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# Documenting the legacies of the Chilean dictatorship: Questioning the family relationship in the documentary films *El pacto de Adriana* and *El color del camaleón*

## ABSTRACT

*The Chilean dictatorship is the subject of a number of recent non-fiction films in which the construction of Chile's collective memory also focuses on those who supported, collaborated or participated in the perpetration of the abuses and atrocities committed by the regime. In recent years, a new generation of Chilean filmmakers has emerged; among these are Andrés Lübbert and Lissette Orozco, whose documentary films about the dictatorship, El color del camaleón ('The color of the chameleon') and El pacto de Adriana ('Adriana's pact'), respectively, were both released in 2017. In both films, the memorialization of Chile's past is associated with*

## KEYWORDS

family conflict  
Chilean dictatorship  
perpetrator  
documentary film  
*El pacto de Adriana*  
*El color del camaleón*  
Lissette Orozco  
Andrés Lübbert

1. For a further discussion of the magnitude of the atrocities committed as part of the standard operating procedure institutionalized by the regime against its opponents, see Jelin (2003), Stern (2010) and Franco (2013).

*the exploration of family memories as the filmmakers engage with Chile's collective memory through family relationships. In this way, family becomes central to a parallel process in which the filmmakers engage in an ethical and emotional questioning of their relationships with their relatives and the family legacy, thereby triggering conflict within the family. This family conflict may be resolved in one of two possible ways: breakdown or reconciliation. The two documentary films studied here offer examples of each possibility, facilitating an exploration of this process and the potential impact of this approach to documenting family relationships.*

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

Cinema is one of the main sources of public narratives that contribute to the construction of a nation's collective memory. This social role of cinema, which is recognized both by filmmakers and by media and film scholars, is more evident in the documentary film medium. One of the most well-known scholars in this field, Bill Nichols, highlighted its contribution to the 'formation of popular memory' in his pioneering book on the subject (1991: ix). This role is fulfilled mainly through the documentary filming of individual stories, life narratives, that serve as examples of subjective representations of a particular collective memory. Moreover, these testimonies are often about traumatic historical periods suffered in the past by the community concerned, addressed by documentary film 'in ways more forceful and poignant than are possible in other forms of media' (Sorensen 2008: 344), 'which offers an audiovisual avenue for the public dissemination of memories' (DiGiovanni 2012: 156). Both Kristin Sorensen and Lisa Renee DiGiovanni highlight the importance of this social role of documentary in the Latin American context and particularly in Chile, where the human rights violations and crimes against humanity perpetrated during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–90) provide a most unfortunate contemporary example.

Chileans were deprived of their freedom through the *coup d'état* staged by Pinochet, with the support of Henry Kissinger (US Secretary of State at that time), against the legitimate president of Chile, Salvador Allende, on 11 September 1973 (coincidentally the same date as the 9/11 attacks exactly 28 years later). In March 1990, Pinochet transferred power to the new democratically elected president, Patricio Aylwin Azócar, after losing a 1988 plebiscite and bowing to domestic and international pressure. During the dictatorship, whose worst period of repression was from 1973 to 1978, individuals considered dangerous or opposed to the regime were systematically kidnapped, tortured and made to disappear or secretly executed. According to the Valech Report, prepared by Chile's National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture in 2004, the Pinochet regime was responsible for over 30,000 cases of torture.<sup>1</sup>

A wide range of cultural productions have turned a critical eye on this period in Chilean history in the interests of contributing to the construction and questioning of how it is remembered. Documentary film has played an important role in this respect not only as a vast storehouse of images and testimonies related to the violence perpetrated but also as a form of revising and interrogating the past. Patricio Guzmán is without doubt one of the main exponents of this movement. Indeed, he has become a standard bearer for the genre thanks to pioneering productions such as *La batalla de Chile* ('The Battle of Chile'), a documentary trilogy released outside Chile between 1975 and 1979. The fact

that this project was first screened in Chile eighteen years after it was filmed says a lot about the conflictive nature of engaging with the past in Chilean society. Ignacio Agüero's *No olvidar* ('Don't forget') (1982) is also highly significant as a document of the institutional practices of the period from the perspective of individuals whose relatives disappeared under the regime. In this case, the family takes on a central role in the process of recovering the collective memory.

The family has historically been conceived of as a social institution governed by a principle of authority. Elisabeth Roudinesco, in her studies of the family as a human institution, argues that '[t]he authoritarian family of long ago and the triumphant or melancholic family of more recent times have been succeeded by the mutilated family of our era, made up of private wounds, silent violence, [and] repressed memories' (2004: 21). In Chile, this mutilation was triggered by Pinochet's *coup d'état*, which tore Chilean society apart (and with it the family as its basic nucleus) and which continues to affect its members in the present. Sebastián Lelio addressed this issue in his fiction film *La Sagrada Familia* ('The holy family') (2006), and it was also explored more recently in Boris Quercia's television series *Los 80* ('The 80s') (2008–14), which achieved considerable success during its seven-season run, following the various conflicts that afflicted a middle-class family during the dictatorship. As the series unfolds, the political developments of the period in Chile find their reflection in the relationships depicted in the family.

