

Article

Post-Dictatorship Documentary in Chile: Conversations with Three Second-Generation Film Directors

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Abstract: No other medium has rejected the restorative narrative of Chile’s democratic state’s memory discourse as vigorously as documentary cinema. After the several democratic governments that succeeded the civic-military dictatorial alliance that ruled this nation uninterruptedly between 1973 and 1990, documentary films have resisted monumental versions of historical memory by confronting the ambivalent nuances of the traumatic legacy of the dictatorship. Chilean documentarians have investigated, uncovered, and depicted the dictatorial state’s crimes, while offering testimonial space to survivors, and have also interrogated the perspectives of the dictatorship’s supporters, collaborators, and perpetrators while wrestling with an open dialectic of confrontational and reconciliatory gestures. More recently, this interest has intensified and combined with what is often described as a “boom” in second-generation personal-narration memory films. The present article includes the author’s conversations with the directors of three recent Chilean second-generation documentaries that explore the perspectives of former secret service collaborators: Adrian Goycoolea’s *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* [*Long Live Chile, Damn It!*] (2014), Andrés Lübbert’s *El color del camaleón* [*The Color of the Chameleon*] (2017), and Lissette Orozco’s *El pacto de Adriana* [*Adriana’s Pact*] (2017).

Keywords: documentary; Chile; dictatorship; Pinochet; torture; trauma; memory; perpetrators; post-conflict; reconciliation

1. Introduction

Chile’s process of transitional justice after General Pinochet’s alliance with the Chilean economic civilian elite that ruled this country through an uninterrupted dictatorial regime between 1973 and 1990 has been entrapped within a prescriptive, state-sponsored restorative notion of national reconciliation, highly reliant on perpetrators’ impunity and vigorously rejected by survivors and their supporters. Critics of the official reconciliation discourse in this nation have instead directed their attention to Chile’s highly productive grass-roots memory culture—which includes independent journalism, social research, memory sites, literature, performance, music, and visual and screen arts—giving preference to agonistic concepts of social reconciliation. Arguably, no other medium has rejected the reductionist, restorative narrative of the democratic state’s memory discourse as unwaveringly and vigorously as Chilean documentary cinema. Documentary films have resisted monumental versions of historical memory by confronting the painfully ambivalent, incomplete, and at times contradictory nuances of the traumatic legacy of the dictatorship. While the majority of the documentaries made in Chile after the end of the dictatorship naturally sought to denounce crimes against humanity, centering their attention on historical narration, forensic and legal investigation, depiction of evidence, and survivor testimony, two landmark films were the first to open up to the exploration of the perspective of former secret service collaborators: *La Flaca Alejandra* [*Skinny Alexandra*] (1994), directed by Carmen Castillo and Guy Girard (Castillo and Girard 1994), which focuses on a conversation with a former revolutionary who

after her arrest and subsequent torture went on to become an agent of the secret service, and *El mocito* [*The Young Butler*] (2011), directed by Marcela Said and Jean de Certau (Said and de Certau 2011), which centers on the testimony of a man who as a teenager was employed as an errand boy at one of the dictatorship's torture houses. More recently, the interest in the figures of the dictatorship's supporter, collaborator, and perpetrator has intensified with what can be described as a "boom" in second-generation personal-narration memory documentaries in Chile and in other Latin American post-conflict societies.

The present article includes the edited text of the author's recent conversations with the directors of three second-generation documentaries, namely, Adrian Goycoolea's *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* [*Long Live Chile, Damn It!*] (2014), Andrés Lübbert's *El color del camaleón* [*The Color of the Chameleon*] (2017), and Lissette Orozco's *El pacto de Adriana* [*Adriana's Pact*] (2017). All people interviewed agreed to participate and for their names and email addresses to be provided in the article. In the first film, Goycoolea explores the reconciliation of his aunt and uncle with a former agent of Pinochet's secret police who guarded them when they were prisoners at an interrogation and torture center in Santiago in the early 1970s. In the second film, Lübbert confronts and reconciles with his father, who in 1978 escaped from Chile to seek refuge in Europe after being abducted, tortured, and forced to undertake intelligence and repressive training with the secret service. Finally, in *El pacto de Adriana*, Orozco confronts her aunt, a former agent of Pinochet's secret police, who is sought by the Chilean courts on charges of collaboration in several cases of kidnapping, torture, and murder. As can be appreciated in the interviews that follow, these recent second-generation, post-dictatorship Chilean documentaries are prime examples of the ongoing interrogation of the perspective of the dictatorship's collaborator, as their directors grapple with the shifting, problematic, and interrelated dynamics of confrontation and reconciliation.

2. Adrian Goycoolea's *¡Viva Chile Mierda!*

Adrian Goycoolea (Figure 1) was born in Brazil to Chilean and British parents and has lived in Brazil, Chile, the US, and the UK. He finished high school in 1991 and then completed one year of an audiovisual communication degree at UNIACC (University of Arts, Science and Communication) in Santiago, Chile. Between 1993 and 1997, he studied filmmaking at New York's School of Visual Arts and then worked as a programmer and publicist at Anthology Film Archives and in various capacities at MoMA, Hollywood.com, and *The New York Times*. In 2003, Goycoolea started a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) at the University of Iowa, and in 2007, he moved to the UK, where he is currently Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Sussex. His screen work ranges from experimental film and personal documentary to multi-channel installations, addressing issues of location, identity, memory, and political histories. *¡Viva Chile Mierda!*, written and directed by Goycoolea, is the director's first feature-length documentary.¹

¹ Director's Email: A.P.Goycoolea@sussex.ac.uk



Figure 1. Director Adrian Goycoolea. Picture courtesy of Adrian Goycoolea.

