THE BODY AS A SITE OF RESISTANCE AND ENACTMENT OF COLLECTIVE MEMORIES AND TRAUMA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN CHILE

by

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ABSTRACT

The long-term psychosocial traumatic effects of 17 years of military dictatorship on Chilean society represents an ongoing challenge regarding the reconstruction of democracy, but also the emotional healing of people affected by these psychosocial traumas. However, the embodied collective responses by people affected by political repression and the prevailing impunity represent a new and unexplored field.

Using *A Liberation Action Research Method* and *An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method* this exploratory study investigates the use of the body as a site of resistance and collective memories by HIJOS, a group of adult children whose parents were executed or detained and “disappeared” by agents of the military dictatorship in Chile. It also focuses on the meaning they make of these practices of resistance and memory through the implementation of a series of creative workshops. Finally, the study explores the therapeutic value of these workshops that involve the use of artistic expressions such as narrative, theater of the oppressed techniques, and collage making.

The study identified the symbolic effects of State repression and violence on the participants and their families, which suggests that practices of memory and resistance developed as a social response to confront the destruction of the individual and the social body. Furthermore, the study identifies that the disappearance, killing, and political invisibility experienced by the parents has been internalized by the participants as a form of social invisibility. Consequently, invisibility appears as a direct outcome of these disappearances and killings, the prevailing impunity regarding these issues, the lack of political will of the current government in addressing human rights issues and justice, and the promoting of the social validation of those directly affected.
This study begins to address the need to explore the embodied individual and collective meaning of social responses to psychosocial trauma, and the role of impunity in the transmission and retraumatization processes. It also provides relevant information for the development of therapeutic, pedagogical, and psychoeducational material and interventions. Finally, it challenges traditional notions of trauma while at the same time emphasizing the need to contextualize trauma as part of social and historical processes.
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the lives of all the people we lost in the madness of death and pain we experienced throughout 17 years of a brutal dictatorship in Chile.

In particular, I dedicate this work to that man whose face I never saw, but whose death taught me the value of life. Thanks for your life.

I extend this dedication to all the participants in this thesis: Beto, Pablo, Kayito, Lalo, Alexandra, Daniela, David, Juan Carlos, Tamara, and Vivi. And specially to their parents and relatives: Catalina Gallardo, Rolando Rodríguez, José Villagra, Raúl Valdés, Eduardo Ziedes, Lucía Vergara, Sergio Peña, Darío Chávez, Ricardo Troncoso, Alberto Gallardo, Roberto Gallardo, and Mónica Pacheco. This work is for you, thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the coup d’état of September 11, 1973 that ended Chilean President Salvador Allende’s government, the military leaders turned Santiago’s National Stadium into a gigantic concentration camp. A few months later, after thousands of dissidents had been arrested and tortured, after hundreds had been interrogated and executed, the authorities scrubbed the floors, painted the benches, and reopened the coliseum to the public.

Seventeen years later on March 12, 1990, the day after General Augusto Pinochet finally turned over the government to Patricio Aylwin, seventy thousand supporters gathered in the National Stadium to listen to the new democratic president but also to perform an act of exorcism. The following is a brief account of what took place at that ceremony:

As the melody died, a group of women in black skirts and white blouses emerged, carrying placards with photos of their desaparecidos. Then one of the women - a wife, a daughter, a mother? - began to dance a cueca, our national dance, dancing all her immense solitude because she was dancing alone a dance meant for a couple. There was a moment of shocked silence followed by the sound of people, slowly, tentatively, starting to clap along with the music, a savage, tender beating of palms that said to the nearby watching mountains that were sharing that sorrow, that we were also dancing with all our missing loves of history, all our dead, and that we were bringing them back somehow from the invisibility to which Pinochet had banished them. And as if answering from beyond time, the Symphony Orchestra of Chile burst out with the chorale from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and the song, adopted by the Chilean resistance in the streets battles, Schiller’s Ode to Joy, his prophecy of a day when all men will once again be brothers. I had never seen before - and would never want to see again- seventy thousand people crying together as they laid their heads to rest. And yet, that unspoken and painful task was the one we set ourselves that day: to repeatedly liberate, in the years to come, all the zones, one after the other, that Pinochet had invaded (Dorfman, 2002, p. 13).

The symbolic and intrinsic dimensions of this ceremony were fundamental for the individual and collective processes of addressing grief and for the restoration of trust in the State at a time when a profound social change was about to take place. The ceremony addressed the profound desire of all of us affected by the dictatorship to heal the wounds inflicted by the 17 years of Pinochet’s military regime. It made evident the symbolic power of the disappeared in...
the collective consciousness, while identifying the individual and social responsibility of keeping alive the memory of those who disappeared, were killed, tortured, exiled, or repressed by the military. As a Chilean, I have taken on my individual responsibility, yet I still struggle with what my role should be in this process. Designing and conducting this research has been a meaningful way to explore and answer this initial question.

The issue of social memory and psychosocial trauma has been a passionate part of my research and clinical work with refugees and survivors of torture, both in Canada and Chile. Part of this passion is related to my strong belief that social memory is an essential piece factor in healing individual and collective psychosocial trauma. Social memories provide a window to the past, they allow us to anchor ourselves to those people, experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and values that were once meaningful but that were transformed or affected by the effects of trauma. From an individual therapeutic perspective we know that we can purposefully bring up painful memories, re-examine them, and give them new meanings in order to incorporate them into the legacy that we want to bring into the future. By doing this we can let go of the painful feelings associated so as to reconstruct our shattered past in significant ways. This process is often not only cognitive or emotional but an embodied experience. However, how do we begin to heal the social fabric of a society that was profoundly wounded? Are reconciliation and truth commissions enough to accomplish this task? What is the role of memory and remembrance in this healing process? With these general questions and ideas in mind I went to Chile in 2003 to be part of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the coup d'état.

During most of my visit I was surrounded by memory at every step of the way. I experienced it as something alive, multiform, a polyphony coming from the past, the present, and from different groups of people who had been affected by the dictatorship. I attended concerts, I watched movies and documentaries, and I visited the Museum of Memory Salvador Allende, the
memorial in the Cementerio General to remember the disappeared, and Villa Grimaldi, a well-known Chilean secret police torture centre. I breathed and experienced memory everyday, and in that experience I found aspects of my life in Chile that had vanished from my memory. I re-encounter my generation in this multitude of voices. A generation that grew up during the dictatorship, with curfews, living in constant fear, yet full of hope for we thought change was possible, but also a generation that experienced and is still experiencing frustration, hopelessness and, at times, despair – despair because there is still impunity and injustice, and the possibilities for knowing the truth and taking those responsible to justice are drifting further away.

A few months before the official commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the coup d'état, President Ricardo Lagos presented a project called No hay Mañana sin Ayer (There Is No Tomorrow Without Yesterday) to deal with the abuses of human rights that took place during the 17 years of military dictatorship. Part of this proposal was to offer reduced prison terms, the commutation of sentences and other forms of immunity to the military involved in the violation of human rights, in exchange for testifying in trials and providing information pertaining to their crimes against humanity (Zalaquett, 2003). The response of those opposed to this proposal was swift and strong. HIJOS (of disappeared and executed parents), an organization composed primarily by sons and daughters of the disappeared, outraged by the injustice of this proposal initiated an indefinite hunger strike to protest this government-sponsored form of impunity.

According to its members the work of HIJOS centres on two main areas: to take those responsible to justice, and to use memory and their experiences to teach the new generations about what happened in Chile. I had the opportunity to meet and interview members of this group during the strike. There were two things in particular that impressed me about them. First, I was surprised by a little silver pendant they wear around their necks with the image of their disappeared father or mother. It felt like they are not only keeping their parents’ presence alive,
but also they use their own bodies as a site of memory and remembrance. I was also profoundly moved by their determination to continue the struggle to denounce different forms of impunity and injustice. As Beto, one of the participants in the hunger strike expressed:

What we want and what we are doing to achieve our goals is for our dead, our disappeared, our tortured, our exiled, ours, not only ours as relatives of the disappeared, they are ours as society, as Chile, our work is for the wholeness of our Chile (personal communication, August 23, 2003).

This statement profoundly resonated with me at many levels. I realized that in their commitment to fight for justice they were using their bodies as the ultimate site of resistance and struggle. And by doing so they were taking the same role that their mothers and grandmothers had taken during the dictatorship. In many ways they were assuming the role of memory keepers of a generation – of mostly women that are beginning to die – that still do not know what happened to their loved ones.

As I reflected on the strike, I became interested in the widespread use of these practices during the dictatorship and how they continue to be performed in democracy. In fact, I remembered my own experiences as a university student in situations where I used my own body to protect fellow students. I also became curious about the healing value and the meaning that members of HIJOS made of these practices, which motivated my interest in working with them. More importantly, I became aware of the power of these actions, particularly when we consider that the President’s proposed immunity was eventually dismissed from the general proposal due to mass disapproval.

Reflecting on these past experiences and reading the literature I began to think about the overwhelming exposure to information, images, videos, ceremonies, and testimonies that bombarded the Chilean society during the months leading up to the commemoration. What I thought was troublesome about this overexposure was the lack of emotional processing to allow the regular citizen the integration of this traumatic past. Young people, in particular, felt a level
of saturation and the subsequent loss of interest in the subject (Madariaga, 2005), while for those directly affected it was a process of re-traumatization given the impossibility to elaborate the meaning of these memories (Madariaga, 2006). I realized there is a profound contradiction among different sectors of Chilean society, between wanting to forget some painful memories while at the same time feeling the responsibility of remembering so as to transmit the history of what happened to the new generations.

