, 'my mother had gone into the bathroom, Lalito hanging off her skirt, and closed the door behind her' (*SF*, p. 138). Aguirre uses this chapter to vocalise her own concerns, but the fact that her mother does not argue back, but merely closes the door behind her, shows that this discussion has not changed her resolve or helped her to empathise with her children in any way. This scene marks a turning point in the narrative. Until this point, despite the obvious fear and neglect that these children have suffered, their suffering has been exclusively psychological, and it seems that Carmen and Ale at least are able to withstand what has happened to them. Physical effects of their lifestyle have thus far been purely speculative. But when the family moves to Argentina, their children begin to suffer real hardship.

Their first impressions of Bariloche show that they have left 'not only a country but a social class' (*SF*, p. 147). The town is 'an area of ramshackle dwellings on dirt roads' and there is 'nothing quaint or bohemian about our new

home' (*SF*, p. 147). This is, naturally, a culture shock to a girl who has spent recent years living in luxury. And while Lalito seems to be 'excited that we were putting down roots somewhere', Carmen begins to experience extreme psychological distress: 'I was afraid to meet people. The thought of putting myself out there was so frightening I'd end up hyperventilating on my bed, covered in cold sweat [...] I was tired of lying, of keeping up the façade, of living in fear' (*SF*, p. 148). Instead, she buries herself in a cleaning routine that becomes 'obsessive-compulsive' (*SF*, p. 155). In their first chapter in Bariloche, a conversation with a local resistance contact, Marcia, gives a flavour of what is to come. She tells the girls that it is 'your human right to be happy' (*SF*, p. 151), and Carmen is shocked to hear this. She knew, she says 'it was our human right to have food, health, shelter and education, but happiness? [...] I cried' (*SF*, p. 151). This list of 'human rights' is a very deliberate inclusion. Over the course of the next few chapters, we shall see Carmen be denied every one of them.

First, the family struggles to afford food. Bob has 'paid a year's rent on our house up front' and 'neither he nor Mami had found work yet', which means that the family is 'cash-strapped' and 'food was rationed' (*SF*, p. 152), meaning that Carmen eats 'only once or twice a day, and tiny portions at that. Sometimes I wouldn't eat at all and would just subsist on tea' (*SF*, p. 153). Yet despite her being a 'skeleton' (*SF*, p. 155) with 'bones protrud[ing] all over the place' (*SF*, p. 153), Bob takes his frustrations out on her and Ale, shouting: 'what's the matter? You poor little rich girls can't get used to living on the wrong side of the tracks? Your bourgeois tastes can't fathom this dirt road?' (*SF*, p. 152). He fails to recognise, or at least vocalise his recognition for, the fact that this situation is in no way their fault: their 'bourgeois tastes' were cultivated by their parents' decision to live in luxury in Bolivia, and their distaste at being made to go hungry is perfectly natural.

Aguirre presents Mami as a victim of Bob's rages too, having Carmen and Ale discuss whether 'Mami is in love with Bob' and saying that 'she should just leave him' (*SF*, p. 152). But when Ale says – and it is important to note that once again Aguirre puts criticisms of her family into the mouth of Ale, not Carmen – 'here's a revolutionary thought: provide for your children and pay attention to them' (*SF*, p. 152), it is ambiguous as to whether she is criticising Bob, both of them, or maybe even just Mami, as they are only her children biologically. Nonetheless, the family is in a bleak situation, and it only gets worse as their time in Bariloche continues.

Eventually Mami finds a job, 'just in time to save us from real hunger' (*SF*, p. 161), but Bob seems to be incapable of finding one and sinks deeper into depression. The family's internal conflicts seem by now to be 'irreparable', and Carmen notes that communication has broken down, as 'the only conversation acceptable to Bob and Mami centred on the misery of others' (*SF*, p. 161). And despite claiming that the family has avoided 'real hunger', Aguirre tells us that she is 'subsisting on two pieces of toast with cheese a day', meaning that she is 'near starvation' (*SF*, p. 162). And then Mami, Bob and Lalito go away for 'weeks', leaving the girls some food money that, thanks to high inflation, is 'worth almost nothing' (*SF*, p. 163). Ale moves into the house of her friend Vero's family. Afraid that it is 'too dangerous' for the neighbours to find out what is going on, Carmen keeps to herself, noting that she feels 'proud to know that I could survive on recycled tea bags dipped in boiling water', even though she is now 'a chronic trembler' (*SF*, p. 163). This strange sense of pride at being able to survive on next to nothing is mentioned more than once: she adds that she is glad to know she could survive in a concentration camp, for which she 'secretly patted myself on the back' (*SF*, p. 162). Once again, we see Carmen internalising what she believes to be her mother and stepfather's ideology: instead of becoming angry that they have left her alone to

starve, she struggles on and congratulates herself for her ability to manage their unreasonable expectations. And when they do finally return, Aguirre is quick to mention Bob's 'sunken and bony' face and Mami's 'collapsed' chest (*SF*, p. 165), as if to deflect criticisms by highlighting that they too have gone without.

However, their return does not seem to improve Carmen's situation. Mami and Bob have soon 'retreated into their world of documents' and Ale decides to still spend most of her time at Vero's house, which makes Carmen feel 'lonely' (*SF*, p. 166). When she writes a letter to her Bolivian boyfriend Ernesto and has it returned unopened, she seems to feel that her only escape route has just closed off, and she performs a shocking act of self-harm. With the lid of the last can of food in the cupboard, which Carmen had saved 'for superstitious reasons, even through my last days of hunger', she 'sawed through the skin of my left wrist' (*SF*, p. 166). This act is so sudden and graphic that the reader is immediately aware of the immense psychological burden that Carmen has been carrying. When Bob finds her, Carmen starts to say 'words I'd never spoken. Words that had been stuck in my throat' since the beginning: 'I want to go home' (*SF*, p. 166). Interestingly, Bob is the one who responds with kindness here, 'taking care of me like the child I was', while her mother's response is 'angry' (*SF*, p. 167). She accuses Carmen of attention seeking, saying 'I don't think you really wanted to kill yourself', but promising to 'see what we can do about getting you some help' (*SF*, p. 167). So Carmen gets sent to see a psychiatrist. However, the visits do not seem to help her, as she 'couldn't tell her anything that was true' (*SF*, p. 167) about their lifestyle. Nonetheless, an IQ test finds that Carmen is 'below average in intelligence' (*SF*, p. 167), which is understandable considering the many changes of schools and countries that she has experienced. Her mention of this fact recalls her conversation with Marcia: Carmen's human rights are 'food, health, shelter, and

education' (*SF*, p. 151), and we have seen her suffer from a lack of all of these things. She has gone through immense hunger; mental health issues, which led to physical pain in the form of a 'suicide attempt' (*SF*, p. 174), even as her own mother denied that she intended to kill herself; she has repeatedly felt unsafe in her own home; and her education has suffered. And despite her obvious trauma, her mother and stepfather's kinder behaviour does not last long, before 'her resistance work drew her in again, and Bob disappeared back into his anger' (*SF*, p. 167).

It is no surprise, then, when Carmen seeks love and shelter elsewhere. First with Dante, who 'took it upon himself to fatten me up' (*SF*, p. 168), and then with Alejandro, who is also a revolutionary. She feels safe with him, and is able to open up about all of the things that she has had to hide: 'the starvation, the fear [...] the suicide attempt [...] the Terror' (*SF*, p. 174). The latter refers to something that happened when she was five years old, a horrific incident which explains much of Carmen's anxiety and fear. She tells him this story, which she has 'never spoken about before' (*SF*, p. 174): when she and her sister were at home in Chile one day with their babysitter, soldiers had arrived in military jeeps and searched the house. One soldier had offered her a chocolate bar if she told him where her parents kept their papers, and she had told him. Then the soldiers had performed a mock execution on Ale and Carmen, aged four and five respectively, pretending to shoot them by firing squad. The feelings that this incident have inspired are still very raw for her: she is 'ashamed' (*SF*, p. 175) to have betrayed her parents to this soldier, and she is 'frozen solid, shaking uncontrollably' (*SF*, p. 176) to recall the mock execution. It is only with him that she is able to repeat this story, to express that 'I'm scared, I'm scared, I'm scared' (*SF*, p. 176), and it is not long before she finds herself 'rarely bothered to go home at all' (179). Ale, too, avoids being at home –

she tells Carmen that Vero's parents 'have agreed to adopt me [...] And they'll take Lalito too' (*SF*, pp. 180-81).

The family has completely crumbled. And Carmen, who has consistently attempted to abide by her family's unreasonable expectations and to do all that she can to keep them together, has finally realised this too. When her mother gets hurt while scouting a path through the Andes and says that she knew she had to survive because 'she couldn't leave us alone' (*SF*, p. 182), Carmen realises the irony of this sentiment:

I struggled to make sense of her words. For as long as I could remember she *had* left us alone. During Allende's years in power, she'd gone to Mapuche land with a literacy campaign. During the exile years in Vancouver, she'd been out day and night organising for the solidarity movement. After the divorce, she'd left us with our father. Since the Return Plan had come into effect, she'd continually come and gone (*SF*, p. 182).

And here the family begins to separate. Ale and Carmen are sent back to Canada, as the situation has become too dangerous for them to stay. Not long after, Mami, Bob and Lalito return, but Bob 'moved into a place of his own' (*SF*, p. 190). Alejandro comes to Canada to be with Carmen, and as soon as she is eighteen they return to South America, leaving Carmen's family behind. She remains in the resistance until the Chilean plebiscite, then after the return to democracy she returns to Vancouver, where she stays.

Her family disappears from the narrative, only appearing again in the acknowledgements. But it is important to see what she says here. Aguirre first thanks her mother for 'allow[ing] me to write my version of the story, and in so

doing to reveal her secrets', adding that 'I had the good fortune of being raised by a revolutionary, and for that I am eternally grateful' (*SF*, p. 276). She calls Bob 'a true revolutionary' and makes reference to his 'exemplary life' (*SF*, p. 276). She thanks her sister for 'accepting my writing of this book, even if her version of the story is completely different' (*SF*, p. 276). And she thanks her father 'for agreeing not to read this book', claiming that 'the information in it would be too much for his weary heart to bear' (*SF*, p. 277). Yet her description of her mother and stepfather is somewhat telling. She mentions how her mother 'could have spent her life in comfort but chose to give up her privilege for a greater cause' and how Bob 'fought for causes locally and globally until his last day on earth' (*SF*, p. 276). Her feelings for them are of admiration for people who have fought for noble causes, rather than filial affection and love. A brief meeting with Trinidad in the final chapter suggests why. When Carmen asks her what she is going to do now that the resistance has dissolved, and whether she has a family, Trinidad shows her 'a dozen baby pictures [...] the babies of the families who have hidden me' (*SF*, p. 265). She explains, 'my babies have given me strength [...] they've kept me company during the lonely times' and that 'I look at them to remind myself why we're doing this' (*SF*, p. 265). She has no biological children, but she has taken on a kind of ideological motherhood, finding strength and love in other families. This scene is full of love: Trinidad 'take[s] my hands in hers' and 'we gripped each other with all our might' (*SF*, p. 264). There is a wistfulness here too, in Trinidad's admission that she does not have 'a man', as not many men 'would be willing to wait for seventeen years while their woman goes off to be in the underground' (*SF*, p. 265), but Trinidad has made sacrifices for her beliefs, while Carmen's mother has repeatedly stated that she believes she can have it all, that she need not 'choose

between motherhood and revolution' (*SF*, p. 100), which has led to her family suffering and making sacrifices.

The complexity of Aguirre's relationship has been expounded in many interviews since the publication of the memoir. She has said that 'ultimately my mother did the right thing in taking us with her' and that her 'relationship with my mother is still strong and has not suffered' from criticisms levelled at her due to the book, although she admits that the difference in how her and her sister saw their childhood, mentioned in the acknowledgments, refers to Ale's perception that 'it was much worse than what I portrayed'⁴³⁴. Aguirre feels that Mami was 'more of a revolutionary and a friend' than a 'traditional mother', although she is quick to point out that 'there was never a doubt in my mind that my mother loved me. I have friends who were not in the resistance who grew up in homes where they weren't even sure if they were loved. For me that was never a question'⁴³⁵. She explains that her mother 'came from a radical feminist background that was very anti-mother, anti-child' and that in her ideology, 'whenever you put your child first, you were a sellout, a fifties housewife, and you weren't feminist'⁴³⁶. This does, in some ways, conform to Andrea O'Reilly's idea of a profound ideological difference between the idealised institution of motherhood, in which the children are treated as the supreme purpose of a woman's life, and mothering, where women have other priorities and are able to put other things ahead of their children at times. As

⁴³⁴ Beth Carswell, 'Someone Fierce: An Interview with Carmen Aguirre', *Abe Books*, <<http://www.abebooks.co.uk/books/authors/carmen-aguirre-interview.shtml>> [accessed 22 March 2015]

⁴³⁵ Patrick Barkham, 'A Childhood on the Run', *The Guardian*, 12 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/nov/12/carmen-aguirre-chilean-resistance-childhood>> [accessed 22 March 2015]

⁴³⁶ Susan Hampson, 'Former Revolutionary Carmen Aguirre Looks Back – in Heels', *The Globe and Mail*, 8 June 2011 <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/relationships/former-revolutionary-carmen-aguirre-looks-back---in-heels/article625195/>> [accessed 22 March 2015]

we have seen throughout this chapter, mothering and revolutionary work required a delicate balance, and at times women's militancy had to come first. But the idea of *never* putting your child first is unusual: as we have seen, this ideology has put Carmen and Ale into many difficult situations, including near starvation. And it is possible that this notion of never being able to put your children first for ideological reasons is another instance in which Aguirre is defending her mother, for it seems she is not so radically feminist as to not be beset by the same uncertainty as other women: 'she said to my sister and me, "Well, I read the book and I guess I was a really bad mother" and I said, "No, you were fine"'⁴³⁷. In a toned-down version of 'matrophobia', Aguirre explains that she wishes to be a different kind of mother to her son: 'she hopes she can strike "a balance" between her grandmother's traditional motherliness and her mother's openness and honesty about who she was'⁴³⁸.

As we can see, the apparent similarities between the two pieces – the ages of the protagonists, the year in which they return from exile, the centrality of the mother-child relationship – belie some incredibly profound differences between the two narratives. In *Infancia clandestina*, despite Cristina's moments of anger towards her son, there is a profound, loving relationship, and she is presented in an almost idealistic light, such as when she is singing the tango, or when she is lying on the grass in the park. In *Something Fierce*, however, the mother-child relationship is radically different. Carmen's mother is often absent, and moments of tenderness are very sparse in the text. The scope of the stories also affects how the familial relationships play out. *Infancia clandestina* takes place over months,

⁴³⁷ Barkham.

⁴³⁸ Barkham.

while *Something Fierce* traces Carmen's story from eleven to twenty-one years of age. Perhaps if Ávila's mother had lived longer, his story would have been very different, but her loss naturally tinges his memories of her and how she is presented. His is a short, brutal tale of loss, interspersed with moments of beauty and love; hers is a long, winding path through psychological and physical neglect: a slow descent into the complete destruction of her family. They have lived very different lives and experienced very different consequences of their mothers' choice to live a revolutionary life – and their responses are very different. Ávila has very little overt criticism for his mother: even when his mother and his grandmother argue after his birthday party, it is resolved with love and an acceptance of the difference in opinion. Aguirre, on the other hand, has much to say about her mother's choices: sometimes vocalised by others, such as her sister or her grandmother, sometimes subtle within the text, and sometimes, particularly towards the end of the narrative, open.

The two pieces complement each other to form a complex view of the difficulties of revolutionary motherhood: while in *Infancia clandestina* almost all of the suffering faced by Juan is caused by agents of the state, in *Something Fierce* Carmen's suffering almost always stems from her family's actions – from their neglect, their pressure on her. Taken together, the two stories show two very different approaches to revolutionary motherhood, but both show the difficulties that these women faced in balancing mothering with militancy, in balancing being a good biological mother with being a good 'ideological' mother. Interestingly, some of the writing which has most informed our understanding of the struggles of this balance between the private and public spheres has been that which discusses mothers' difficulty in finding a work-life balance. Although revolutionary motherhood is more dangerous than working outside of the home, both working

mothers and revolutionary mothers have had to struggle to combine the tasks which they have chosen to fulfil themselves as individuals with the duties bestowed upon them by social gender roles, especially as women have traditionally been expected to feel fulfilled because of their mothering duties. And it is this social expectation of women as primary caregivers that has led to mothers being the most scrutinised, most criticised and most loved in these two works; it is the mothers whose choices and priorities are most questioned. The women who took it upon themselves to change their world, despite their family commitments, took on an immense task.

Moreover, as we have seen, these women did not only have to challenge gender expectations in wider society: they were also confronted by the often-conservative understandings of women in the revolutionary groups themselves. These groups ascribed to a surprising degree to the same patriarchal notions as the military regimes, and while they may have been more revolutionary than wider society in some ways, they were still informed by the same deeply rooted patriarchal ideas. Indeed, the work of these women may still be too radical for many to appreciate: their extraordinary lives and their sacrifices have been almost entirely erased, eclipsed by the work of the families of the disappeared, and by the work of male revolutionaries.

However, the tide is beginning to turn. In recent years, both academic and cultural understandings of the plight of revolutionary mothers have begun to break through the silence that surrounded their lives. These women may not have had the clear-cut morality of mourning mothers fighting a brutal regime to cement their place in history, and many may still criticise the choices that they have made, but as mothers they did what they thought was best for their children: they tried to create a better world. Now that these children have grown up and had children of

their own, they can appreciate the struggles that their revolutionary mothers had to face, and cultural production by the children of revolutionary mothers has been at the forefront of bringing these women's lives into the public eye and opening a dialogue on social expectations of mothers, particularly working mothers.

The final chapter of this thesis will focus on this younger generation, and show how their different perspectives have impacted the ways in which the dictatorships, and the institution of the family, are understood today.

Chapter 3 Children and Memory

On Thursday 24th March 2016, the date of the 40th anniversary of the Argentinian military coup of 1976, hundreds of thousands of Argentinians took to the streets to commemorate the victims of the dictatorship and to proclaim that this would never again be allowed to happen. The march, which coincided with a state visit by US President Barack Obama, was of unprecedented size: Nora Cortiñas, president of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora*, described it as ‘la marcha más grande que recuerdo’⁴³⁹. There were several reasons for the magnitude of the demonstration: the high level of dissatisfaction with the new Argentinian President Mauricio Macri, whose economic policy recalled the neoliberal policies of the dictatorship; the wish to make a statement to Obama, whose visit threatened, in the words of Horacio González, ex-director of the Argentinian National Library, to ‘confiscar la política de derechos humanos’; but also, crucially, because the moment was right: Cortiñas asserted that ‘ni la [marcha] de los veinte [años después de la dictadura] ni la de los treinta años fueron como ésta’⁴⁴⁰. In a country where ‘reconciliación nacional’ was thought to require ‘una política de amnesias e indultos para todos’ under the government of Carlos Menem, the period of the dictatorship was shrouded in silence for many years⁴⁴¹. The government of Néstor Kirchner marked a crucial step in the move away from impunity: the laws of *Obediencia Debida* and *Punto Final*, which protected perpetrators of human rights

⁴³⁹ Página 12 (a), ‘Sin derechos no hay democracia’, 25 March 2016, <<http://m.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-295379-2016-03-25.html>> [accessed 2 April 2016].

⁴⁴⁰ Página 12, (b), ‘Fue la marcha más grande de todas’, 26 March 2016, <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-295463-2016-03-26.html>> [accessed 2 April 2016]; Página 12, 2016 (a); Página 12, 2016 (b).

⁴⁴¹ Aitor Bolaños de Miguel, ‘La gestión de la memoria en la Argentina democrática’ in *Memorias de la violencia en Uruguay y Argentina: golpes, dictaduras, exilios (1973-2006)*, ed. by Eduardo Rey Tristán (Santiago de Compostela: UP, 2007) pp. 329-49 (p. 343).

abuses from prosecution, were nullified under his government, and in 2004 ESMA, the *Escuela Superior de la Mecánica de la Armada*, which had been used as a detention centre during the dictatorship, was converted into a space of memory⁴⁴². These acts opened up the possibility of public dialogue concerning the regime's crimes and highlighted the importance of remembering.

At the moment of the 40th anniversary of the coup, 660 perpetrators had been prosecuted; 119 appropriated children, now adults, had been identified; 35 spaces of memory had been opened to the public⁴⁴³. And memory has begun to take hold: Taty Almeida, a member of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora*, described how she felt 'emocionada y conmovida' to see so many young people demonstrating on the anniversary⁴⁴⁴. These young people would not have their own memories of the events taking place 40 years before, but their presence shows that they find these events to still be relevant and worth remembering. In this chapter, I will be focusing on the younger generations: on how memory has won out over silence in the post-dictatorship period; on the symbolic importance that memory holds for the future of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay; on the reclamation of sites of torture as spaces of memory; and on the steps still needed to finally achieve *Memoria*, *Verdad* and *Justicia* – words with such a profound significance that banners bearing them were hung by the Argentinian government from the enormous obelisk in Buenos Aires to commemorate the anniversary⁴⁴⁵. We shall see that the first post-dictatorship generation

⁴⁴² Página 12, 2016 (b); Bolaños de Miguel, p. 347; p. 348.

⁴⁴³ Página 12, 2016 (b). Throughout this chapter I shall be referring to 'appropriated children', although these 'children' are now in their thirties. I am using the term in the sense of *hijo*, rather than *niño*.

⁴⁴⁴ Página 12, 2016 (a).

⁴⁴⁵ La Nación, 'El Obelisco recuerda a los 40 años del último golpe militar', 23 March 2016, <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1882610-el-obelisco-recuerda-los-40-anos-del-ultimo-golpe-militar>> [accessed 3 April 2016].

understands the dictatorial period in a different way to the older generations, and that their new ideas about memory and the institution of the family help to push voices which have been traditionally marginalised into a more central social position.

However, this chapter will also focus on the most striking figure of the child living under dictatorship: the appropriated child, taken from an imprisoned mother and given to a military family. This figure is caught between two different identities: the identities of the biological and the 'psychological' families⁴⁴⁶. The acts of trying to reconcile these split identities will lead us to question our understanding of concepts such as identity and family, and will help to explain the rapid changes in family legislation which have taken place since these countries have begun to embrace the task of remembering the dictatorships.

The 1.5 generation

If the generation most affected by the dictatorships – those who were young adults at the time of the military coups – can be considered generation 1, and the generation above them – their mothers and fathers – can be considered generation 0, then it follows that the children of the 'dictatorship generation' be considered generation 2. Marianne Hirsch, who coined the term 'postmemory', defines the second generation as the ones for whom the 'powerful, often traumatic, experiences [...] preceded their births'⁴⁴⁷. However, this definition leaves little room for the children of the dictatorship period: Susan Suleiman has identified a 'grey area between victim and vicarious witness' which she terms the '1.5

⁴⁴⁶ This term is taken from an article by Lidia Castagno de Vicentini, which compared biological parents to 'psychological parents'. The article will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

⁴⁴⁷ Cara Levey, 'Of HIJOS and Niños: Revisiting Postmemory in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay', *History and Memory*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2014) pp. 5-39 (p. 8).

generation' for whom the traumatic events are 'pre-adulthood, but not pre-birth'⁴⁴⁸. The 1.5 generation is a group who were both direct victims – of crimes perpetrated against them personally, such as child appropriation – and indirect victims – as the heirs to the trauma experienced by their parents, which they may or may not have any direct memories of themselves. The age of the children at the time of these events plays a crucial role in how much they remember, as does the country in which they were living: the dictatorship in Argentina lasted seven years, while in Chile the dictatorship lasted seventeen years, long enough for an entire generation of children to grow up knowing no other form of reality.