Structured as a personal narration through Goycoolea's reflexive voiceover, *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* (Figure 2) includes a series of highly significant interviews, such as an original conversation with former agent of Pinochet's secret police Andrés Valenzuela. Valenzuela, who defected from the service in the early 1980s, provided vital information about the pernicious practices of the repressive apparatus, including details concerning missing detainees, to Chilean journalist Mónica González, who is also interviewed in the film. Goycoolea's documentary features additional conversations between the director and his aunt Gaby, who, not long after the coup of 1973, was held prisoner along with her husband in a torture center in Santiago, where they were guarded by Valenzuela, their former neighbor. In the film, Goycoolea also talks with his cousins in their home in Spain, who revisit together their traumatic memories of being raided by soldiers in their Santiago home, witnessing their parents' being taken away, and then being forced into a life in exile. Goycoolea's film explores the reconciliation of his aunt and uncle with Valenzuela. *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* has screened internationally, including New York, Santiago, Geneva, Rijeka, Glasgow, Madrid, Barcelona, and Brighton. It was listed as one of the ten best Chilean films of 2014 by Twitchfilm.com.



Figure 2. Frame from *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* (Goycoolea 2014). Picture courtesy of Adrian Goycoolea.

Antonio Traverso (AT): Do you identify as Chilean?²

Adrian Goycoolea (AG): I do consider myself Chilean, but given that I grew up in Brazil, the US, and Chile, I have a somewhat conflicted sense of national identity. I suppose I'm something of a Pan-American subject.

AT: When did you decide to make a documentary about your family's story?

AG: The idea came to me when I found out about the unexpected reunion between my uncle, Sergio Córdova, and Andrés Valenzuela in Spain around 2005. Soon after I moved to the UK to take up my post at the University of Sussex in 2007, my Uncle Sergio told me the full story when I visited him, my Aunt Gaby, and my cousins in their home in Spain. My uncle died the following year. I thought it was an incredible story for a documentary, so I began filming in 2010.

AT: What response did you get from your family?

AG: I knew it would be difficult for them to speak on camera about what they had been through. I was particularly nervous about approaching my Aunt Gaby. Much to my surprise, she said that the timing was perfect. She and her children had had to write down their experiences for the bid they were submitting to the Chilean government to receive reparations. They hadn't discussed it as a family yet, and she thought that my film might be a good opportunity to do it. It still wasn't easy for them. My cousin Ximena, the youngest sibling, ended up calling me on the day of the interview to tell me that she had left the house to come to the shoot only to turn around and go back home because she simply couldn't do it. My cousin Sergio Cristian (Chacal), the second younger sibling, also found it very difficult, and it was touch and go whether or not he would be able to go through with the interview. We actually started the conversation without him, but after a while, he joined the group and shared his experiences.

AT: How did journalist Mónica González respond?

AG: Mónica González was incredibly warm and accommodating. What sparked her interest was my telling her that I had recently interviewed Andrés Valenzuela. She had not heard from him—no one had—since he left Chile after her unprecedented interview with him in 1984. So, she must have been curious to hear what Valenzuela had said to me. It's likely that her conversation with me may have been the first time she spoke on camera and in such detail about her experience with Valenzuela in the 1980s.

AT: How did you find and get to interview Valenzuela?

AG: The main problem was that not even his close friends had a means of contacting Valenzuela directly. They would only communicate with him when he was in touch with them and this was sporadic. Through my contacts among Chilean exiles, I sent him an interview request in 2011. Some months later, I heard back that he wasn't interested. I tried to contact him directly, but I hit a brick wall. None of his friends had heard from him in months, and they were reluctant to relay new messages from me. But I hadn't given up hope to find a way to speak with him. From my conversations with Valenzuela's friends, I had a hunch he might be working for a certain company in France, which, unfortunately, had branches all over France, and I had no way of knowing where to start. I memorized how to say in French: "Hello, I'm looking for Andrés Valenzuela, does he work here?" and off I went to France with a list of addresses in the summer of 2011. Luckily, I hit the jackpot the first place I went to, and somebody pointed him out to me. When I approached him with my single French sentence, he replied also in French: "Yes, I'm Andrés Valenzuela". I then switched to Spanish

² Interview conducted via email in 2016–2017. Goycoolea provided answers in English, which I subsequently edited. He reviewed earlier drafts and approved the final version of the interview. I thank him for his interest and support and for providing me with photographs, media materials, and access to his film.

and explained who I was. He hurriedly asked me to come back after work, adding that we should talk elsewhere. I was anxious that he might not be there when I returned, but he was, and he agreed to be interviewed. Probably, it helped that I said that the focus of my film was his relationship with my aunt and uncle, toward whom he felt warmly. We drove to a nearby restaurant, where I shot the video interview. When we finished, he told me that had I approached him in Spanish, he would have said he didn't know who Andrés Valenzuela was. But because I looked like a *gringo* and spoke rubbish French, he had no reason to think I was Chilean. He also told me that he had not wanted to be interviewed before because he had been considering traveling to Chile to visit his family and didn't want to be back in the public consciousness, hoping that he'd been forgotten and it was safe to go back. But a short time before I found him, a popular Chilean television drama series was aired that had a character based on him. So, he felt that his plans of returning to Chile had already been dashed and he might as well be interviewed by me.

AT: Have you stayed in contact with Valenzuela?