As I start this study I embark on a reflection of the effects of State violence on the human experience. I am guided in this reflection by my own experience and a desire to understand the role of memory as a tool for facing the society and the individual tasks of remembrance, mourning, healing, and the confrontation of a violent past with a vision of developing sustainable peace processes towards a hopeful future. These reflections are at the heart of the interest and passion that has inspired this study.

**Rationale and Goals of the Study**

Societies emerging from periods of violence or trauma, like those in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Guatemala, or El Salvador, often harbor competing and conflicting understandings of the past and intense struggles over memory (Lira, 1998). During these transition processes, memory re-appears as a concept that allows conceptualizing and framing the horrors of the past and the lessons to be learned from it (Jelin, 2002). The Chilean case offers an example of the huge contradictions that emerge when trying to establish a process of reparation in the name of social reconciliation, which is based on the absence of true justice and strongly marked by impunity.

During the 1989 electoral campaign of the *Concertación*, a coalition of left-of-centre political parties that came together to defeat Pinochet in the plebiscite of 1988 emphasized justice and the crimes of the dictatorship as central elements in their political discourse (Moulian, 1998). In 1990, after the election of Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin as president,
the promises of the *Concertación* shifted. Before the military government yielded power to Aylwin, the military made a provision that prohibited the Congress from investigating the crimes of the dictatorship or bringing constitutional accusations against its leaders (Moulian, 1998). The new democratic government had to mediate between two positions: the military, whose aim was to ensure a legacy of oblivion in the name of social peace, and those sectors of society affected by the years of repression who demanded not only justice but also a full disclosure of the truth about the atrocities committed by the military. The way President Aylwin faced this political dilemma was to announce that the administration of justice would be done *en la medida de lo posible* (to the extent of possible), thus decreeing what would be the official policy of the governments of the *Concertación* that still rules the country (Madariga, 2005).

Consequently, President Aylwin’s government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the human rights violations of the Pinochet regime. This investigative commission did not have the power to bring charges, initiate legal proceedings, or impose penalties on those involved. The new democratic government, fearing military reprisals while attempting to hold together an unstable political coalition, promoted a form of reconciliation (or forgetting) instead of justice (Moulian, 1998). This political transition as reconciliation required forgiveness without further examination of the historical past or acknowledgement of wrongdoings and provided little access to justice (Frazier, 1999).

At the emotional level, the long-term effects of political violence on the population included a range of feelings such as pain, anguish, fear, loss, grief, displacement, and the destruction of a coherent and meaningful reality (Lira & Castillo, 1991). Political trauma becomes chronic when the factors that cause the trauma remain intact (Martín-Baró, 1996). Clinical psychologists in Chile working with survivors of political violence have identified *impunity* – the absence of formal justice – as one of the mechanisms that instill insecurity and
defenselessness in individuals and deny the possibility of having a hopeful future (Lira, 1997; Madariaga, 2005; Pantoja, 2000; Rojas, 1998). Impunity has also been identified as the main cause of re-traumatization, given that every re-traumatizing episode exacerbates feelings of anger, injustice and impotence, abandonment, and frustration derived from unfulfilled expectations and promises made by the State (Bastías, Mery, Rodríguez, & Soto, 2001; Madariaga, 2006). Furthermore, these unresolved feelings can lead to a state of chronic trauma where the person constantly re-experiences the symptoms with almost the same intensity of the original traumatic event leading to intense feelings and thoughts associated to the past traumas (Pastrana & Venegas, 2001).

Carlos Martin Beristain (2003) argues that one of the first obstacles to achieve national reconciliation is that the direct victims as well as all those affected need to “reconcile themselves with their own experiences” (p.1). This necessarily implies the full knowledge of the truth of what happened and the court trials and punishment of those responsible so that these acts of justice can be socially shared, re-symbolized, and integrated into their lives at a social and individual level.

Even though there is an incipient acknowledgement by the government and within academic and therapeutic circles about the chronic nature of trauma and its relation to impunity, very little research has explored the way in which individuals can reconcile themselves with their own experiences in the context of real and perceived impunity. Furthermore, most of the current academic debates on memory, reconciliation, and trauma seem to focus on the political and social strategies to deal with oblivion, and the need to keep memory alive so that we will “never again” repeat the horrors of the past. This situation reflects the ongoing struggles over the past, where there is a sector of society that favors oblivion over memory, arguing that remembering the past divides the country, while others believe that on-going debate about the past promotes
the development of social change by constructing a new and more democratic social order for our country (Salazar, 2002; Stern, 2000).

In this context, studying the role and uses of memory becomes paramount in order to understand the individual need to reconcile their own history and the connection with their collective responsibility to maintain a historical consciousness and memory of what happened. Likewise, the experiences of those participating in embodied practices of memory and resistance are still not recognized as a source of theoretical, therapeutic, and pedagogical knowledge and praxis. Furthermore, there seems to be a clear need for therapeutic interventions that address these issues in everyday clinical work.

The main goal of this exploratory qualitative research was to further enhance knowledge of people's embodied responses to institutionalized violence. In this study I seek to understand the processes by which people developed individual and group responses to denounce and to resist the violence and impunity of the dictatorship that still prevails in the democratic government by transforming their bodies into sites of resistance and memory. In this study I explored the following research questions: (1) How do members of HIJOS use their bodies as a site of resistance and enactment of collective memory? (2) How do these young people understand and make meaning of the value of these embodied practices of resistance and memory? and (3) What is the therapeutic value of exploring these practices through a series of creative workshops?

The overarching objectives of this study were the following: (a) to explore the embodied experience of members of HIJOS in practices of memory and resistance; (b) to empower the participants by exploring and validating the personal and collective meaning they made of these practices; (c) to determine the healing value of exploring these practices through a series of innovative expressive workshops; (d) to compare the individual experiences of memory to the
public discursive construction of memory; (e) to explore the trans-generational effects of psychosocial trauma in this segment of the population; and (f) to consider the use of memory and resistance in pedagogical and therapeutic practices.

Overview of the Study

In order to investigate the research questions in a thorough manner, I used a meta-theoretical framework that includes a number of theories that attempt to account for all the complexities and challenges of studying embodied social practices that are both individual and collective, that involve the construction of meaning, and that are historical in nature in the context of piloting an innovative workshop method that involves a variety of artistic expressions. The specificity of this research calls for a theoretical framework that can sustain and acknowledge the interpretive nature of the phenomena: the socially, culturally, and historically situated knowledge that is being constructed by the participants throughout the process, the embodied experiences being studied, the therapeutic effects of embodied interventions, and the research method used.

Bearing these characteristics in mind I have conceptualized the overall framework using some aspects of social constructionism, particularly the recognition of the historical character of psychological knowledge (Gergen, 1973), the interpretive nature of human beings (Gadamer, 1991; Ibañez, 1990), the reflexivity involved in the production of knowledge (Ibañez, 1994; Potter, 1996) that together with the main premises of social psychology (Garay, Iñiguez, & Martínez, 2002; Iñiguez, 2005) are known as critical social psychology. In order to understand the complexity of embodied life experiences I am drawing from narrative inquiry (Cabruja, Iñiguez, & Vázquez, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Riessman, 1993), the body-centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006), and the neurobiology of trauma, (Rothschild, 2000; Scarry, 1985; van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996). Finally, in order to account for the
therapeutic benefits of the research process I am drawing on a variety of therapeutic approaches, (Becker, 2003), (Epston, White, & Murray (1996), Herman, (1992), and Lira & Weinstein, (1990), with a particular emphasis on narrative therapy (Payne, 2002; White & Epston 1990).

The methodological approach used is what I have termed *A Liberation Action Research Method*. This approach draws from the main premises of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, developed by Paulo Freire (1986), la psicología social de la liberación / liberation psychology (PSL) initiated by Martín-Baró (1996) and further developed by Montero (2000) amongst others, participatory action research (Fals-Borda, 1985, 1991), and Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) (Boal, 1995). What these four approaches have in common is the promotion of collective processes of knowledge generation through ongoing reflective practices that seek to unearth sources of popular local knowledge that lead to social change through praxis (Fals-Borda, 1985). Therefore the research process becomes a critical dialectical process where the experiences and ideas of both participants and researchers enrich each other’s experiences and the understanding of the phenomena being investigated.

The exploration of these practices of embodied resistance and memory and the meaning derived from them was provided through the implementation of a series of workshops that use artistic expressions such as writing, techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed, photography, and collage. For the data analysis, I developed *An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method* that draws from the main premises of narrative inquiry (Arvay, 1998, 2003; McAdams, 1993; McLeod, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993), body-centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006), and participatory action research (Cresswell 2002; Fals-Borda, 1985; Rahman, 1985).