It seems natural, then, to begin this chapter about children by looking at the lives of the 1.5 generation, the children who lived through the dictatorships, and then turning to the second generation, the children who were born after the dictatorships. In this first section, I will examine one way in which children were directly affected by the dictatorships: appropriation. This act had a profound effect on the formation and understanding of identity by the children who were affected. In order to examine cultural understandings of child appropriation, I will analyse the novel *Las cenizas del cóndor* (2014), by Fernando Butazzoni, which centres around the story of a young man, Juan Carlos, who believes that he was illegally adopted during the Uruguayan dictatorship and enlists the help of a famous journalist – the author of the novel – to uncover the truth surrounding his birth. This complex and multifaceted novel will also lead us to question who owns memory and how, as generation 2 comes into adulthood, the dictatorships of the Southern Cone will be remembered in the future.

⁴⁴⁸ Levey, p. 11; p. 26.

Child Appropriation

Karen Dubinsky, writing about the symbolic discourse of the child, notes that Western cultures see childhood as 'essentially vulnerable', and that this vulnerability takes on a particular cultural weight during periods of 'conflict, war, and social upheaval', when 'children can become bearers of huge social anxieties'⁴⁴⁹. When examining the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, we can see how childhood became invested with the fears of the military regimes: Judith Filc describes how children were seen as 'las secciones débiles de la pared', through whom 'el 'enemigo' logra la infiltración y destrucción de la familia'⁴⁵⁰. Children, then, were seen as the 'frontera de la familia': the point of entry for subversive ideas, which would then pose a threat to the rest of the family, who may become 'contaminated'⁴⁵¹. Therefore, the dictatorships took it upon themselves to do all that they could to control the minds of children. We have previously seen how they implemented educational programmes which promoted conservative family values as those of 'good' families; they also dismissed and sometimes even imprisoned teaching staff who were thought to be teaching the wrong material to students⁴⁵². In a 1984 project interviewing Argentinian children under the age of 13 about their thoughts on the dictatorship, Hugo Paredero cites one child who has discussed education standards with his teacher: 'las escuelas estaban hechas por los militares [...] bajó terriblemente el nivel'⁴⁵³. The control did not stop at the classroom: children's literature was an area of particular interest for the censors,

⁴⁴⁹ Karen Dubinsky, 'Babies without Borders: Rescue, Kidnap, and the Symbolic Child', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2007) pp. 142-50 (p. 144); p. 145.

⁴⁵⁰ *Entre el parentesco y la política* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1997), p. 52; p. 53.

⁴⁵¹ Filc, p. 56; p. 69.

⁴⁵² Filc, p. 56.

⁴⁵³ Hugo Paredero, *¿Cómo es un recuerdo? La dictadura contada por los chicos que la vivieron* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2007), p. 94.

with texts being scrutinised to ensure that they conformed to the official discourse on ‘valores sagrados como la familia, la religión o la patria’⁴⁵⁴.

However, the final responsibility over the ‘correct’ education of children lay with the parents, with Jorge Fraga, minister of social welfare in Argentina, stating that ‘el niño es la consecuencia de la familia [...] los males de un niño son, en un 90 por ciento, consecuencia de una mala familia’⁴⁵⁵. The education that children received at home was a major concern: while school curricula and children’s books could be regulated, there was no sure way of knowing what children were learning from their parents, and this teaching could easily undermine the efforts of formal educators. General Ramón Juan Camps, who was the head of police for the province of Buenos Aires at the start of the Argentinian dictatorship, stated that ‘subversive parents teach their children subversion. This has to be stopped’⁴⁵⁶. Children, while they were still malleable, had to be protected from these ‘subversive’ ideas so that they did not ‘grow up to hate the flag and the armed forces’: with the “‘right’ kind of political thinking’, they could be raised to be ‘good’ members of the Argentinian family⁴⁵⁷. The children were innocents in this programme – officers told their men that ‘*the war was not on children*’ – and the security services wished to act in their best interest⁴⁵⁸. The ‘paso necesario’ to ensure this ‘buena crianza’, then, was to appropriate these children: to unlawfully take them from their parents and give them to “‘decent” and “patriotic” families’,

⁴⁵⁴ Paula Guitelman, *La infancia en dictadura: modernidad y conservadurismo en el mundo de Billiken* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2006), p. 39.

⁴⁵⁵ Filc, p. 37.

⁴⁵⁶ Rita Arditti, *Searching for Life: the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina* (London: University of California Press, 1999), p. 50.

⁴⁵⁷ Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ‘The Treatment of Children in the “Dirty War”: Ideology, State Terrorism, and the Abuse of Children in Argentina’ in *Child Survival: Anthropological Perspectives on the Treatment and Maltreatment of Children*, ed. by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987) pp. 227-46 (p. 237); Sue Lloyd-Roberts, ‘Argentine Grandmothers Determined to Find “Stolen” Babies’, *BBC Newsnight*, 4 April 2013 < <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-22004491> > [accessed 29 June 2015].

⁴⁵⁸ Suárez-Orozco, p. 237, emphasis in original.

usually within, or with connections to, the armed forces, who could raise these children within the ideology promoted by the military⁴⁵⁹.

It is worth highlighting the double-speak present in this policy: children were both considered vulnerable to the subversive teachings of their families, but also a weak point at which subversion could enter the family. The difference lies in the ages of the children: teenagers were at risk of 'corrupting' their families, while younger children were at risk of being 'corrupted'. Furthermore, the policy of appropriating children was not one which was uniformly applied throughout the Southern Cone, but mostly occurred in Argentina. In Chile, family members of detained-disappeared women reported that some of them were pregnant at the time of their detention, but doubt surrounded even the possibility that these women had given birth⁴⁶⁰. In a special report in 2014, an investigation led by Consuelo Saavedra concluded that 'no hay evidencias sobre la ocurrencia de apropiación de niños como sí las hubo en Argentina', but that the case was as yet not closed.⁴⁶¹ The team uncovered two cases of women who had given birth to children conceived through rape in detention centres during the dictatorship, and 'al menos' 15 children who were born while their mothers were detained, although these children remained with their families⁴⁶². They also reported on the case of Susana Flores, who gave birth while detained and who reported hearing her daughter cry after birth, but was told that her child had died, although she was never shown her body. In Chile, the possibility that children were stolen by

⁴⁵⁹ Filc, p. 80; Arditti, 1999: p. 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Teresa A. Meade, 'Holding the Junta Accountable: Chile's "Sitios de Memoria" and the History of Torture, Disappearance, and Death', *Radical History Review*, Issue 79, (Winter 2001) pp. 123-39 (p. 131).

⁴⁶¹ 'Los hijos invisibles de la dictadura', *24 horas*, 15 December 2014, <<http://www.24horas.cl/programas/informe-especial/informe-especial-los-hijos-invisibles-de-la-dictadura-1528848>> [accessed 30 April 2016]

⁴⁶² Saavedra, 2014.

military agents remains just that – a possibility. However, some children born to Chilean parents were appropriated in Argentina – of those children who have since had their identities restored, five were the children of Chileans⁴⁶³.

Similarly, the majority of children being sought by Uruguayan families were kidnapped in Argentina. *Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos*

Desaparecidos report:

catorce casos de niños hijos de uruguayos desaparecidos o asesinados, ubicados y con identidad restituida, dos casos de niños hijos de padres argentinos secuestrados en Uruguay, y cuatro casos de niños presuntamente nacidos en cautiverio en Argentina que siguen sin aclararse. Cabe agregar a todos estos casos la desaparición en Argentina, en julio de 1977, de los adolescentes uruguayos Beatriz y Washington Hernández Hobbas, de 16 y 15 años respectivamente, meses después de sufrir el secuestro de su madre⁴⁶⁴.

Rita Arditti, writing in 1999, stated that the missing Uruguayan children were ‘were all kidnapped or born in captivity in Argentina’, but in 2000 one of the missing children, Macarena Gelman, reappeared in Uruguay, which ‘proved that the kidnapping of minors had happened not only in Argentina’⁴⁶⁵. However, the scarcity of examples of this occurrence suggest that it might have been a relatively isolated case.

⁴⁶³ Saavedra, 2014.

⁴⁶⁴ Gabriel Bucheli, Valentina Curto and Vanesa Sanguinetti, *Vivos los llevaron... Historia de la lucha de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (1976-2005)*, coord. by Carlos Demasi, and Jaime Yaffé (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2005), p. 15.

⁴⁶⁵ Arditti, 1999: p. 51; Levey, p. 19.

In Argentina, on the other hand, the appropriation of children was widespread and, as we have seen above, part of an official policy with the clear intention of separating these children from their 'subversive' parents. *Nunca Más* Argentina says that around 3 per cent of the disappeared in Argentina were pregnant at the time, and the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* estimate that around 500 children were appropriated, of which 121 have been found⁴⁶⁶. In Argentina, the young children of detained people, and their unborn babies, were considered 'botín de guerra' and either 'sold in a lucrative black market or placed with a sterile military or upper class couple'⁴⁶⁷. In order to combat this policy, and with the aim of recovering the children who had been taken, some women whose daughters had been detained while pregnant formed an organisation which at its inception in November 1977 was called *Abuelas Argentinas con Nietitos Desaparecidos*, and which would, a few years later, come to be known by its current name: *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*⁴⁶⁸. The organisation has worked in collaboration with scientists to help their search: a study of the pelvic bones of some of the women whose remains were found was able to confirm that they had given birth, lending certainty to the search; a test was also created specifically for the *Abuelas* which proved 'grandparenthood', so that family connection with a child could be established even in the absence of their disappeared parents⁴⁶⁹. After this genetic testing was successfully applied to find Paula Logares in 1984, the *Abuelas* set up a genetic data bank so that the disappeared children would be able to reclaim their

⁴⁶⁶ Arditti, 1999: p. 43; p. 50.

⁴⁶⁷ Filc, p. 37; Suárez-Orozco, p. 235.

⁴⁶⁸ Filc, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁶⁹ Rita Arditti, 'The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Struggle against impunity in Argentina', *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2002) pp. 19-41 (p. 30); Rita Arditti and M. Brinton Lykes, 'Recovering Identity': the Work of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 15, No.4 (1992) pp. 461-71 (p. 464).

identities even after the death of their relatives⁴⁷⁰. The indisputability of this DNA testing has helped over 100 stolen children to be identified, and the work of the *Abuelas* has brought the systematic appropriation of babies into the spotlight⁴⁷¹. In 1998 General Jorge Rafael Videla was arrested and charged with the appropriation of minors: one of the few crimes not covered by Argentinian amnesty laws, and after ‘una megacausa que se prolongó 15 años’, he was sentenced in 2012 to 50 years in prison, where he died one year later⁴⁷². For the *Abuelas* this sentence was an enormous victory: it was exactly what they had asked for⁴⁷³.

Unfortunately, the *Abuelas* had not always had the understanding of those in power. For years they had to fight against those who believed that the children should be left where they were. The secretary to Archbishop Pio Laghi told the *Abuelas* that ‘those who have them have paid a lot for them. It clearly shows [...] that they are people with great resources [...] the little ones will never suffer the deprivations that derive from poverty’⁴⁷⁴. And monetary concerns were not the only reason. A Rosario newspaper published an article called ‘The true parents are the psychological parents’, in which its author, Lidia Castagno de Vicentini, argued that biological ties were irrelevant in the face of the ‘almost ten years in which

⁴⁷⁰ Arditti, 1999: pp. 71-72.

⁴⁷¹ Gabriel Gatti, ‘Imposing Identity against Social Catastrophes: The Strategies of (Re)Generation of Meaning of the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* (Argentina)’, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 2012) pp. 352-65 (p. 360).

⁴⁷² Arditti, 1999: p. 172; Darío Lagos, ‘Poder y apropiación’ in *Sur, dictadura y después... elaboración psicosocial y clínica de los traumas colectivos*, ed. by Diana Kordon, Lucila Edelman, Darío Lagos and Daniel Kersner (Buenos Aires: Psicolibro Ediciones, 2010) pp. 240-45 (p. 241); Clarín, ‘El ex dictador Videla, condenado a 50 años de cárcel por el robo de bebés’, 5 July 2012, <http://www.clarin.com/politica/Expectativa-fallo-plan-sistematico-bebes_0_731327044.html> [accessed 3 April 2016]; El Mundo, ‘El dictador argentino Jorge Videla muere en su celda a los 87 años’, 17 May 2013 <<http://www.elmundo.es/america/2013/05/17/argentina/1368795704.html>> [accessed 3 April 2016].

⁴⁷³ Página 12, ‘*Abuelas* pidió 50 años de prisión para Videla’, 28 March 2012, <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/ultimas/20-190621-2012-03-28.html>> [accessed 3 April 2016]

⁴⁷⁴ Arditti, 1999: 61.

some of them have lived with their substitute families'⁴⁷⁵. Estela de Carlotto, leader of the *Abuelas*, criticises how the press covered the cases of appropriated children, saying that 'they spread lies about our work and try to create a positive image of the kidnappers [...] calling the kidnappers "parents" before millions of spectators'⁴⁷⁶. Judges in restitution cases in the 1980s and 1990s were often 'appointed during the repression' and therefore 'seldom behaved fairly and professionally'⁴⁷⁷. Even other family members discouraged the *Abuelas'* actions: Elsa Pavón de Aguilar recalls how her brother-in-law told her 'you will not get her back', while her husband told her 'this is enough. You are destroying yourself'⁴⁷⁸.

The obstacles that the *Abuelas* had to overcome seemed almost insurmountable, and one of the largest of these obstacles was the concept of belonging. With whom does a child belong? On the one hand, as we have seen, critics of the *Abuelas'* work have suggested that the child belongs with those who have raised him or her, and who have greater material resources with which to provide for the child. Adoption policy in Argentina at the time supported this view: adoptees were given the name of the adopting family, with their original name being completely erased in order to 'elimina[r] todo vestigio de su anterior filiación', as this complied with the 'deseo de los adoptantes que buscaban niños libres de todo vínculo con su familia de sangre'⁴⁷⁹. On the other hand, the *Abuelas* have argued that it is impossible to render a child 'free' of any biological connection: one member, Chicha Mariani, has said that 'in spite of your being brought up in a different home, one carries the genes of one's forebears inside

⁴⁷⁵ Arditti and Lykes, p. 467.

⁴⁷⁶ Arditti, 1999: p. 138.

⁴⁷⁷ Arditti, 1999: p. 107.

⁴⁷⁸ Arditti, 1999: pp. 112-13.

⁴⁷⁹ Carla Villalta, 'De los derechos de los adoptantes al derecho a la identidad: los procedimientos de adopción y la apropiación criminal de niños en Argentina', *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2010) pp. 338-62 (p. 342).

oneself'; each person has 'an inescapable biological origin'⁴⁸⁰. Rita Arditti, who has worked extensively with the *Abuelas*, argues that 'by changing their names, their ages and their identities, the appropriators turned the children into objects, depriving them of their history'⁴⁸¹.

However, academics have critiqued the notion that 'la familia biológica es la familia "real", la única capaz de darles a esos niños el amor que necesitan': Gabriel Gatti describes this as 'not the flexible, mobile, changing, liquid and unstable identity of the present times, but one that is hard, rocky, firm'⁴⁸². Arditti and Lykes suggest that there may be as many as four different mother figures to any child: 'the genetic mother, the birth mother, the social mother and the legal mother': the *Abuelas* themselves, in cases where their grandchildren were restored to their biological families at a young age, became "'adoptive" mothers to their own grandchildren', taking on the roles of social and legal motherhood despite not being genetic or birth mothers to these children⁴⁸³. Recent work in the field of adoption studies suggests the need for a redefinition of the concept of 'real' parenthood, in order to 'include the possibility that a child can have more than two parents'⁴⁸⁴. Barbara Yngvesson, who accompanied a group of Chilean children who had been adopted in Sweden during the Pinochet dictatorship on their 'roots trip' to learn more about themselves and their country of origin, discusses the ambiguities involved with an adopted child confronting their biological past, leading to 'the discovery of a self both familiar and strange, me and not-me', which

⁴⁸⁰ Gatti, p. 353.

⁴⁸¹ 1999: p. 122.

⁴⁸² Filc, p. 80; Gatti, p. 358.

⁴⁸³ Arditti and Lykes, p. 462; Arditti, 1999: p. 98.

⁴⁸⁴ Sarah Park Dahlen and Lies Wesseling, 'On Constructing Fictions and Families', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Winter 2015) pp. 317-21 (p. 318); Marianne Novy, *Reading Adoption: Family Difference in Fiction and Drama* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 5.

'reveal[s] the precariousness of "I am"'⁴⁸⁵. She believes that this return to the point of origin 'always involves bringing the "past" into dialogue with the present, rather than collapsing present into past (or privileging one over the other)'⁴⁸⁶.

That in Argentina the idea of restitution is seen in more black-and-white terms – that is, either that the biological family is the 'true' family or that the adoptive family who has raised the child is – may be understood by considering that, in the words of Sarah Park Dahlen and Lies Wesseling, 'adoptees [...] often function as projection screens on which interested and adult parties project their own needs and concerns'⁴⁸⁷. The *Abuelas* would 'surely not', Gabriel Gatti argues, consider identity in such fixed terms 'if this catastrophe had not intervened', but in the wake of the crimes of the dictatorship, the return of the children 'gave them a sense that some measure of justice could, after all, be achieved'⁴⁸⁸. These cases are unlike other adoption cases, where the biological parents have chosen to relinquish their rights to their child: 'los padres de los nietos desaparecidos no los abandonaron, al contrario, los amaban, los deseaban, y las madres trataron de proteger a sus hijos nacidos y no nacidos de sus secuestradores': as such, the biological families still have a right to claim their children⁴⁸⁹. It seems unfair, then, that Gabriel Gatti calls the *Abuelas'* understanding of identity 'a solid, essential and forceful weapon for combating the absence of meaning' which leads to the reconstruction of 'social life and identity [...] in all their forceful unity'⁴⁹⁰. For while it is true that the *Abuelas'* definition of identity entirely eliminates the place of the appropriators, seeing children who have not yet been restored as having what

⁴⁸⁵ 'Going 'Home': Adoption, Loss of Bearings, and the Mythology of Roots', *Social Text*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring 2003) pp. 7-27 (p. 9).

⁴⁸⁶ Yngvesson, p. 13.

⁴⁸⁷ p. 319.

⁴⁸⁸ Gatti, p. 360; Arditti, 1999: p. 92.

⁴⁸⁹ Filc, p. 91.

⁴⁹⁰ Gatti, p. 362; p. 363.

Estela de Carlotto has named a 'non-identity', the group has shown itself to be much more flexible when dealing with adopters who adopted the children without knowledge of their origins or involvement in their appropriation⁴⁹¹. One of the *Abuelas*, Reina Esses de Waisberg, summarises the *Abuelas'* attitude to the two sets of circumstances:

If I find my grandson or my granddaughter and he has been with a decent couple who adopted him without knowing that he was the child of disappeared, I will let the child stay with them. I would want us to visit [...]
But if he is with a couple who participated in the repression, I will fight until my last breath to have my grandchild come and live with us⁴⁹².

The *Abuelas* have kept this attitude in practice. When the Uruguayan children Victoria and Anatole Julien Grisolas, who were kidnapped in Argentina, were found in 1979 living in Chile with adopted parents who were 'unaware of their origins', the *Abuelas* agreed that the children 'should continue living with their adopted parents', although in order to prevent them from forgetting their biological family, 'an extended visitation programme was established'⁴⁹³. Similarly, Tatiana Ruarte Britos and Laura Malena Jotar Britos, who had been adopted 'de buena fe', remained with their adopted family but were visited often by 'sus abuelas y tíos, quienes les contaban acerca de sus padres'⁴⁹⁴.

The *Abuelas'* work in the field of identity further elucidates this issue: they contributed to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, adding 'the right of the

⁴⁹¹ Gatti, p. 362.

⁴⁹² Arditti, 1999: p. 104.

⁴⁹³ Arditti, 1999: p. 65; p. 66.

⁴⁹⁴ Filc, p. 90.

child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations', while in Argentina their search has inspired new legislation which states that 'adopted children have a right to know that they are adopted and by age eighteen have full access to their adoption records'⁴⁹⁵. The *Abuelas*, as these statements show, insist upon a person's *right* to know about their origins if they should wish to look into their past: there is nothing 'forceful', in the words of Gatti, here, nor any suggestion that people who legally adopt are somehow inadequate parents. Chicha Mariani, one of the *Abuelas*, explains that restitution means 'not restitution to us but an offering to the child of what is theirs', and most certainly not 'as if we had "won" something'⁴⁹⁶. Their circumstances are unique and their discourse regarding identity and the 'llamado de sangre' should be read in that specific context: a context in which a child has been illegally appropriated and kept unaware of their biological family, who are searching for the whereabouts of the oblivious child⁴⁹⁷. In many other contexts, the concepts of 'true' family and 'real' parents are much more nuanced. In fact, as the *Abuelas* have discovered through their restitution process, even in the context of the Argentinian dictatorship, the restoration of children's identities has been complex and difficult.

One fear of the *Abuelas* was that the restitution process would 'constitute a second trauma'⁴⁹⁸. Some of the restored children experienced extreme feelings of pain and anger: Elsa Pavón de Aguilar, the grandmother of Paula Logares, described how she 'made an incredible scene' when she was told the truth, accusing her grandmother of 'wrecking her family', as she 'had a mother and a

⁴⁹⁵ Arditti, 1999: p. 146; 2002: p. 31.

⁴⁹⁶ Arditti, p. 105.

⁴⁹⁷ Villalta, p. 355.

⁴⁹⁸ Arditti, 1999: p. 2.

father' already⁴⁹⁹. Similarly, Victoria Montenegro, who 'adored' her adopted father, 'refused to believe' the truth, feeling 'angry' that the *Abuelas* had told her this story and 'hat[ing] them profoundly' for it⁵⁰⁰. Others had a more mixed response, with Rodolfo Fernando Guillermo feeling sad that he had 'lost a lot of time getting to know his biological family' and that part of his life had been 'stolen', but still spending time with his adopted mother whom 'he loved', saying that 'it is not easy to break the ties'. Still others, some of whom had been 'suspicious about their origins' were able to 'rapidly integrat[e] themselves into their legitimate families'⁵⁰¹. Each person processes the revelation in a different way, and the experience 'indudablemente produce una crisis que requiere un trabajo psíquico', leading the *Abuelas* to seek the help of psychologists and therapists to help guide them⁵⁰². However, Estela de Carlotto has stated that 'the knowledge of the truth is the best therapy', and the *Abuelas* have noted a 'typical pattern' of behaviour by the newly-informed children, whereby after 'a strong emotional reaction', the children soon begin 'asking detailed questions and noting any signs of resemblance to their relatives'; in these situations 'la idea de la herencia está constantemente presente'⁵⁰³. Those who were kidnapped when they were older find that 'a gesture, a voice, or a particular piece of information can become the specific agent that unleashes old memories'⁵⁰⁴. And although some of the children refused to confront their past – such as Mariana Zaffaroni, who as we have seen in chapter two (p. 139-40) took 17 years to look into her biological parents' history after being told about

⁴⁹⁹ Arditti, 1999: p. 114.