AG: When I was in Chile for the premiere of my film at the International Documentary Festival of Santiago (FIDOCs) in 2014, I found out that Valenzuela had recently been in the country visiting his family. Possibly because of the time lag between our interview in France and my film's premiere in Chile, he might have thought it was safe for him to go back. I was glad to know that he'd finally returned home. I also learned that while he was there, he'd been summoned by a Chilean judge to testify in court for several human rights cases that had been launched as a result of his original "confession" to Mónica González in 1984. I hope that his testimony was useful to the Chilean court. I had no contact with Valenzuela for quite a while after our interview in 2011. I couldn't even send him a copy of the film, since he had stopped working for that French company. I wasn't even sure if he knew that I had completed the film. But recently, we got in touch via Facebook. He told me that he had seen my film and that he found it "very moving and well made" and that it made him "travel back in time".

AT: How did the Chilean public and media respond to the film?

AG: I was anxious to see how the film would be received in Chile given that I speak in English with an American accent and also because of my film's sympathetic treatment of Valenzuela. But in the Questions and Answers (Q&A) session many in the audience said they had been moved by the film. Some of them told their own stories, quite similar to my family's. Some had traumatic experiences at the hands of the secret service but had never told their families. There were stories of families divided across political lines. Media reviews tended to center on my interview with Valenzuela. This is not surprising in view of the fact that images of Valenzuela had not been seen on Chilean screens since he'd left the country almost thirty years earlier. My film is now permanently housed at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, where it screens occasionally and is available through their Center of Audiovisual Documentation. A few months after the premiere in Chile, my film was shown in Geneva, where the audience consisted mostly of Chilean exiles and their families. In the Q&A session, many people conveyed how moved they were by my aunt's testimony and the way the film approaches the experience of exile.

AT: What was it like for you to make this film?

AG: Making this film was a long, difficult process. It involved traveling from the UK to Spain, France, and Chile between 2010 and 2013. Fortunately, I had support from the University of Sussex, where I teach filmmaking, to cover travel expenses to shoot interviews. With no other resources, I did pretty much everything: production, directing, camera, editing, animation. There were only a few interviews in which I had someone helping me with the sound recorder, and the final sound mix was done professionally by a cousin of mine, Nadine Voullieme Uteau, in Chile. The scene in which my cousins have a conversation around the table in my aunt's kitchen was very difficult to film as I didn't have anyone to help me with the sound. To shoot that scene, I engineered an extendable arm that

I attached onto my camera so that I could re-position the shotgun microphone while still not being in the shot. This made the video camera heavier and more cumbersome, which caused me to have some issues with image stability and mic noise. I was dripping with sweat after that shoot, since I was filming handheld for over two hours straight. But, shooting by myself this way allowed for a far greater level of intimacy with my family. I also used different recording formats. For example, there is a sequence towards the end of the film in which I shot my aunt and cousins at Park Güell with a Super-8 film camera. I decided to use Super-8 in this scene to present a different aesthetic of memory: the home movie, which is coded both as nostalgia and as a source of documentary evidence for a familial narrative. This sequence directly precedes the semi-final scene of the film, which shows actual home video footage of my aunt and uncle visiting their old haunts in Papudo, Chile, several years ago. For me, these two sequences highlight the way in which the aggregation of family memories proceeds to form cultural and historical narratives that we retell in order to create a coherent sense of self, both as individuals and as nations. *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* is my first feature-length film, and as such, it marks a turning point in my career in terms of scope and ambition. It is also the most complex subject I have tackled thus far. I believe that I am getting closer to finding my personal voice, especially in terms of how best to mix the personal with the political.

AT: Is this a first-person film?

AG: When I was planning my film, I had in mind the films of Patricio Guzmán, Chris Marker, Agnes Varda, and Jonas Mekas in connection with first-person documentary approaches, especially in terms of the use of the device of the personal voice over. But I suppose I didn't include footage of myself on camera in the way other Chilean memory documentarians have done because this wasn't really my life's story. I also thought that by asking the interview questions myself as well as filming, editing and narrating the film, there was already enough of my presence. Without removing myself entirely, I was trying to leave as much room as I could to my subjects.

AT: Why do you use animation in your film?

AG: My decision to use animation responded to practical and conceptual factors. One practical reason was that much of my family's photographic archive had been confiscated by the military when my aunt was detained. The second problem was that I didn't have the funds to pay for archival material. So, by transforming archival photographs of the coup into drawings, I no longer needed to pay for the rights. More importantly, I was able to represent well-trodden historical images in a new light, thereby personalizing the historical archive. I feel that the archival imagery of the 1973 coup has been seen by the Chilean public so much that it has lost some of its impact. I felt that by drawing it in a simple way, I could render it both more accessible and more affecting, because of the tension between the naive aesthetic and the traumatic nature of the historical footage. Also, in a more general sense, I am interested in the nature of memory as it relates to the creation of historical narratives. This is why I animated the drawing of some of the images as a way to indicate that memory—and by extension, history—is an act of creation. Every time we remember something we recreate it in our minds. The drawings in my film, although based on the photographic archive, are my interpretation of these indexical images. This seems like an important metaphor when dealing with historical material in a documentary context. Some of the pictures of my family, in particular the "photograph" of Valenzuela with his arm around my Uncle Sergio, are fabrications that create images of events for which there is no photographic record.