This text is as a partial, limited, and imperfect representation of the rich and life-affirming stories of the participants that came to life and acquired new meanings through the
social interactions and reflective experiences during the research process. The text is both a tapestry and a symphony of the many voices and experiences I have encountered on this journey. It includes a visual rendering of the artistic memory pieces created by the participants at different stages of the process. It also integrates their voices in individual sections in an attempt to portray the richness of their embodied experiences, each telling a different story of pain and hope that speaks to the heart of those committed to healing the wounds and re-constructing the memory of a shattered society. In doing so I am aware that this is only a small piece of the work that needs to be done. However, I am also aware that as Piper (2002) explains “we are the subjectivities that we produce; therefore we have the power of transforming them through the articulation of different praxis” (p. 30). Finally, I offer a situated interpretation of these social practices of memory and resistance in the hope that those affected by psychosocial trauma, including therapist and intellectuals, can benefit from this journey.

In this study I have established a connection between memory and resistance and its role in promoting individual and collective emotional and physical survival processes. Consequently, I argue that the engagement in embodied practices of memory and resistance elucidates the feeling of invisibility the participants experience resulting from the lack of social validation and the prevailing impunity. In the text I propose a tentative theorizing about the body as a meaning-making organism where individual and collective meanings are created. In addition, I identified a need to move forward in a process of re-constructing memory by taking an active role in deconstructing the structures that sustain a rigid vision of the past by developing interventions that can be both healing and dynamic in helping the participants reconcile with their own experience and place in history. What I offer in this text is what the participants and I have termed “acts of active hope” understood as the emotional, embodied, and lived engagement in acts of purposeful remembrance and reflection through the creation of artistic pieces that seek to open reflective
spaces about one’s own responsibility in history. Through these acts of active hope we dismantled and re-defined the notions of memory and resistance to be re-constructed again in the body as a wholesome experience that acknowledges past emotions and future memories.

In this introductory chapter I have presented a personal account of the context in which I met the participants and became interested in the subject of this research. I have provided a brief historical background of the current social situation where impunity appears as the main cause for the development of these practices of memory and resistance. I have included a rationale for the need to transform discussions about social phenomena like memory and resistance into psychological theories and interventions and pedagogical praxis. Within this context I have described the main goal, the objectives of this study, as well as the guiding questions. I have also explained the theoretical framework that assisted me in understanding and interpreting the research phenomena as well as the methodology developed. Finally, I have provided a glimpse of the results generated through the engagement of the participants and myself in this research process.
CHAPTER 2: SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter I situate the context of the study by presenting a brief overview of the sociohistorical background that led to the coup d'état. I then offer a description of the sociogenesis of trauma in the context of the notion of psychological warfare. Within this framework I describe the ideology of the military and the main forms of repression used to control the population. I continue with a characterization of the psychosocial effects of repression on the population, followed by a description of the memory and resistance practices that emerged in this context. I conclude by addressing the need to explore the importance of the embodied memory and resistance practices that developed during the dictatorship through the lens of the participants in these actions.

On September 4, 1970, Salvador Allende, the candidate of the Unidad Popular / Popular Unity (UP) coalition of left-wing parties, was elected president of Chile. This was the first socialist president democratically elected in the country (Gilbert & Lee, 1986). The political platform of the UP included the extension of the agrarian reform initiated by the previous president, Eduardo Frei, the nationalization of the copper industry, and the creation of a socialized sector of the economy (Barrera & Valenzuela, 1986). The government counted on the massive support of the poorer classes, made up mainly of workers, miners, peasants, pobladores (poor, urban dwellers), students, intellectuals, and artists (Gilbert & Lee, 1986). The popular support of his government during the presidential campaign and while in power was represented by demonstrations of more than a million people. However, the three years of Allende’s presidency were conflictive and ended in the polarization of the civilian society. In recent years the influence and support of the United States in the process of destabilization of Allende’s government has been amply reported (Ensalaco, 2000). According to the U.S. Senate inquiry into U.S. involvement in Chilean affairs, the United States attempted first to block the
confirmation of Allende’s election and then to destabilize his government and ultimately to remove him by force (Ensalaco, 2000).

On September 11, 1973, the military coup d'état led by Augusto Pinochet initiated a process that completely transformed Chile’s social fabric and its institutional structures. The political repression that followed included mass detention of political opponents, summary execution, torture, disappearances, illegal searches of homes, factories, schools, hospitals and public buildings, the dismantling of political and social organizations, and mass exile. The systematic violation of human rights, the persecution of opposition leaders, and the institutionalized violence against citizens created an atmosphere of political threat and chronic fear (Gilbert & Lee, 1986; Lira, 1991, 1992, 1997). Those who supported the socialist government of Salvador Allende were persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, killed, or sent into exile, and included political leaders, priests, nuns, trade union leaders, members of leftist parties, human rights activists, community leaders, students, intellectuals, and common citizens.

The profound social, political, and cultural change experienced in Chile represents a brutal form of changing by force of an ideology - the socialist ideology - embodied in the government of Salvador Allende, and the installation of an opposing ideology, which represented the economic interests not only of the Chilean dominant classes, but also of foreign economic and political interests through the implementation of the neoliberal economic model (Brinkmann, 2006; Madariaga, 2002; Moulian, 1998; Salazar, 2002). The repression that followed is expressed in the statement of Augusto Pinochet at the time: “We are going to apply Martial Law to everybody found with weapons or explosives! They will be shot immediately, without trials” (Augusto Pinochet cited in Verdugo, 1998).
The Sociopolitical Genesis of Trauma

In order to understand the genesis of the political repression exercised by the State after the coup d'état and its effects on the population, it becomes necessary to review some of the relevant literature. Herman (1997) defines psychological trauma as "an affliction of the powerless. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning" (p. 33). In the context of psychosocial trauma the field of political psychology provides some important concepts to understand this particular type of aggression against the civilian population. Chilean psychologist Elizabeth Lira (1992) uses the notion of "psychological warfare" to conceptualize the problem. The origins of this concept can be found in the military disciplines. There are two main elements associated with this concept: (a) morality as a concept to be considered in both the supporters and the adversaries, and (b) political propaganda as a strategic factor for multiplying violence (1992). These two factors became essential in manipulating and controlling the population through moral demands such as loyalty and misinformation. Therefore, war is no longer an armed conflict since it begins to incorporate elements drawn from the field of psychology as well as other political, social, and economical factors.

Omang (cited in Lira, 1992) states that a concrete application of the research studies conducted in the field of military disciplines can be found in the CIA Psychological Operation Manual in Nicaragua. Psychological warfare is defined in that manual as a "type of military operation developed after the Second World War to control large groups of people and or territories, without using other conventional forms of warfare" (Lira, 1992, p. 14). In these types of operations, human beings are considered as a military objective, but the mind of the individual, in particular, becomes a target. Therefore when control of the mind has been reached the enemy has been destroyed. The procedures used in psychological warfare include using and
manipulating people’s anxieties and fears by dehumanizing and humiliating people thus transforming danger and life threat in a permanent situation that extends over time and whose end is unpredictable (Lira, & Castillo, 1991). In psychological warfare there are three basic principles: (a) the supporters of these actions must receive social material and moral compensations permanently so as to have their continued support; (b) the military must reinforce and accelerate indirect actions through secret agents, rumors, and movements that feed people’s fears and anxieties, and (c) confuse the public opinion with waves of false and true news (Lira, 1992, pp. 138-139).

Lira (1992) argues that in the case of Chile, psychological warfare was used against the population throughout the 17 years of the dictatorship. Initially the State repression was directed towards those who supported the government of Salvador Allende and later against those who opposed the military dictatorship. The objectives were: (a) to intimidate its opponents by creating fear; (b) the paralysis of people by dismembering social and political organizations, thus stopping people from organizing themselves; and (c) the control of a large number of people (Brinkman, 2006; Lira, 1992; Riquelme, 1994). The main methods used were: forced disappearance of people, the systematic and widespread use of torture, forced exile, or displacement of social and political groups, and the use, control, and manipulation of the media to implement this psychological warfare (Brinkman, 2006; Lira 1992). In this context fear was the main psychological instrument used against the population. This was a scientific process planned and executed with the intention of impacting the social and political behavior of the population and the subsequent effects on everyday life (Lira, 1992; Rojas, 1998). Likewise, Rojas (1998) argues that crimes against humanity are expressly conceived and planned; they are visible, major aggressions, executed to be transmitted as a symbol from the individual body to the social body with the aim of terrorizing, paralyzing, and subduing through fear.
The Use of the Body as a Form of Repression

Consistent with the notion of psychological warfare, we observe that since 1973 the body became the target of a symbolic fear-producing system. The military government carried out a number of actions, whose object was the destruction or damage of the body. According to the Rettig Report (1993) issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission there were: 15,405 political assassinations, which include shootings, stabbings and even exploding people with dynamite; 15,000 detentions which involved political prisoners kept in illegal facilities; countless exiles; 1,185 disappeared (although the Organization of American States has estimated 5,000 cases). There were also countless politically motivated rapes committed in the context of torture or as a part of a standard detention procedure (Agger & Jensen, 1994). In addition, even more heinous crimes were perpetrated as punishments. For example, two teenagers were burned alive by troops in Santiago in 1986 during a protest rally, and three prominent opponents of the regime were found with their throats cut in 1985 (Martinez, 1993).

Torture

Within the context of exercising control by terrifying the population, torture is without a doubt a particular form of communication and social control. A preliminary form of analysis identifies torture as a form of punishment meant to obtain information about the enemy through sophisticated methods of inflicting excruciating pain to the body of the prisoner. However, a secondary and perhaps even more powerful message is conveyed to those opposing the regime: "DO NOT mess with authority as your body will be terribly punished or made to disappear" (Martinez, 1993, p. 125). The body of the prisoner becomes a symbol of terror and a sort of catalyst that transmits the fear to the social body of the rest of the community.