⁵⁰⁰ Lloyd-Roberts.

⁵⁰¹ Arditti, 1999: p. 2.

⁵⁰² Lagos, p. 244; Arditti, 1999: p. 104; p. 115.

⁵⁰³ Arditti, 1999: p. 122; p. 121; Filc, p. 80.

⁵⁰⁴ Arditti, 1999: p. 121.

her origins – many of the recovered children took an interest in the wider work of the Abuelas and ‘han estado yendo a las marchas de derechos humanos’⁵⁰⁵.

As we have seen, no two cases of child appropriation and restitution of a child’s identity are exactly alike. Some children were found while still young, while many others reached adulthood before learning the truth; some accepted the truth immediately, while others struggled with it for many years; some cut ties with their adopted families, others saw their adopted families as their ‘real’ families and yet others struck a balance between the two. I would like to turn now to one fictionalised account of child appropriation in the tumultuous period before the Argentinian coup d’état, which deals with many of the themes that have been examined in this chapter so far.

The Appropriated Child in *Las cenizas del cóndor*

This incredibly detailed Uruguayan novel tells the story of one small family against the much wider backdrop of the entire Operation Condor. The novel has two different timelines: one set between 2000 and 2002 in which the author, Fernando Butazzoni, conducts research into a young man’s claim that he may be the child of disappeared parents; and one set in 1974 in which three people from very different backgrounds come together to save a child from appropriators. In this second strand, Ekaterina ‘Katia’ Alexandrovna Liejman (alias María Eugenia Romero in Argentina and Teresa Capdevila in Venezuela), a Soviet spy, is sent to Buenos Aires to investigate the growing unrest in the country and report back to her handler. Aurora Sánchez (alias Natalia), a Uruguayan activist who has fled to Chile, discovers that she is pregnant and must escape across the Andes to

⁵⁰⁵ Filc, p. 91.

Argentina, where she believes she will be safe, but upon arrival she is immediately arrested. Manuel Docampo, a Uruguayan army captain, is chosen as a go-between by Argentinian and Uruguayan officials, but he soon learns that he is being used as a pawn to cover up secret missions. Manuel meets Katia, who claims to be a Spanish journalist, and they begin a romantic affair, but when the *rezidentura* in Buenos Aires discovers this relationship, she is forced to leave him. Aurora gives birth in prison and her child is immediately taken from her. As she is a Uruguayan citizen, the task of ‘disappearing’ her is given to her compatriot Manuel, but he cannot bring himself to do it and rescues her instead. Having nowhere else to turn, he takes Aurora to Katia’s apartment, and she agrees to help him look after her. After Aurora has recovered from being tortured, the three of them track down her baby and snatch him back from his adopted family, before Manuel and Aurora flee to Uruguay to marry and raise the boy as their child, and Katia flees to Venezuela to escape the Soviet agents who now wish to kill the spy they believe has turned against them. The boy that they rescue, Juan Carlos, is the young man who has contacted Fernando⁵⁰⁶.

The story ‘se pega a los hechos’ but has certain details changed, such as names and ‘las circunstancias geográficas y las fechas de ciertos eventos’⁵⁰⁷. It has been minutely researched to tie the wider-ranging events of the period with those of the protagonists, and shows in detail how one event can deeply affect the lives of people far away. In one such case, a revolution in Ethiopia delays the arrival in Argentina of a Soviet official with a new passport for Carlos Prats, a former Chilean

⁵⁰⁶ As Fernando Butazzoni is both a character in the novel and the author of it, I shall be referring to the character as ‘Fernando’ and the author as ‘Butazzoni’ in order to distinguish between their two very different roles.

⁵⁰⁷ Fernando Butazzoni, *Las cenizas del cóndor* (Montevideo: Editorial Planeta, 2014), p. 751. Further references to this edition are given in the text with the abbreviation CC.

army officer now living in exile, and he is killed in a car bomb. The chaos surrounding this assassination allows Manuel to help Aurora escape to Uruguay. Butazzoni describes how 'esa pequeña historia familiar encerraba la historia completa del Plan Cóndor' (CC, p. 600), how the three very different protagonists of the 1974 storyline find that 'los destinos de cada uno [...] son un único destino' (CC, p. 712): that is, that they are all 'entrelazados' (CC, p. 712) in the plot to save baby Juan Carlos. Juan Carlos, despite doing little to drive the plot forward other than making first contact with Fernando, is at the centre of the entire novel: the plot to save him is the text's climax and the mystery of his origins is what drives Fernando's investigation. However, in the 2000-2002 storyline Juan Carlos' main role seems to be to act as go-between for Fernando and Aurora, convincing her to see him when she does not want to: 'quiero que la convenzas para que me reciba' (CC, p. 463). He is strangely marginalised, feeling that his mother and Fernando have left him 'afuera de la conversación' (CC, p. 340), and indeed, he does not appear as an adult in the final third of the novel at all, only in mentions by other characters: once he has convinced Aurora to send Manuel's notebooks to Fernando, he serves no other purpose. In a sense, despite being the centre around whom all of the action unfolds, he is somehow voided of agency, turned into a largely unknown and unexplored hollow space at the centre of the text. For the purposes of this section, however, I would like to turn the focus back to Juan Carlos, both as a child and as an adult, as I feel that many of the elements of his life are reflective of the experiences of the appropriated children. Butazzoni describes how Katia justifies saving Aurora by seeing her as representing 'a todas las víctimas posibles de una dictadura que se ha ido extendiendo por toda la región' (CC, p. 502) – but if Aurora is the 'every victim' of the dictatorship generation, Juan Carlos is in many ways the 'every victim' of the 1.5 generation.

Although the circumstances surrounding Juan Carlos' rescue are far from typical, many other aspects of his experience are, including his prenatal treatment. Aurora is treated brutally in the detention centre despite her pregnancy being obvious: 'a sus carceleros no les interesan en absoluto ni su salud ni su embarazo' (CC, p. 299) – she has been interrogated and tortured (CC, p. 296). She 'ni siquiera ha sido capaz de brindarle [a Juan Carlos] un poco de paz en la panza' (CC, p. 298), having been subjected to ordeals such as when 'la golpean [...] le aplican picana[...] la violan con palos y botellas' (CC, p. 298). The *Abuelas* have testified that such methods were indeed used in detention centres: pregnant women often miscarried under torture, and unborn babies were even directly targeted, with soldiers putting 'a spoon or a metallic instrument in the vagina until it touched the foetus' and then applying electric current so that 'they shock[ed] the foetus'⁵⁰⁸. However, if the unborn baby did survive this treatment, the women gave birth and were killed afterward while their babies were given to childless married couples of military officers⁵⁰⁹.

Child psychologist Alicia Lo Giúduce describes how 'the child becomes an object for the appropriators', which becomes clear in the novel during one scene where the pregnant Aurora overhears soldiers talking bluntly about how they will sell her child to the highest bidder: 'alguien que está desesperado por un bebé [...] es de la Federal y está dispuesto a pagar buena plata' (CC, p. 302)⁵¹⁰. They describe the unborn child as 'mercadería' and one soldier says, 'no veo para qué vamos a regalar lo que podemos vender' (CC, p. 303). Aurora, remembering the incident many years later, talks of 'las tarifas', asking Fernando if he knows '¿cuánto se pagaba por un varón sano, de más de tres kilos y menos de una semana de nacido?

⁵⁰⁸ Arditti, 1999: p. 24; p. 22.

⁵⁰⁹ Arditti, 1999: p. 24.

⁵¹⁰ Arditti, 1999: p. 141.

¿Y cuánto valía una nena si tenía el pelo rubio y los ojos celestes?' (CC, p. 434). The children are indeed seen as merchandise, with certain characteristics and qualities more highly valued – and therefore more highly paid for: Judith Filc explains how children who had 'piel muy blanca y ojos claros' were 'muy buscados' and Juan Carlos does indeed have 'pelo rubio, ojos azules' (CC, p. 97)⁵¹¹. But the insistence on certain characteristics shows how the military do not consider these children in human terms: Aurora describes how, for Juan Carlos' appropriator, he was 'regalado [...] como si fuera un cachorrito'; he was nothing more than 'una mascota para que se entretuviera' (CC, p. 436). Rita Arditti and M. Brinton Lykes argue that the objectification of children as 'war booty' is merely an extension of the way in which children in 'advanced Western society are, by and large, perceived', with them being seen as 'commodities, as products to be owned, not as human beings in their own right'⁵¹². Aurora, even as she is 'casi muerta' after her torture and her rescue by Manuel, knows that she cannot allow her son to be 'criado por esa gente' (CC, p. 435), kept from his true mother and his true identity. She insists that he 'se llamará Juan durante toda la vida', even if 'le pongan otro nombre y nadie lo sepa' (CC, p. 413).

In this attitude, she ascribes to the same notion of identity that the Abuelas have promulgated – just as they describe children who have not been restored as having a 'non-identity', Aurora sees Juan as being 'un muerto viviente' (CC, p. 644), 'un muerto escondido detrás de un nombre inventado por otros' (CC, p. 645), kept in 'su tumba de brazos y rebozos' (CC, p. 647). Nothing about this new identity is authentic – without his true identity he is merely 'una sombra' (CC, p. 647), living with what Butazzoni describes as 'la identidad sustraída: lo que no se es y, a la vez,

⁵¹¹ Filc, p. 64.

⁵¹² p. 461.

lo que se es sin saber' (CC, p. 742). However, despite Juan Carlos' physical absence, his loss is felt viscerally, almost as a presence in itself: Manuel, Katia and Aurora feel as if 'el bebé ausente se hubiera instalado allí, en el apartamento, para marcarle a cada uno las obligaciones y los compromisos' (CC, p. 486), he is like 'un pequeño fantasma que ronda a toda hora por el apartamento' (CC, p. 467). The language used is that of lack, of absence, of death, with the horrifying juxtaposition of burial imagery and that of new life serving to remind the reader that for the appropriators, death and new life went hand in hand: the mother suffered 'un ritual de sacrificio' so that the new family could 'arrebatarle a su hijo': Aurora thinks at one point that 'no pueden sacárselo de su vientre por la fuerza, que si no ya lo hubieran hecho' (CC, p. 301).

This death and brutality, this image of a mother who has been 'profanada' (CC, p. 301), contrasts enormously with the image of the reunited mother and child. As Manuel, Katia and Aurora flee in the car after a successful rescue, he turns to see that 'Aurora y su hijo se han quedado dormidos', with 'ni la agitación de la refriega ni la incertidumbre de esa larga retirada' able to 'alterar la calma con la que ella duerme abrazada a su hijo' (CC, p. 684). This Marian image exorcises the earlier horrors: Aurora, who had wished, even in a weak state, to 'salir a buscar a su bebé por la ciudad', and Juan Carlos, who 'ronda a toda hora' (CC, p. 467), are now able to finally forget their errant longing and sleep peacefully, reunited. Butazzoni is reassuring his reader that despite the violent nature of the rescue, which we will examine in more detail later, there is no doubt that this is the *right* thing to do: Katia describes their mission as a 'rescate', 'de ninguna manera un robo ni un secuestro', but rather the 'única forma valedera' of putting things right (CC, p. 597). Although he never explicitly refers to the controversy surrounding whether or not appropriated children might be better with their adopted families,

Butazzoni is making his opinion clear, and leaving no room for the reader to question whether Aurora should have her child back. By referencing many typical aspects and ideas surrounding the early lives of appropriated children – the way that their mothers were tortured while pregnant, how the babies were treated as objects by the military, the way that they unknowingly experience what the Abuelas term a ‘non-identity’, the loss that their families feel in their absence – Butazzoni turns Juan Carlos into a symbol for all of the missing children, and his steadfast insistence that Juan Carlos’ restitution is the right thing to do tells the reader that it is *always* the right thing to do.

In adolescence and adulthood, certain elements of Juan Carlos’ story remain typical, although others are somewhat more unusual. When Juan Carlos first goes to the radio station to meet Fernando, he is carrying with him a tape on which his adopted father, Manuel Docampo, states that he has ‘cosas para contar’ – namely, that despite never working at Batallón 13, ‘siempre supe que ahí había gente enterrada [...] algunos presos se morían y [...] eran enterrados ahí’ (CC, p. 59). Just after making this tape, Manuel shot himself, and it was Juan Carlos, who ‘tenía entonces dieciséis años’ (CC, p. 55), who discovered his body and hid the tape before the police arrived. He clearly wanted to protect the man who he refers to as ‘mi padre’ (CC, p. 22), despite having been told when he was twelve that ‘no soy hijo de ellos [...] mi madre me enseñó los papeles de la adopción’ (CC, p. 95) and, even more curiously, despite the fact that he assumes that ‘mi viejo era un torturador o algo de eso’ (CC, p. 94). Juan Carlos’ life seems to have been affected very little by the revelation that he was adopted: he describes how in the four years following this announcement ‘todo estaba perfecto’, until one day, ‘el tipo fue y se pegó un tiro en el sillón del living [...] de paso, para arruinarme la vida del todo, el viejo me dejó de regalo un casete grabado en el que confesaba lo del

Batallón 13' (CC, p. 95). This event changed his view: when Fernando asks what he 'est[á] buscando con todo esto' (CC, p. 94), Juan Carlos does not answer directly – he 'midió las palabras con extremo cuidado' (CC, p. 95). However, the fact that he mentions his suspicions that 'a mis padres verdaderos los habían desaparecido' (CC, p. 95), combined with his declaration of 'a la mierda familia y a la mierda el cuento del bebé abandonado en la puerta del hospital' (CC, p. 95) – the story that Manuel and Aurora told him when he asked about his origins – suggest that he is now seeking the truth about his biological parents. The suicide of the adopted parent is unusual, but the affection that Juan Carlos feels towards the man he called his father is not: as we have seen, many appropriated children felt love for their adopted families. Manuel's suicide has clearly affected him deeply: when he is describing the event to Fernando, the writer 'solo vi angustia' (CC, p. 55) in his eyes, and the detached way in which Juan Carlos refers to 'el tipo' and 'el viejo' (CC, p. 95) when talking about it contrasts sharply with his earlier use of 'mi padre' (CC, p. 22) and 'mi viejo' (CC, p. 94). Juan Carlos is attempting to distance himself from 'una etapa muy dolorosa de su vida' (CC, p. 55). It is the suicide that inspires him to say 'a la mierda familia' (CC, p. 95), not the realisation that his adopted father was probably a torturer: he defends him by saying that 'por lo menos dejó una denuncia' (CC, p. 94), which he sees as an 'especie de legado de su padre' (CC, p. 55).

His relationship with Aurora is also complicated. When Fernando tells Juan Carlos 'quiero hablar con tu madre', he tells Fernando that 'mi madre está chiflada' (CC, p. 94), which seems cruel and uncaring, but he shows his love for her in other ways: despite the adoption records and despite having already declared 'a la mierda familia' (CC, p. 95), Fernando notes when he again asks to speak to Aurora that Juan Carlos 'seguía llamando [a Aurora] madre' (CC, p. 137). Juan Carlos'

reference to Aurora's mental health is only explained later: after repeatedly telling Fernando not to speak to her – 'ella de eso no habla con nadie' (CC, p. 94), 'mi madre no va a hablar con usted ni con nadie' (CC, p. 137), 'mi madre está muy alterada y creo que es porque no quiere hablar con usted' (CC, p. 337) – Fernando asks him, '¿no será que vos no querés que hable conmigo?' (CC, p. 337), and Juan Carlos explains his protective attitude. He says that 'me preocupa la salud mental de mi madre', explaining that 'durante los últimos años ha tenido varios episodios de depresión' (CC, p. 337). He explains how 'cuando está deprimida se pasa el día en la cama, ni siquiera es capaz de bañarse sola' (CC, p. 338). He details how he takes care of her, saying:

la última vez que se enfermó yo tenía que meterme bajo la ducha con ella, con los ojos cerrados [...] le daba miedo quedarse sola debajo del duchero [...] Después tenía que ponerme a secar los charcos de agua que había por toda la casa y lavar su ropa y ponerme a cocinar. Y cuando terminaba de hacer esas cosas, iba al dormitorio, la despertaba a los sacudones y le daba los alimentos en la boca con una cuchara porque si no lo hacía de esa manera ella no comía (CC, p. 338).

In spite of the flippant way in which he has described Aurora as 'chiflada' (CC, p. 94) and how he says 'ya no la soporto' (CC, p. 338), Juan Carlos obviously cares about her deeply enough to look after her during her crippling bouts of depression. Fernando struggles to understand why the young man would take such care of a woman who he believes 'no era su verdadera mamá' (CC, p. 339), and ponders at how 'hablábamos de su madre y la llamábamos de esa forma con total naturalidad' when 'supuestamente [...] sabíamos que él era un hijo adoptado' (CC,

p. 339). He says 'supuestamente' because by this point he and his wife Lucy have discovered that Aurora is 'de verdad [la] madre biológica' (CC, p. 339) of Juan Carlos. They are first alerted to this possibility by how Aurora refers to Juan Carlos: just as they are surprised that he calls her 'mi madre' (CC, p. 339), so they were also surprised to hear that Aurora 'habla del chico como si fuera su hijo', repeatedly saying '*mi hijo*' (emphasis in original) which they find strange because 'después de todo el muchacho es adoptado y sospecha de ella y amenaza con denunciarla y volverle la vida imposible' (CC, p. 190). Their reasoning, unstated but implied, is that only a 'true' mother would still call him 'mi hijo' in such circumstances – in the words of Juan M. Pérez Franco, 'nadie puede dejar de pertenecer a una familia [...] porque sus miembros están confinados en un endogrupo del que no pueden salir merced a los lazos de lealtad y afecto que les unen'⁵¹³. But Lucy and Fernando have little real reason to think this way: their reasoning is based on a very narrow definition of family which sees adopted parents as not being 'real' parents – a notion which Marianne Novy dismisses, saying that 'in the homes of most adoptive families [...] it is obvious that adoptive parenthood is real'⁵¹⁴.

Juan Carlos' adoption certificate states that he was adopted in 'junio de 1977' (CC, p. 195), when he 'había nacido en 1974' (CC, p. 93). We later learn that Aurora is Juan Carlos' biological mother and that he was returned to her when he was just a few months old, but even if this were not the case, Aurora would have raised him from just before his third birthday and would probably have been the only mother figure he would remember – and therefore the fact that they refer to

⁵¹³ Juan M. Pérez Franco, 'Dinámica familiar y represión política' in *Infancia y represión: historias para no olvidar*, ed. by Loreto Alamos et al (Santiago: Editorial ARGE Limitada, 1992) pp. 145-65 (p. 162).

⁵¹⁴ p. 5.

one another as 'mi madre' (CC, p. 339) and 'mi hijo' (CC, p. 190) would be natural. Furthermore, Lucy's assumption that Juan Carlos 'amenaza con denunciarla y volverle la vida imposible' (CC, p. 190) is plainly false: although Juan Carlos has said that he wants to know the truth about his origins, his only contact with any form of authority is when he goes to see Archbishop Cotungo, who is the president of the *Comisión para la Paz*, in order to give him Manuel's tape. Aurora certainly has more faith in Juan Carlos than Lucy believes – she tells Fernando 'no hay manera de que me lo quiten, ni de que él me dé la espalda [...] No hay nada que modifique sus sentimientos' (CC, pp. 173-74). His imagined disappeared biological mother is just an idea to him, whereas Aurora, no matter what problems she might have, has been a real and tangible mother to him for as long as he can remember.

The only other evidence that they have that suggests that Juan Carlos is Aurora's biological son is a picture of her when she was young, spotted by Fernando 'casi de refilón' (CC, p. 174). He says that 'Aurora y Juan Carlos se parecen [...] bastante' – despite the fact that 'ella es menuda y de ojos marrones, él es corpulento y de ojos azules': he draws a quick conclusion, stating that 'se parecen. Es su hijo' (CC, p. 192). Noting any physical resemblance is, as Rita Arditti explains in the citation included earlier, one of the key ways in which 'children identify with their legitimate families': she cites one example, where Paula Logares reacted very strongly to the idea that she had been appropriated, until 'she finally looked at one picture and agreed that it did look like her'⁵¹⁵. But physical resemblance has also led to the uncovering of appropriated children: Anatole and Victoria Julien were discovered in Venezuela because they were recognised from 'una publicación de niños desaparecidos'⁵¹⁶. However, the *Abuelas* also rely on

⁵¹⁵ Arditti, 1999: p. 121; p. 114.

⁵¹⁶ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 29.

DNA testing to prove their suspicions, whereas Fernando and Lucy decide that Aurora's insistence on calling Juan Carlos her son, added to the 'percepción sobre el parecido entre ambos' means that it is 'factible concluir que Juan Carlos Docampo era en realidad hijo de Aurora Sánchez' (CC, p. 194). As they consider the question of why she '*lo hace pasar por su hijo adoptivo*' (CC, p. 198, emphasis in original), Fernando realises how much Juan Carlos' unusual life is a 'testimonio de una época', one characterised by 'los engaños, las mentiras y la opacidad' (CC, p. 198). Times have changed – it is now the new millennium, but the country 'tantos años después' is still 'viviendo con miedo' (CC, p. 198). When Juan Carlos first comes to see Fernando, he gives a false name, Ricardo, and agrees to see the *Comisión para la Paz* only if someone agrees to accompany him, as he does not want to 'aparecer muerto en una cuneta' (CC, p. 20). Fernando seems surprised by this, telling him 'no es para tanto [...] esas cosas pasaron hace mucho tiempo' (CC, p. 20), but as he learns more about the story he begins to change his mind, admitting 'yo también tenía miedo, y Lucy lo tenía [...] teníamos el miedo metido hasta los huesos' (CC, p. 198).

Butazzoni reminds the reader that although the later narrative string (2000-2002) takes place in democracy, the difference between dictatorship and democracy is not as clear-cut as one might expect. He describes how Uruguayans felt, at the turn of the millennium, as if they were in 'una especie de laberinto maldito del que deseábamos salir lo antes posible', a sentiment shared, he assumes, by 'los argentinos, que tenían las llamadas leyes de punto final y de obediencia debida' and 'muchos chilenos, que debieron soportar a Augusto Pinochet ocupando, ya en democracia, una banca en el Senado' (CC, p. 16). By writing two narratives, one set in dictatorship and one set some years after, Butazzoni incorporates the experiences of both the 1.5 and the 2 generations, and

shows that the transition to democracy in all three of these countries was far from smooth.

The Transition to Democracy

I shall return to *Las cenizas del cóndor* later, but first I would like to look at the period surrounding the transition to democracy in these three countries. All three have had different paths, but there are also certain points of commonality: all three had a period of immunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses in the 1980s and 1990s, mostly due to pressure from the military, and all three have returned to the question of justice in the 2000s and 2010s. And, as we shall see later, these countries have begun to experience a phenomenon whereby the definition of who was a victim during the dictatorships and who has the right to speak about what happened is expanding to permit more and differing points of view. First, however, I would like to briefly outline the key events in the transition to democracy in each of these countries in turn. As I have already mentioned the *Comisión para la Paz*, I shall begin by looking at Uruguay, and describing the events preceding the *Comisión's* appointment and analysing why it took fifteen years of democracy before an official truth commission was called for.