3. Andrés Lübbert's *El color del camaleón*

Andrés Lübbert (Figure 3) was born in Belgium in 1985 to a Belgian mother and a Chilean father. He completed a Master's degree in Audiovisual Arts at Brussels' Royal Arts School in 2010. His documentaries have participated in more than 140 film festivals in 20 countries, winning close to 30 prizes. Lübbert's films address themes of interculturalism, migration, identity, human rights,

and social issues. His short documentary *The Reality* (Lübbert 2009) was nominated for the Golden Key at the Kassel Documentary Film Festival in Germany, and, in 2013, he was Vocation Award laureate in Belgium for his commitment to social documentary filmmaking. He directed the short fiction film *Fistful of Memories* (Lübbert 2014) about Turkish and Moroccan migration to Antwerp and the documentary *Dying for Life* (Lübbert 2016) about a Syrian refugee in Belgium. Written and directed by Lübbert, *El color del camaleón* (Lübbert 2017) is the director's first feature-length documentary.³



Figure 3. Director Andrés Lübbert. Picture courtesy of Andrés Lübbert.

El color del camaleón (Figure 4) is a personal-narration documentary in which the director appears on screen to confront his father, Chilean-born war reporter Jorge Lübbert. In 1978, in the midst of Chile's dictatorship, Lübbert's father, then a twenty-one-year-old technical drawing graduate, who had recently started a job with the state-owned telephone company, was kidnapped and taken hostage by the secret service, being released and abducted consecutively over a period of five months. Forced to collaborate through torture and death threats, he was trained to perform intelligence and repressive work. Psychologically crushed, the director's father fled Chile later that year, seeking asylum in the former East Germany and then in Belgium, where he eventually got married and fathered two sons, the youngest being Andrés. In the film, the director poses questions to his father about his past in Chile, the reasons for his exile, and the cause of his traumatic symptoms, which Lübbert witnessed as he grew up. Narratively structured through the director's reflexive voiceover, the film deviates from the conventional first-person narration of recent memory documentaries to adopt a second-person address through which Lübbert appears to talk to his father. In the film, father and son are seen traveling together from their Belgian home to Chile, where they share a trajectory of traumatic memory, visiting former torture centers and ultimately allowing a reconciliatory dialogue to open up between them. *El color del camaleón* premiered at SANFIC (International Film Festival of Santiago) in August 2017, where it won the Best Director and the Public's awards. The film has screened widely, including venues in Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, and Perú.

³ Director's Email: andreslubbert@hotmail.com



Figure 4. Jorge Lübbert, pictured; frame from *El color del camaleón* (Lübbert 2017). Picture courtesy of Andrés Lübbert.

AT: How did you learn Spanish?⁴

Andrés Lübbert (AL): When I was a child, my father refused to speak Spanish at home. So, we spoke Flemish. When I was about nineteen, I traveled to Chile for the first time. Since I didn't speak Spanish, I half-communicated in English and sign language. Later, I studied Spanish grammar in Madrid and then traveled throughout Latin America. When I got back home to Belgium, I forced my father to speak Spanish with me.

AT: How did you get into filmmaking?

AL: I never thought of becoming a filmmaker when I was younger; it happened almost by chance. I actually wanted to be a professional soccer player. I used to be as obsessed with soccer as I am now with cinema. While traveling, I made two documentaries without having studied film, let alone thinking of it as a profession. But soon after, I discovered the cinema of Argentina, which had a huge impact on me, especially the realist films of the New Argentine Cinema. I then started to think seriously about filmmaking, and, in 2005, I enrolled for one year at Universidad del Cine, Argentina, after which I spent about four years completing a Master's degree in audiovisual arts in Brussels. Before *El color del camaleón*, I made fifteen documentaries, but they were no-budget films in which I worked on my own or sometimes with just one more person. *El color del camaleón* is the first film for which I had a production budget and a full professional crew.

AT: What was this transition like for you?

AL: With a budget and professional assistance, I spent more time redrafting the script, designing the visual style, and planning the shoots. Earlier, I'd made my films quickly, some in one or two weeks. Although there is something special about working fast, I don't think I gave those films as much thought as I should have. But going from working on my own to working with a team of professionals

⁴ I conducted an informal video conversation with Lübbert in person and in Spanish in Santiago, Chile, on 4 September, 2017. On the same occasion, Chilean media producers Rodrigo Gonçalves and Fernando Villagrán conducted a formal video interview with Lübbert, also in Spanish, for *Off the Record*, a Chilean cultural program nearly two decades old, created and produced independently for Chilean television. I thank Gonçalves and Villagrán for giving me permission to videotape and use their interview (*Off the Record's* and my questions are respectively marked with initials here). I subsequently transcribed, translated into English, and edited Lübbert's responses, and he reviewed earlier drafts and approved the final version of the full interview. I thank him for his interest and support and for providing me with photographs, media materials, and access to his film.

wasn't difficult for me at all because I'm good at giving instructions. As a soccer player, I used to be extremely competitive, and, often, I was my team's captain. It wasn't hard to transfer these skills to my filmmaking. In my previous films, I performed most of the creative roles myself. I don't think I like one function more than any other. I enjoy the thinking and the writing at the beginning, but I also love going on shoots and the post-production.

AT: Why did you shift the first-person narration of recent post-dictatorship documentaries to a second-person address in your film?

AL: This film started as my attempt to open a dialogue with my father. This desire eventually became the film's central narrative conflict. As you see it from the start of the film, I speak to my father without getting a response from him. So, it was clear to me that the narration had to be structured through my voiceover and that it had to be addressed to my father. I had done voiceover narrations in some of my previous films but never in this way. This "speaking to my father" narrative structure also means that my father eventually came to share his most personal secret with me and at the same time with everybody else. Since my father works in the film and television industry, he was always very aware when I was filming him and of what everybody would see and hear. So, in the end, he not only tells me his hidden story but also trusts me to choose what I make public and how. My father's trust in me ultimately becomes a demonstration of his love for me.