Non-fiction films, such as certain post-dictatorship documentary films, have also explored problematic relationships within families, often doing so by confronting family members who played some kind of role in the perpetration of the abuses and atrocities committed under the regime and forcing them to remember. This represents a change in the point of view of the enunciation that has emerged in consonance with a new cinematic trend worldwide. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, a significant number of documentary films dealing with atrocities have been made that, instead of focusing on the traditional figure of the victim, tell the story of the atrocity from the point of view of the person who committed it. Thus, we find the figure of the perpetrator in the protagonist's role in films such as Joshua Oppenheimer's acclaimed film *The Act of Killing* (2012), about the Indonesian genocide. In the Chilean context, the first manifestation of this change in focus was Carmen Castillo's *La flaca Alejandra* ('Skinny Alejandra') (1994), whose protagonist is Marcia Merino, *La flaca Alejandra* (her political alias as a member of the MIR, or Movement of the Revolutionary Left). Merino was captured, tortured and beaten by DINA (Pinochet's secret police force), until finally she was turned into a collaborator with the regime. After years of exile in France, Castillo returned to Chile to film *La flaca Alejandra*, which, as Antonio Traverso suggests, is a documentary that 'contributes to the critical disarticulation of the stronghold of the official restorative notion of national reconciliation dominant in Chile' (2017: 105).

During the years of the democratic transition in Chile, an official discourse on the nation's collective memory was established that centred around national unity. This discourse has been promoted by every Chilean government up to the present date, although it has also been widely questioned, both by human rights organizations and by intellectuals, critics, filmmakers and artists. Among these critics is Nelly Richard, who argues that 'the Chilean transition established an official discourse of memory which, through consensus and reconciliation, privileged soothing and conciliatory narratives' (2010: 19), avoiding confrontation and contestation, which were deemed upsetting to the institutional balance. In this sense, cinema has contributed

to the questioning of what could be called the *official memory* by promoting more critical and reflective views of Chilean history. Chile's collective memory is thus an incomplete and disputed concept, where certain cultural productions operate as critical agents of officialdom. This article tries to demonstrate that this trend is still current throughout the exploration of two recent examples of these cultural productions.

*La flaca Alejandra* has become a point of reference for subsequent documentary film, such as Marcela Said and Jean de Certeau's *El mocito* ('The young butler') (2011), which presents the testimony of el mocito, who as a teenager was forced to take part in the dictatorship's abuses, or Adrian Goycoolea's *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* ('Long live Chile, damn It!') (2014), in which Goycoolea explores his aunt and uncle's reconciliation with a former agent of Pinochet's secret police who had been their prison guard at an interrogation and torture centre in Santiago in the early 1970s. These films, together with two more films, released in 2017: Lissette Orozco's *El pacto de Adriana* ('Adriana's pact') and Andrés Lübbert's *El color del camaleón* ('The colour of the chameleon'). Their interest in those who supported or collaborated with the dictatorship is the outstanding feature of this corpus of documentary films.

However, what differentiates the latter two films from the first three is that in Orozco's and Lübbert's films, the person who worked for the regime is a relative of their respective filmmakers. This is what makes *El pacto de Adriana* and *El color del camaleón* of special interest for this article, which is concerned with how the memorialization of Chile's collective past can be intertwined with the exploration of family memories. Susanne Luhmann studies this twofold journey in documentary films exploring the private legacy of Nazi atrocities. As she points out, each of the films analysed in her article 'constitutes an attempt to make families engage with historical evidence so as to reconsider familial memories' (2011: 120). Thus, in these documentary films the journey back into the nation's traumatic past is at the same time a personal journey to dig up old family secrets. This parallel process gives rise to a confrontation between historical evidence and family legacy, which in turn compels a questioning of family relationships that triggers the conflict that underlies them.

On the one hand, *El pacto de Adriana* depicts the breakdown of the family relationship as an ethical price that the filmmaker must pay. On the other, *El color del camaleón* presents how the trauma of the filmmaker's father ultimately leads to acceptance and consequently to reconciliation between father and son. This article seeks to explore how these two different directional processes are documented and consequently to consider the impact of this cinematic approach to family relationships, which, as I will attempt to demonstrate, depends on the will to remember and recognize the responsibilities of those who experienced the conflict in the first person. To this end, I will explore the only two documentary films to my knowledge that address the traumatic memory of the Chilean dictatorship through family relationships between second-generation documentary filmmakers and relatives who took part in the abuses and violations committed during this traumatic period in Chile's recent history.

### **TESTIMONY AND BREAKDOWN IN *EL PACTO DE ADRIANA***

The first-person documentary *El pacto de Adriana* was the first film directed by the Chilean Lissette Orozco. The film has won numerous international awards, including the Peace Award at the 2017 Berlin International Film

Festival and Best Film in the New Directors Competition at the 2017 São Paulo International Film Festival. In Chile it took awards at the AriacaDoc (2017) and DocBarcelona-Valparaiso (2017) festivals, and the Chilean Art Critics Circle selected it as the best feature film debut of 2017. With this documentary Orozco delves into the story of her aunt, Adriana Rivas, known within her family as *tía Chany*. Both are part of an extended Chilean family in which the women play an important role. She tells us at the beginning of the film that she grew up surrounded by women and mothers. Her biological mother left her at a young age and she was raised by her grandmother (whom she refers to as her mother) and her great-grandmother, Marina, the family matriarch.