The Transition to Democracy in Uruguay

The Uruguayan transition began, at least in theory, in 1980, when the Uruguayan people voted against the continuation of the civic-military regime in a landmark plebiscite, but free elections were not held until 1984, and Julio María Sanguinetti, the elected president, did not take office until March 1985. Eugenia Allier Montaña describes the Uruguayan post-dictatorship period as being split into three eras – the first, between 1985 and 1989, is what she calls ‘las batallas de la memoria y el

olvido', a period 'marcado por las contiendas entre los diversos actores políticos [...] por la memoria del pasado reciente o por su olvido'⁵¹⁷. One of the first acts of Sanguinetti's new government was to pass the *Ley de Amnistía*, which called for 'the release of political prisoners jailed since 1 January 1962, with the exception of those who had committed intentional homicides'⁵¹⁸. Those who were considered to be imprisoned justifiably had their sentences reduced by two thirds⁵¹⁹. The law explicitly excepted 'military or police personnel' and 'persons who, acting on behalf of the state or protected by the state, committed crimes on the basis of political motivations', which led to 'demands for an equivalent amnesty' which would protect those excluded by this law⁵²⁰. In August 1986, Sanguinetti presented an equivalent bill – the *Ley de Caducidad* – for the members of the military and police, which led to mass protests and a parliamentary rejection of the bill⁵²¹. However, in October 1986, nineteen generals stated that this rejection posed 'serious risks' to Uruguayan democracy, and the law was passed, covering politically-motivated crimes that occurred before the 1st March 1985⁵²². Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder believe that this amnesty for the military and police was 'one of the main costs of the political opening', and probably agreed to at the signing of the Club Naval Pact in August 1984⁵²³. As we have seen in the second chapter (p. 103), this legal immunity was very unpopular, and inspired human rights organisations such as the *Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos*

⁵¹⁷ 'La (no) construcción de memorias sociales sobre el exilio' in *Memorias de la violencia en Uruguay y Argentina: golpes, dictaduras, exilios (1973-2006)*, ed. by Eduardo Rey Tristán (Santiago de Compostela: UP, 2007) pp. 273-92 (p. 282).

⁵¹⁸ Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder, 'The Legacy of Human Rights Violations and the Collective Identity of Redemocratised Uruguay', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1997) pp. 55-77 (p. 61).

⁵¹⁹ Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: p. 62.

⁵²⁰ Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: p. 62.

⁵²¹ Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: pp. 62-63.

⁵²² Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: p. 63.

⁵²³ 1997: p. 75.

Desaparecidos and SERPAJ to seek signatures of 25% of the electorate in order to call for a referendum on whether or not to overturn the immunity law for police and military personnel.

The referendum was called for April 1989; in March, SERPAJ released an unofficial truth commission report known as 'Uruguay: Nunca Más'⁵²⁴. The Uruguayan government made no comment on the document, which sealed its status as unofficial, and unrecognised⁵²⁵. A month later, the public voted to uphold the *Ley de Caducidad*, meaning that it 'no sólo queda legalizado' but rather it was also 'legítimado por la voluntad ciudadana'⁵²⁶. Sanguinetti believed that this referendum, and its result in particular, was 'the final step in the transition to democracy', as the 'very processes of attaining the referendum and carrying it out peacefully' had shown that the democratic system was working, allowing the people to 'mobilis[e] widely and ha[ve] the chance to challenge the decision by the political class'⁵²⁷. Furthermore, the referendum's result had, 'from a legal and political point of view', signalled that the majority of the population was willing to leave the past behind and not pursue any further claims for justice⁵²⁸.

Thus, the country entered the second period as demarcated by Allier Montaño: the period she calls 'la represión del pasado', which she situates between 1990 and 1995⁵²⁹. It was in this period that Punta Carretas, which had been a prison facility during the dictatorship, was sold and converted into a 'fast-paced,

⁵²⁴ Louis Bickford, 'The Archival Imperative: Human Rights and Historical Memory in Latin America's Southern Cone', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No.4, (1999) pp. 1097-122 (p. 1109).

⁵²⁵ Louis Bickford, 'Unofficial Truth Projects' in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 4, (2007) pp. 994-1035 (p. 1009).

⁵²⁶ Ana Forcinito, 'Narración, testimonio y memorias sobrevivientes: hacia la posmemoria en la posdictadura uruguaya', *Letras Femeninas*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Winter 2006) pp. 197-217 (p. 202).

⁵²⁷ Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: p. 59; p. 77; p. 59.

⁵²⁸ Roniger and Sznajder, 1997: p. 59.

⁵²⁹ Allier Montaño, p. 282.

neon-signed, food-chained Baudrillardian postmodern mall', a symbol of how Uruguay was 'caught in globalisation's zeal', but also a symbol of 'the nation – more specifically, the state – was not ready to face the horrific events of the recent past'⁵³⁰. Luz Ibarburu, a member of *Madres y Familiares*, describes how this period was characterised by 'desánimo [...] general' among the human rights activists, adding that she 'personalmente tiré la toalla [...] simplemente no tenía fuerzas'⁵³¹. The battle against immunity had been lost, and the group saw its membership wane to just four people for 'un tiempo largo' as the activists became disillusioned⁵³².

Then, in 1996, Uruguay entered a new phase, defined by Allier Montaño as 'el regreso del pasado'⁵³³. The commemoration, in March 1996, of the twentieth anniversary of the Argentinian coup d'état drew much attention from Uruguay, as well as 'more than a passing reference to the local lack of political will to do something similar'⁵³⁴. In April 1996, Rafael Michelini, whose father, Senator Zelmar Michelini, had been killed in Buenos Aires on the 20th May 1976, called for a 'March of Silence' to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of his father's death and to 'urg[e] citizens to demand information about the past and the Uruguayan armed forces to speak out'⁵³⁵. In early May, Jorge Tróccoli, who had been a member of the armed forces during the dictatorship, publicly 'admitted that the Uruguayan armed forces had tortured people'⁵³⁶. The march was well-attended, with 'a crowd of

⁵³⁰ Victoria Ruetalo, 'From Penal Institution to Shopping Mecca: the Economics of Memory and the Case of Punta Carretas', *Cultural Critique*, No. 68, (2008) pp. 38-65 (p. 38); p. 43.

⁵³¹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 71.

⁵³² Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 72.

⁵³³ p. 282.

⁵³⁴ Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder, 'The Politics of Memory and Oblivion in Redemocratised Argentina and Uruguay', *History and Memory*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (Spring 1998) pp. 133-69 (p. 158).

⁵³⁵ Levey, p. 13.

⁵³⁶ Levey, p. 13.

thirty to fifty thousand' and became a yearly event which has become 'el punto de referencia principal de las movilizaciones en reclamo del esclarecimiento de la situación de los desaparecidos'⁵³⁷.

1996 also saw, in July, the foundation of HIJOS, a group 'united by their status as sons and daughters of the dictatorships' victims'⁵³⁸. They began to perform 'escraches': taken from Lunfardo slang meaning "to ruin" something, especially someone's reputation by revealing secrets', they involve telling a target's neighbours about the crimes they committed during the dictatorship, and performing public demonstrations in their area – demonstrations which have now taken on a carnivalesque nature, with 'music, giant puppets and street theatre', and taking 'months' of preparation⁵³⁹. The *escraches* 'contested the lack of formal justice by occupying urban space' and 'bringing the past into the present' as a continuation of 'the previous generation's struggle for a more just society' and in order to 'blu[r] the boundaries between the dictatorship and post-dictatorship periods'⁵⁴⁰. These *escraches* brought the dictatorship back into the public eye, and political activism began again in earnest, with a petition started in 1997 for an investigation into the dictatorship, which was denied, but which did not deter the activists, who went on to campaign for a memorial in 1998 and to petition the new President José Batlle for a meeting about a possible investigation in 2000⁵⁴¹. Batlle met a delegation from *Madres y Familiares* in August 2000, and he agreed to create *la Comisión para la Paz*⁵⁴². This was a watershed moment in the politics of memory, as it was the first official investigation and it had taken fifteen years of 'lucha por la

⁵³⁷ Roniger and Sznajder, p. 159; Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, p. 120.

⁵³⁸ Levey, p. 14; p. 6.

⁵³⁹ Diego Benegas, "If There's No Justice...": Trauma and Identity in Post-Dictatorship Argentina', *Performance Research*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2011) pp. 20-30 (p. 21); p. 23.

⁵⁴⁰ Levey, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁴¹ Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, pp. 85-90.

⁵⁴² Bucheli, Curto and Sanguinetti, pp. 90-93.

memoria en la sociedad civil' to bring it about⁵⁴³. Uruguay was confronting its past officially for the first time, although it took another five years before any of the perpetrators of human rights abuses were prosecuted⁵⁴⁴.

After Tabaré Vázquez became president in 2005, changes began to happen quickly: excavations began on military sites for the bodies of the disappeared, and in 2006 a campaign to annul the *Ley de Caducidad* began⁵⁴⁵. In September 2006 the first military and police personnel were tried and convicted, and in November Juan María Bordaberry was arrested and put on trial⁵⁴⁶. This was permitted by a new ruling on the *Ley de Caducidad*, which stated that the law could not be applied in the case of 'economic crimes, crimes committed by civilians or high-ranking military/police officers, crimes executed outside of Uruguay, and kidnapping of minors'⁵⁴⁷. And judicial reform was met with social changes as, in the words of Ana Ros, 'the political and legal response to the dictatorial crimes shapes ways of remembering': in October 2006 MUME, the *Museo Uruguayo de la Memoria*, was founded, and it was opened to the public in December 2007, with the intention of constructing 'la memoria sobre el terrorismo de Estado y la lucha del pueblo uruguayo', as well as providing 'conocimiento a las nuevas generaciones'⁵⁴⁸. The Uruguayan people were searching – for the first time in twenty years of democracy – for the role that the past would play in the nation's future.

2007 also saw the foundation of a new group: *Niños en Cautiverio Político*, whose members had all been 'incarcerated with their mothers whilst babies or

⁵⁴³ Forcinito, p 202.

⁵⁴⁴ Ana Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 158.

⁵⁴⁵ Allier Montaño, p. 282.

⁵⁴⁶ Allier Montaño, p. 282.

⁵⁴⁷ Levey, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁴⁸ Ros, p. 7; MUME, 'Central cultural museo de la memoria', 17 May 2016, <<http://mume.montevideo.gub.uy/museo/centro-cultural-museo-de-la-memoria>> [accessed 22 June 2016].

toddlers'⁵⁴⁹. Unlike in Argentina, where newborns and young children were taken away from their mothers and placed into new adoptive families, the Uruguayan dictatorship tended to keep mother and young child together⁵⁵⁰. Some of the children had been born in prison, while others were taken into prison alongside their mothers; some left prison with their mothers, while others were released to live with relatives at a certain age, 'with the oldest being around four years of age when released'⁵⁵¹. In an interesting distinction from HIJOS and other children's groups, the members do not identify their group with relatives, but instead they identify directly as victims themselves: although they were mostly 'too young to remember their own prison experiences', some of them do retain upsetting memories of 'habitual visits to their parents in prison at weekends'⁵⁵².

As events progressed and memory began to take a firm hold in Uruguay, the politics of impunity became increasingly questionable. In 2009 another referendum was held to decide whether or not to overturn the *Ley de Caducidad*, which was again lost, but in 2011 the law was overturned regardless, and immunity from prosecution was finally declared null and void⁵⁵³. The 2009 election of José Mujica, former Tupamaro and *rehén* of the dictatorship, served to highlight how much the political environment in Uruguay had changed, with a man who had previously fought against the establishment now taking the highest office in the country.

⁵⁴⁹ Levey, p. 20; p. 6.

⁵⁵⁰ Graciela Jorge (coordinator), *Maternidad en prisión política: Uruguay 1970-1980* (Montevideo: Trilce, 2011), p. 12.

⁵⁵¹ Levey, p. 21.

⁵⁵² Levey, p. 23; p. 21.

⁵⁵³ Levey, p. 20.

The Transition to Democracy in Argentina

In direct contrast to the situation in Uruguay, Argentina began prosecuting the leaders of the dictatorship soon after the return to democracy⁵⁵⁴. Raúl Alfonsín became president in late 1983, and soon set up the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP) to investigate human rights abuses during the dictatorship⁵⁵⁵. Their findings were condensed into a book, *Nunca Más*, which as the first such report in Latin America had a ‘significant impact worldwide’, being translated into ‘English, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese and German’ and selling over half a million copies by 2008⁵⁵⁶. Once these details had been published, trials began, charging leaders of the Juntas with ‘711 counts of murder, illegal detention, torture, rape, and robbery’ although all of the defendants were cleared on charges of child theft⁵⁵⁷. While in Uruguay – and, as we shall see, Chile – the country was immediately plunged into a state sanctioned policy of forgetting, in Argentina the cathartic process of a democratic trial formed the foundation of the new democracy, with its ‘symbolic representation of the supremacy of the rule of law’ demonstrating that no individual was above being held accountable for their actions⁵⁵⁸.

However, this period of ‘exemplary’ justice did not last long: in an attempt to draw the line under the prosecutions – and ‘in an effort to appease the military’, who felt that the trials were unjustified and still saw themselves as “saviours” of the country’ – Alfonsín introduced the Ley de Punto Final in December 1986, which

⁵⁵⁴ Ros, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁵ Arditti, 2002: p. 24.

⁵⁵⁶ Arditti, 2002: p. 24; Emilio Crenzel, ‘Between the Voices of the State and the Human Rights Movement: Never Again and the Memories of the Disappeared in Argentina’, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Summer 2011) pp. 1063-76 (p. 1063).

⁵⁵⁷ Arditti, 2002: p. 24.

⁵⁵⁸ Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 143; p. 142.

set 'a sixty-day limit for new prosecutions'⁵⁵⁹. Nonetheless, human rights organisations were able to file a 'huge number of suits' due to the amount of evidence that they had previously collected, which may have angered the military: in April 1987 a group of military officers known colloquially as the *Carapintadas* 'occupied the garrison of Campo de Mayo' in 'armed protest' about the trials of military personnel⁵⁶⁰. Soon after the dissolution of the occupation, in June 1987, the law of *Obediencia Debida* was introduced, which stated that 'no officer could be accused of having committed acts that under normal circumstances would be considered crimes' if they were committed in order to obey a direct order by a superior officer, which many saw as evidence of a deal between Alfonsín and the *Carapintadas*⁵⁶¹. One of the only crimes that were excluded from these 'amnesty laws' was the crime of child abduction, in what Rita Arditti believes was a 'concession to the Grandmothers' demands'⁵⁶².

But the amnesty laws did not quell the military rebellions; rather they seemed to prove that the fledgling democracy was weak and that rebellions could be successful in changing governmental policy. In January 1988, Aldo Rico, head of the *Carapintadas*, led the Rebellion of Montecaseros, and in December of the same year there was another insurrection, the Rebellion of Villa Martelli⁵⁶³. Alfonsín called upon the armed forces to break up these mutinies, but the army showed their support for the mutineers and their cause by being 'slow to respond to his command'⁵⁶⁴. Tensions were running high, with many people seeing the military's

⁵⁵⁹ Carina Perelli, 'Memoria de sangre: Fear, Hope and Disenchantment in Argentina' in *Remapping Memory: the Politics of Timespace*, ed. by Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) pp. 39-66 (p. 47); Arditti, 2002: p. 24.

⁵⁶⁰ Perelli, p. 51; p. 52; p. 53.

⁵⁶¹ Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 139; Perelli, p. 54.

⁵⁶² 2002: p. 24.

⁵⁶³ Perelli, p. 55; p. 57.

⁵⁶⁴ Perelli, p. 56.

actions as conducive to another coup d'état, and in January 1989 a left-wing 'grassroots-cum-human-rights-organisation [...] called Todos Por la Patria' staged an attack on La Tablada Army Regiment⁵⁶⁵. This time the army were not slow to respond, intervening 'with a vengeance' and managing to rehabilitate their image as aggressors and troublemakers into one of 'the popular heroes of the day' and 'valiant soldiers', which effectively silenced activists for human rights⁵⁶⁶. Later that year Carlos Menem was elected president, and in December 1990 he issued presidential pardons to the Junta members who had been convicted in 1985, despite the fact that 'eighty percent of the population was against the pardons'⁵⁶⁷. All of the work of the human rights organisations was rendered moot, and a new period of forgetting and silence began.

The crimes of the dictatorship began to creep back into the public sphere in the mid-1990s. In 1995, a group of the children of people who were 'murdered, disappeared, formerly arrested or exiled' during the dictatorship formed a group known as H.I.J.O.S. (*Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio*)⁵⁶⁸. Twenty years had passed since the coup, and in 1996 the anniversary was noted with 'a series of mass meetings' and an event on the 24th March in the Plaza de Mayo attended by between fifty and a hundred thousand people⁵⁶⁹. 1996 was also a very important year for the *Abuelas*, who were able after 'many years of investigation' to present a case which convincingly argued that the kidnapping of the children of imprisoned women was a matter of policy, an argument which led to new court proceedings against major military personnel, including Jorge Videla

⁵⁶⁵ Perelli, p. 57.

⁵⁶⁶ Perelli, p. 57.

⁵⁶⁷ Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 139; Arditti, 2002: p. 24.

⁵⁶⁸ Cecilia Sosa, *Queering Acts of Mourning in the Aftermath of Argentina's Dictatorship: The Performances of Blood* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2014), p. 34; Benegas, p. 20.

⁵⁶⁹ Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 153.

and Emilio Massera⁵⁷⁰. This new court case brought the plight of the missing children back into the public eye, and in May of the same year, a doctor named Jorge Bergés, who had taken part in the appropriation of babies during the dictatorship, was attacked and ‘seriously wounded’ near his home⁵⁷¹. Other attacks on perpetrators of human rights abuses, including the ‘Angel of Death’ Alfredo Astiz, evinced a climate of growing anger and frustration towards the impunity enjoyed by state-sponsored torturers, kidnappers and murderers⁵⁷². Susana Kaiser, interviewing young Argentinians on their opinions about the dictatorship in 1998, found a very bleak view of the judicial system in the country, with participants reporting a feeling that ‘justice doesn’t exist, at least in Argentina’: that ‘justice is always a cover-up’, and that due to the lack of justice, people are forced into ‘coexistence with [...] major human rights abusers’⁵⁷³. And it is from that climate of anger against impunity that the first *escrache* was performed by members of H.I.J.O.S. in January 1997⁵⁷⁴. Their first target was Jorge Luis Magnaco, who had been involved with the birth and appropriation of children of imprisoned women⁵⁷⁵. But these *escraches* were not a form of revenge: they stopped ‘at the doorstep’ of the target, with the performers refusing to ‘cross the boundary to inflict physical harm’ and thus ‘continue the cycle of violence’⁵⁷⁶. And nor were they a form of justice – rather, they highlighted ‘the need for justice’ by drawing attention to ‘*impunity*, a more subtle crime, committed in [...] the present’⁵⁷⁷.

⁵⁷⁰ Arditti, 2002: pp. 35-36.

⁵⁷¹ Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 154.

⁵⁷² Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 154.

⁵⁷³ Postmemories of Terror’ (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 102.

⁵⁷⁴ Benegas, p. 23.

⁵⁷⁵ Benegas, p. 23.

⁵⁷⁶ Benegas, p. 26.

⁵⁷⁷ Benegas, p. 27, emphasis in original.

It was not until Néstor Kirchner became president in 2003 that the politics of impunity began to change on an official level, rather than merely an informal one. Kirchner 'embraced the position of the victims': he believed that 'era acuciante reparar los daños causados por la dictadura' and that 'había que compensar a las víctimas del terrorismo de Estado'⁵⁷⁸. Under Kirchner, and later under his wife Cristina, many changes occurred in the field of human rights, leading some to call the period the 'won decade'⁵⁷⁹. In 2005 the impunity laws were dissolved, and in 2006 'extensive trials began'⁵⁸⁰. Alongside the quest for justice, the period also saw a move towards promoting memory and creating spaces in which memory could be fostered. After ESMA became a space of memory in 2004, some human rights groups, including H.I.J.O.S. and *Abuelas* moved their headquarters to the site, and in its first decade it has seen 'international workshops, art exhibitions, book launches, concerts, theatre and cinema events, film shoots, TV channels, journalist modules', becoming a truly 'experimental' site where 'different ways of 'performing life' in the present can be tested, adopted and also rejected'⁵⁸¹. The Kirchnerist period witnessed the move from memory being the responsibility of the few, those who were members of the relatives' associations, to being available and accessible to everyone.

The Transition to Democracy in Chile

As in Uruguay, the early transition period was characterised by a lack of convictions for perpetrators of human rights abuses: in both countries 'the very

⁵⁷⁸ Sosa, p. 18; Mario Wainfeld, 'El Presidente que cambió el paradigma', 28 October 2010, <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-155847-2010-10-28.html>> [accessed 3 April 2016].

⁵⁷⁹ Sosa, p. 169.

⁵⁸⁰ Sosa, p. 27; p. 19.

⁵⁸¹ Sosa, p. 84; p. 173.

architects of the repression negotiated the terms of the transition with the future political elite', and they were therefore able to construct an environment which was favourable to them⁵⁸². Many of the crimes committed by agents of the dictatorship were covered by the 'self-declared amnesty' of 1978, which granted freedom from conviction to

todas las personas que, en calidad de autores, cómplices o encubridores han incurrido en hechos delictuosos, durante la vigencia de la situación de Estado de Sitio, comprendida entre el 11 de Septiembre de 1973 y el 10 de Marzo de 1978'⁵⁸³.

There were some exceptions, such as 'parricidio, infanticidio, robo con fuerza en las cosas, o con violencia o intimidación en las personas [...] incendios [...] violación [...] fraudes'⁵⁸⁴. Nonetheless, unlike in Uruguay where 15 years of democracy passed before an official truth commission was set up, the first official truth commission, *La Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación*, popularly known as the *Informe Rettig*, made its investigation immediately after the return to democracy, between 1990 and 1991⁵⁸⁵. When its findings were made public, President Aylwin accepted the report in an 'emotional ceremony'⁵⁸⁶.

However, despite this report, Mary Lusk Friedman says that 'public acknowledgement of state terror was grudging during the first ten years of the

⁵⁸² Ros, p. 5.

⁵⁸³ Meade, p. 125.

⁵⁸⁴ Elizabeth Lira and Brian Loveman, *Leyes de reconciliación en Chile: amnistías, indultos y reparaciones 1819-1999* (Santiago: LOM, 2001), p. 207.

⁵⁸⁵ Hillary Hiner, 'Voces soterradas, violencias ignoradas: discurso, violencia política y género en los Informes Rettig y Valech' in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (2009) pp. 50-74 (p. 50).