AT: Do you expect your father to make his own film in response to yours?

AL: No, it is enough that in my film he eventually answers me. We shared very intense experiences travelling together to Palestine, Germany, and Chile. We are much closer to each other now, and this is what making the film was for in the first place: that he and I would be able to talk. My father said that making this film helped him to open his heart.

AT: Were you expecting the kind of public response your film had in Chile?

AL: I've been very surprised by it. It's been like a dream. I won the Best Director and the Public's awards at SANFIC 2017, and after the screenings, people showed me great affection and gratitude. I saw them queue to share with me their own experiences during the dictatorship. Never before had anything this special happened to me.

Off The Record (OTR): What does the film's title mean?

AL: The "chameleon" of the title symbolizes my father. So, in the film, I'm asking what his real color is. As a child, an obsession grew in me to find out who my father was. I saw him suffer from depression, insomnia, addictions, but I didn't understand why. I witnessed his self-destructive behavior, going to conflict zones as a reporter for more than thirty years. He literally traveled around the world seeking mortal danger. I imagined an idealized friendship with him that I didn't have. I made this film to find out who my father was and, ultimately, also who I was.

OTR: When did you first approach your father?

AL: I started to wonder about my own identity at around nineteen. I had never been in Chile, and I decided to come here. I learned some Spanish, met my Chilean family, and made my first documentary, *My Father, My Story*. In that film, I tell the story of my father in a very naïve way. I didn't know much about the dictatorship, so I interviewed some of my relatives and people who work in human rights. I began to get personally entangled in this story, which to me was very difficult to understand. It was like a great jigsaw puzzle for which I had many disconnected pieces. I went back to Belgium without any answers about what had happened to my father in Chile. My filmmaker uncle, Orlando Lübbert, told me that when my father escaped from Chile and then went from East Germany to Belgium, he started treatment with psychotherapist Jorge Barudy, who in those days had created a support center for exiled Latin American torture victims. In therapy, my father began a process of reparation through the reconstruction of his personal history. The first thing he did in

therapy was to record his testimony on audiotape, which my Uncle Orlando later transcribed. When I was twenty-two, my uncle gave me the full transcript to read, in which my dad describes in the first person what happened to him in Chile. I actually use parts of this very intense testimony in my film. But, at the time, I didn't know what to do with that dense document, so, in order to understand it, I began a search to confirm the facts in it. I needed to understand that awfully harsh history that was rather unknown to me. At first, I wanted to talk with my father about it, but I knew he suffered from a deep trauma. I could perceive his pain, so I didn't have the courage to ask him anything for some time. One day, I spoke to him when we were together on a long drive in Belgium. However, I only asked him one question about his past, and he was unable to say a single word. I realized that his trauma was too deep, the memory of his experiences too painful, so I let it go. Only after some years, when I had finished my Master's degree in filmmaking, did I decide to return to this story. I proposed to my father to reconstruct his past by making a film with me. He agreed. I don't think he did it for himself, other people, or Chile. He did it for me, because he could see that I was suffering too.

OTR: What was it like for you and your father to shoot the film together in Chile?

AL: Although it took only four months, it was a life-changing process for my father. Thanks to it, he managed to break through his inability to speak about his past in Chile. The hardest was when we visited places where he'd been through terrible experiences. As a child, I used to see my dad going to war zones for his work and never showing any fear. He was taken prisoner by the Taliban in Afghanistan, by guerrillas in El Salvador, and by Blackwater Security in Iraq, and he always survived. He was as strong as a rock. But in Chile, I saw a fear in him I'd never seen before. It was puzzling to see terror in his eyes, to see him out of breath or become paralyzed 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. But I think I was also able to cure in great measure the trauma he had passed on to me. This is why the film is constructed as a dialogue about the past between my father and me. You can see that my father wants to answer my questions but finds it extremely difficult to do so. Progressively, he is able to open up and reconnect with his past. Shooting the film together was a healing experience for both of us, and as a result, we also became much closer than before.

OTR: How was your father affected by his participation in the film?

AL: I think it took a huge load off him. This doesn't mean that my father got rid of his terror. Probably, he is always going to have this fear within him. To give you an example: during the process of production, I collected many documents with information about military personnel in order to have evidence that they had been members of the secret service. By the end of the production, I had two large piles of such documents, some of which didn't even make it into the film. Before returning to Belgium, my father forced me to dissolve in water all this paperwork in order to eliminate any traces of what we had done. He didn't want anybody finding in the rubbish proof that we had been making the film. He said that those who were in the secret service before still had considerable power in Chile. Although I could perceive that his fear was real, I myself wasn't afraid at all, and I dismissed his concerns. I acknowledge that sometimes I may have approached the film's production in a rather naïve way. As someone from a younger generation, born overseas and not having gone through a dictatorship, I simply thought that we needed to tell this story and couldn't see anything of which to be frightened.

OTR: How was your interaction with audiences after screenings in Chile?

AL: Before the film premiered at SANFIC we had avant-premieres at five Chilean universities. Since we knew that it is difficult to attract young people to documentary screenings, we decided to take the film to them. Audience reactions were diverse but all rather intense. After the screenings at SANFIC, I must have received hundreds of hugs from very emotional people, not only torture victims but also children of victims and even children of perpetrators. There was one woman, the daughter of a general charged with crimes against humanity, who approached me in tears, saying that the film had

deeply touched her. Ultimately, the children and grandchildren of the perpetrators of the dictatorship did not have a choice in what their parents and grandparents did. But they also became part of the same collective trauma and culture of silence with respect to the past. Perhaps films like mine can help to start a dialogue between young Chileans and the generation who experienced the dictatorship.