The exact number of people who were tortured during the dictatorship is almost impossible to estimate because at the time people did not report torture, many people left the
country, and others died some time after they were released as a consequence of torture, but their deaths were registered as natural death. Human rights organizations working with victims of torture during the dictatorship estimate that there were more than 400,000 victims (Madariaga, 2001). A recent study (2005) conducted with urban dwellers of 12 out of the 113 shantytowns of Santiago found that 98,904 people experienced a form of torture during the dictatorship (Moya, Videla & Valladares, 2005). Finally the Valech Report issued by the National Commission on Political Prison and Torture in 2004 established that 27,255 out of 35,865 people who testified were tortured by agents of the State. One of the issues encountered in quantifying the extent of torture relates to the definitions used. The Valech Report considered for their characterization of torture only those people who were tortured in detention centers, excluding a large segment of the population who were tortured in their homes (usually in rural areas) and in shantytowns and urban communities (Moya, Videla, & Valladares, 2005).

Moya, Videla and Valladares (2005) found that collective forms of torture of urban dwellers were common during land and air raid operations against poor shantytowns in Santiago. These actions were characterized by the joint operation of the military by land and the air force. They were conducted at night or in early hours of the morning. They included massive and vicious home searches that included the complete destruction of furniture and personal belongings, and the arrest of all the men over 15 years of age who would be taken to the soccer fields to be beaten up or subjected to fake and real executions in front of their families and the rest of the community who were forced to watch. These practices were commonly used in the shantytowns and poor neighborhoods to search and arrest community and union leaders, political militants, and to intimidate the entire community (Madariaga, 2001; Moya, Videla, & Valladares, 2005).
At the individual level torture affects the entire biopsychosocial unity of the person, thus the multiple effects of torture will have an impact on the physical and psychological health of the person, and on the individual capacity to relate, trust, form, and maintain social relationships. At the social level, torture contributed to the development of social behaviors and patterns of domination as a result of the internalization of fear, apathy, and social indifference. These forms of behaviour have influenced the population in the way violence is perceived as an accepted form of conflict resolution in interpersonal and social relations. It has also imposed an individualist focus in social relations that has eroded previous forms of collective socialization (Madariaga, 2001).

**Disappearances**

Strongly connected to the practice of torture is the disappearance of people. The expression “disappeared detainees” became common in Chile and outside during the dictatorship. According to the official definition provided by the Rettig Report (1993), “disappeared detainees refers to the situation of those who were arrested by government agents or by persons in their service and about whom the last information is that they were apprehended or that they were seen later in a secret prison” (p. 35). The official response was to deny having arrested them, or to claim that they had been released. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission established that torture was generally used during such detention, and there is a “moral certainty” that it ended in the victim’s death and the disposal of the remains to prevent their being discovered (1993, p. 36).

In addition, the report identified two forms of disappearances practiced by government officials. The first one which was mostly practiced after September 11, 1973, included the arrest, summary execution or murder of the victim, and the secret burial or dumping of the body, followed by denial or false stories. In these cases the disappearances were primarily a way of
hiding or covering up crimes committed, rather than a “centralized coordination aimed at eliminating predetermined categories of people” (p. 36). The second one was carried out primarily during the 1974-1977 period mainly but not exclusively by the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional / National Intelligence Directorate (DINA). This particular form of disappearance was a systematic, politically motivated effort to exterminate particular categories of persons (member of political parties). However, after the report was made public, more than 1,500 new cases were formally denounced to the National Corporation of Reparation (Lira, 1997). Furthermore, after the arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998, the number of disappeared people who were reported by their relatives also increased (Madariaga, 2002).

The individual and sociopsychological repercussions of a disappearance include a high level of psychological pain and a profound alteration of the everyday of the affected family, friends, or neighbors. Particularly sinister is the effect on witnesses who saw their son, a friend, a neighbour being kidnapped, realizing later that the government consistently denied that this event ever took place. This non-acknowledgement has the power to produce in the witness a denial of their own perception, which is compounded by the lack of information that can lead to psychotic states or alterations of their sense of reality. In the families directly affected, this situation produced further problems that in many cases ended in separations or the break up of relationships or modifications in the family structure (Kordon & Edelman, 2002). These changes were linked to the different positions taken by family members in relation to the course of action to follow, the terror that permeated the behaviors and that conditioned the assimilation of the alienating discourse of the dictatorship. It was often the case that the internalized levels of aggression remained in the home debilitating further the family bonds (Kordon & Edelman, 2002; Lira, 1997).
Public Executions and Killings

The Rettig Report (1993) also established that public executions were another form of destroying the body of opponents and intimidating people. They were conducted in three forms. In some cases there were armed confrontations between the military or the police who were coming to arrest someone and those who were being hunted. In many of these cases the military killed those arrested or wounded. In other cases the military prepared an ambush to kill the political militants they were looking for, and they claimed afterwards that it was a confrontation. There were also other forms of executions such as cutting people’s throats and the public kidnapping and shooting into the person’s head. The bodies of the people killed in real or fake confrontations were usually returned to their families, while the bodies of those shot on the streets were dumped in empty plots or near a roadside. Many killings happened in the context of the repression exercised during national protest rallies between 1983-1990 (Rettig, 1993).

Like in other forms of repression the executions of opponents had similar effects on the families of the victims and the community in general. The families of executed and disappeared prisoners experienced a progressive level of isolation. In many cases they became marginal and marginalized (Moya, Videla, & Valladares, 2005). To have a relative disappeared, killed, or to have suffered torture became dangerous stigmas. Under those circumstances many families became silent; they isolated themselves out of fear and to avoid further repression. This self-imposed isolation was magnified by the discrimination and/or elusiveness of friends, colleagues, and even relatives who feared that becoming closer would have political repercussions for them. This situation not only impacted their social relations but also their economic survival. In most cases men were the victims leaving the wives and children unprotected financially, which led to the loss of economic status and social validation and, in many cases, people experienced hunger and poverty (Brinkmann, 2006).
Other Forms of Repression

The political exile of a large number of Chileans was another form of repression and traumatization used by the dictatorship. The exact number of Chileans who left the country after the military coup is difficult to determine. The highest estimate made by the Catholic migration organization in Chile, Instituto Católico Chileno de Migración (INCAMI), is that one million people (a tenth of the population at the time) left the country for political or economic reasons since the military coup (Kay, 1987). This form of dislocation was also another way in which the dictatorship attempted to fragment the social body of the supporters of the UP and of those opposing the dictatorship. The psychosocial consequences of exile include: the abrupt rupture of a life project; the loss of social and emotional networks such as family, friends, and co-workers; the loss of a familiar landscape and geography; and the end of people’s active participation in the everyday life of their country and therefore the loss of personal history, biography, and sense of identity (Domínguez, 1994).

Censorship was another strategy used to silence the population. By February 1974 half of Santiago’s journalists were unemployed due to the closing of news media (Ensalaco, 2000). Only four of the original 11 newspapers remained, five radio stations had been bombed or expropriated, and censorship mutilated the few magazines still allowed to publish (Sagaris, 1996). The military government also banned a long list of books, including poems by Chilean Nobel prize winner Pablo Neruda, and ordered the destruction of history texts, poetry, anthologies, novels, and biographies of prominent Chilean religious thinkers (Gilbert & Lee, 1986). To own books or to participate in cultural activities became a life-threatening activity. These attacks attempted to eliminate an entire generation of artists and intellectuals from Chilean society, along with their work, creating a vacuum, which the military government filled with censor-approved, official culture (Sagaris, 1996).
Particularly relevant to the context of this study is to provide a brief overview of the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) given that most of the participants are adult children of militants of this political organization. The origins of the MIR are linked to the regrouping of a number of small, left-wing groups who were in profound disagreement with the Socialist and Communist parties (Neghme & Leiva, 2000). Officially the MIR was born in August 1965. From the beginning their members worked towards the Chilean revolution using the armed struggle, following the Fidel Castro revolution in Cuba. Their vision opposed the traditional Chilean left that they viewed as pacifist, concerned mostly with winning elections, and unwilling to materialize the revolution — the only road to confront the bourgeoisie (Naranjo, 2004). Although the MIR supported Allende’s government it did not participate actively in this political project because they considered that Allende had not fully included the popular masses in the government’s Socialist project. In contrast, their strategy consisted in developing local groups of “popular power” as an alternative to the Popular Unity government that would eventually lead to the creation of the People’s Assembly made out of workers, urban dwellers, students, and peasants. Their vision was to achieve a revolutionary government of workers and peasants (Corvalán, 1996). The MIR was annihilated between 1973-1980, losing most of its leaders while the rest of its members were detained and tortured. Although at first they tried to respond and resist the brutality of the military with a few weapons, they soon realized that they could not fight and began to retreat. Initially the MIR profoundly rejected the idea of exile, however, the loss of so many of its members forced them to leave the country and reorganize in countries like Cuba and Sweden. At the beginning of the 1980s the MIR initiated a reorganization process where they studied the possibility of returning to Chile to fight the dictatorship from within the country. This process was developed in Cuba and it is known as *Operación Retorno* (Return Operation). This process also included the establishment of...
resistance bases to promote the rural armed struggle in the South. This reorganization process never materialized and it ended in the death of many of its members and the fragmentation of the party that is currently divided in many small fractions (Pérez, 2001).