As this film is made by women and about women, it could be read in the context of studies examining the role of women in Latina America's political and social conflicts, like DiGiovanni's analysis of Carmen Castillo's documentary film *Calle Santa Fe* ('Santa Fe Street') (2008), which traces Castillo's autobiographical experiences before and during the Pinochet dictatorship and the memorialization of, among other issues, the problematic relationship between motherhood and militancy (it is this question that is the focus of DiGiovanni's article). However, while Castillo and other documentary subjects were victims of the military repression, Adriana Rivas was among its perpetrators. She was a DINA agent who was accused years after the end of the dictatorship of having participated in kidnapping, torture and murder under the regime. At the beginning of the film, Orozco's voice describes her family as being made up mostly of women and explains the special admiration she felt for her aunt, and the difficult moment faced by the whole family when that aunt was arrested by the Chilean police in 2011. That arrest and the revelation of the crimes that her aunt was charged with serve as the trigger for Orozco to begin making her documentary film about her aunt's past. This process of family discovery will lead her to an exploration of her country's recent history, inevitably intertwining family memory and collective memory.

The first scene in *El pacto de Adriana* is a Skype call between Orozco and her aunt, who by then was living in Sydney (Australia). In this conversation, the two women talk about Orozco's great-grandmother's deteriorating memory. Throughout the film, on repeated occasions the narrative returns to her, highlighting to the spectator how the passage of time is slowly wearing down her memory. There is also a brief recounting of an accident suffered by Orozco herself that resulted in a temporary memory loss. These elements underscore the film's special focus on the question of memory, presenting it as something fragile, in progressive deterioration, and which therefore needs to be preserved by filming it. Also it is precisely a call to remember that Orozco makes to her aunt with the purpose of uncovering their family secret. The scene of the Skype call ends with Orozco's first sentence narrated in voice-over: 'Every family has at least one secret, mine is no exception'.

Orozco's remark evokes Annette Kuhn's affirmation in *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* that 'family secrets are the other side of the family's public face' (2002: 2). In this case, the truth of Adriana Rivas' past is what is elided from Orozco's family narrative. As Orozco declares in the film: 'I realized that she never really worked for the Air Force as I was always told. Instead, she was part of DINA'. This acknowledgement is a clear plot twist in Orozco's construction of her aunt's identity. While previously Orozco had viewed her aunt as a role model, from this moment she becomes, in Orozco's own words, 'a complete stranger'. Thus, as Kuhn suggests, while our stories about the past serve to construct our own identities (2002: 2), they also shape

2. This type of social pressure was referred to in Chile as a *'funza'*, a practice whereby groups would gather in the street to accost perpetrators who had escaped the punishment warranted by their crimes.

the identity of the other, which, again following Kuhn, is the product of both what is told and what is forgotten or repressed (Kuhn 2002: 2). Moreover, the revelation of what was previously untold can trigger a significant change in our personal construction of the other. This is the case of Orozco, whose feelings towards her aunt shift from admiration to disapproval. However, this shift was not Orozco's first reaction, but rather the conclusion of a questioning process that helped her to understand, as she describes it in the film. According to Orozco, this questioning and the consequent transformation in her attitude towards her aunt took place during the production of the film: 'I started to discover that she wasn't the person I thought she was, that she had a dreadfully dark side' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14). Orozco's story thus becomes an example of Kuhn's argument that '[b]ringing the secrets and the shadows into the open, allows the deeper meanings of the family drama's mythic aspects to be reflected upon, confronted, understood' (2002: 6). In Orozco's case, this experience is made public thanks to the documentary filming process.

This process can be complicated by the subjects of the revelation since in most cases it can damage their public image and, therefore, their initial response is denial. The perpetrators want to avoid facing the past, and thus denial operates as a semi-conscious self-defence mechanism. According to Ervin Staub, 'they surround themselves with a defensive shield' (2006: 872) of forgetfulness to avoid any questioning of their justifications and, as Ernesto Verdeja suggests, 'to confer legitimacy on past policies' (2009: 9). Breaking down this defensive shield and overcoming their refusal to remember thus becomes the filmmaker's primary goal. Orozco achieves this objective by giving her aunt the opportunity to tell her own version of the story. But instead of taking this opportunity to confess, her aunt adopts a pattern common among perpetrators, denying any personal responsibility for the crimes that she committed, focusing on the structural/situational dimension to play down her individual agency. It is well known, thanks to Hannah Arendt, how at his trial Adolf Eichmann characterized himself as a pawn that could easily have been replaced by another, a bureaucrat who was merely following orders (1963). Similarly, Orozco's aunt stubbornly protests her innocence, alleging that her role in the secret service was strictly an administrative one, and certainly did not involve violence or torture. She even defines herself as a victim for having to bear social, media and judicial pressure that she considers unjust. Not only is she pursued by the courts and incriminated by the media, but she is also hounded by a group of Chileans demonstrating outside her house in Australia, demanding that she be handed over and made to pay for what she did.<sup>2</sup>