OTR: Do you see Chileans as a society either addressing or avoiding this conversation?

AL: My father's personal history, with his trauma and amnesia, is typical of what has been happening with the country at large. With the return to democracy in 1990, most Chileans avoided thinking about the past and sought to move on. Only after so many years it is becoming possible to heal from the wounds of the past through reflection, dialogue, and remembrance. What I see in Chile from the outside is a clear-cut divide between political opposites. But in my father's story, we can see that history is neither black nor white but multicolored. This is why it's important to open up to different kinds of dialogue and different versions of history. My film proposes the idea that, through inter-generational dialogue, it may be possible to come together as a society. Documentaries like mine also constitute valuable documents for future generations. When those who were direct witnesses of the dictatorship have passed, who is going to keep their memory alive so that these terrible events do not take place again? My film conveys a message of hope for the future, but now we need to take a step aside and let the younger generation speak.

4. Lissette Orozco's *El pacto de Adriana*

Lissette Orozco (Figure 5) was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1987. She studied audiovisual communication, specializing in film and television screenwriting, and completed a Master's degree in documentary cinema at Santiago's UNIACC (University of Arts, Science and Communication) in 2011. Orozco has taught at UNIACC and Diego Portales University and worked as a freelance researcher, scriptwriter, assistant director, and director in independent documentary production and in docureality shows for public television in Chile. She wrote and directed the award-winning short documentaries *El día ideal* [The Ideal Day] (Orozco 2010), *Subsuelo* [Underground] (Orozco 2014), and *Vorágine* [Vortex] (Orozco 2014), as well as the multiple-award-winning feature-length documentary *El pacto de Adriana* [Adriana's Pact] (Orozco 2017). As assistant director, Orozco is currently completing a documentary about the Chilean writer and performer Pedro Lemebel. Orozco migrated to Bogotá, Colombia, in 2017, where she teaches documentary at the National Film School and continues to work as project advisor, scriptwriter, and independent documentary director.⁵



Figure 5. Director Lissette Orozco. Picture courtesy of Lissette Orozco.

⁵ Director's Email: liss.orocho@gmail.com

Lisette Orozco's aunt, Adriana Rivas, migrated to Australia in the 1970s. As a result, the director of *El pacto de Adriana* (Figure 6) always knew her as "Aunt Chany from Australia," who would visit every now and then and stay at her home in Santiago for a month. In 2007, Rivas was arrested by Chilean police as she attempted to go through customs at Santiago's international airport on one of her routine visits. Thus begins Orozco's search to find out about her aunt's past, to which she had been largely oblivious until then. Initially, she collected news items about her aunt's case while keeping a video journal, but in 2011, when she was completing a Master's degree in filmmaking, Orozco launched the production of a full documentary, *El pacto de Adriana*. Orozco learned that her aunt had been an agent of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA), Pinochet's notorious secret service, in the early 1970s, and that she was being charged with collaboration in several cases of kidnapping, torture, and murder. However, the same year that Orozco started her film, Adriana Rivas, who had been released on parole with a prohibition to leave the country, secretly escaped from Chile and returned to her home in Sydney, where she still lives. The film narrates Orozco's trajectory in the interaction with her aunt, moving from trust to suspicion and from the desire for reconciliation to confrontation, public exposé, and total family rupture. *El pacto de Adriana* screened in more than forty international film festivals in 2017, receiving over ten prizes, including the Peace Award at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival. It was also nominated for the Phoenix Awards in 2017.



Figure 6. Adriana Rivas, pictured waving, in the early 1970s; frame from *El pacto de Adriana* (Orozco 2017). Picture courtesy of Lisette Orozco.

AT: How did you produce *El pacto de Adriana*?⁶

Lisette Orozco (LO): Very slowly. It took me five years; you can see me in the film going through life stages. In 2011, I applied for production support from the state film fund but didn't get it. I reapplied but to no avail. During my pitch, they asked if I wanted to make this film to clear my aunt's image. So, I had to complete the film through crowdfunding and with non-Chilean funding, for example, from the Tribeca Film Festival. Only after being nominated for an award at the Berlin Film Festival did I receive Chilean state funding to complete the postproduction.

AT: How did you approach the script?

LO: I never imagined my film as a large, high-end production. Its strength is a well-developed script with a strong dramatic structure. Describing it at first as a film about my aunt, I realized that it wasn't she but I who was in conflict with her past. Hence, I became the central character. As is

⁶ Conversation conducted via Skype on 27 October, 2017. I videoed Orozco's responses in Spanish and then transcribed, translated into English, and edited them. Orozco reviewed earlier drafts and approved the final version of the interview. I thank her for her interest and support and for providing me with photographs, media materials, and access to her film.

common in documentary filmmaking, I constantly rewrote the script while events unfolded. My first draft outlined ideal events and potential directions. In the first scene of that draft, I arrive in Australia, call at my aunt's door, and then we talk in her flat. Yet, I never went to Australia. I knew that some of these ideal events were highly unlikely; for example, a scene where my aunt turns herself in to the police. I drafted that script to get a development grant, which I then used to procure Chilean filmmaker Iván Osnovikoff's assistance. This made the script more real, but the film's structure was only completed in the editing.

AT: Was the film difficult to direct?