⁵⁸⁶ Bickford, 2007: p. 1032.

transición’, with the Chilean population ‘initially consign[ing] to the private sphere the process of recovering from this personal and civic trauma’⁵⁸⁷. This first decade was marked by what Tomás Moulian called an obsession ‘por el olvido de sus orígenes’⁵⁸⁸. In 1997, Villa Grimaldi was opened to the public as a ‘Parque por la Paz’, which was ‘marked throughout with brick plaques and stones naming the various “stations” of the torture (cubicles, electric torture rooms, bathrooms, etc)’⁵⁸⁹. However, writing in 2001, Teresa Meade questioned ‘how much the park’s young visitors’ – as it is mostly visited by ‘local school-children and teenagers’ – ‘understand the history commemorated there’, especially ‘in the absence of history lessons in schools’⁵⁹⁰. She even noted the lack of ‘a general effort to make Villa Grimaldi and similar sites understandable to the public’, suggesting that the sites did little to contribute to the knowledge of those who were not already aware of the history behind them, and therefore were not particularly successful in defeating the silence of the period⁵⁹¹. Steve Stern refers to this period as one of ‘impasse’: a time when the ‘cultural belief by a majority’ in the violence and horror of the dictatorial regime met with the fear that Pinochet and his supporters ‘remained too strong for Chile to take the logical ‘next steps’ along the road of truth and justice’⁵⁹².

It is important to remember that unlike in Uruguay and Argentina, the leader of the dictatorship, Augusto Pinochet, had not fallen out of favour with the

⁵⁸⁷ ‘Tales from the Crypt: the Re-emergence of Chile’s Political Memory’ in *Hispania*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (December 2014) pp. 612-22 (p. 612).

⁵⁸⁸ Claudia Gatzemeier, ‘Hacer memoria en el Chile actual. Historias e historia. (Re)construcción del acontecer y escenificación del recuerdo en relatos de autores chilenos’ in *Taller de Letras* No. 49 (2011), pp. 109-21 (p. 111)

⁵⁸⁹ Steve J. Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet: the Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006* (London: Duke UP, 2010), p. 171; Meade, p. 128.

⁵⁹⁰ Meade, p. 132.

⁵⁹¹ Meade, p. 132.

⁵⁹² Stern, p. xxxi.

public in the same way: in Santiago there is a museum dedicated to the general, who still has ‘ardent supporters’⁵⁹³. Nor did he lose his position upon the return to democracy: Pinochet was to continue in his role as the head of the military until 1998⁵⁹⁴. The lack of convictions during this period can be attributed to a fear that they might ‘arriesgar la reconciliación’ and bring about another coup: Pinochet had once said, ‘the day they touch any of my men, the rule of law is over’⁵⁹⁵. During negotiations concerning his early resignation in December 1990, Pinochet showed off his power by calling for a ‘Grade One *acuartelamiento*’ – ‘an emergency alert ordering army troops to report to their units within two hours’, and as the order began to be reported on the radio, civilians panicked, forcing Aylwin and his Minister of Defence Rojas to back down⁵⁹⁶. Then, in May 1993, while Aylwin was on a state visit to Europe, Pinochet called a troop alert, which lasted five days and once again panicked the civilian population⁵⁹⁷. Pinochet was protesting the investigation into fraud purportedly committed by his family, a potential change in the law of the armed forces which would place them under greater civilian control, and new ‘damning justice proceedings and publicity’ against the military⁵⁹⁸. Aylwin was forced to stop the investigation into the ‘Pinocheques’ fraud case and the civilian influence over the military, but he managed to resist the creation of a new amnesty law that would prevent further judicial proceedings against the military, instead proposing a compromise, known as the Aylwin Law, in which information

⁵⁹³ Vicky Baker, ‘Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet’s house becomes visitor attraction’, *The Guardian*, 18 December 2008 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/18/pinochet-museum-house-chile> > [accessed 14 June 2015].

⁵⁹⁴ Cath Collins, ‘Human Rights Trials in Chile during and after the “Pinochet Years”’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2010), pp. 67-86 (p. 72); Stern, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁵ Gatzemeier, p. 111; Collins, p. 72.

⁵⁹⁶ Stern, p. 59.

⁵⁹⁷ Stern, p. 119.

⁵⁹⁸ Stern, pp. 119-20.

could be provided to the courts secretly⁵⁹⁹. The law was universally unpopular – not fulfilling the military’s wish for a new amnesty, nor the wish of human rights groups to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions – and it was liquidated a month later after the *Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos* held a public hunger strike⁶⁰⁰. Neither side was willing to compromise, and for many years the transition process was ‘deadlocked’⁶⁰¹.

Pinochet resigned his position in 1998 and immediately ‘took up his post as a lifetime senator’⁶⁰². A few months later, in October of the same year, he was arrested in London at the behest of the Spanish judge Baltazar Garzón and was held under house arrest for seventeen months⁶⁰³. In 1999 there was a ‘Mesa de Diálogo’ staged to allow ‘representatives of the three branches of the armed forces and of the police’ to meet ‘four human rights lawyers’; while the information that the armed forces provided about the disappeared was later proven to be very unreliable, there was, for the first time, ‘public recognition of human rights violations [...] [which] would have been unthinkable just two years earlier, when Pinochet was in charge’⁶⁰⁴. In Chile, his arrest was a symbol of his weakening power – one that was seized by a new human rights group, *Acción Verdad y Justicia Hijos-Chile*, the Chilean children’s association, who began to perform ‘funas’, the local version of the *escrache*, in September 1999, and held them at the rate of ‘nearly one a month’ between October 1999 and December 2000⁶⁰⁵. The group and its actions were initially controversial: older children wanted to support the

⁵⁹⁹ Stern, p. 120; p. 121; p. 123.

⁶⁰⁰ Stern, pp. 123-24.

⁶⁰¹ Stern, p. 125.

⁶⁰² Stern, p. 212.

⁶⁰³ Stern, p. 213; p. 225.

⁶⁰⁴ Onur Bakiner, ‘From Denial to Reluctant Dialogue: the Chilean Military’s Confrontation with Human Rights (1990-2006)’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2010), pp. 47-66 (p. 58).

⁶⁰⁵ Stern, p. 233; p. 234.

Agrupación de Familiares, not to create a separate entity which might ‘undermine the *viejas*’, but as the *funas* became more successful in drawing the public’s attention, some members of the *Agrupación* joined in⁶⁰⁶.

Pinochet’s arrest in London also impacted the legal sphere: by May 2000, ‘over one hundred cases against Pinochet had been brought [...] before different Chilean courts’, showing that ‘the *Pinochetista* control over the judiciary had been eroded’⁶⁰⁷. This erosion of power inspired a new truth commission to be set up between 2003 and 2004: the *Comisión de Prisión Política y Tortura*, popularly known as the *Informe Valech*⁶⁰⁸. This commission highlighted the culture of silence present in Chile: of the 28,459 people interviewed, ‘most had never told anyone what had happened to them during their incarceration’⁶⁰⁹. The report had a strong effect on public opinion: Steve Stern notes that in September 2003, ‘one of four Chileans (25 percent) still affirmed that [Pinochet] would be remembered by History as “one of the great rulers” in twentieth-century Chile, not as “a dictator”’, but by August 2006, ‘the Valech Report on torture, and the indictments for human rights crimes had worn down the loyalist core to only one of eight Chileans’ with ‘four of five Chileans (82 percent) now [seeing] a “dictator” instead of a great ruler, and they included a solid majority (60 percent) on the Right’⁶¹⁰. And while Pinochet died before ever being sentenced, the trials of his former agents continue to this day: by late 2014 there were over one thousand cases being processed,

⁶⁰⁶ Stern, p. 233, emphasis in original; p. 237.

⁶⁰⁷ Carlos H. Acuña, ‘Transitional Justice in Argentina and Chile: A Never-ending Story?’ in *Retribution and Reparation in the Transition to Democracy*, ed. by John Elster (Cambridge: UP, 2006), pp. 206-38 (p. 323); Bakiner, p. 58.

⁶⁰⁸ Hiner, p. 50.

⁶⁰⁹ Friedman, p. 612.

⁶¹⁰ Stern, p. 302.

although ‘only about seventy of Pinochet’s military officers are in prison’⁶¹¹. It is important to note that these court cases have not overturned the Amnesty Law; instead, they find loopholes within it. Carlos H. Acuña tells how the Supreme Court ruled that ‘the amnesty did not include disappearances because, given that no body had been found, these crimes should be considered ongoing’⁶¹²; as shown above, the law did not grant amnesty for kidnapping.

The term of President Michelle Bachelet from 2006-2010 was the first since the end of the dictatorship that privileged memory over justice: seventeen memory projects were completed in 2006, and another six in 2007⁶¹³. 2008 saw her announce ‘the construction of a state Museum of Memory and Human Rights’, and after a struggle between various different groups, Londres 38, the infamous torture site set in central Santiago, opened as a space of memory in 2008⁶¹⁴.

Sons and daughters

In the paragraphs above I have mentioned, albeit briefly, the foundation of new relatives’ associations during the transition period, run by the children of the victims of the dictatorships. These children’s groups were all founded in the mid-to late-1990s at a time when, as we have seen, the politics of silence and impunity reigned. These biological children of the victims inherited their parents’ fight: as “‘verdaderos” familiares’, they were ‘obligados por su parentesco’ to continue the fight for memory even during this dark period⁶¹⁵. Cecilia Sosa describes how the relatives’ associations formed a kind of ‘wounded family’, whose role as the

⁶¹¹ Alexandra Ripp, ‘Remembering the Coup: Chilean theatre now’, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 2014) pp. 87-101 (p. 89).

⁶¹² Acuña, p. 232.

⁶¹³ Stern, p. 315.

⁶¹⁴ Collins, p. 85; Stern, pp. 318-23.

⁶¹⁵ Filc, p. 99.

'guardian of mourning' has turned the task of memory into 'a family issue', which can exclude those who do not have the requisite '*sangre azul*'⁶¹⁶. Judith Filc, too, sees that the use of the 'modelo tradicional de la familia' by the relatives as a double-edged sword⁶¹⁷. On the one hand, it united those with shared experiences – 'sólo *nosotros* sabemos la verdad acerca de la represión' – allowing them to feel that they 'belonged', that they were completely understood 'without needing to explain anything', and even bonding the members with one another in a kind of substitute family⁶¹⁸. We have seen this attitude in earlier chapters with the assertion that 'todos los desaparecidos son hijos de todas las Madres', and which also applies to the children's groups, who see themselves as members of 'la familia más grande que un ser humano puede tener', which Sosa labels 'a family of choice'⁶¹⁹. On the other hand, this reliance on the symbol of the family as the centre of memory excludes the general public – 'usted *no puede saber*' – creating a barrier whereby those from the outside feel discouraged from engaging in memory politics, as they may not feel that they have the right to do so⁶²⁰.

In Uruguay, the decision to name the second-generation group HIJOS⁶²¹ raised some internal concerns as to whether this name would exclude other young people who felt a commitment to their cause as part of a 'nosotros generacional'⁶²². This wish to be connected with other members of their generation led to a widening of the definition of the membership of HIJOS, from the children of the desaparecidos to include those whose parents were 'murdered, imprisoned, exiled', and then to those who were 'the children of the entire dictatorship

⁶¹⁶ Sosa, p. 1; p. 34, emphasis in original.

⁶¹⁷ Filc, p. 60.

⁶¹⁸ Filc, p. 60; Levey, p. 21.

⁶¹⁹ Filc, p. 27; Sosa, p. 26.

⁶²⁰ Filc, p. 60.

⁶²¹ The italicisation of the 'j' emphasises the need for justice above all else (Levey, p. 14).

⁶²² Levey, p. 14.

generation', highlighting their association not only with their oppressed relatives, as with the *Abuelas* or *Madres*, but also with one another as an entire generation⁶²³. A similar move occurred in Argentina, where in 1999 H.I.J.O.S. opened their membership to those whose families had not been directly affected by violence, but who felt an affiliation with the group due to 'ideological sympathy and alignment with the organization's aims of fighting impunity and forgetting'⁶²⁴. This decision was not universally well-received, causing 'an internal split' in the group which had previously established internal hierarchies according to 'the extent to which each member had been affected by state violence' – if 'disappeared or exiled parents did not qualify as the same', then those whose parents had not been direct victims of violence surely had little place in the organisation⁶²⁵.

However, this opening up of the definition of victimhood was incredibly significant. Earlier understandings focused on 'individual pain and despair' with only the victims themselves or their genetic relatives having the 'right' to speak out – a phenomenon that Cecilia Sosa calls the 'monopoly of blood', which left no space for 'the collective dimension of repression', the people who 'had not been imprisoned, disappeared and tortured' but had nonetheless had experienced 'the loss of a certain dimension of collective innocence'⁶²⁶. Diego Benegas points out that when members of children's associations 'testify to their own suffering' therefore 'embodying the victims', the stories they tell are 'perceived as pertaining to them exclusively', leaving others on the outside⁶²⁷. *Escraches* and *funas* attempt to close this distance, transforming the victim of dictatorial violence 'from the "disappeared" to "society"', from 'H.I.J.O.S. to the neighbours': the children's

⁶²³ Levey, p. 15; p. 16.

⁶²⁴ Sosa, p. 36; Levey, p. 31.

⁶²⁵ Sosa, p. 36; p. 34.

⁶²⁶ Perelli, p. 50; Sosa, p. 18; Perelli, p. 50.

⁶²⁷ Benegas, p. 25; p. 26; p. 25.

associations come to play the part of instigator, informing but not acting, leaving the question of how to handle the presence of a newly-unmasked human rights abuser 'to the neighbours'⁶²⁸. The new 'inheritors' of the fight for justice 'no son necesariamente parientes de los desaparecidos' – the 'seed' that is passed on 'es la de los ideales políticos [...] la memoria y la remembranza colectivas – y no la memoria genética'⁶²⁹. A defining moment for this new attitude came when the newly-elected Néstor Kirchner stated 'we are the sons and daughters of the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo', a statement which was embraced whole-heartedly by relatives' associations, with *Madres* saying upon his death that 'he was also our son' and members of H.I.J.O.S. describing themselves as 'orphans once again'⁶³⁰. Susana Kaiser suggests that this attitude that 'we are all mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters and sons of desaparecidos' helps to 'collectivise accountability' for the past and to combat the 'apathy' that can be experienced by those who feel that 'you didn't live through it so you cannot speak about it'⁶³¹. She reminds us that 'the children of yesterday are today's and tomorrow's voters, activists or indifferent citizens'⁶³².

Thus, while relatives' associations such as Hijos-Chile, H.I.J.O.S. and HIJOS have 'played a crucial role in exposing lesser-known aspects and effects of repression', they cannot carry the weight of memory alone if they wish to ensure that this happens 'nunca más'⁶³³. Many of the key protagonists in the fight against the dictatorships and the subsequent impunity for their actors have since died – 'Néstor Kirchner and Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina, Sola Sierra and Cardinal Raúl

⁶²⁸ Benegas, p. 27.

⁶²⁹ Filc, p. 99.

⁶³⁰ Sosa, p. 18; p. 144.

⁶³¹ Kaiser, p. 129; p. 128; p. 127.

⁶³² Kaiser, p. 146.

⁶³³ Levey, p. 30.

Silva in Chile, and María Ester Gatti in Uruguay' – leaving a space in the defence of human rights which must be filled with new voices or else silence will once more take hold⁶³⁴. And as those who personally suffered or were witness to suffering (the 0 and 1 generations) slowly decrease in number, the process of memory and the call for justice must take place 'on a social scale'⁶³⁵. Marianne Hirsch questions if the concept of 'postmemory', as discussed below, is 'limited to the intimate embodied space of the family'– although the term 'is often reserved for the offspring of survivors and victims such as HIJOS [...] it is not exclusive to them'⁶³⁶. Ana Ros insists that 'the political situation affected all of [the post-dictatorship generation]', an opinion also heard from one of the *Abuelas*, who says that 'there is no family that has not been touched by what happened here, one way or the other', and in our new understanding of victimhood as being one that applies to society at large, the post-dictatorship generation would indeed be the 'offspring of survivors and victims'⁶³⁷.

It is important to note, however, that there are some key differences between the post-dictatorship generation and the generations that did witness the crimes of the dictatorships. Each generation has its own perspective, its own 'subjetividad social', with issues being 'necessarily reopened and reinterpreted'⁶³⁸. The social awareness of the new generation develops distinctly to that of those who were witnesses, through what Marianne Hirsch describes as 'postmemory': 'the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded his birth [...] shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor

⁶³⁴ Ros, p. 6.

⁶³⁵ Lusky Friedman, p. 616.

⁶³⁶ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012), p. 6; Levey, p. 31.

⁶³⁷ Ros, p. 4; Arditti, 1999: p. 5.

⁶³⁸ Forcinito, p. 199; Roniger and Sznajder, 1998: p. 162.

recreated'⁶³⁹. Hirsch insists that the 'listener to trauma becomes co-owner of the traumatic event', with the memories passed on in this way being 'transmitted [...] so deeply as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right'⁶⁴⁰. However, they in fact form a 'pseudo or secondary memory [...] that denotes distance from the traumatic events in question': they are mediated 'not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation', meaning that they are much less 'directly connected to the past'⁶⁴¹. The listener – as 'witness to the trauma witness' rather than witness to the trauma directly – maintains a certain level of emotional distance: 'he does not become the victim – he preserves his own separate place, position and perspective'⁶⁴². Therefore the post-dictatorship generation is able to have attitudes and approaches that are notably different from those of earlier generations, as evinced by the more inclusive membership of children's associations, and for the difference in their form of protest (*escraches/funas*). They are bonded together by these shared attitudes as a 'nosotros generacional', as Levey has called it above, as 'hijos de una época antes que de las familias', with 'the language of kinship [...] by no means exhausted by the mandates of blood' – instead, the younger generation of human rights groups are forming 'families of choice' with 'non-normative forms of intimacy, support and care'⁶⁴³. The 'monopoly of blood' has been exchanged for a 'shared sense of ownership towards the traumatic past', with 'other voices [...] emerg[ing]' (167), and it is from this point of view that *Las cenizas del cóndor* was written⁶⁴⁴.

⁶³⁹ Forcinito, p. 199.

⁶⁴⁰ Forcinito, p. 204; Levey, p. 8, my own emphasis.

⁶⁴¹ Levey, p. 8; Forcinito, p. 199.

⁶⁴² Forcinito, p. 204; p. 205.

⁶⁴³ Horacio González, 'Filiaciones argentinas', *Página 12*, 29 June 2011, <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-171044-2011-06-29.html>> [accessed 5 April 2016]; Sosa, p. 26.

⁶⁴⁴ Sosa, p. 167.

The 'Democratisation' of Memory in *Las cenizas del cóndor*

As I have mentioned above, the novel is based on a true story – one which Fernando Butazzoni, a journalist by profession, considered interesting and important enough to investigate and write about for over a decade, one which he believes that people have a right to know about. Throughout the novel, Fernando struggles against the refusal of Juan Carlos and, to a much larger extent, that of Aurora, to reveal details of what they consider to be their personal trauma. At his first meeting with Aurora, he describes himself as 'un hombre que lo único que quería era conversar' (CC, p. 172), but her reactions show she is far from happy to be speaking to him: she allows him in, but she is 'casi resignada', speaking 'con amargura', and when she tells him that he could have called instead of appearing unannounced at her door, he describes it as 'un reproche' which she 'disparó' (CC, p. 172). Fearing that this animosity suggests that she will not allow him to speak to her again, he 'actuó con la mayor severidad posible', which even leads him to doubt his position – 'como si tuviera algún derecho a hacerlo' (CC, p. 173). When he says that 'solo quiero saber la verdad' (CC, p. 172), she tells him frankly that 'no se lo voy a decir, porque eso pertenece a nuestra vida privada y nadie más tiene por qué conocerlo' (CC, p. 173), and thereafter 'era evidente que Aurora no quería seguir hablando' (CC, p. 174). Nonetheless Fernando pushes the topic, using the thinly-veiled threat that 'hay mucha gente revolviendo los papeles de adopción de esa época', and Aurora responds by leading him to the door and then she 'me cerró la puerta en la cara' (CC, p. 174). Despite this clear evidence that Aurora does not want to speak to him about the matter, Fernando decides to persist.

After coming to the conclusion that Juan Carlos is her biological son, he chooses not to meet with the young man, who says that 'le gustaría hablar conmigo', for fear that he might accidentally hint as to his suspicions about Juan

Carlos' true parentage and that this would lead to 'una tormenta familiar' – but his fears are not for the stability of the familial relationship, or for the mental well-being of a woman who he knows suffers from bouts of severe depression, but rather because he worries that this revelation 'me dejaría fuera del juego' (CC, p. 220). Instead, then, of meeting with someone who *does* want to meet him, he decides to 'hablar cara a cara con Aurora [...] sin que su hijo lo supiera' (CC, p. 221), intending to 'arrinconar a la viuda', even though he admits that he wouldn't be surprised if she 'sufriera algún tipo de ataque de desesperación o de ira' (CC, p. 222). Perhaps in order to assuage his guilt, he repeatedly criticises his own actions, admitting that 'no me sentía orgulloso' (CC, p. 222). Later, when he does go to meet her again, describing how he 'me sentí mal, indigno. Me vi a mí mismo [...] hurgando en un pasado que no me pertenecía', while she sits 'con la mirada perdida [...] sin dejar de mirar al vacío' (CC, p. 261), clearly upset by the memories that he is bringing to the surface. However, if he does feel guilt, it seems that this guilt is retrospective, as he shows little hesitation in his actions. As they converse at their second meeting, she delivers him a cutting critique, describing him as one of the ones who 'no sufrieron', but who 'se creen dueños de la verdad, los que condenan sin que les mueva un pelo [...] que duermen tranquilos porque se convencieron de que tienen la conciencia limpia' (CC, p. 275). Then she turns her focus on him specifically, saying that he 'quiere investigar, quiere descubrir algo y estar orgulloso de ese descubrimiento' (CC, p. 275). She believes that he is trying to appropriate her story, to 'sacar todo lo provecho posible' from 'algo sucio' – but she tells him that he 'no es mejor que los demás, no se haga ilusiones' (CC, p. 275). Once again he is struck by the notion that 'yo no tenía ningún derecho a estar ahí', but this time he qualifies this thought by saying 'o por lo menos eso fue lo que creí que ella pensaba en ese momento' (CC, p. 276) – the thought is therefore mediated

several times, through what he thinks that she thinks in this precise moment, suggesting that this is not in fact a fair criticism, and he chooses to persist.

He tells her that 'el terror nos esclaviza', that 'contar la verdad [...] es la única manera que tenemos para alejar el terror de nuestras vidas' (CC, p. 276). He adds that 'toda la mugre y la culpa [...] todo eso hay que sacarlo para afuera' (CC, p. 276) in order to 'ayudarse [...] y también para ayudarnos a todos' (CC, p. 277). This speech that he delivers, not allowing her a chance to defend her own position – 'la interrumpí' (CC, p. 276) – is a 'calculated' (CC, p. 276) attempt to guilt her, suggesting that only the revelation of her story can free everyone in the country from the fear that they live under, even as he admits to the reader that his true thoughts on the subject were 'contradictorios' and 'poco edificantes' (CC, p. 277). He has manipulated her, and he says, 'arrepentí de mi propia malevolencia' when he sees that she is 'una mujer desvalida, abandonada a su propia pesadilla' (CC, p. 277), but this stated guilt once again has little affect on his actions, suggesting that it is only retrospective, as moments later Fernando manipulates her again.