Denying any personal responsibility and claiming the status of victim are not the only strategies employed by Orozco's aunt to defend herself; she will also invoke the idea of generational transfer, suggestive of the concept of 'post-memory' posited by Marianne Hirsch as 'a generational structure of transmission' (2008: 114). According to Hirsch, post-memory is 'the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before' (2008: 106). The trauma is transmitted mainly through stories and images, for which the family serves as a useful context. Hirsch (2008, 2012) has stressed the privileged role of the family in the process of intergenerational memory transmission and, therefore, in the construction of post-memory. However, the generation responsible for transferring experiences and knowledge can intentionally create a skewed version of the past. In one of the documentary films studied by Luhmann,



Malte Ludin's *2 or 3 Things I Know about Him* (2005), it is the director's mother who has the task of maintaining the family legacy to defend the innocence of her husband, Hanns Ludin, who was executed for war crimes. In Ludin's film, the family legacy is inherited by the filmmaker's two sisters, and particularly the elder, Barbel, who doggedly defends her father's memory, resulting in a problematic relationship with the filmmaker because of his questioning of the official version of the family story.

A conflict arises because, on the one hand, the emotional bond pressures the filmmaker to embrace the family story asserting his father's innocence, while on the other, the historical evidence irrefutably confirms his guilt. Luhmann refers to this conflict as the 'tension between these two institutions of memory' (2011: 120). Yet despite its power, in both Orozco's and Ludin's films it is not the family bond that wins out, as both filmmakers are determined to uncover, as Luhmann describes it, 'the ethical version of [her/his] family's history' (2011: 122). This determination threatens the family bond because the historical evidence clearly contradicts the family memory. As Orozco herself acknowledges, her desire to believe her aunt had her constantly struggling against the evidence (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14), but ultimately the weight of that evidence and the inconsistencies in her aunt's story tip the scales towards the historical version and away from the family version, even though her aunt invokes their emotional bond in an effort to keep Orozco from turning against her.

Orozco's film thus documents the filmmaker's investigative process, hindered as it was by the family relationship that links her to the film's subject. As part of this process she interviews Javier Rebolledo, a journalist who has dedicated much of his career to investigating cases of human rights violations during the dictatorship. In this conversation, Orozco remarks 'I don't know what to believe', to which the journalist replies flatly and free of any emotional attachment that the evidence identifying her aunt as part of the machinery of repression is overwhelming. At the same time, Rebolledo introduces the idea of the 'pact of silence' as a practice that not only operates as a mechanism of exoneration but also as a denial strategy: 'what they did was so horrendous that it is unspeakable'. He argues that Orozco's aunt is aware of the atrocities that she committed but that she does not want to confess them because to do so would be to invalidate herself as a human being. It was precisely to give her the chance to reclaim her humanity, as Orozco herself explains (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14), that was one of the objectives of her documentary film, but her aunt rejects the offer, and the conflict between them increases as the film moves towards its conclusion.

Orozco's final position is determined not only by the evidence incriminating her aunt but also by the way her aunt confronts the memory of the past in the present. Orozco wants to give her a chance to redeem herself for what she did, but instead her aunt denies all responsibility, and even expresses pride over the advantages that she enjoyed during the era of repression. In one scene, her aunt confesses that they were the best years of her life, that her employment with the government had given her a chance to live even if that meant selling herself to the devil because for her that was the price she had to pay to enjoy, as she describes it, 'those things that were forbidden to us'. This 'us' clearly refers to the lower social classes of Chilean society who, as Adriana Rivas argues as a kind of moral justification, could only improve their circumstances by selling themselves to the highest bidder. With this in mind, it is not the 19-year-old Adriana that Orozco blames (indeed, she even

views her as a kind of victim of the system), but the Adriana in her 1960s who continues to cling to her justifications for her complicity with the regime and even expresses pride over it (Traverso 2018b: 14–15).

The tension increases over the course of the film until, finally, as spectators we witness the breakdown of the relationship between aunt and niece. In the last conversation between the two women, her aunt shouts and cries, and in desperation invokes the emotional bond once again in an effort to save what by this point appears beyond saving. 'I'm your blood' is one of the phrases she shouts on the computer screen in this last Skype call. This exasperated invocation of the family bond and her aunt's imposing personality leaves the filmmaker speechless. She does not know how to respond to the distressing close-up of her aunt, which utterly overpowers her. Her response finally comes in the calm after the storm, as it is only in that moment of reflection that she is able to recognize her aunt's manipulative ploys. Then, very close to the end of the film, in one of its most emotive scenes, Orozco recognizes in a voice-over while she is showing her mother the images of that last conversation with her aunt, 'how she used me, interrogated me, humiliated me. I felt she ate me'. In contrast with her aunt's emotional blackmail, her mother embraces her in an expression of genuine familial love. We can thus read her mother as the counterpoint to her aunt: while her aunt sought power, her mother preferred an ordinary working-class life; while her aunt crossed the line, her mother remained faithful to her family values. At the beginning of the film, she tells Orozco that she was one of six children who were all educated with the same values, suggesting that Adriana is the only one who has failed to uphold them (but only outside the family environment as Orozco's mother expresses no misgivings about her sister's behaviour within the family).