**The Ideology of the Military Regime**

During the first years of the dictatorship, the country experienced a profound ideological transformation. Chilean identity was transformed by the military government’s ideological discourse. The legitimacy of the “new order” imposed by the military was based on the doctrine of national security, which presupposes the existence of an internal enemy that must be exterminated or at least demoralized and neutralized. Due to censorship and manipulation of the mass media, and the need of the new regime’s supporters to dismiss rumors of atrocities, this discourse went virtually unchallenged in public. As a result the meaning of *Patria* (Fatherland) was profoundly altered. It no longer referred to a common shared identity rooted in common socialization, education, and political traditions and beliefs. The *enemigos de la Patria* (enemies of the Fatherland) were defined as leftist subversives and extremists, as non-Chileans and traitors. This characterization of Allende’s supporters as enemies established the context of an internal war, thus justifying their extermination, political repression, and human rights violations that ensued (Lira, 1997).

Becker and Calderón (1994) have identified the different ways in which the dictatorship became established in people’s psyches by turning the external threat into chronic fear. The regime:

(a) undertook sufficient repressive activities to convince the entire population that the threat was real; (b) defined the reasons for the repression in sufficiently vague and arbitrary terms so that anyone might see himself as a potential victim of such repression; (c) at certain moments, denied the existence of repression and at other times spectacularly highlighted its existence; (d) always made it clear that the threat was an existential threat, i.e., a threat of physical death and psychological annihilation (p.59).
Faúndez (1994) asserts that in order for the repression to be effective the public discourse of the dictatorship needed to be ambiguous and contradictory. Therefore, it continuously used dual messages, thereby creating rules that both impose and deny. For instance, the discourse proclaimed itself to be apolitical, yet it exercised political power. In practice, it carried out a war against the people while proclaiming peace, tranquility, and order. It denied the existence of political prisoners or political persecution while at the same time it arrested, kidnapped, tortured, executed, and made people disappear (Faúndez, 1994).

Impunity

Impunity was an essential factor in instilling fear and silence among the population and in demonstrating that the armed forces exercised absolute control. Impunity is defined as the process of repeatedly leaving without punishment those people guilty of a crime that affects individuals or social groups as a way of exercising power and control, thus generating uncertainty and mistrust in the social and political processes (Brinkman, 1999). The process of impunity began with the persecution of the victims that had been previously selected by the State repressive system because they were considered potential political and ideological enemies of the new order. This was followed by the absence of an investigation about the circumstance, causes, or responsibilities attributed to the victims. Therefore they were denied their right to due process, while at the same time there was guaranteed impunity to those State officials responsible for crimes by the omission of justice. From a human rights perspective the violation of these rights by the State transformed impunity into an implicit moral approval of these crimes (Brinkmann, 1999). Unlike what happened in other dictatorships, the Pinochet administration received the consent and support of members of the judiciary, who not only allowed impunity to happen, but also did not protect the fundamental rights of people. What becomes troublesome in
the current context is that the same legal structure is still in place including the same judges (Brinkmann, 1999, 2002; Madariaga, 2005, 2006).

**The Social Effects of Repression on the Population**

Consistent with the notion of psychological warfare, Chilean psychologists Elizabeth Lira and Maria Isabel Castillo (1991) studied the subjective and political meaning of life threat and fear in the Chilean society during the military dictatorship. In this context the systematic violation of human rights constituted a permanent life threat that the researchers' conceptualized as a political threat. One of the psychological and political effects was the generalized fear in the population. The results suggest that fear is at the base of the psychosocial trauma in Chile. Although fear is an individual and subjective experience, when it is lived simultaneously by many people it acquires especial significance in the social and political behavior of people (Lira & Castillo, 1991).

Within this context everyday life is transformed; people became vulnerable and the economic survival of people is affected. Suddenly people are confronted with the concrete possibility of experiencing pain and suffering, losing loved ones, or dying. In this context the political repression of the State is perceived subjectively as a process of personal annihilation, that also includes the loss of collective ideals and dreams. The processes of transmission are many and effective. In the privacy of private relationships people talk about detentions, torture, and executions, which generate panic, confusion, and a sense of unreality, which subsequently fulfills the objectives of the dictatorship of creating fear in the population. In the public domain the media avoids talking about this reality due to the imposed or self-imposed censorship that results in an increased silence. This fragmentation of the social reality intensifies the efficiency of the repressive State, thus the internalized fear on one hand, and the apparent normality of
society on the other, create a horrifying world where reality and fantasy coexist making it difficult for the individual to understand and control their own experiences.

Castillo and Lira (1991) identified three stages in the way fear affects individuals: (a) people objectify fear as a threat to their personal integrity; (b) the certainty or high probability that the danger will materialize transforms threat into fear; (c) the perception of the threat as being imminent can transform fear into terror or panic. Panic refers to a spontaneous and disorganized individual and collective reaction resulting from a dangerous event. The difficulty in identifying the content of this life threat, or to discriminate its imminence, is known as anguish, which is also related to waiting. Waiting is related to the impossibility of identifying the exact object of anxiety and the anticipated impotence when confronted with a dangerous situation. This insecurity and fear are generated by the abrupt change of the social surrounding or because of the fantasy of some anticipated change. Therefore both reality and fantasy can trigger processes of insecurity that can be individually or collectively internalized as a fear of change (1992). In Castillo and Lira’s opinion, this life threat can be perceived as (a) the threat of one’s own physical death; (b) the fear of suffering some form of physical aggression, being beaten up, or tortured; (c) the loss of the physical conditions to work; (d) the fear of losing the daily economic income and having to accept an insufficient salary to cover basic needs; and/or (e) the threat to live a life according to values, beliefs and purposes that are in opposition with those of the State (1991).

At the individual level, Castillo and Lira (1991) identified a permanent state of vulnerability and an exacerbated state of alertness, including a sense of impotence or loss of control over their own life, and an alteration of the sense of reality that translates into the impossibility of validating objectively one’s own experiences and knowledge. At the collective level, Lira argues that the repressive methods employed were changing over time, however the
systematic use of terror managed to create a generalized sense of passivity, silence, and compliance in large sectors of society, which made it possible for people to accept unemployment, exploitation, and the lack of – or insufficient – social programs such as housing, health, and education (Lira, 1992).

Unfortunately the effects of terror did not end at the end of the dictatorship. Terror not only affected social relationships, it also became internalized in the psychic structures of society. The general uncertainty experienced for so many years influenced the development of individual and group behaviors, which are translated into either aggressive or violent reactions, or mistrustful, and apathetic responses about the current social and political events of the country. Consequently, Castillo and Lira (1991) and Lira (1992) argue that the long-term effects of fear have modeled inhibitory and self-censored attitudes that generate difficulties in discriminating reality and thus impeding the necessary participation to achieve a democratic society.

In this regard Lira (1992) explains that the concept of chronic fear is in itself a contradiction since fear and anguish are both individual responses to internal and external threats. Chronic fear, however, is no longer a specific reaction to a concrete situation, but rather it becomes a permanent reaction in everyday life not only of those directly affected but also to whoever feels a form of threat, which implies that a large part of the society was affected. Consequently Lira (1992) concluded that “during the military regime, fear was used as a psychological instrument with political purposes, scientifically planned to influence the social and political behavior of the population” (p.151).

At the collective level the effects of the internalized chronic fear affecting a large sector of the population were also conceptualized from a psychoanalytic perspective. Lira (1992) suggests that the long and continued political repression introduced an intolerable dimension in the context of social relationships. This concept, called the sinister and developed by Freud
(1919), refers to the loss of the boundaries between reality and fantasy. In the Chilean context the torture, disappearances, executions, and assassinations – among other violations of human rights – are an expression of the sinister, the ominous in social relationships given that reality surpasses the limits of the most perverse fantasy ever imagined. The sinister sustained the development of chronic fear by overwhelming psychic apparatus, thus causing the habitual defenses to stop being effective (Lira, 1992).

Collective People’s Resistance

The responses of the people to confront the massive repression of the military regime have recently begun to be explored. The Rettig Report (1993) describes the reactions of the Chilean society during the 1973-1990 dictatorship in the following ways. The document establishes that during the first stage of the dictatorship, from September 11 to December 1973, there was no public critical reaction from society, with the exception of some sectors of the Catholic Church. The absence of a reaction can be the result of the fear, the surprise and the lack of knowledge about the events that were happening. From January 1974 to August 1977, there was an emergent reaction from different social sectors in defense of human rights as people began to learn of the extent of these violations. Social organizations such as the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees began to form and work in solidarity with the victims. The period from September 1977 to May 1983 was marked by increased and organized participation of the population in the social context. However, large sectors of society still remained indifferent or skeptical about the magnitude of the violation of human rights. The period between May 1983 and March 1990 saw a more determined participation of the social sectors in confronting the dictatorship. Pacific opposition began to take shape as a form of protest and organization. Likewise, some of the political parties began to reorganize, as well as unions, students’ associations, and multiparty organizations. This period was characterized by a
strong presence of the population on street manifestations such as rallies and demonstrations in opposition to the military regime until the elections in 1989 (Minnoletti, 2002; Rettig, 1993).