Having heard his speech, Aurora gets up to continue her cleaning and he realises that she expects him to leave. But when he hears her drop a glass baking tray, he decides to help her to clean it up, despite the fact that she 'sonó ansiosa' (CC, p. 279) when asking him what he was doing – although he admits that this attempt to help her has ulterior motives, as 'si abandonaba mi empeño, en cuanto me incorporara tendría que marcharme' (CC, p. 280). As he helps her, he takes advantage of his additional time in her presence to try to ingratiate himself, and to once more turn the topic back to that of her story during the dictatorship. When he asks her to 'alcánceme algo', he says that both of them know he is referring to 'otra cosa' (CC, p. 280); he says that if they do not get the pieces of glass from under the refrigerator, they could 'pasar años [...] sin que nadie los descubra' (CC, p. 281),

clearly referring more to her secrets than the glass shards. He also takes this opportunity to ingratiate himself through the achievement of a shared objective, with them both looking at the piece of glass that he finally is able to reach 'como si fuera un diamante' when he shows her it 'con orgullo' (CC, p. 281). And it works, with her turning the topic back to the possibility that she will agree to 'hablar con usted', which she says she will under one condition: 'no quiero que hable más con mi hijo' (CC, p. 282). But Fernando is not satisfied by this concession, saying that Juan Carlos 'también contaba en esa historia [...] tiene derecho a saber', and when she says that she will take care of it herself, which she has told him before (CC, p. 174), he goes to wash his hands 'para ganar tiempo' while he asks himself whether he should 'seguir tensando la cuerda' (CC, p. 283). The situation 'me irritaba un poco', and he judges that 'mis manos estaban casi tan vacías como al comienzo de la conversación' (CC, p. 283), despite having been able to manipulate Aurora into agreeing to talk to him after she had already attempted to throw him out: he sees himself as 'especializado en acorralar' (CC, p. 284), and clearly believes that he should have been able to get her to back down from her one condition.

His motivations are almost alarmingly arrogant: he tells the reader that he is not excited as an 'investigador que comienza a descubrir un misterio', but rather that he holds the conviction that Aurora 'necesitaba de mi ayuda' and that she could also 'ayudarme' (CC, p. 284). He believes that his investigation will take Aurora and Juan Carlos out of the 'túnel' that they live in, and 'otorgarles un poco de paz' (CC, p. 284.) However he admits that these 'buenas intenciones genéricas' soon give way 'al afán de armar la historia': they become the pretext that will allow him to 'internarme de nuevo en la historia de un pasado común que siempre guardaba una sorpresa, un dato nuevo, otro pliegue sangriento' (CC, p. 284).

Fernando has adopted the notion that the memories of the dictatorship are part of a 'pasado común', a notion which, as we have seen, began to take hold across the Southern Cone around the turn of the new millennium. However, his journalistic ethics are highly questionable even in these first two meetings, and Butazzoni allows the reader a lot of space to question and criticise his actions. Even in these first two meetings, Fernando has already manipulated Aurora, piled guilt upon her for the atmosphere of terror that the entire country is experiencing, and questioned her right to tell her own son about her personal and very traumatic story. Butazzoni shows at least some remorse, questioning retroactively his right to act in this way, but his character Fernando shows little if any, admitting that he has spent weeks thinking of the best way 'de acercarme a esa mujer' (CC, p. 277), calculating carefully every step and phrase. Butazzoni presents to his reader the most extreme version of this notion of a 'pasado común', a version in which Aurora has no claim or right over her own story whatsoever, because 'aunque fuera suya' – the subjunctive implying some level of doubt – 'nos involucraba a todos' (CC, p. 405), an idea that Butazzoni considers important enough to end the first part of the book with.

Fernando admits that 'a cualquier precio, yo iba a conseguir que Aurora me contara toda la verdad' (CC, p. 339), an admission that, coming less than a page after Juan Carlos telling him about the intensity of Aurora's mental anguish, seems particularly heartless. Juan Carlos has come to ask Fernando not to talk to his mother again, as 'ella no quería volver a tocar esos temas', and because he had previously asked Fernando not to (CC, p. 336). Instead of respecting his wishes, Fernando and his wife Lucy attempt to convince him that speaking to Fernando is the best course of action for Aurora, saying that 'hablar es bueno' (CC, p. 337), and that 'la única forma que tenemos de ayudar a tu madre es conociendo toda la

verdad' (CC, p. 338), implying that not allowing Fernando to talk to Aurora would prevent him from 'helping' her. Lucy tells Juan Carlos that 'ninguna verdad puede ser tan horrible como para preferir no saberla' (CC, p. 339), echoing the *Abuelas'* attitude that 'the knowledge of the truth is the best therapy', but while the *Abuelas'* admit that it is 'a complex and difficult situation for everybody', Lucy tells Juan Carlos that 'vivir en la mentira solo les va a traer desgracias a vos y a ella' (CC, p. 339), exposing the negative side of not complying rather than focusing on the benefits of knowing as the *Abuelas'* do⁶⁴⁵. And the fact that she says 'deberías convencer de eso a tu madre' (CC, p. 339) implies that she is not concerned for their well-being, but rather whether or not Aurora agrees to talk further with Fernando, a realisation that Juan Carlos appears to have come to as well: he tells Fernando and Lucy, irritated, that 'la historia de mi vida me pertenece a mí'; when Lucy insists that 'la estás protagonizando ahora mismo. Nadie te puede quitar eso', he replies that 'ya me quitaron bastante' (CC, p. 340).

Just as Juan Carlos attempts to shield Aurora from Fernando, so she attempts to shield him. Having agreed to speak to Fernando on the condition that he does not see her son again, she is careful to ensure that their meetings do not run long, in order to avoid that 'me encontrara con su hijo' (CC, p. 404). She explains that she has tried to save him the pain of knowing the truth, as 'esa negrura [...] puede destruirlo porque él no entendería las razones. Todavía es un muchacho' – he will in time have the chance to 'buscar, de leer, de enterarse de los horrores' (CC, p. 437). She challenges his insistence that she tell Juan Carlos the truth, asking '¿qué verdad quiere que le cuente a mi hijo? ¿Que nació después de una sesión de picana? ¿Que a su padre lo fusilaron y después quemaron su cuerpo?' (CC, p. 437), and then appealing to his empathy, asking '¿usted qué habría hecho?'

⁶⁴⁵ Arditti, 1999: p. 122; p. 116.

(*CC*, p. 438). She tells him that for her the most important thing was ‘salvar a mi hijo, criarlo, alzarlo en silencio’, and then tells him ‘no puedo más. Ahí tiene su novela, ahora dejéme en paz’ (*CC*, p. 438). Fernando respects neither her wish to be left in peace, nor her wish for him to not speak to her son – he decides to ignore the ‘pedido expreso’ and arranges to ‘encontrarme “de casualidad”’ with Juan Carlos by calling his university to find out his class timetable (*CC*, p. 460), another calculated action.

Juan Carlos thanks him for convincing Aurora to tell him the truth about his parentage, which allows Fernando to reassure himself that ‘para algo habían servido mis desvelos’ (*CC*, p. 461) and he asks Juan Carlos to convince his mother to let him see Manuel’s notebooks, and to meet him again. He tells Juan Carlos what he wants to hear, claiming that he cares about Aurora’s emotional health – ‘lo último que quisiera es provocar una de sus crisis’ (*CC*, p. 462) – in direct contrast to what he has told his readers about wanting the story at ‘cualquier precio’; he unilaterally liberates himself from his promise to Aurora by saying that now that she has told Juan Carlos the truth ‘puedo verte tantas veces como quiera’, and he tells him that he and Aurora have ‘todo mi respeto’ for their suffering, which he follows immediately with a ‘but’, telling them that they cannot claim to own this story (*CC*, p. 463). Once again he stresses his right to know the whole story by diminishing Juan Carlos and Aurora’s ownership of their own history: ‘pero esa historia no les pertenece solo a ustedes, porque mucha gente sufrió las bestialidades de la dictadura, aquí y en la Argentina y en Chile’ (*CC*, p. 463). Juan Carlos once again refuses to believe this attitude, pointing to the other people in the café and saying: ‘no creo que a esta gente le pertenezca nada de nuestra vida. Mírelos: todos están contentos [...] sin pensar en otra cosa que en sus estómagos’ (*CC*, p. 464). Fernando is careful not to insist so as not to ‘terminar por estropearlo

todo' (CC, p. 464). He admits that he is 'tratando de manipular a un joven que recién salía de su propio infierno personal', but once again this regret seems to be retrospective, as it does not affect his behaviour: 'pensé que nada justificaba mi conducta, pero de todas formas continué' (CC, p. 463).

As the novel comes to a close, Fernando goes to visit Aurora one last time. Their relationship is increasingly strained, with Aurora having said at a previous meeting that Fernando 'intentaba medrar con su sufrimiento' (CC, p. 654) and him noticing that 'mi presencia la obligaba a volver una y otra vez al pasado, a su esposo y al dolor de aquel suicidio', although he claims that he has no other choice as she is the 'depositaria de una historia que a mí también me pertenecía' (CC, p. 527). He goes to the last meeting knowing that 'ella no iba a agregar nada nuevo' (CC, p. 747) and that 'ya me había pedido que la dejara en paz, y mi insistencia [...] apenas si lograba postergar lo inevitable' (CC, p. 746). He takes her a letter from Katia, and a glass cooking tray like the one that she broke a year before. However, she does not appreciate the gift, responding with 'severidad' that 'las cosas que se rompen, ya están rotas' (CC, p. 747). He attempts to apologise, but she says 'no me molesta' (CC, p. 747) and then 'no dijo nada más': she remains sat in the chair in which her husband committed suicide, 'sola, quizá embargada por la pena o la nostalgia o el miedo a que, alguna vez, la pesadilla volviera a repetirse' (CC, p. 748). This is the last we see, at least in the 2000-2002 timeline, of Aurora Sánchez, who Fernando promised would be helped by talking to him and revealing her secrets: she sits alone, in silence, haunted by the ghosts of the past while the journalist who has spent over a year attempting to get her story by any means now leaves to 'escribir el libro' (CC, p. 746) of her life, a story which he claims also belongs to him. Her reaction to his gift which 'no es exactamente un regalo' (CC, p. 747) suggests that she recognises that the incident with the glass cooking tray, which she says

she had forgotten, was manipulation on his part, and her response that broken things 'ya están rotas', that is, that they cannot be fixed, implies that the damage that he has caused her by trawling up her past cannot be undone, especially not with 'gifts' which remind her of his manipulative tactics.

Her phrase also recalls something he recognises when comparing the face of Aurora with that of a picture of her much younger self: he notices 'la gran diferencia' between 'aquel rostro armonioso y bien redondeado' of her youth and the 'cara afilada, de pómulos marcados y ojos que resultaban más oscuros, como velados al mirar' of today (CC, pp. 428-29). He says that they 'eran y no eran la misma persona', that 'la Aurora de la adolescencia [...] ya había desaparecido', turning from 'una muchacha alegre' into a woman who, 'aunque tenía la misma cara, era triste y severa' (CC, p. 429). The pain of her torture, of the loss of her lover Javier, the stress of the struggle to get her son back from his appropriators – all of these events have left scars that cannot be healed; she has changed in a way that she cannot come back from. Despite his promises, Fernando never had the power to help her, and he has not attempted to do so: instead he has manipulated her, repeatedly ignored her wishes, used her son as a means to get to her, and now he has laid claim to her story despite never having shared in her suffering or – from what the reader has seen, at least – even truly empathised with her.

However, it is important to note that while Fernando has repeatedly told Juan Carlos that his story is not his own, he has never said this directly to Aurora, perhaps guessing that this opinion, while possibly acceptable to a member of the younger generation who has no memories of the trauma of his early life, would be completely unacceptable and indefensible if said to Aurora, as he could not possibly credibly claim to have experienced the same kind of pain as she has. Now, however, having claimed the story as belonging to him, Fernando is able to slip

away, as happy and unaffected as the people who Juan Carlos had pointed out in the café, to take the plaudits for his novel. The self-awareness of Butazzoni himself is questionable here: on the one hand, he attempts to mitigate the unethical behaviour of Fernando by repeatedly stating that he did not have the right to act this way, as if recognition of the misdeed were to undo it, but then the multiple-page-long section 'Después de las cenizas' at the end of the novel, explaining the sources Butazzoni has used and thanking those who have helped him at length, does come across as more than mildly self-congratulatory, as does the final note that the writing took place between the long period of 'enero de 2003 – junio de 2013' (CC, p. 757).

The decision by Butazzoni to write himself into the novel as a major character is an interesting one. While the 2000-2002 timeline does give the reader an insight into the climate of fear at the turn of the millennium and the start of the COPAZ investigation, this is not Butazzoni's main focus, but rather a backdrop. Instead, the focal point of this section of the novel – and this timeline does comprise a substantial portion of the novel – appears to be the investigative work that he has done in order to write this story. Butazzoni details at length the processes required to coax this story piecemeal from Aurora, his main source: the hoops he has had to jump through, the setbacks, the dead ends. The sections dedicated to Fernando's decision to copy by hand Manuel Docampo's sixty-two notebooks and 'sufrir lo necesario' (CC, p. 558) seems almost *too* detailed, telling the reader:

si quería cumplir con el plazo fijado por Aurora, mi ritmo de trabajo no podía bajar de nueve libretas por día. Cada una de esas libretas tenía cincuenta páginas, y pese a que el tamaño de las hojas era más bien

pequeño – diez centímetros de base por quince de altura – la cantidad de letras que Docampo había logrado meter en cada página resultó ser endemoniada... (CC, p. 559).

This precise account of his progress focuses on what appears to be a minor element in terms of driving the plot forward, no matter how much work it must have taken. The 2000-2002 timeline appears to be a project in self-aggrandisement, or at least in gaining recognition for the effort involved in producing this novel, a novel which capitalises on the suffering of a victim of torture, a woman who in her grief is ill-equipped to combat the pressure but upon her by a man accustomed to 'acorrallar a políticos y a empresarios' (CC, p. 284). However, the reader is complicit in this from the moment the novel is opened – it is their interest that has fuelled Fernando's insistent interrogation, and when he repeatedly states that Aurora and Juan Carlos' story is not theirs alone but rather everyone's, the reader must recognise that this invasion into personal grief has happened on their behalf: indeed, by opening the novel, they have personally taken the step of choosing to pry into this story.

Butazzoni is, as I have stated above, presenting an extreme version of the notion that the trauma of the dictatorships affected the whole of society, a version which bastardises this notion by showing how it could be exploited by individuals who view victims as stories rather than people, who have little or no respect for the privacy or dignity of those who have suffered. This is not, of course, what Néstor Kirchner meant when he stated that he too was a son of the *Madres* and *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, nor what members of children's organisations whose parents were not direct victims of state violence mean: these voices are raised in solidarity and respect, embraced by the victims and their families. They recognise

that a society-wide adoption of the victims' position is the best way to ensure that these crimes never occur again, that they do not slip into obscurity upon the death of the last victim or witness, but rather that they are remembered and understood. A vital difference is that those in solidarity with the victims and their families respect their voices and add to them, while Fernando has imposed his, writing Aurora and Juan Carlos' story 'a mi manera' (CC, p. 198) while Aurora, the principal victim, slips into silence. I would not say, however, that Butazzoni presents this extreme version knowingly or with self-awareness, as every insertion of retrospective guilt that he did not have the right to act this way is accompanied by the assertion that the story is also his, which implies that he does have the right to know it. Instead, I would say that Butazzoni, by inserting himself into the novel as a major character in order to show the epic path that his investigation took, has inadvertently turned himself into one of the novel's major antagonists. It is difficult for the reader, even as they are implicated in the invasion of Aurora's privacy through reading the novel, not to sympathise with the depressed and lonely victim and widow, especially when she is being subjected to repeated unsolicited visits from a man she has asked to leave her alone.

This moral ambiguity, this questioning of who is 'good' and who is 'bad', touches upon another major aspect of the post-dictatorship generation: their ability, their need even, to question and problematise certain ideas which were considered undeniable truths by older generations: Susana Kaiser highlights the younger generation's ability to 'reaffir[m] or challeng[e] their elders' stories', saying that interpretations are tied to context, and that 'when the moment changes, these memories can also change'⁶⁴⁶. Fernando may be a dedicated and hard-working journalist dedicated to finding out the truth; he may be a selfish and

⁶⁴⁶ Kaiser, p. 12; p. 22.

manipulative journalist who harasses a victim of torture after becoming obsessed with the idea that he has a right to know her story; or – more likely – he falls somewhere between the two, adopting unethical methods in his blinkered pursuit of a story, but still holding noble abstract motives. But even more interesting than Fernando's motives and actions are those of Manuel Docampo.

Manuel's story is, I believe, the epitome of the moral ambiguity and 'grey areas' that characterise the post-dictatorship period. Unlike the other major actors in the 1974 timeline, Manuel is not alive when Fernando begins his investigation, meaning that all of Fernando's perceptions of him are mediated – through others' testimony, through Fernando's own prejudices and assumptions, through a context which is very different from the one in which Manuel was living, and even through Manuel's own code, which makes his notebooks seem 'indescifrables', a 'cúmulo de sinsentidos' (CC, p. 525), and therefore means that Fernando is required to interpret them himself. The only words that Manuel says directly to the reader come in the form of his suicide tape, which is inserted almost 100 pages before any of his 1974 chapters, meaning that the reader has little basis from which to interpret these words other than Fernando's perspective, which is that 'no tuve compasión ni tristeza por él' (CC, p. 58). Manuel's story is a series of unanswered questions at the centre of the text. Why would an army captain and trained torturer suddenly decide to risk his life to save a young woman who he has been conditioned to see as a subversive and an enemy of the state? Why did he choose to marry her and adopt her son to be raised as his own? Why did he commit suicide so many years later, under democracy? Unable to ask these questions of Manuel himself, Fernando spends the entire novel turning them over in his mind, seeing them from different angles but never being able to definitively answer them.

As I have said, the first that the reader sees of Manuel Docampo comes in the form of a transcription of his suicide tape. He tells his listener – a listener he believes will destroy the tape ‘en cuanto sepan que existe’ (CC, p. 58) – that ‘yo tengo [...] yo quiero confesar’ (CC, p. 59), immediately making the reader believe he is confessing to a crime. But the crime of his confession is not an act he has performed himself, but rather the crime of *knowing*: he knows that bodies of disappeared people were buried at Batallón 13, and even if he ‘nunca maté a nadie’, he believes that it is ‘lo mismo, es como si lo hubiera hecho [...] nadie está limpio acá’ (CC, p. 59). He claims that he has attempted to tell the truth before but that they threatened to ‘matar a mi familia’, and to ‘destapar toda mi historia’ (CC, p. 59). He then says that ‘no les voy a dar el gusto. Por eso hago lo que hago’ (CC, p. 59), his final words before he kills himself. The tape immediately sparks questions in Fernando’s mind: ‘¿por qué se mató? ¿Por remordimiento? ¿Para proteger un secreto? ¿Para salvar a alguien?’ (CC, p. 62). However, in spite of any of these possible motives, Fernando’s first impressions of Manuel are entirely negative: ‘un tipo vinculado de forma directa con la dictadura, un represor o un torturador, un hijo de puta con toda seguridad’ (CC, p. 171), an opinion which he justifies to his wife by saying, ‘si no había sido un hijo de puta, entonces ¿por qué se suicidó y dejó grabada una confesión?’ (CC, p. 191).

For him, then, the suicide is evidence of guilt – but Manuel’s tape seems to confess more to knowing without saying anything, in the face of threats to his family, than to any crimes which he may have committed himself. And if feeling fear and saying nothing are crimes, by Fernando’s own estimation everyone is guilty – he tells Juan Carlos that ‘acá todo el mundo sabía’ (CC, p. 92), ‘todo el mundo sabe algo’ (CC, p. 96). At this early stage of the novel, the only contrasting voices are those of Manuel’s family – Juan Carlos saying that his father resigned

from the army 'creo que en 1977', that is, in the early years of the dictatorship, a fact which Fernando says 'daba una nota falsa o, cuando menos, oscura' (CC, p. 97). After this, he makes repeated reference to not trusting Juan Carlos, saying that 'si me estás mintiendo [...] lo voy a descubrir' (CC, p. 99), that 'a veces... la verdad no es lo que imaginamos' (CC, p. 98), that 'en este asunto hay que desconfiar siempre' (CC, p. 97). It seems unlikely that a torturer would choose to resign during the dictatorship, especially when this would no doubt raise suspicions from within the armed forces: in his confession tape, Manuel states that he was threatened 'incluso después de haber pedido la baja' (CC, p. 59). Juan Carlos' insistence that this was the case suggests that Manuel had at least some reservations about the orders issued by the military during the dictatorship – we later learn that he resigned as soon as he and Aurora were able to legally register the adoption of Juan Carlos (CC, p. 195); before 1977 it was 'muy arriesgado' (CC, p. 437), especially as Manuel had 'una especie de sospecha sobre él', as Aurora's body 'no había aparecido' (CC, p. 436). Aurora herself also defends Manuel to Fernando, saying that 'mi esposo era un hombre de bien, y gracias a él tengo a mi hijo': he ensured that 'Juan Carlos tuvo una niñez hermosa' by giving him 'todo lo que estaba a nuestro alcance' (CC, p. 173). However, the reader may easily dismiss these opinions, believing them to be the natural defence of a family.

The first 1974 chapters featuring Manuel give little hint as to his character. He has been chosen as a go-between for Manuel Cordero Piacentini in Argentina and Víctor Castiglioni Herrera in Uruguay, who require an 'inocente', 'idiota de uniforme', who 'pueda actuar por fuera sin saberlo, con disciplina y buena fe' (CC, p. 147). Docampo's quiet personality, his 'cortedad de palabra', makes him seem 'tímido' or 'tonto', the perfect pawn, but his perception that words are 'casi innecesarias' (CC, p. 139) also makes him hard to decipher for the reader. He 'se

abstiene de asistir' the parties of his fellow soldiers, but shows no 'prurito' when asked to torture prisoners, although his superiors see his silence as being 'casi despectivo o, quizá, condenatorio' (CC, p. 140). When Castiglioni sends Manuel to Buenos Aires to interrogate 'una terrorista sin escrúpulos que se cree protegida por su propio embarazo' – who will turn out to be Aurora – Manuel responds to the revelation that 'la detenida está embarazada' with the simple 'entiendo' (CC, p. 343). He knows that 'no debe reaccionar' (CC, p. 343) and he does not, leading Castiglioni to confirm his 'estupidez' (CC, p. 344), but leaving the reader unsure of how to understand the exchange.