Orozco even has to deal with her aunt labelling her a traitor. This is the price that she has to pay for refusing to pledge blind allegiance to the family narrative, for questioning it despite the consequences that doing so could have for her family relationships, and despite her aunt's emotional manipulation. In assessing the price that she has paid, she eloquently explains: '[...] if I've betrayed my own family, it's because I've made public their dark secret, and if I betrayed my aunt, it's because I didn't use my film to clear her image, as she expected me to do' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14). Making this film not only precipitated the end of her relationship with her aunt but also shook the very foundations of her whole family. As Orozco herself recognizes, '[t]he film was like a bomb that deeply fractured my extended family' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14). The film was especially problematic, as would be expected, for those who had lived through the dictatorship years, from whom it elicited two types of responses. The first is exemplified in the reaction of her father and his sister, for whom the focus was on the ontologically problematic nature of the project itself: 'Why do you want to make trouble for yourself?' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 15). The second is typified in the response of her right-wing uncles, who accused her of making a communist film and doing harm to her aunt (Traverso 2018b: 15). However, the film elicited a different response among family members of her own generation, who received it more positively, and whose recognition of Orozco's efforts to be honest with herself partly lightened the weight of the family legacy for her.

Brian Winston outlined three facets of the responsibilities of documentary filmmakers (2000), which also emerge in the study *Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in Their Work* (Aufderheide et al. 2009), presenting the analysis of interviews based on open-ended questions with



45 American filmmakers. According to these scholars, documentary filmmakers have ethical responsibilities, first, to the subjects who participate in the documentary filming process; second, to the institutions or individuals who finance the production; and third, to the viewers of the documentary film. Previously, Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz and Jay Ruby had identified a fourth dimension: responsibilities inherent in the filmmaking profession (1988: 6). In this respect, if Orozco had used her documentary film to clear her aunt's name by embracing just the biased family legacy against the historical evidence that incriminates her, as she herself suggests, 'I would have rescinded my right to call myself a filmmaker' (quoted in Traverso 2018: 14). This assertion touches on the third and the fourth facets of her responsibilities as a filmmaker, expressed principally in her commitment to professionalism and consequently to the film as the product of her work and the audience as its final consumer. But she also touches on the first responsibility when she considers the victims of her aunt's actions while working for DINA (Traverso 2018b: 14) as a filmmaker exploring the perpetrator's perspective should always keep in mind those who suffered the atrocities.

### TESTIMONY AND RECONCILIATION IN *EL COLOR DEL CAMALEÓN*

*El color del camaleón* is another personal documentary film that deals with the filmmaker's relationship with a family member. In this case, the relationship is between the filmmaker, Andrés Lübbert, and his father, Jorge. In a manner similar to *El pacto de Adriana*, the filmmaker's reflections in voice-over and his conversations with his father are the main narrative strategies used to narrate their particular traumatic experience. But unlike Orozco's film, in this documentary the relationships are male-male, as in addition to the relationship between father and son we also meet Andrés Lübbert's uncle, Orlando. In this case, the filmmaker's invitation to journey back into the past has a literal dimension, embodied in the trip taken by father and son from their Belgian home to Chile. This trip worked not only to visit the places that served as the source of his father's trauma, as will be discussed below, but also for a reunion with his extended family. As is made clear in the images, this family reunion, especially with his mother, is a very special moment for him. According to his son, he has never seen his father so emotional before. *El color del camaleón* has been screened at numerous international festivals, taking awards at the Munich International Documentary Festival (DOK.fest, 2017) and the Santiago International Film Festival (SANFIC, 2017). Unlike Orozco, this is not Lübbert's first documentary film, although it is quite certainly his best-known film.

In 1978, under the Pinochet dictatorship, Lübbert's father was captured by DINA and forced to train as a secret agent. This back-story is significantly different from Adriana Rivas: while the former was forced to collaborate with the regime through torture and death threats, the latter assumed her part in the repression voluntarily. In this sense, Lübbert can be compared with Marcia Merino, *La flaca Alejandra*, who, as noted above, was also violently forced to betray her political beliefs and comrades. Unlike Merino, Lübbert had the opportunity to run away, although exile was his only escape: first in West Germany and later in Belgium. Rivas was also forced to leave her family and flee her homeland, but unlike Lübbert this was to escape punishment for her part in the regime. Thus, while Lübbert fled from the injustice of a dictatorship, Rivas fled the threat of the justice of a democracy.

*El color del camaleón* begins by depicting the father-son relationship through home movies showing the filmmaker as a child playing with his father in the snow. The first image of his father prompts the director to state his intentions in a voice-over: 'Dad, I feel that up to now, I've never really had the chance to get to know you'. As the filmmaker recognizes, the main purpose of making this documentary film is to find out who his father is, to find an explanation for his suffering, depression, insomnia and addictions; in short, to understand the reasons behind his self-destructive behaviour (Traverso 2018b: 9). In so doing, he also attempts what Hirsch identifies as the main objective of second-generation creators, i.e. 'to represent the long-term effects of living in close proximity to the pain, depression, and dissociation of persons who have witnessed and survived massive historical trauma' (2008: 112). In this sense, the members of the second generation suffer collateral damage as a consequence of the first generation's traumatic experiences, both in the past of their childhood and youth and in the present as adults, when they begin seeking answers, for example, through filmmaking practices that involve interviewing their relatives. Andrés Lübbert acknowledges this in his film when he remarks in a voice-over: 'it affects me now more than it affects you because you went through it and you spent years in therapy to deal with it. For me it was something new like everything I discovered about you'.