**The Role of Women in the Resistance**

From the beginning of the dictatorship women from diverse social and political backgrounds began to organize out of desperation at finding themselves powerless to work either inside or outside a system that refused to recognize them as either a political or labour force. Many of them had lost their husbands or children and therefore an important part of their financial support disappeared. Determined to use their very condition as homemakers and mothers as their principal political weapon, they began organizing communal pots or providing free childcare so other women could work. They also risked their lives by hiding people who were being persecuted (Agosin, 1996). Within this social context arose the *arpillera*, which in English translates to *burlap*; in Spanish it came to mean *the cloth of resistance*.

**The Arpilleras**

The arpillera, a colorful tapestry made out of burlap, is a traditional Chilean art. During the dictatorship the *arpilleras* became an expression of individual and collective memory and a form of resistance. The *arpilleristas* organized themselves first as mothers, sisters, and wives of the *disappeared* and then as political citizens. As identified by Agosin (1996), the dictatorship forced these women to confront public life and to make their pain and grief visible. They not only created tapestry, but also they initiated street protest. The first arpillera workshops were formed in March of 1974 as part of the handicraft workshops under the sponsorship of the Vicariate of Solidarity of the Catholic Church (Vidal, 2002). These first arpilleras depicted the circumstances in which their loved ones had been arrested, or the absence of that person at home in their everyday life. Others showed their endless search in police headquarters or detentions centres. Yet others, talked about torture, hunger, and despair, while others represented the hope
that their loved one would soon come home. One recurring theme was the divided family, a painful metaphor for a divided country (Agosín, 1996).

The arpilleras workshops also acted as a form of psychological grief support group for these women, as well as a source of income to feed their children who were without fathers (Lira, 1997). These arpilleras invented strategies to challenge the overwhelming fear by depicting political repression. They developed a new form of political resistance by telling the story of a divided Chile in graphic and visible forms, thus becoming a portrait of the daily suffering of poor people and the impact of human rights violations of the military dictatorship. In a sense, they became “embroidered memories” of those years (Agosín, 1996).

According to Leydesdorff, Passerini, and Thompson (1996), it is not surprising that gender differences affect the way in which memories are experienced and represented by men or women. They assert that in most societies there are widespread tendencies for men to dominate the public sphere and for women’s lives to focus on family and household; therefore, these experiences should be reflected in different qualities of memories. These differences often reflect both the particular areas of power, which women and men hold in everyday life, and the various levels of public discourse. However, memories of subordinate groups can also show striking resilience, and they can be transmitted “as women’s memories, from the interstices of society, from the boundaries between the private and the public” (Leydesdorff, Passerini, & Thompson, 1996, p. 8). This analysis is particularly relevant to the case of the arpilleras. The massive disappearance of men from the public sphere forced women to take on different roles. As mothers, they were the first to react to the arrest of their children and husbands. They used the private safety of their homes to create tapestries of both their own and the country’s memories, but also they took to the streets to protest and demand justice. Furthermore, their resistance and
political determination challenged the authoritarian power of the military, the oppression and the exploitation, thus setting a precedent for the rest of the society to engage in acts of resistance.

**The Use of the Body as a Form of Resistance and Memory**

As the body became an important form of repression in the official discourse of the dictatorship, an important segment of the population began responding by using bodily signs in its own discourse in an attempt to maintain a dialogue with authority (Martinez, 1993). With the help of the *Committee for Peace* headed by Archbishop Raúl Silva Henríquez, an Inter-Church organization formed shortly after the coup to help the victims of the repression and their families. In 1974, the *arpilleristas* formed the Agrupación Chilena de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos (the Chilean Association of Relatives of Disappeared Detained). From the beginning, the objectives of these women were clear and have not changed: they want to know where their family members are. They want the truth about these disappearances to be known (Chuchryk, 1993). Over the years the activities and their objectives have evolved within a political framework. According to Hernán Vidal (2002), the public discourse of this organization has focused on two main metaphors: the human body and the family. In his analysis he shows that they denounce the military action against the family in the following, simple terms: lesionar (to inflict an injury), dolor (pain), sufrir (to suffer), herida profunda (a deep wound), or la herida permanecerá abierta, sangrando para siempre (the wound will remain open, bleeding forever) (cited in Martínez, 1993). The actions of this group included chaining themselves to public buildings, street protests, and the reproduction in their own bodies of their relatives' pain through hunger strikes.

In addition, in public appearances and street protests these women pinned pictures of their disappeared to their hearts as a constant reminder of their loss, but also as a way to convey a powerful message to the authorities: that they were not willing to forget their loved ones and to
stop searching for them. The most compelling embodiment of the absence of their loved ones is the *CUECA sola*. The *cueca* is a traditional couples dance. They adapted this dance to show the women dancing alone as a symbol of the felt absence of the body of their loved ones. The power of this dance as a symbol resides precisely in the unfinished relationship they portray, in the ongoing search, and in the hope that those two bodies will be dancing again. Finally, it denounces the injustice of depriving people of the most basic right to be happy and loved in intimate relationships.

On November 11, 1983, Sebastian Acevedo, a fifty year old worker and member of the Chilean Communist Party, sprayed his clothes with gasoline, shouting that his disappeared children should be freed, or at least taken to trial. He then set himself on fire and died eight hours later. He destroyed his own body in an act of despair and love. His martyrdom not only shocked the Chilean public but also forced the authorities to release his daughter and son. According to Renato Martínez (1993), his violent death shows a “form of communication – a most tragic discourse – that uses the body as the ultimate sign of protest and defiance” (p. 86). After his death, a pacifist group that was beginning to organize took his name to honor his life, thus forming *El Movimiento contra la Tortura Sebastián Acevedo* (The Sebastián Acevedo Movement against Torture). The objectives of this movement were to denounce and to stop the widespread use of torture by the military by using the body as their main symbol of resistance (Vidal, 2002). The non-violence principle proposed by Gandhi inspired their philosophy and their actions, which included standing in front of torture centres shouting, “in this place a man/woman is being tortured now” (Martínez, 1993). Members chained themselves to structures, blocked traffic with their bodies, and engaged in hunger strikes (Vidal, 2002). These initial actions undertaken by small groups soon began to be reproduced by other sectors. It became common for university students to engage in sit-ins in the middle of the streets or in public
places as a form of protest. These peaceful demonstrations where people just sat for hours and sang songs became a symbol of the growing defiance of the population. Human chains were another form of protest and resistance. These spontaneous groups would rush together to form a human chain and block an arrest by the police. Their actions inspired other members of the society who began to demonstrate and to confront the military with their bodies in mass protests until the end of the dictatorship in 1990.

However, it was not until 1983, that the streets were fully reclaimed as the natural habitat for the political body. The social mobilization of the masses began at that time. Beginning in May 1983, there were national protests against the military regime almost every month. Occasionally, these protests were accompanied by calls for partial or general strikes and included street demonstrations, public gatherings, marches, and, during the evening hours, pot-banging as well as barricades in the lower-class areas. Hundred of thousands of people participated in these manifestations of opposition of the government. More than one thousand deaths were registered as a result of police and military repression of the protests. According to Barrera and Valenzuela (1986), few governments have faced such generalized and widespread expressions of opposition in Chilean history.

In 1988, a plebiscite was held to determine whether Pinochet should be allowed to remain in power as head of the government. He lost the plebiscite, and presidential elections were held at the end of 1989. Pinochet's candidate in this election lost, and Patricio Aylwin, a candidate of the centre spectrum of the Concertación, the opposition coalition, won with 54% of the votes (Paez, Asún, & González, 1994). His election represented the end of the dictatorship and the long and delicate transition to a democratic state.

The end of the dictatorship initially brought hope to those sectors that supported the Concertación in the elections. Based on the electoral promises, the supporters expected
substantial changes in the sociopolitical context leading to justice and full reparation of the psychosocial trauma inflicted by the dictatorship on the population. However, this has not been the case. The reasons lay in the characteristics that marked the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the transition process. In strict rigor the dictatorship was not defeated, but rather it ended as a result of an agreement between the right-wing parties that were part of the military regime, and the centre-left parties that made up the Concertación. In the organization and conformation of the Concertación, several left-wing parties and political groups – those which most of the victims of the repression belonged to – were excluded, including the Community Party, the MIR, and a sector of the Socialist Party. That is to say, the sectors that remained faithful to the legacy of Salvador Allende and who opposed the economic model imposed by the dictatorship were excluded (Brinkman, 2006; Madariaga, 2002). Within this social, political, and economic framework it becomes easy to understand the fact that the four governments of the Concertación have not shown the political will to fully investigate the crimes of the dictatorship, to take those responsible to trial, and to provide the victims with effective reparation measures. Consequently, the unfulfilled promises of justice made by the Concertación to the families of the victims and to society in general have developed into a new form of impunity which is considered one of the most serious social, ethical, legal, and political problems currently facing Chilean society (Brinkmann, 1999, 2002; Madariaga 2005, 2006).

In this context the social tension between memory and oblivion emerged at the heart of the current issues faced by Chilean society. This tension is characterized by the insistence of the right-wing parties and the Concertación to put the past behind and focus on the construction of a new democratic society. This position of *dar vuelta la página* (turn the page) that promotes oblivion is based on the belief that discussions about the past endanger social peace and national reconciliation. On the other hand, there is an entire sector of society that seeks to keep the
memory of those years alive, vindicating a posture of promoting truth and justice in relation to
the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship (Fernández, 2006; Madariaga;
2005).