The first time that the reader has a chance to see into the mind of Manuel is when he meets Aurora. She has been imprisoned for some time and has been starved by her captors – he sees her as an 'especie de esqueleto cubierta por unas ropas andrajosas' with 'el vientre tenso, a punto de reventar' (CC, p. 350) which 'resalta aún más la flacura de su cuerpo' (CC, p. 351). For Manuel this is nothing new – he has had to 'asistir a interrogatorios y actuar con el máximo rigor' (CC, p. 351), he has 'participado en sesiones de tortura' on many occasions (CC, p. 361) – and yet his reaction shows his horror. He whispers 'Por Dios!' (CC, p. 350), his legs go weak (CC, pp. 350-51) and he is overwhelmed not by 'miedo ni asco [...] sino vergüenza' (CC, p. 351). Manuel, it seems, has believed in the 'preceptos repetidos una y otra vez' of the military: in the 'honor', 'orgullo por el uniforme, respecto a la bandera y exaltación de la patria' (CC, p. 590): having seen Aurora in this state, he 'percibe al mundo cabeza abajo, como lo hubieran colgado de un gancho en la sala de interrogatorios' (CC, p. 591). His immediate reaction is one of fury: he calls for 'el jefe' (CC, p. 352) and the usually calm and quiet Manuel lets off a string of expletives at full volume before pushing the boss until he 'termina con la espalda

contra la pared' (CC, p. 353) and then he tells him, with 'la boca casi pegada al rostro del hombre':

esa mujer tiene que ser interrogada por mí, y ni siquiera puede mantener los ojos abiertos [...] Muerta no me sirve. Si pierde el embarazo no me sirve [...] Y cuando una cosa no me sirve, te aseguro que alguien paga [...] me vas a ayudar, hijo de puta (CC, p. 354).

Manuel does not usually act like this: he is copying behaviour that he has seen in films, his heart is beating 'a toda velocidad' and he is 'nervioso y asustado', attempting not to think about the consequences of these actions for fear that he 'terminaría pidiéndole disculpas' (CC, p. 353). He is putting on an act, a risky one, in order to protect Aurora, and the reader can tell that it is not just for professional reasons that he wants her to be looked after, for despite his claim that 'si pierde el embarazo no me sirve', the pregnancy itself would not affect his ability to interrogate her. In fact, just ten pages before, Castiglioni asks him if he 'sabe el coraje' that it takes to 'revent[ar] el vientre a patadas de una mujer preñada' (CC, p. 343), showing that the armed forces have little official interest in her pregnancy. Manuel intervenes because he finds the sight of Aurora in this state to be 'dolorosa' (CC, p. 350), and his act as a violent and vengeful soldier – 'uno de esos tipos' (CC, p. 353) – works: the man who runs the prison stammers the question '¿Qué... qué quiere-qué... qué quiere que haga?' (CC, p. 354). When Manuel returns a week later, he finds that 'los carceleros parecen haber tomado algunas medidas' to make her 'aspecto [...] menos deplorable' (CC, p. 364): Aurora tells him that 'después que usted vino el otro día [...] me han curado y me dan de comer' (CC, p. 366).

But Manuel's fury has just been a cover for a much more profound feeling of horror: alone in his hotel room after their first encounter, he thinks about the 'crac de algo que se rompía en su interior y desacomodaba su alma para siempre' – he feels that these few seconds were enough that 'una fractura definitiva se produjera en su conciencia' (CC, p. 361). For Manuel, a type of 'paréntesis [...] se abrió en su vida, como si la eternidad hubiera quedado atrapada en las paredes de una celda inmunda' (CC, p. 361). This image recalls the novel *Primavera con una esquina rota*, by another Uruguayan author, Mario Benedetti, who described how the military had opened 'un enorme paréntesis en aquella sociedad, paréntesis que seguramente se cerrará algún día, cuando ya nadie será capaz de retomar el hilo de la antigua oración'⁶⁴⁷. Manuel, too, feels that he cannot continue on as before: he feels compelled to 'quedarse en ese calabozo y echarse a morir con la prisionera' (CC, p. 361). At their second meeting, he attempts to question her but finds her only willing to repeat the same few sentences – 'me han curado todos los días' – leading him to slap her 'lo más suave que puede', which nonetheless feels as if 'el cuello de la mujer cede y se va de lado' (CC, p. 367). She responds 'como si nada hubiera sucedido', still repeating that 'me han curado todos los días', but he is horrified, deciding that 'no quiere permanecer más tiempo en ese lugar' (CC, p. 368), and when he returns to his hotel he strips naked, feeling that 'esas prendas están contaminadas' and calls for the laundry service to take his clothes: the matter is 'urgente' (CC, p. 369).

He thinks about what he has seen, considering the 'salidas' (CC, p. 370) for this situation, and he looks at his pistol and 'calcula el daño que puede hacer una bala de nueve milímetros disparada en la sien a quemarropa' (CC, p. 371), clearly

⁶⁴⁷ Mario Benedetti, *Primavera con una esquina rota* (Madrid: Punto de Lectura, 2008), p. 93.

considering suicide. But instead of killing himself, he takes it upon himself to save her – when given the task of executing her and disappearing her body, he hides her in a suitcase and carries her to the home of Katia, his former girlfriend. As he is carrying her through the streets towards her house, he considers his situation: he is in ‘territorio enemigo’ with a ‘pistola en el costado’ and Aurora in the suitcase – ‘se propone defenderla como sea’ (CC, p. 396). In this moment, the trained soldier and torturer risks his life for that of a complete stranger, a young woman who he has met only twice and exchanged only a handful of words with, a young woman who he has been trained to see as his ideological enemy. And the danger he is in does not diminish when he successfully manages to get Aurora to Katia’s home – he is at risk every time he crosses the border into Argentina without permission from his superiors to bring money and supplies and to formulate the plan to rescue Juan Carlos; he is at risk every time he makes inquiries as to whether Aurora is still being sought or if she is believed dead; and of course he is at most risk when he carries out the plan to rescue Juan Carlos and then smuggles the baby and his mother into Uruguay under documentation that he has himself falsified. Indeed, from the fact that Manuel’s suicide tape in the 1990s states that the military has threatened to ‘destapar toda mi historia’ (CC, p. 59) suggests that he believed even then that he was at risk for what he had done. He has, in only a few brief moments, condemned himself to a life of always looking over his shoulder – but why?

His motives for saving Aurora at such great risk to himself, and his motives for committing suicide many years later, are questioned throughout the novel. Fernando’s first impressions are cynical: he suggests that while Manuel believes that he has ‘un rastro de coraje’, he is also looking to ‘inventarse un pasado heroico’ which he can think of ‘sin excesiva vergüenza’ (CC, p. 397). He suggests that Manuel does not feel ‘altruismo’ – that for him, Aurora and her baby are ‘una

abstracción', and he merely wishes to 'borrar de su memoria los malos recuerdos y la carga de una culpa que, por alguna razón, le ha envenado la sangre': his motive is, then, 'puro egoísmo' (CC, p. 552). Fernando insists that Manuel's actions in the dangerous task of trying to recover Juan Carlos are due to his wish to 'sobrevivir a ese recuerdo [...] y despegarse de esa pesadilla que no cesa' (CC, p. 569), 'restaurar para sí la dignidad' (CC, p. 624), 'para purgar la pena que [...] le correspondía por ser partícipe de todas esas bestialidades' (CC, p. 644); for him, 'ese bebé es mucho más un símbolo de su propia redención que el hijo de la muchacha' (CC, p. 663). Yet this seems unfair – what Fernando fails to recognise is that it is not for 'alguna razón' that Manuel has had this sudden crisis of conscience: the crisis was brought about by the sight of pregnant Aurora under such terrible conditions. Just before considering suicide in his hotel room, Manuel remembers 'a su madre en la cocina de la casa familiar, allá en la infancia' (CC, p. 371), and this idyllic image of motherhood, juxtaposed with the horror of Aurora's pregnant belly on her half-starved, tortured frame, spurs him to think of killing himself for being, in some indirect way, involved in such a system.

Castiglioni has told him that it takes 'coraje' to torture a pregnant woman, and Manuel clearly does not have this type of 'courage', as even a moment in Aurora's presence is enough to inspire him to defend her, calling immediately for her to be treated better. He has not, in the time between seeing her for a few seconds (CC, p. 361) and meeting the head of the prison, even had a chance to 'idear una estratagema' (CC, p. 353) of how to defend her, much less to coldly consider how saving her might protect his conscience – he acts on instinct (CC, p. 353). Fernando struggles to reconcile two opposing truths: that he 'sufrió una especie de colapso moral' upon seeing Aurora, but that, nonetheless, 'en muchas ocasiones debió presenciar castigos horribles, y en algunos casos tuvo que

aplicarlos él mismo' (CC, p. 692) – which he did without suffering a 'colapso moral'. He is 'torturador y valiente. Torturador pero valiente. Un valiente, un torturador' (CC, p. 561), a paradox to which Butazzoni admits to never having been able to find 'una respuesta final' (CC, p. 562). He says that it is open for 'cada quien' to make 'sus propias conclusiones' (CC, p. 562), and I believe that there is enough evidence in the novel for the reader to do just that.

For me, it seems that Manuel's crisis of conscience upon seeing a tortured pregnant woman showed him that he was not, as he had been conditioned to believe through the 'preceptos repetidos una y otra vez' (CC, p. 590), on the side of the 'good' and 'just': he feels that the torture he witnessed and performed was part of 'la dinámica de la guerra' which 'lo exigía' (CC, p. 692), but seeing her has shown him 'las injusticias de una lucha que él quiso librar con honor' (CC, p. 590). None of the actors in this drama is 'donde debiera' (CC, p. 590), and nobody acts 'según los preceptos' (CC, pp. 590-91). Having seen, apparently for the first time, the truth behind this 'war', he chooses the other side: when he sees the world 'cabeza abajo', as if he were 'colgado de un gancho en la sala de interrogatorios' (CC, p. 591), it is because he has chosen the side of the victims: the language of torture shows that he has turned from perpetrator to possible victim. In order to save Aurora and Juan Carlos, he is forced to remain within the armed forces until Juan Carlos has been safely adopted, but his perspective has changed forever: when he is sent to 'observar el trato que se les dispensa a los prisioneros y evaluar el comportamiento de los participantes en las torturas' (CC, p. 451), it leaves him 'cargado de ansiedad', feeling as though he has spent the week 'caminando en un fangal' (CC, p. 452). Meanwhile his mind has been 'todos estos días en Buenos Aires' thinking about Aurora and how he can 'ayudarla en su recuperación' (CC, p. 453). He feels that 'son inmensas las distancias' between himself a few years ago as

he 'combatía a la guerrilla y torturaba a sus prisioneros' and the man of today (CC, p. 452). Manuel has had his eyes opened, and his perspective has changed forever: it is not that he is simultaneously 'un valiente' and 'un torturador', but rather that he became the first when he saw and tried to rectify the problems of the second – he was *then* a torturer; he is *now* a brave man.

Moreover, the reader discovers the fact that Aurora defends him is not 'natural': when he was looking after her in Katia's house while formulating a plan to save her baby, she promises herself that in spite of whatever treatment, 'nada podría ser entendido ni purgado. Nunca' (CC, p. 644), but years later, speaking to Fernando, she defends him:

Manuel era un buen hombre. Nunca pudo amarme, y yo nunca pude amarlo, pero él siempre se sintió en la obligación de cuidar a nosotros, y Juan Carlos fue el hijo que no tuvo. Era una forma de amor después de todo. Hizo todo lo que pudo para ponernos a salvo, y cuando el niño creció y fue lo bastante grande como para protegerme, cuando ya era evidente que nadie iba a golpear a nuestra puerta para llevárselo, entonces ahí él decidió que era hora de descansar (CC, p. 438).

That a victim of brutal torture at the hands of the military, torture which has left her 'triste y severa' (CC, p. 429) forever, freely defends a military man is testament to the extent to which he had changed. She says that her sisters, 'pese a que saben la verdad', think that she is 'una traidora porque me casé con un milico' (CC, p. 437), but the truth, or at least the truth to her, the victim, is quite different: in her defence of him she speaks only positively, referencing love, duty and protection; when she references his suicide she does so euphemistically, showing respect, and

her reference to his decision to 'descansar' suggests that she believes that he was haunted by what he had seen, which she seems to pity, saying that 'no hubo reproches' (CC, p. 438).

The question of why Manuel chose to commit suicide is another mystery that Fernando struggles to answer. He does not seem to believe Aurora's explanation that 'se había quitado la vida para descansar por fin, después de tanto dolor y tanto miedo', asking himself: '¿uno se mata para descansar?' (CC, p. 743). He wonders if '¿sería posible pensar que Docampo se hubiera suicidado para pagar sus culpas?' or, perhaps, '¿para no pagarlas nunca?' (CC, p. 743), although there is no sign in the text that Docampo was being investigated – it was not until two decades after his death that the impunity laws were lifted. The mystery of Manuel's suicide, whether it was due to 'remordimiento' or 'miedo' or because he did not want to face his son knowing 'la verdad', is never answered – but Fernando asks if his motive '¿tenía alguna importancia?', saying that 'había sido un torturador, pero estaba muerto' (CC, p. 743), implying, it seems, that his motives do not matter. For Fernando, the matter is still, even right at the end of the novel, starkly black-and-white: he had been a torturer, and this can never be undone, even if a victim of torture believes that he has atoned. But Fernando is from the 'protagonist' generation – although he was exiled, he knew personally of cases of friends who were 'aterrorizados' which means he is emotionally invested in the 'dolor de miles de personas' (CC, p. 198). A member of the post-dictatorship generation, who did not live through the 'trama' (CC, p. 198), might be less visceral in his judgement, as we see with Juan Carlos, who as I have shown above, wishes to defend Manuel even though he believes that 'mi viejo era un torturador o algo de eso' (CC, p. 94). It is only later, when Aurora has told him the truth, that Juan Carlos says, interrupting Fernando's reference to 'tu padre', that 'él no era mi padre' (CC, p.

462), as he has now been told about 'su padre verdadero' (CC, p. 463). Juan Carlos was willing to accept Manuel as a torturer, as it did not harm his childhood 'perfecto' (CC, p. 95): for him, the two sides of Manuel – torturer and good father – were not mutually exclusive. And despite Juan Carlos' assertion that Manuel is not his father, which he says very sharply – 'me paró en seco' (CC, p. 462) – Aurora thinks differently, saying that Juan Carlos was *their* son, not just hers: he was 'nuestro, todo lo nuestro que podía ser' (CC, p. 437). Nonetheless it takes Juan Carlos almost another decade to decide to make contact with his biological paternal family: the epilogue tells us that 'en el año 2010 viajó a Chile para establecer contacto con sus parientes en aquel país' (CC, p. 751) – although no explanation is given for this delay, it may be because despite the opinion he offers soon after the shock of hearing about his true origins, he still felt close to the man who had raised him – just as Mariana Zaffaroni also delayed meeting her biological family.

Even if Fernando is not convinced by the atonement of Manuel, Butazzoni has still left space in his novel for the reader to make their own judgement, and even the presence of the seed of doubt is a sign of the changing attitudes of a new epoch. The Rettig and Valech Reports in Chile have been described as trying to 'reivindicar una sola versión del pasado, y difundirla como un tipo de historia oficial sobre la dictadura', and Emilio Crenzel states that Argentina's *Nunca Más* was used in the 1990s to support certain 'interpretations of the country's political violence', interpretations which 'emerged again in 2006 [...] from an official perspective' with a new prologue which, in his mind, 'fails to place the country's past political violence in historical context' by excluding 'guerrilla and political

activities from the universe of the disappeared'⁶⁴⁸. But these perspectives are not always the ones that are supported by the younger generations – while *Nunca Más* supports the idea that 'a wide range of perpetrators be held responsible', countering the policy of 'due obedience', Susana Kaiser finds that most of the subjects she interviewed accepted the law of Due Obedience to some extent, saying that 'many [soldiers] didn't want to do what they did but they were forced'⁶⁴⁹. Kaiser is very critical of this opinion; she says that 'there are no published accounts of cases of military officers who refused to follow orders and whose families were killed', and that the sources of this theory 'might have been conversations within military families, widespread rumours, or media declarations by represores', which she refers to as 'an evident distortion of the past within certain circles'⁶⁵⁰. Participants repeatedly refer to the family as an excuse for the soldiers' actions, saying that 'if you didn't do it you didn't have money for your family, no food for your children' and that 'if you don't [do it] you won't find anybody when you return home', suggesting the belief that a torturer could also be a good family man, not just in spite of but even *because of* his torture⁶⁵¹. This is not evidence that young people do not care about the crimes of the dictatorship – the fact that on every anniversary of the military coup in Chile 'peaceful commemorative demonstrations in Santiago become riots between left-wing citizens and police' is evidence that this date is still ingrained in the minds of people too young to have witnessed the events that are being commemorated – instead, these differing

⁶⁴⁸ Hiner, p. 54; Crenzel, p. 1072.

⁶⁴⁹ Crenzel, p. 172; Kaiser, p. 135.

⁶⁵⁰ Kaiser, p. 136; p. 137.

⁶⁵¹ Kaiser, p. 137.

opinions are evidence of the younger generation's wish to have a 'critical approach to the past and their parents' activism'⁶⁵².

Louis Bickford, writing about the documents collected by the Truth Commissions in the Southern Cone, notes that they are stored poorly and 'slowly disappearing' – the need to preserve them is 'growing increasingly important', as it is only through 'full access to as many of the original documents as possible' that future generations can 'thoroughly investigate what happened and reach their own conclusions'⁶⁵³. The Argentinian *Nunca Más*, for example, is 500 pages long – but the Truth Commission that it reports on compiled more than 50,000 pages of testimony, meaning that there is still much that could be learnt from these documents: as not every piece of testimony has been included, the inclusion or exclusion of each document necessarily shapes the reader's understanding and perspective⁶⁵⁴. As the distance from the events of the dictatorships increase, the new generations are willing to make their own conclusions – ones which complicate the black-and-white narratives both of the 'official story' of the dictatorships as 'a crusade to save the nation', and the 'historia contra-oficial' which can be seen to present events in a 'decontextualised form', with the 'ideological, political or economic causes of the terror [...] largely ignored'⁶⁵⁵. However the lack of context can lead to a lack of understanding as to 'why the horror happened', and therefore how to prevent it from happening again⁶⁵⁶. And in this new era of more multi-faceted narratives, new voices and stories may appear, such as that of Manuel Docampo, whose story stubbornly refuses to fit under either heading of 'good' or 'evil', instead forming a complex knot of meaning at the centre

⁶⁵² Ripp, p. 89; Levey, p. 17.

⁶⁵³ 1999: p. 1099.

⁶⁵⁴ Arditti, 2002: p. 24.

⁶⁵⁵ Benegas, p. 24; Hiner, p. 54; Kaiser, p. 43

⁶⁵⁶ Kaiser, p. 41.

of the text – and, earlier this year, the publication of an article interviewing a former Chilean soldier who considers himself to also be a victim of the dictatorship.

This article, entitled ‘A Chilean Ex-soldier Guiltily Recalls His Unit’s Atrocities’, was published in *The New York Times* and tells the story of Guillermo Padilla, who was an 18 year-old soldier in 1973. Padilla, who was from a ‘working-class district’, wanted to join the army because he ‘liked the uniform and military life and had no interest in politics’; he joined ‘five months’ before the coup⁶⁵⁷. He says that he ‘still carries the emotional scars’ of his actions – although at the time he ‘didn’t feel anything’ about playing a role in a firing squad, he now claims that he ‘can’t get the images of these people out of my head’, and that he now ‘cries even when watching some commercials or cartoons on television’. The article is careful to highlight Padilla’s innocence – during one execution he was ‘watching from a nearby jeep’, for example, and he says that despite the fact that people call him ‘one of the assassins from ‘73’, he ‘can’t say I have killed because I don’t know if my shots were the ones that killed’, which even he admits sounds like denial: ‘or I just don’t want to believe it’. The article also repeatedly underlines the fact that the soldiers were ‘forced to obey orders they couldn’t refuse’, that they were made ‘on fear of death to beat, kill, torture or rape innocent people’, that they were ‘threatened that if we didn’t comply, we would also be killed’, and that one soldier was killed in front of the others ‘so we would all see what could happen to us’. In spite of the repeated threats to their lives, the soldiers faced ‘retribution, being shunned by family and friends, or ending up in jail’, as ‘much of society regards the

⁶⁵⁷ Pasquale Bonnefoy, ‘A Chilean Ex-soldier Guiltily Recalls his Unit’s Atrocities’, *The New York Times*, 28 February 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/29/world/americas/a-chilean-ex-soldier-guiltily-recalls-his-units-atrocities.html?_r=0> [accessed 14 April 2016].

soldiers as criminals', and 'hundreds of former conscripts [...] are now suing the state for compensation for the moral and psychological damage done to them during their mandatory military service'. Padilla says that 'after everything I saw, by 21 I had become a different person', and that 'they destroyed our lives'.

The article is certainly problematic. For one thing, it highlights the death threats that the soldiers were confronted with, but also admits that Padilla felt nothing when shooting people in a firing squad, suggesting that he did not require death threats to perform his orders. However, the article serves to complicate the idea that those who were on one side benefitted and those on the other side suffered. This soldier shows that at least some of the very agents of repression have also suffered from its effects. The article shows that the notion of an 'us' and a 'them', a 'good' and an 'evil', a 'victim' and a 'perpetrator', all of which are distinct from one another, is too simplistic a view which does not cover a wide range of experiences under dictatorship.

What we are witnessing, then, is a process that I term the 'democratisation of memory': as more time passes since the events of the dictatorships, more people feel a right to express their opinions, and the label of 'victim' is defined more broadly to incorporate and represent the voices of those who suffered from the fear and censorship of the dictatorships but did not suffer physical abuse. After many years of silence and cover-ups, the people feel that they have the right to know what has happened in their country. *Las cenizas del cóndor* represents this, with Fernando investigating a story that he believes has to be told, but his is a cautionary tale: an example whereby the rights of the victim of torture are considered secondary to the right of the people to know the story, leading to unethical and harmful journalistic practice. But the democratisation of memory is not simply an increase in the number of people who are 'allowed' to speak, but also

the number of perspectives that can be presented. Each new generation will, necessarily, form its own conclusions as to what happened: what caused the dictatorships, who suffered and who is to blame. Butazzoni is careful to present in *Las cenizas del cóndor* a detailed analysis of how all of the dictatorships worked in tandem as part of a much wider global context, but he also represents the minutiae of the regimes through the stories of his protagonists, including that of the military officer Manuel Docampo, and the fact that the reader is allowed to reach their own conclusion on Manuel's story further demonstrates how the novel reflects the current trend towards democratisation in memory politics.