LO: Although this wasn't my first directorial experience, it was my first feature-length film. Because the production lasted years, I had to become acquainted with changing crew members many times. The use of multiple formats was new to me, including my dad's family video and footage of my aunt filming herself. I also use video that I shot of my conversations with my aunt, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother. The intimacy in these scenes would have been impossible had there been someone else doing camera or sound. And I include research video, which I wasn't thinking of using in the film at first. There is also professionally shot video of interviews and public events, such as the homage to Pinochet and the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the coup in 2013, where I had camera operators and a sound recordist with me. On these shoots, I was in front of the camera and had a second camera farther away documenting the filmmaking process.

AT: How would you describe your film's style?

LO: This film basically narrates my coming to terms with my aunt's case. So, there is a meta-textual level that runs through the narrative, for example, when I reflect in voice-over about the significance of a scene both for the film and for me. These structural elements and the combined use of materials from multiple sources give the film a characteristic collage-like style that resembles a video journal. In fact, initially I was just trying to keep a video record of my experiences.

AT: When did you decide to make a full documentary?

LO: Officially, I started *El pacto de Adriana* the first time I spoke publicly about it in 2011. But without realizing it, I had started much earlier when I decided to keep the paper with the news of my aunt's arrest in 2007. From then on, I instinctively kept saving information about her case. Around 2009, I was drafting a fiction film script based on the case of Rodrigo Anfruns, a six-year-old child abducted and murdered in Santiago in 1979, and my mum said to me: "Why don't you ask your Aunt Chany, she worked for DINA and may know something". I approached her hesitantly, but she didn't have any problem with giving me a video interview, which was the first I did with my aunt. By the time of my second interview, sometime before her escape from Chile in 2011, I knew I was making a documentary related to her case.

AT: How did your aunt respond to the documentary idea?

LO: Given that in 2011 I was close to finishing my Master's, I knew very well that I had to get my aunt to sign a clearance form immediately. I told her I wanted to make a documentary connected to her case, but that the film would focus on me rather than her; on what it meant for me to find out about her past. She said: "OK, make it about you, and I will demonstrate to you that I'm right". I agreed, and she signed the form.

AT: What was it like for you to discover your aunt's past as a DINA agent?

LO: It's been a daunting experience, and I'm still working through it. If my mum had been the one implicated, I wouldn't have made this film. But with Aunt Chany, I had a relationship at a distance. She would visit from Australia occasionally and would stay with us for a month, with the whole family revolving around her. And then she would leave. As an aunt, she was always caring, but she'd always been just an idealized character for me. I saw in her an imposing female figure who told the

men in my conservative family right from wrong. But I knew little about her. If someone had asked me about her character, I would not have been able to say much. By making the film, and then having her around when she was on parole, I started to know what she was really like, for example, her authoritarian demeanor. I remember times when I'd be in the shower, and suddenly she'd turned off the hot water since, according to her, "five minutes in the shower was enough". I was shocked that she would intrude in my life like that. I realized she was a tough, domineering woman, but she was my aunt, and I respected her. After she fled Chile, we continued to interact via phone and internet. I sent her a video camera to Australia for her to keep a video diary for the film. I only asked her to describe to me whatever she felt like recording from her everyday life. But eventually, our communication started to break down. She became less open to me because I would always argue with her. You can see in the film how she grows suspicious of me because I'm no longer believing her denials. I found it quite impossible to accept her claim that she didn't know that DINA was torturing prisoners when she was a member. We'd have these clashing conversations that made my head spin. Sometimes, she would boldly justify the use of torture, and I would say to her: "That is awfully inhuman". 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. But then I'd get home and find a message from her saying: "Hello, dear, how are you? I love you". I didn't know what to do. I was constantly struggling with a desire to believe her. Sometimes, I felt like abandoning the project or wondered whether I could turn it into a fiction to avoid the conflict. I think I got started on this in quite a naïve way, and only now, after speaking publicly about it all year, I'm starting to see the dimension of what I did. One day, she sent me all the videos she'd made. What she did was to stage apparently candid scenes of her life in Australia, which were, however, related to her case. For example, she filmed herself crying while watching a television program about her case or talking with me on the phone or Skype but without telling me that she was filming. I was so impressed by the material she sent me that in the end, it became a good portion of the film. Possibly, this is the reason why she said that I used and betrayed her.

AT: Do you feel that you betrayed her?

LO: I sent my aunt a video camera to give her the opportunity to tell her side of the story. I did my best to be fair to her in the film. I showed what she recorded without adding commentary, and I never passed judgment on her. I also did everything she told me. In the film, she says: "Go and talk to such and such, show them this picture, ask them about this or that". I came to understand much later that she was doing all this to build her alibi. But her story collapses on camera because none of her former colleagues is willing to confirm her statements. They say they don't remember. Some even tell her that she's lying. In her footage, she contradicts herself, pressures me to threaten people, and tries emotional blackmail on me. I became aware of her manipulations only when I was editing the film. I realized I had to make a decision in order to finish it. I had to make myself responsible for what she was telling me and for so much evidence against her. So, 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. On the other hand, I've been just toward many people whose lives were injured by her actions as a member of DINA. I do not make films just for my family. If I had used my documentary to clear my aunt's image, I would have rescinded my right to call myself a filmmaker. With her voluntary participation in the film, my aunt had the opportunity to reclaim her humanity. I don't judge the nineteen-year-old Adriana Rivas. I actually see her as another victim of that system. She could have said: "I was young when I got involved with DINA. They convinced me that I was on the right side, that we were fighting terrorists. But we were wrong to do what we did". But I cannot accept that now, in her sixties, she should continue to justify their actions and show pride for her time with DINA.

AT: How did others in your family react?