One of the worst effects of this intergenerational legacy is the absence of parents, especially mothers. In her documentary film *Calle Santa Fe*, Carmen Castillo interviews two daughters whose mothers participated in what was known as *Operación Retorno* ('Operation return'), a plan first implemented in 1978 to bring exiles secretly back into Chile to defeat the Pinochet dictatorship. One of these exiles was Margarita Marchi, who had the courage to refuse to collaborate with the regime even when tortured, and the bravery to keep fighting even though it meant having to send her daughter to live in a commune called *Proyecto Hogares* ('Homes project') in Cuba with 60 other children. Her daughter, Macarena Aguiló, would have to grow up before she could finally understand why her mother had left her there. It is worth noting that the two daughters interviewed in Castillo's film represent two different ways of dealing with their traumatic legacy; as DiGiovanni suggests, while the other daughter 'seems to have deep-seated misgivings about remembering, Aguiló shows great commitment to an elaboration of meanings of the past by participating in commemorative events and producing filmic memory projects that disseminate new narratives' (2012: 31). Thus, Aguiló, Lübbert and Orozco could all be considered members of this second generation that has suffered and continues to suffer the effects of the trauma but that at the same time turns to transgenerational communication as a possible way of overcoming those effects. In so doing, as DiGiovanni suggests, they foreground 'the importance of continuity in the reconstruction of the self and the potential productivity of remembrance in the process' (2016: 201).

In this vein, like Kuhn (as noted above), DiGiovanni stresses the importance of memory for the construction of the self, but also, as I have already suggested above, for the construction of the identity of the subject of that memory. While Orozco's aunt becomes a stranger to her, Lübbert's father has been a stranger to him since his childhood. Throughout the film, he questions his father about his past in an attempt to break down the barriers posed by his unexplained traumatic symptoms, which have kept them apart for so long. However, in contrast with Orozco's aunt, who monopolizes the conversations with her niece, Lübbert's father barely responds to his son's questions. He tries

to explain that it is not easy for him to dwell on his traumatic past. It takes him time before he can finally face it. Thus, while Adriana Rivas' verbosity supports her refusal to accept responsibility, Jorge Lübbert's silence is symptomatic of how complicated the act of remembering can be, to the point that it becomes, as the filmmaker himself acknowledges, 'the film's central narrative conflict' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 9).

Andrés Lübbert makes these barriers visible through shots that show his father unresponsive to questions, evading the camera, staring silently or directly asking his son to stop filming. In this way, every attempt by the director to obtain a testimony from his father fails. His father is portrayed as a person so traumatized by his past that he is simply unable to talk about it. Referring to other cases of people who, like Lübbert's father, were forced to collaborate with the regime, Nelly Richard describes this forced silence as the lack of a voice, of that voice that, 'as an expressive vehicle of a talking subjectivity, externalises the destruction of a person that an extreme experience has turned into someone no longer capable of pronouncing words, of bearing witness to himself as a source of meaning' (2010: 57). The director's father thus expresses a symptom of the trauma that he has experienced: his inability to remember. In this case, the expressive vehicle of subjectivity is damaged, and to repair it, as suggested in the previous section, a call to remember needs to be made repeatedly until a response is elicited.

In *El color del camaleón*, this call is made mainly by visiting the former torture centres that served as the setting for the traumatic events of the past that the visit in the present is intended to conjure up. This journey will not be easy for Lübbert's father. The filmmaker himself describes it this way: 'It was puzzling to see terror in his eyes, to see him out of breath or become paralysed with paranoia when we visited certain locations. I could sense his pain and fear, and it was very hard for me to see him like that' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 10). The filmmaker's reaction here reveals the emotional effects of the generational transfer, embodying the pain for the younger generation of witnessing the suffering of the elder. This suffering is especially acute when his father is unable to enter the amphitheatre where the corpses were exhibited and mutilated. He asks his father about the details, but he refuses to talk about it, claiming that he has already made enough effort. Here, questions arise as to the limits of remembrance. His father is not willing to go into gruesome details not only because they are painful for him to remember but also, as father and son agree, because they may be disrespectful to the victims of the atrocities being recalled.

However, these limits and the willingness to remember may change depending on the situation or the state of mind of the one remembering. Jorge Lübbert's most detailed and personal testimony of what actually happened is not expressed directly in the film, but given in a more private context. This testimony was previously offered in therapy sessions recorded and subsequently transcribed by his brother, Orlando Lübbert. In the film this testimony is read and performed by an actor. An interesting aspect of presenting his testimony this way lies in the fact that Lübbert's father actually helped his son to direct the performance. Jorge himself is still unable to articulate this testimony in front of the camera, and yet he is able to participate in directing it.