The Democratisation of the Family

If the new generation has allowed a wider range of voices to speak about the dictatorships, and has allowed for new interpretations of the events which may complicate the positioning of common soldiers as purely antagonistic agents, so too has this new period allowed for new, if controversial, opinions regarding the appropriation of children. The *Abuelas* have long influenced how child appropriation has been presented, but *Las cenizas del cóndor* presents a slightly different view, which may be more in line with the new generation's understanding. As I have stated above, the novel is unambiguous in its presentation of child appropriation as wrong, and that returning Juan Carlos to Aurora is the only way to right this wrong, but Butazzoni is also careful not to merely leave the appropriators of Juan Carlos as vague, faceless entities, more ideas than people. Instead he presents the two sides of the appropriators: for Katia, Manuel and Aurora, the 'supuesta madre' (CC, p. 435) is 'la ladrona, la apropiadora, la zorra, la mina [...] la usurpadora', but Butazzoni points out that this woman is also 'Graciela [...] ingenua en su alegría' (CC, p. 674) with her 'cara de buena

persona' (CC, p. 435). However, she is not so naïve, as Katia's reconnaissance shows that Graciela knows about the origins of the baby: she has told her neighbours that he is 'un pobre huérfano de los subversivos' (CC, p. 618), not knowing that 'en realidad n[ó] es huérfano' (CC, p. 674). Nonetheless, despite the couple knowing about the origins of Juan Carlos, who they call Faustino, Butazzoni presents them with a kind of innocence. Tiburcio is not a torturer: 'nadie le solicitó jamás que hiciera otra cosa aparte de mecanografiar esos documentos' (CC, pp. 676-77); he gazes lovingly at his appropriated child at night before going to sleep, imagining the day when people see them together and say, '*ahí van padre e hijo*' (CC, p. 677, emphasis in original); he is saddened by the death of his friend Villar, who brought him the child, and 'no entiende qué pudo haber pasado' (CC, p. 677); when he is informed about the attack on Graciela, his first question is to ask 'con quién está el nene' with 'el hilito de voz' (CC, p. 683). And despite their conviction that they are doing the right thing, Katia, Manuel and Aurora feel guilty for the force that they have used against Graciela. Aurora tells Fernando that she sometimes dreams of 'la cara de susto de la mujer, sueño con sus gritos', but that 'no me genera ninguna emoción' (CC, p. 436). However, after the attack, she 'confiesa a su amiga [Katia] que le inquieta la posibilidad de haber herido a la ladrona de gravedad' when 'un arranque de cólera la impulsó a golpear con saña a quien pretendía retener a su hijo' (CC, p. 705). She finds it painful to think of herself as she 'descargaba puntapiés y golpes de puño sobre el cuerpo indefenso de la mujer' who had already fallen to the ground (CC, p. 705), an attack that leaves 'un miedo que no se va a acabar nunca' in Graciela (CC, p. 688). Her child was being 'acunado y alimentado y hasta querido' (CC, p. 536) by this woman, but in this moment they were 'bestias' who were trying to protect 'sus crías' (CC, p. 436). Katia wonders how Graciela would interpret these events, if she would think that 'le secuestraron a su hijo' or

that 'se vengaron de ella porque su marido es policia', that 'ni siquiera respetan su duelo, su tristeza por la muerte de sus amigos' (CC, p. 675). She believes that Graciela would eventually see that 'la madre verdadera vino a buscar lo que pertenecía' (CC, p. 675), because Juan Carlos *does* belong with Aurora, but that does not mean that this woman, who is linked to something undeniably wrong, is herself entirely culpable. She is another cog in the machine, partly victimising another through her action, partly victim herself – especially after the violent attack by Katia, Manuel and Aurora.

It is this moral ambiguity surrounding the appropriators of stolen babies which most closely represents the feelings of the appropriated children themselves. As I have shown above, their feelings were ambivalent: some hated their biological families for telling them the truth; some hated their adopted families; but most found themselves torn between the two, condemning their appropriation but finding it difficult, as one said, 'to break the ties' to the adopted family⁶⁵⁸. This attitude is one which shows a clear distinction by age: Susana Kaiser's interviews with children of families who were not direct victims finds a 'quite generalised acceptance' that the adoptive parents of stolen children could be 'loving' despite their ability to 'obey orders to torture someone to death'⁶⁵⁹. The young people believed that the 'personal and emotional take priority over the crimes committed', an opinion that Kaiser clearly does not share, as she deems it 'extremely controversial', and sees past crimes as being 'the root of the problem'⁶⁶⁰. Similarly, the *Abuelas* apply phrases with what Gabriel Gatti calls 'terrible texture' to children who have been appropriated and not yet found: 'outside true identity, vacuum, nothing [...] non-identity', entirely dismissing the

⁶⁵⁸ Lloyd-Roberts.

⁶⁵⁹ Kaiser, p. 110; p. 111.

⁶⁶⁰ Kaiser, p. 110; p. 112.

sometimes decades of life that the children experience before they find the truth⁶⁶¹. These black-and-white opinions do not, however, reflect the adoptive experience: Marianne Novy says that ‘both the myth of the adoptive family as identity and the myth of heredity as identity [...] are inadequate’ – the identities of the appropriated children are formed by a complex blend of the two⁶⁶².

It is the recognition of the complexity of family relationships that has allowed, in the recent post-dictatorship period, for the acceptance of new family forms to emerge. Just as the question of memory has been democratised, allowing for a wider range of voices and a wider range of opinions, so the family has begun to be considered in a similar way, with the emergence of a wider range of voices and opinions on what a family is. The violence of the dictatorships disrupted standard genealogies, with the “re-organisation” of society requir[ing] “re-organising” the basic social unit, the family’ on both sides – the agents of the dictatorships uprooted children and moved them to different families; those opposing the dictatorships found themselves having to rearrange familial units to close the gaps filled by the dictatorships’ victims, as ‘grandmothers became mothers and cousins became siblings’, as *Madres* became one another’s sisters and the mothers of one another’s children, and H.I.J.O.S./Hijos/HI/OS became siblings⁶⁶³. The biological family became a symbol of the struggle against dictatorship, even as the families of those struggling became more experimental, more theoretical, less bound to the ties of filiation. And as these families became more experimental, they found support from sectors of society that were traditionally marginalised by the institution of the family: *Abuelas* have reported receiving support from ‘gays, people with AIDS, prostitutes’ and from ‘transsexual

⁶⁶¹ Gatti, p. 362.

⁶⁶² Novy, p. 23.

⁶⁶³ Suárez-Orozco, p. 242; Gatti, p. 360

groups'⁶⁶⁴. Even as the *Abuelas* find legitimacy in the narrative of blood, the support that the relatives' associations offer one another springs from 'non-normative forms of intimacy', and the boundaries of who may claim victimhood and kinship with the disappeared move ever wider⁶⁶⁵. I would argue, then, that the blood that binds those who fight for truth and justice in the wake of the regimes' violence is not that of biological affiliation, but rather the blood that these regimes have spilt. The post-dictatorship societies have been bonded by this blood, by these shared losses, and this bond has broken the restrictions on who has the 'right' to speak, which is no longer tied to biological links to the victims. And as new generations find their own voices, which challenge, complicate and transfigure opinions and understandings held as unshakeable by earlier generations, a new, more complex view of the period emerges, and brings with it new definitions of what it means to be a family beyond the strict definition of biological ties.

It was these new definitions that led members of H.I.J.O.S. to demonstrate for the introduction of gay marriage and adoption, highlighting the hypocrisy of the protestors' slogan of 'queremos mamá y papá' in a society that had doomed thousands of children to be raised without one or the other or even both due to disappearances, and forced hundreds of others to be raised in adopted families – the legitimacy of which, now that the adopted families were to be same-sex couples, was being questioned⁶⁶⁶. In the wake of dictatorial violence, the nuclear family 'was no longer viable': the definition of family had expanded to incorporate support groups where the biological tie that linked the members was not a biological tie to one another, but rather a shared tie to others; adoptive families,

⁶⁶⁴ Arditti, 1999: p. 93.

⁶⁶⁵ Sosa, p. 26.

⁶⁶⁶ Sosa, p. 157.

where the parents had no biological tie to the children they were raising; families missing one or both parents, with children being raised by grandparents; and a myriad of other familial forms⁶⁶⁷. As the transition to democracy progressed and those who had been marginalised and whose voices had been silenced – the direct victims and their families – were given a central position from which to speak, so they brought other marginalised, non-heteronormative, voices with them. The first post-dictatorship generation, which has shown its willingness to accept and make room for new voices and perspectives, has also shown its willingness to accept and make room for new forms and understandings of family, identity, and love – leading to a more complex and democratic understanding both of memory and of family, one that is beginning to be reflected in the legislation of all three of these countries.

⁶⁶⁷ Sosa, p. 157.

Conclusion

In May 2015, a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl, Chiara Paéz, was reported missing in Rufino, Argentina. After an extended search, her body was found in horrifying circumstances. She had been given pills to induce an abortion – she was eight weeks pregnant – and had been beaten and buried, gravely hurt but still alive, in the patio of her boyfriend’s house⁶⁶⁸. The circumstances of Chiara’s death provoked an enormous outpouring of grief and anger across Argentina and the Southern Cone. On the 3rd June 2015, 150,000 people marched to the Plaza de Congreso to proclaim ‘Ni una menos’: a rallying cry against *femicidio*, or gender-based violence⁶⁶⁹. In neighbouring Chile and Uruguay, thousands marched in solidarity and to protest the same problem in their own countries⁶⁷⁰. On the anniversary of the marches, the protests were renewed⁶⁷¹. A year on, some key changes had been made: 25 new shelters for victims of domestic abuse were being built, a system of electronic tags were brought in for known abusers to keep them away from their victims, and talks had opened on the automatic cancellation of parental rights for convicted abusers⁶⁷². Much ground is still left to cover, but the

⁶⁶⁸ Germán de los Santos, ‘Chiara Paéz, el crimen de la adolescente que disparó las marchas de Ni una menos’, *La Nación*, 3 June 2016 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1905389-rufino-chiara>> [accessed 14 September 2016]; José E. Bordón, ‘El crimen de Chiara Paéz: la adolescente habría sido enterrada viva’, *La Nación*, 11 May 2015 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1791888-el-crimen-de-chiara-paez-la-adolescente-habria-sido-enterrada-viva>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁶⁹ Fernando Massa, ‘En defensa de la mujer, un clamor recorrió el país: #NiUnaMenos’, *La Nación*, 4 June 2015 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1798662-en-defensa-de-la-mujer-un-clamor-recorrio-el-pais-niunamenos>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁷⁰ *La Nación*, ‘#NiUnaMenos: la marcha contra los femicidios se extiende a Chile y Uruguay’, 2 June 2015 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1798026-niunamenos>> [accessed 14 September 2016]; Nelson Fernández, ‘#NiUnaMenos se hizo fuerte en Uruguay’, *La Nación*, 3 June 2016 <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1798514-niunamenos-se-hizo-fuerte-en-uruguay>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁷¹ Mar Centenera, ‘Argentina marcha contra la violencia machista a un año de ‘Ni Una Menos’, *El País*, 4 June 2016 <http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/06/03/argentina/1464908364_913858.html> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁷² Centenera.

#NiUnaMenos campaign has brought up the question of domestic violence ‘en los medios de comunicación, en las conversaciones familiares y en las escuelas’⁶⁷³.

In March 2012, a twenty-four-year-old gay Chilean man, Daniel Zamudio, was attacked in Santiago by a group of men, who tortured him and beat him; he died weeks later in hospital⁶⁷⁴. The brutality of the attack provoked horror and anger in Chile, and thousands of people attended his funeral and the subsequent march⁶⁷⁵. Then-President Sebastián Piñera invited Daniel’s parents to La Moneda in a show of support, and then promised to push through anti-discrimination legislation which had been proposed seven years before⁶⁷⁶. The legislation was passed in May 2012⁶⁷⁷. This case was a ‘watershed’ moment for gay rights in Chile: Gideon Long, writing eighteen months later, said that because of Daniel’s murder ‘gay rights are being taken more seriously than ever before. A tentative debate is under way about legalising same-sex marriage’, a debate which would, in 2015, result in the introduction of gay civil unions in Chile⁶⁷⁸.

In both of these cases, violent attacks inspired popular protests which provoked political change. These countries were confronted with the misogyny and homophobia that lay beneath the surface of their societies, and they chose to reject them and to fight for change. The roots of these protests can be seen in the resistance to dictatorships: then, too, brutal acts demonstrated the violence of the

⁶⁷³ Centenera.

⁶⁷⁴ BBC News, ‘Chileans Voice Outrage After Gay Man Brutally Beaten’, 7 March 2012 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-17283313>> [accessed 14 September 2016]; CNN Chile, ‘Realizan masiva marcha en homenaje a Daniel Zamudio’, 30 March 2012 <<http://www.cnnchile.cl/noticia/2012/03/30/realizan-masiva-marcha-en-homenaje-a-daniel-zamudio>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁷⁵ CNN Chile.

⁶⁷⁶ Constanza Solís, ‘Homicidio de Zamudio: el antes y después de un caso histórico’, *24 Horas*, 28 October 2013 <<http://www.24horas.cl/nacional/homicidio-de-zamudio-el-antes-y-despues-de-un-caso-historico-908560>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁷⁷ Solís.

⁶⁷⁸ ‘Daniel Zamudio: The Homophobic Murder that Changed Chile’, *BBC News*, 29 October 2013 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24722180>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

patriarchal discourse and inspired mass protests which led to significant political change. These protests even called upon images from the resistance to dictatorship: in the *#NiUnaMenos* marches, which were attended by members of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora*, the slogan ‘vivas nos queremos’ was used – recalling the popular slogan of the relatives’ associations, ‘vivos los queremos’⁶⁷⁹. Marginalised groups showed, both under dictatorship and more recently under democracy, that by uniting their voices they could put the interests of the politically disenfranchised onto the public agenda.

Real, tangible changes to political definitions of the meaning of ‘family’ have come from mass public action, and the political and familial landscapes of today are unrecognisable compared to those of the pre-dictatorship era. Where before women were considered ‘apolitical’, both Chile and Argentina have since had female presidents, both of whom are mothers, and all three countries have introduced gender quotas to ensure female involvement in politics⁶⁸⁰. Elective abortion has been legalised in Uruguay; divorce has been legalised in Argentina and Chile; Argentina and Uruguay have legalised gay marriage and Chile, where gay sex was illegal until 1999, has introduced gay civil unions. These societies are liberalising. The Catholic Church is losing influence over political issues, and Argentinian Pope Francis has made many revolutionary statements regarding the place of women, children and sexual minorities in society, countering the

⁶⁷⁹ Página 12, ‘Para poner freno a la violencia machista’, 3 June 2016 <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-300898-2016-06-03.html>> [accessed 14 September 2016].

⁶⁸⁰ Miki Caul Kittilson and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions: Political Engagement and Participation* (Oxford: UP, 2012), p. 39; p. 115; Mala Htun, *Inclusion Without Representation in Latin America: Gender Quotas and Ethnic Reservations* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2016), p. 66.

traditionally conservative stance of the church⁶⁸¹. New family forms are increasingly acceptable in the Southern Cone, and women are increasingly visible in important positions in public life.

This thesis has explored these changes to the institution of the family through three different approaches: demographic statistics, historical events, and the analysis of cultural expressions. Together these different approaches have given a broader and more comprehensive view of the changes occurring. By studying demographic statistics, I have been able to definitively prove that the institution of the family is changing rapidly in the ways outlined by the model of the second demographic transition. This demographic data laid the foundation for the rest of the thesis, showing that in spite of the socially conservative discourse of the dictatorships, demographic change continued under these regimes, albeit in a marginalised way. As the resistance organisations in these countries adopted a familial narrative which questioned the traditional family discourse, with its male supremacy and its strict nuclear structure, these marginalised forms took on new significance.

However, we have also seen that the difference between conservative and revolutionary family forms is not one that can be clearly and easily delineated. While ‘militant mothers’ in the relatives’ organisations usually presented themselves in a conservative way, with an insistence upon their role as mothers and upon their apoliticism, the very act of them stepping into the public arena to speak out against dictatorial violence was revolutionary, and has transformed how motherhood is understood in the political sphere of these countries. Meanwhile, the women who balanced their motherhood with their work in revolutionary

⁶⁸¹ BBC News, ‘Pope Francis Says Church Should Apologise to Gay People’, 27 June 2016 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36636845>> [accessed 16 September 2016].

organisations – who I have termed ‘revolutionary mothers’ – were often confronted with a gender discourse in these organisations which mirrored that of the regimes themselves. Although the extent to which traditional gender roles were adhered to varied in these groups, and despite the fact that the women themselves were sometimes unaware of the institutional sexism until later, these women had a dual struggle against both the military regimes and the sexism inherent in their own organisations. Both militant mothers and revolutionary mothers found their activism balanced between the revolutionary and the conservative. The militant mothers presented traditional images of motherhood but in a revolutionary way; the revolutionary mothers presented a radical new form of motherhood but were often treated in traditional ways. I was further able to explore the nuances of the balance between traditional and radical motherhood by analysing three pieces of cultural expression: *El desierto*, *Infancia clandestina*, and *Something Fierce*. All three of these texts examine non-traditional family forms and interrogate gender roles and family ties to question ideas and values that were taken as universal and concrete.

The post-dictatorship generation has also questioned ideas and values that were considered certain. Having an emotional and temporal distance from the events of the dictatorships has allowed this younger generation to complicate the concept of ‘victim’, understanding that the climate of fear and violence affected society in general and not just the direct victims of state violence. This new understanding of victimhood has allowed new voices to emerge, bringing marginalised voices – and forms of family – into the spotlight. *Las cenizas del cóndor* shows an unusual point of view, with one of its protagonists being a torturer who risks his life to save an appropriated child who he then raises as his own son. This adopted family questions the notion that families are necessarily

biologically related, leaving space for new family forms, such as families with same-sex parents and adopted or surrogate children.

Throughout this thesis my aim has been to give a voice and a spotlight to lesser known stories and ideas. I have looked beyond the enormous cultural weight of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* to ask where the fathers were; I have looked beyond the image of the apolitical mother to see the mothers who fought against the regimes in spite of and not because of their maternity; I have looked beyond the binarisms of biological family and psychological family to show that the appropriated children find their identities split between the two. Here, the three distinct approaches of my thesis come together: the resistance to dictatorships and the memory movement in the post-dictatorship period have brought key understandings of the family into question, inspiring legislative changes that created an environment which was conducive for demographic change. Furthermore, social and demographic change meant that marginalised family forms lost much of their taboo, allowing marginalised voices of resistance to surface in cultural expression.

Some general trends in the societies of the Southern Cone can be spotted in my work, which touches on demographic, social and cultural movements. The first is that demographic change is likely to continue, with the birth rate continuing to fall, the average age of marriage increasing and divorce rates increasing, the ages at which women have their children becoming more polarised between the teenage years and the thirties, and the life expectancy rising. These countries will need to raise the retirement age in order to combat the increasing number of dependents on a decreasing workforce, and in Chile where women's participation in remunerated labour is still low compared to the rates in Argentina and Uruguay, provisions will need to be made to support women, particularly mothers, as they

enter the workforce. In Argentina and particularly in Uruguay, where women's university enrolment rates are substantially higher than men's, the education system may have to be reviewed to make university education more inclusive for men and to ensure that it accommodates for gender difference in learning styles. We have seen that demographic change is tied to access to education, with the more educated being more affected by demographic change: in order to avoid creating an 'underclass', it is vital that these countries ensure that education is available for all and based on merit rather than prosperity.

In social trends, we have seen at the start of this conclusion that activism and mass protest is still thriving in the Southern Cone. These societies recognise that by unifying for a common cause, the public can affect serious legislative changes which will transform their lives. As I have discussed before, Uruguay's legislation tends to lead the way among the societies of the Southern Cone, which would suggest to me that the next big change will be the decriminalisation of abortion; in more conservative Chile, where it is currently banned in all circumstances, it is likely that this reform will come in the form of a relaxation of the law at first – perhaps a legalisation of abortion in the case of rape or risk to the mother. Women are increasingly involved in politics at every level, from grassroots activism to the presidencies themselves, which helps to put women's issues on the agenda. We have seen how the women's groups during the dictatorship took the first major steps for women into the public sphere in defence of their families; decades on, women are building on the foundations made by these dictatorship-era groups and even borrowing their rhetoric, but this time they are making demands for themselves as women rather than for others in their role as mothers.

Indeed, the resistance organisations during the dictatorships have had a huge impact both on the way that people mobilise and on their belief in the power

of the public to affect change. Furthermore, the horror and rage inspired by particularly brutal cases such as those of Chiara Paéz and Daniel Zamudio show that these societies have a much lower tolerance for violence than during the dictatorship period, or that they have the language and the power to stand up to them. The people increasingly look to politicians who appeal to the masses, such as José Mujica or Néstor Kirchner, rather than political elites.

There is also a trend towards liberalisation of the family, with increasing public visibility and acceptability of non-traditional family forms, such as consensual partnerships (where a couple lives together but is not married), single parenthood and same-sex unions and adoption. The nuclear family model that was once prescriptive is now just one option, and even within this model there are changes occurring. Women are now increasingly equal partners in marriage, with men taking a greater share of domestic tasks and parenting, particularly in families where the woman works outside of the home.

Finally, we can also see a trend in culture concerning the family and the dictatorship and post-dictatorship periods. Recent years have seen a wealth of cultural expressions regarding these topics, only a few of which I have been able to include in this thesis. Uruguayan author Marisa Silva Schultze's novel *Apenas diez* discusses the topic of exile, showing a young woman who has spent most of her life exiled in Sweden as she returns to Uruguay: tensions arise between her and her mother as she sees her birth country as a foreign place where she does not belong, and as her mother struggles to make her remember her now-disappeared father.

The beautifully written Chilean novel *Tengo miedo torero* by Pedro Lemebel tells the story of a transvestite who falls in love with a revolutionary and helps him on his missions: the earthy, natural world of the protagonists contrasts with the aggression, bitterness and closeted homoeroticism of the military in a truly

original take on Pinochet's personal life. Also from Chile, Alejandro Zambra's *Formas de volver a casa* depicts the life of a man whose family was left unaffected by the violence of the Pinochet regime as he confronts the past of a girlfriend whose father was a militant, asking questions about who really owns memory and who has a right to speak about the dictatorships.

From Argentina, Leopoldo Brizuela's novel *Una misma noche* tells the story of a man who, when his neighbour's house is burgled, finds himself remembering a traumatic event in the same house that he witnessed as a child during the dictatorship, blending the two nights from past and present and drawing connections. Also from Argentina, Laura Alcoba's novel *La casa de los conejos* recounts the story of the daughter of militants from a child's point of view, while her compatriot Félix Bruzzone's novel *Los topos* draws lines of comparison between dictatorship and post-dictatorship in a story about the son of two disappeared parents, a story which touches on issues of gender identity, bisexuality and violence under democracy.

The Uruguayan documentary *Todos somos hijos* tells the story of one man's search to learn more about his disappeared father's past, while the Chilean documentary *Nostalgia por la luz* recounts the stories of women who search in the Atacama desert for traces of their disappeared children. The short documentary *Eterno retorno*, also from Chile, talks to two groups of women – the first generation of exiles to Italy, and the second generation, who consider themselves Italians – discussing themes of belonging and identity. The Argentinian film *Cautiva* depicts the life of a teenager who discovers that she is the daughter of disappeared militants, while *Hermanas*, also from Argentina, shows two sisters who went into exile reuniting and confronting the truth about their family's history. From

Uruguay, the new film *Migas de pan* shows the hardships faced by female prisoners under dictatorship.

These recent depictions of the dictatorship and post-dictatorship period abound with original and marginalised voices: the voices of exiles, particularly young exiles who feel distanced from the land of their birth; the voices of gay people and transvestites; the voices of children, teenagers, and those who experienced trauma during their childhood; the voices of those who feel that the dictatorships passed their families by. Some of the themes discussed therein are ones we have had space to explore – the lives of the children of militants, the questioning of who has the right to speak about dictatorships – while others, such as exile and minority sexuality and gender identities, have not been discussed in detail in this thesis: a task for the future. I am curious and excited to see what new and original cultural expressions will appear in the Southern Cone in the future, and how their explorations of the theme of family will lead to new understandings of this central, but changeable, institution.

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