LO: The film was like a bomb that deeply fractured my extended family. To finish it, I had to struggle against most of my family, since they tried to stop me for over five years. My mum, of

course, supports me. My cousins are also with me wholeheartedly. We are from a generation born in democracy and are not afraid of speaking out. My dad and his sisters, on the other hand, would say to me: “You are so talented, you could make a film about any other topic. Why do you want to make trouble for yourself?” And my right-wing uncles on my aunt’s side would say threatening things like: “I hope you are not making a communist film! You are not going to fuck Chany up, are you?” I’d say to them: “I’ll show whatever I find out”. They’d argue: “You don’t have any right to talk about things of which you know nothing, things that happened before you were even born!” Somehow, they made me feel like I was intruding into something with which I had nothing to do. Why can I not speak about the past, especially if it has directly affected me? These uncles won’t speak to me now, and they’ve even threatened me with legal action. This is why their faces had to be blurred in the film. My family prefers to live in a constant state of amnesia, and I will never endorse that. In fact, I feel that my family’s fissure has been more healing than damaging for me. In any case, I accept that I can easily say all this now that I’m travelling and constantly talking about the film. But I’m also processing all this stuff and I’m not totally sure what I may feel in the future. Regardless, I’m also constantly being reassured that my film contributes to the memory process in Chile.

AT: How has the public responded?

LO: Although *El pacto de Adriana* may not be a choice for the majority of Chileans who go to the cinema seeking entertainment, my film is today in its fourth week screening in commercial cinemas in Chile. This is something very unusual for a Chilean film in this country, even more rare if it’s a documentary, and further still if it’s about the dictatorship. So, this is a fantastic outcome and it’s very encouraging to know that more people are becoming interested. There have been some very reassuring moments too. For example, after a screening in Valparaíso, one woman said: “I’m the daughter of one of the dictatorship’s disappeared. Do you mind if I come up there and give you a hug?” It’s also encouraging to show my film in countries where Chilean exiles live, to know that they are touched by it and to hear their own experiences. The film has been quite revelatory to many young Chileans as well, who’ve told me that the dictatorship topic cannot be brought up within their own families. Somebody told me that their grandfather was in the military during the dictatorship but nobody in the family wanted to speak about it. I recently received an email from a woman telling me that she and her family had not seen my film yet but that it depended on what they saw whether they would talk to her mother-in-law again. I asked who her mother-in-law was, and she happened to be one of my aunt’s former DINA colleagues. I can only take responsibility for my own family’s fracture. I don’t know how many more Chilean families are going to implode as a result of my film. It has been screening all year nationally and internationally and has received many awards, including the Peace Award at the Berlin Film Festival, one of the world’s top film events. It was also nominated for the Phoenix Awards, where it will be competing against the work of Latin American film masters. Regardless of the outcome, I feel I’m a winner already! I think the reason why this modest film is doing so well is that it appeals to audiences everywhere. It elicits strong responses because in spite of the story’s Chilean context, the theme of digging out family secrets is universal . . . and stories about dictatorships are also universal.

AT: How do you think your film contributes to the memory process in Chile?

LO: My film shows that the only way not to distort or repeat history is to remember it. That half of Chileans prefer to live in a kind of amnesia is in itself one of this nation’s greatest wounds. I grew up in a right-wing family where I often heard them say: “Why do these people insist on stirring up the past? Why do they need to be constantly remembering painful things that are better left to rest? When will they turn the page over so that we can live in a better country?” But, really, would you ever stop looking for and remembering a missing loved one? You can see in my film that today’s Chile is still a nation deeply divided but also that it is not necessary that everybody agrees with everybody else for the truth to come out. I can empathize much more now with the victims, and I finally understood what they mean by “neither forgetting nor forgiving”. It is simply not possible to forget or forgive the perverse acts that were

committed under the pretense of intelligence work. Besides, survivors are not expecting anyone to ask them for forgiveness. What they seek is the bare truth about what happened to their relatives. They want to know where they can leave a flower in memory of their disappeared. Toward the end of *El pacto de Adriana*, I say that I see my film as my individual contribution to the memory process in Chile, that I hope it may motivate those who have information to come out and help to complete Chile's memory jigsaw puzzle. I also hope it will motivate others to talk and reflect about things that have been kept hidden for too long, and confront those who prefer to live in a state of amnesia.

5. Conclusions

Chilean political documentarians have investigated, uncovered, and depicted the dictatorial state's crimes while offering testimonial space to survivors and have also interrogated the perspectives of the dictatorship's supporter, collaborator, and perpetrator while wrestling with an open dialectic of confrontational and reconciliatory gestures, oscillating between critical confrontation and the desire for reconciliation, sometimes unyieldingly resorting to public denunciation and rupture within their own families. In the above conversations with three second-generation directors of post-dictatorship Chilean documentaries—Adrian Goycoolea's *¡Viva Chile Mierda!* (2014), Andrés Lübbert's *El color del camaleón* (2017), and Lissette Orozco's *El pacto de Adriana* (2017)—this article has evidenced some of the complexities involved in the interrogation of the perspective of the dictatorship's collaborator. The article's interviews suggest that this is an especially challenging process when this scrutiny is performed by a personal narrator-director who is a member of the family of a willing or forced collaborator or a direct relative of those who have personally engaged with a collaborator. In the text of the above conversations, the reader can perceive how these young directors grapple with the shifting, problematic, and interrelated dynamics of confrontation and reconciliation, ultimately contributing with their nuanced narrations to an agonistic process of social reconciliation while departing in greater or lesser measure from the official restorative narrative of the Chilean democratic state's post-dictatorship monumental memory discourse.

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