During the shooting of the scene at the amphitheatre, the filmmaker respects the limits established by his father and does not press him. However, in the editing room he considered it necessary to insert images of inside the amphitheatre, as if trying to relive what his father had refused to remember through the camera's gaze. Over this sequence shot we hear the voice of the

actor reciting Jorge Lübbert's intimate testimony of the traumatic events. His narration, far from being disrespectful to the victims, exposes the level of the atrocities committed by the regime not only against those victims, but also against those who, like Jorge Lübbert, were trained to support the repression, and forced to witness the violence as part of their training process. As Jorge Lübbert explains to his son, 'it was to dehumanize you, to rid you of all emotion'. Lübbert, like Orozco, decides to go beyond transgenerational communication by seeking Javier Rebolledo's support as well. However, while Orozco turned to Rebolledo to obtain the historical facts that would undermine her aunt's version of the past, Lübbert turns to him to find out what his father is unable to tell him about his training. What seems to concern Lübbert here is the extent to which his father had been dehumanized, and how far this process had taken him.

But even in his conversation with Rebolledo, Lübbert's father returns to what has been his main argument throughout the film: how hard it was to stand firm in his convictions and not give into the coercion, threats against his family and manipulation of the repressors. Also like the scene at the amphitheatre, his more private feelings are narrated through the performance of his testimony recounted in therapy while the camera pans around the former clandestine torture centre at the Cerrillos Air Base. The actor's voice-over narrates his feelings of guilt for being there, for being an accomplice to the repression of his compatriots. He also explains that keeping in touch with his family was what kept him from caving in and becoming completely dehumanized. This help was not only psychological but also physical, as his father was the one who facilitated his flight from Chile, which kept him from breaking down once and for all. As he confesses to Rebolledo: 'I was reaching such a point if you had given me a suicide vest, if I were a jihadist, for example, I'd have exploded it without a second thought'.

The key question, even made explicit by the filmmaker in a voice-over ('I wonder to what extent they were able to transform you?'), thus remains unresolved. However, he has at least ascertained that his father feels distress and guilt for his part in the repression, that he struggled against it and did not surrender entirely, that he was traumatized by it and continues to suffer the effects of that trauma in the present. This clearly offers Andrés Lübbert some relief, as does the fact that he knows his father 'might have done terrible things but never killed anyone'. When Andrés shares this observation with Rebolledo, the latter asks him if that is really important to him. Andrés's answer is yes, thus foregrounding how important the magnitude of the perpetration committed is, not only as horrible consequences towards the victim but also as a relevant factor in the kind of responses from those who are involved with perpetrators. For Andrés, if his father had committed murder he would have crossed a line into the realm of the unforgivable. At the same time, Rebolledo reminds him that agency is another key aspect in the judgement of any atrocity. According to Rebolledo, Jorge Lübbert 'is a victim [...] he was used by them. From that point of view almost everything can be forgiven'. In short, while in Orozco's film, Rebolledo's contribution leads the filmmaker to abandon her emotional doubts and accept the evidence against her aunt, in Lübbert's film it also serves to dismiss the filmmaker's doubts, but in this case by offering a kind of exoneration.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although Orozco also defines her aunt as a 'victim of that system' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 14), there are several factors that place Adriana Rivas and Jorge Lübbert on different levels. First, while the former voluntarily collaborated with

the regime, the latter was forced into collaboration against his will. Second, while all the evidence seems to show that she took part in torture, he refused to be trained in such practices. Third, while she enjoyed this period of her past, for him it was an extremely traumatic period. Finally, while she still justifies the atrocities and denies all responsibility, he has been left permanently traumatized. In this sense, agency as a personal response to troublesome periods of history needs to be taken into account in our judgement of their behaviour as this response is important not only in the past but also in the present when they are called upon to remember. Nevertheless, although both could be defined as victims of circumstantial factors, and Jorge somewhat more so than Adriana, this is not intended to suggest that either of them could be placed on the same level as the victims of the atrocities perpetrated by the regime.

Moreover, the role that the perpetrators play within the structure is also important because it will determine their level of responsibility. Thus, the degree of culpability of the perpetrator who gave the orders (commissioners/high-ranking commanders/thinkers/indirect participants) must be distinguished from that of the one who executed them (executioners/ordinary guards/brainwashed/direct participants). Adriana's culpability, for example, is not comparable to that of the former DINA director Manuel Contreras, even though (as we see in an interview that Jorge Lübbert watches on TV in *El color del camaleón*) Contreras uses the same strategy as Adriana, denying all responsibility and alleging that he was also merely following the orders of his immediate superior, President Pinochet. Here, we need to consider the importance of both the structural/situational and the personal/dispositional dimensions, and their 'synergistic interaction' (Bandura 1999: 207) to better understand the different categories that should define the complex figure of perpetrator. In this vein, several scholars have proposed their own taxonomy of perpetrators (Mann 2000; Borer 2003; Elizur and Yishay-Krien 2009).

As is clear in the two films studied in this article, documentary filmmaking in a family context and its call to remember effectuates a confrontation between historical evidence and family legacy, pulling the family relationship in one of two opposite directions: breakdown or reconciliation. In *El pacto de Adriana*, the relationship between niece and aunt takes a trajectory from Orozco's veneration of her aunt as a pillar of her family to an acknowledgement of her aunt's inhumane past and of her continued lack of humanity in the present, leading ultimately to the breakdown of their relationship. Conversely, in the *El color del camaleón* the process turns out to be restorative, beginning with an uneasy father-son relationship due to the father's trauma and ending with the consolidation of their familial bond. Jorge Lübbert not only ultimately reveals the memory he could not express, but even trusts his son to make it public through the film. For the filmmaker, this is a demonstration of his love for him (Traverso 2018b: 9). In Orozco's film, the filmmaker's aunt tries to manipulate her into making a film that would clear her tarnished image. As Orozco did not do what her aunt expected, but instead freed herself of any kind of emotional engagement that might distort her understanding of her aunt's role in their nation's past, she has to face her aunt's accusation of betrayal (Traverso 2018b: 14).