From research in the field of psychology we know that it is virtually impossible to heal
the wounds of trauma without the victims telling their stories and without the proper validation
and acknowledgement of what happened. Furthermore, psychological theories demonstrate, as
Bessel van der Kolk (1994) notes, "the body keeps the score," suggesting that trauma inhabits
the physical body of the survivors. Similarly, we can infer that the social body of a country
brutalized by fear and repression would keep the score of the collective wounds. This study is
located in the intersection between individual and social bodies, between individual and
collective meanings, between justice and impunity, and between trauma and hope.

The use of the body as a site of resistance and collective memory during the dictatorship
and the democratic governments poses a number of interesting challenges for the field of
traumatology in relation to collective responses to institutionalized violence, fear, destruction,
and impunity. These practices confront our understanding and knowledge of how traumatized
people respond to trauma and compel us to further explore people's responses by addressing the
following needs:

• to understand the connection between emotional and physical resistance to traumatizing
  experiences,

• to understand how people develop individual and collective embodied responses to mass
  violence,

• to understand the complex individual and collective meaning-making systems that are
  involved in surviving massive traumatic experiences,
• to explore the role of collective memory as a potential source of pedagogical and healing practices, and

• to explore the use of artistic expressions as a tool for exploring and healing memory and resistance practices.

Studying the use of the individual and social body as a site of resistance and collective memory in a group of adult children of the disappeared and politically executed will expand our understanding of collective embodied responses to mass violence. This exploration will allow us to comprehend the connection between emotional and physical resistance and the healing power of these collective responses. It will also give us some insights into the trans-generational impact of trauma. It will help us understand the lived experience of the adult children of the disappeared and the politically executed and the meaning-making systems they have generated as a result of their personal experiences of engaging in these practices. It will also assist us in understanding the role of memorializing the body as an act of resistance, its meaning, and healing power. The use of artistic workshops to explore these practices will give us therapeutic information about the effectiveness of developing art-oriented interventions. In addition, it will assist those therapists and researchers working in the field of cross-cultural counselling to understand similar embodied responses to trauma, and to develop appropriate counselling interventions. It is expected that this study will contribute to documenting the historical collective processes of resistance during the dictatorship in Chile. Finally, it is hoped that this investigation will inform other disciplines such as oral history, anthropology, and sociology by explicating the role of people in organizing and responding to organized government repression.
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

In this chapter I present a conceptualization of the study by discussing relevant research and theories in areas linked to the subject matter as well as the research questions that guide the research. The chapter is divided into seven sections. In the first section I present some ideas derived from social psychology that have guided me in visualizing and understanding the study. In the second section I present my conceptualization of collective memories in the context of social oblivion. In the third section I describe the evolution of the concept of trauma until the development of the notion of psychosocial trauma that I used in this study. In section four I discuss some ideas about the social transmission of trauma in the context of mass genocides and war. Section five is devoted to conceptualizing the transmission of trauma resulting from human rights violations in Chile. In section six I present a conceptualization of social body in the context of the disappeared. I continue by exploring the embodied relationship between perception and memory and I finish by presenting my understanding of embodiment. In the final section I offer some theories about the healing power of art in psychology, I describe some of the collective artistic expressions used in Chile during the dictatorship and I conclude by presenting a project that integrates the notions of art and memory to heal the wounds of two generations of trauma survivors.

Ideas Derived from Social Psychology

Social psychology like many others disciplines in the social sciences has experienced changes throughout its development. Spanish social psychologist Tomas Ibáñez (1990) identifies that social psychology emerged as an independent discipline after a long transformation process in which society moved from being conceived as a natural object of study to being understood as a social production, that is to say, as an object that changes according to the activity of human beings (1990). Traditional forms of social psychology have centered their attention on the
contextual variables that affect individuals such as race, class, social status, or gender, but that are contextualized as essentially independent from the individuals. In Piper’s (2002) view, this analysis continues to focus on the individual without a reflexive analysis of “the social”. According to Ibáñez (1990, 1994) and Piper (2002), the challenge to expand the knowledge about the social production of intersubjectivities has led social psychologists to acknowledge the following issues:

(a) **Recognize the symbolic nature of reality.** The social character of reality becomes evident when a group of people construct shared meanings. It is this pool of meanings that allow individuals through language to invest certain objects with a series of qualities they do not have “per se”. This symbolic dimension of social reality is given by the construction and circulation of meanings. This implies that the social does not reside in the individual, nor outside of them, but “in-between” people, that is to say in the space of meanings that are constructed collectively (Ibáñez, 1994, p. 227).

(b) **The acknowledgment of the historical nature of social reality.** In recent years the idea that societies not only have history but also a historical dimension has become unquestionable Ibáñez, 1994. This notion suggests that social phenomena not only have memory but also a future. That is to say, they experience changes in the evolution of their current characteristics, which identifies the process-oriented nature of its constitution. By disregarding this temporal characteristic of social phenomena we are transforming them into stable objects of study, changing therefore their nature and identity.

(c) **The acknowledgement of the importance of reflexivity.** This issue addresses the capacity of human beings of breaking the object/subject dichotomy by fusing both terms in a circular relationship that allows constructing the social nature of human beings. This implies that the subject is capable of taking him/herself as an object of analysis, thus opening the possibility
for the creation of shared meanings and intersubjective spaces that are the basis of the social
dimension of society. This implies also that reflexivity has to be extended to social sciences by
becoming object of analysis, which also identifies the role of social researchers in examining
their own reflexive practices.

(d) *The acknowledgement of human agency*. According to this idea human behavior is to
a great extent propositional, this means that human behaviors and intentions show a causality
that highlights the relative self-determination of the agents, thus challenging the deterministic
notion promoted by positivists thinkers.

(e) *The acknowledgement of the dialectical character of social reality*. This view places
its emphasis on the relational nature and the process-oriented character of social phenomena.
This means that society only acquires a status of existence through the practices developed by
the individuals, at the same time individuals do not exist as social beings unless they are placed
in the context of a society. Therefore their interaction becomes a mutually constructed process.

(f) *The acknowledgement of the appropriateness of a constructionist perspective to
construct reality*. In this regard they propose that social psychologists need to consider a
constructionist stand by focusing on the role of cultural constructions and linguistic principles
given that every social phenomena is intrinsically historical therefore at least partially
constructed through linguistic conventions and cultural practices (Ibanez, 1994; Piper, 2002).

**Social Representation**

*Social representation* is a theoretical model that developed from the work of Serge
Moscovici. It explores the social construction of reality by focusing on the social origins of
reasoning and the categories we use to construct a vision of reality and the events that constitute
our world (Taramasco & Perez, 2001). They are understood as a means to interpret and
apprehend every day life in order to transform what is unknown into something familiar by
giving meaning to the unexpected. Social representations develop in social contexts where individuals and groups are confronted with different forms of communication among them; through the cultural frames that define them; and through the values and ideologies that reflect people's belonging to specific social groups. In sum social representations develop in the interaction among individuals (Prado & Krause, 2004).

Jodelet (1994) explains that the concept of social representation is located in the intersection between the psychological and the social dimensions. From the psychological dimension we understand how the individual constructs everyday knowledge by becoming familiar and integrating the new elements that emerge in their social life modifying therefore his/her behaviors according to social representations. The second dimension is given by the highly social nature of these representations and by the collective construction of its cultural character (Jodelet, 1986, as cited in Ibáñez, 1994). The role of social communication is also identified as an essential factor in constructing social representations. Therefore social actors construct and elaborate social representations in everyday conversation and through the information presented by the media (Ibáñez, 1994). According to Prado and Krause (2004) the dual nature of social representations are a strong foundation over which a subculture or social group sustains its conception of the world.

The process of constructing knowledge generally takes place as a result of changes in the life conditions of a society. As defined by Moscovici (1987) social representations emerge in moments of crisis and conflicts. In these contexts people begin a process of collective communication in order to understand, manage, and adapt to the symbolic and practical life conditions imposed by the new situation. In this sense social representations allow people to classify and understand big scale events by integrating complex and conflictive events into social thought. This process also contributes to the legitimization and the acceptance of the new social
order. This function of legitimizing happens at a symbolic and a practical level given that they generate behaviors consistent with the reproduction of social relations established by the ruling social order (Moscovici, 1961, as cited in Páez, 1987).

Social representations are the result of communication processes that embody the beliefs, values, and ways of thinking of the members of the group. The processes of sharing these group characteristics constructs a pool of knowledge, common sense, and models of explaining and justifying events. These communication processes take place inside *reflective groups*. These groups are defined by their own members according to specific criteria to decide who belongs to them. The common knowledge created inside these groups implies also a commonly shared identity, which is a precondition for the existence of these groups (Prado & Krause, 2004).