As I have sought to demonstrate here, the perpetrators' refusal to face up to the traumatic past acts as a barrier to reconciliation in the present. In this respect, members of the second generation in a post-conflict society are more likely to facilitate a reconciliation process because they are more open to discussing what happened and are even willing to question their family legacy.

The two documentary films studied here propose an inter-generational dialogue motivated in both cases by the second-generation filmmaker and his or her relationship with a very close family member who was involved in the human rights violations perpetrated during the Chilean dictatorship. The family connection thus becomes key to a process in which the filmmakers feel compelled to engage in an ethical and emotional questioning of their relationship with their relatives. It is precisely the family bond that makes the documentary filmmaking process especially problematic because it forces the filmmakers to deal with the tension between their emotional engagement as family members and their ethical responsibilities as documentary filmmakers. Thus, while establishing a relationship with a person who has collaborated in atrocities would obviously be problematic for a filmmaker, the problems increase exponentially when that person is part of the filmmaker's own family.

However, despite this problematic situation, the filmmaker has a responsibility to open up dialogue that will be able to shed some light on the family's past. In so doing, filmmakers are also questioning the official discourse of their society because the family legacy may fall fully into line with this public narrative. Thus, when Orozco states that she will never support her family's decision to live in a constant state of amnesia (Traverso 2018b: 15), she is also questioning a society that has chosen to 'move on' from the past to protect its own interests. In Chile, as in other countries in Latin America and elsewhere, this approach is endorsed, encouraged and even imposed by democratic governments in transitional processes on the pretext of national reconciliation. For instance, as Margaret Popkin and Nehal Bhuta point out, amnesty laws become the justification for impunity and enforced amnesia, insisting that the victims must simply 'forgive and forget' (1999).

In the specific case of Chile, Traverso, drawing on Richard, argues that the 'top-down reconciliation politics would encourage an officially sealed narrative of the past that is hostile to the agonistic manifestations of a community's living, bleeding memory' (2017: 97). The right-wing parties are usually the ones interested in imposing this kind of policy. In her reading of *Calle Santa Fe*, DiGiovanni emphasizes the role of Sebastian Piñera, president of Chile from 2010 to 2014 and again since 2018. In her article, DiGiovanni cites a reflection of Castillo's in a voice-over about how her country seemed to her at that moment: 'It cannot be true that we are once again in Santiago, as if all that we went through never happened, as if our dead never existed' (2012: 22). As DiGiovanni eloquently describes it, 'instead of encountering "home" she [Castillo] encounters the arrogance of the victors, the impunity of the criminals and general amnesia' (2012: 22). In the same vein, several scholars have explored this issue in general or related to other particular national contexts (Schwan 1998; Lemarchand 2009; Verdeja 2009; Rigney 2012).

Since denial and shirking all responsibility for the past is, as several scholars point out, the preferred stance of perpetrators, collaborators, supporters and beneficiary bystanders (Baumeister 1996; Christie 2000; Mikula 2002; Andrews 2003; Staub and Pearlman 2006; Staub 2006; Shnabel and Nadler 2008; Gobodo-Madikizela 2012), it is the filmmaker's responsibility to likewise 'move on' by fostering situations where the conflict can be resolved not by forgetting the past but rather by revisiting it as the necessary first step towards achieving an authentic and lasting national reconciliation. In this way, Orozco's confession 'I feel that my family's fissure has been more healing than damaging for me' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 15) may achieve its full meaning because instead of following her right-wing family's self-interested



justifications as institutionalized in their official family narrative, she prefers to join the victims, survivors and their relatives, and their right to know the truth of what happened in the past and to be recognized in the present, thereby contributing 'to the memory process in Chile [...] [confronting] those who prefer to live in a state of amnesia' (quoted in Traverso 2018b: 15–16).

The potential productivity of memorialization, challenging the official discourse of reconciliation by offering counter-narratives that delegitimize it to reinterpret history, is also highlighted by various scholars (Jelin and Kaufman 2000; Nelson 2002; Schaap 2005; Verdeja 2009; Gray 2015; DiGiovanni 2016; Traverso 2018). Among the activists who pursue this activity in Chile are documentary filmmakers like the ones discussed in this article because as Traverso suggests (and as pointed out in the introduction to this article with reference to other scholars' definitions of the role of documentary filmmaking), 'no other medium has rejected the reductionist, restorative narrative of the democratic state's memory discourse as unwaveringly and vigorously as Chilean documentary cinema' (Traverso 2018a: 1). As I have sought to demonstrate in this article, *El pacto de Adriana* and *El color del camaleón* contribute to this social function through the documentation of their filmmakers' family experiences as an example of second-generation filming practices in post-dictatorship Chilean documentary cinema.

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