In the case of Chile, the Coup d'état represented an extremely meaningful event in the history of the country. It affected the population in different aspects: personal, familial, social, and, more specifically, in their life options and emotional bonds. In this sense, the coup d'état forced people to reorganize and re-elaborate the meanings of the social structures that supported their lives until that moment. Therefore, the different social groups that formed the country at that time began constructing their own social representations about September 11th, 1973 with the corresponding cognitive, symbolic, and affective components about this event. The concept of reflective groups assist us in understanding that in Chile people from different political orientations – right, centre, and left – form diverse reflexive groups given that their members are conscious of their belonging and have guidelines for accepting new members. Therefore, it is possible to infer that they have constructed specific social representations of the September 11th, 1973 events that are likely to be reconstructed within the group as new events emerge and members adapt their social identity and belonging needs to these groups (Prado & Krause, 2004).
Conceptualizing Collective Memories as a Social Practice

In this section I present a discussion about memory and oblivion as social practices in the context of the dictatorships in Latin America based on the notions of collective memory and social oblivion. The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992) was the first to introduced the notion of “collective memory” at the beginning of the last century. In his view, memory is a social practice constructed through the integration of individual memories that are formed and organized within social frames. These frames are made up of the general representations of a society or a particular social group within society incorporating their values and needs. Thus, the act of collectively remembering social events is fundamental in the process of constructing new narratives and reframing the meanings of old ones. This process is often reinforced by commemorations and group rituals. The social nature of memories implies that we remember social events with the help of the memories of others, within a context of shared cultural codes, even though personal memories are individual and unique, thus memories are in essence a reconstruction of past events (Halbwachs, 1992). Time and space are among the most important social frames. In this sense, time refers to the dates that represent meaningful events so they can be evoked later, allowing societies or groups to construct traditions, and an identity that can allow them to recognize themselves as members of a group (Halbwachs, 1992; Mendoza, 2005). Likewise, people leave tracks in places. Every society transforms the space they occupy in their own particular ways, and in this manner they construct fixed frames where they enclose their memories. Spaces contain and construct memory given that experiences are kept in the corners, in the parks, or any other places where groups live their reality and make meaning of their experiences (Halbwachs, 1992; Mendoza, 2005). Likewise memory can be constructed through artifacts and instruments like museums, archives, and galleries; libraries are created and organized with the purpose of storing and communicating the present and the past of a society or
group to the future generations (Middleton & Edwards, 1992). However, the most important frame of collective memory is language, given that it is through language that people construct, communicate, and maintain the contents and meanings of memory. Collective memory is often referred to as *collective memories* because the interpretations about specific events will depend on the groups and collectivities that experienced, interpreted, and made meaning of those events (Mendoza, 2005). Halbwachs’s (1992) conceptualization of memory has a number of elements in common with the notion of social representations discussed earlier, thus suggesting the possibility of defining collective memory as a form of social representation of a historical event (Prado & Krause, 2004).

**Social Oblivion**

The other side of the process of collective memory is *social oblivion*. Social oblivion has been a recurrent form of communication in many cultures throughout time. Oblivion can be constructed in different ways, following different patterns and procedures. Mendoza (2005) argues that social oblivion is usually controlled by the power of the dominant group that imposes and modifies the social practices of control that determine to a great extent what is to be forgotten and what needs to be remembered (Mendoza, 2005). In this regard, Middleton and Edwards (1992) state that, “who controls the past controls the future, but also who controls the past controls who we are” (p. 26). The mechanisms that operate to prevent people’s communication about meaningful events can be silence, omission, imposition, prohibition, censorship, and the use of terror or any other mechanism that leads to oblivion (Jelin, 2002; Shotter, 1992). In this case we can speak of *institutional oblivion*, which is the social amnesia imposed by the groups that control society while sustaining power (Mendoza 2005; Middleton & Edwards, 1992; Shotter, 1992). According to Mendoza (2005) social oblivion can be defined as:

the impossibility of evoking or expressing meaningful events that at a certain point had a place in the social life of a group or society because the communication is blocked or
forbidden by the entities in control, that attempt to silence those events in order to impose a unified vision of the past, or because other visions of the past do not fit the social framework of the institutions controlling society (p. 10).

While memory is based on language, oblivion is based on silence. An example of social oblivion is the silence of the governments in Latin America about the fate of the political disappeared (Galeano, 1986). According to Mendoza (2005), oblivion starts from the individual and social practices of silence. At the individual level, there is an absence of speaking either to oneself (internal dialogue) or in public with others. In this process there is little or no reflection; what is not said does not count. Therefore at the social level what has never been narrated does not exist or at least has no collective meaning. This is the case of mass tragedies or killings that, when they are not openly narrated, lead to social oblivion because they are not present in the narratives transmitted to the future generations (Jelin, 2002). The social silence imposed by those in control can also include the forceful destruction of social forms of communication like murals, books, and poetry. In the case of Chile, the dictatorship burned books, destroyed art, closed newspaper publishers and magazines, prohibited painting slogans and murals on walls, all attempting to erase the memory of ideas, history, and social actors (Lira, 1997). Another form of control of memory is the media. From this perspective the media has a strong influence on controlling people given that the official discourses limit and give shape to what can and cannot be said, thought, written, and remembered (Middleton & Edwards, 1992). Mendoza (2005) argues that when groups in power want to erase the past, the media speaks about the people, groups, actions, or situations like objects, therefore what remains in the memory of people are numbers as facts. Thus turning people and events into something without meaning. An example of this concept is “the subversive elements” used by the State-controlled media in Chile and Argentina during the dictatorships that intended to dehumanize people by objectifying those people involved in fighting the military regime (Mendoza, 2005). In addition, this type of
information is referential, since it does not allow evoking or remembering anything personal or human about the people involved.

Perhaps the most obvious way of silencing the memory of people is through the imposition of terror to erase memory. In this case many victims opted for forgetting even their friends and compañeros as a way of protecting themselves in case they were tortured. In this context, not to remember was a way of saving lives. On the other hand, the narratives of the victims and survivors do not have a place in the public space. Therefore narrations are not enough when there is no one willing or ready to listen. In that case the only solution is to keep silent, or to attempt to forget as in the case of the survivors of the Holocaust (Jelin, 2002). In this regard Mendoza (2005) explains, “when societies forget their own victims they forget a piece of their lives” (p.15). In this sense the different events and meanings that a society has experienced are fragmented once the mechanisms of oblivion begin to operate, thus generating holes in the memory of the people where nobody knows what is hidden because the truth is concealed (Mendoza, 2005).

Social oblivion exercised from the State is based on one imposed version of the past. This imposition attempts to make people believe that the State version is the natural result of the past and any other versions would lead to disorders or anarchy. According to Fernández Christlieb (1991), the groups who sustain power often want to impose a vision of the past by portraying themselves as the heirs of that time, “and when they are questioned they often argue that one should not look at the past, but rather towards the future because the future is where we can find progress” (p. 58). Consequently he argues, “progress that is based on power does not have memory” (Fernández Christlieb, 1991, p. 58).

This is the discourse often used in transition processes in Latin America where there is a denial of the truth, and unwillingness to fully review other visions of the past, or to acknowledge
the horrors lived and responsibilities of those involved (Jelin 2002). It has been the case that the State during these transition processes has destroyed places, such as torture centres and prisons, that hold the memory of what happened. They have also changed dates to give new meanings to commemorations of what happened in the past. In Chile for many years September 11th was a holiday imposed by the military to remember the martyrs that gave their lives for the country. It was also an opportunity for people to express their rejection to the dictatorship and to remember their vision of the events of the past. Recently the democratic government made that date a regular working day to avoid the public meetings and commemorations, and they replaced it with the day of National Reconciliation, which is observed on the first Monday of September (Mendoza, 2005). This change of dates is perceived by people as an imposition to change the meaning of this tragic day in favor of maintaining the social peace and order, and hence avoid dealing with the wounds of the past (Lira, 1998; Salazar, 2002).

The fall of the dictatorships in Latin America brought the need to express the hidden narratives that were silenced during many years of attempting to reconstruct what was omitted and hidden. In this sense language acquired new meaning and became the vehicle for naming what was absent and allowing memory to come out of clandestinity. The memories of groups resist disappearing because they need a past to anchor their identity. As Umberto Eco argues, “when in a society censorship erases a part of their memory the society experiences an identity crisis” (as cited in Mendoza, 2005, p. 19). When this happens societies get lost and they struggle trying to maintain their memory and therefore a sense of their existence through the reconstruction of their identity (de la Parra, 2002; Lira, 1998).

**Memory as Social Identity**

Strongly linked to the notion of memory as a social practice is the role of memory in creating and maintaining individual and collective identity. Individual identity is constructed in
the intersection of the familial, social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and professional contexts linked to the transmission and biological constitution of the person (Kordon & Edelman, 2002). In this sense acts of remembering and memory are an essential part of our personal lives. Our individual memories are constantly re-enacted and collectivized through sharing our memories and the construction of collective images through which individuals perceive themselves as a collective (Connerton, 1989). As social and cultural beings we share memories to confirm our experiences and perceptions of the past, and to establish and maintain a sense of continuity and social identity (Halbwachs, 1992; Lowenthal, 1985). It is through this interplay that we construct a sense of continuity with the past and with others or a sense of discontinuity like in the case of mass trauma. Memories have the power to trigger mechanisms and processes of recognition that allow the individual and the collective to give meaning and purpose to their lives and affirm their identities (Lira, 1997; Lowenthal, 1985; Rüsen, 1989). In this regard, Pierre Nora (1989) asserts that the need for identity is also a driving force for the individual. The “law of remembrance” has great coercive force for the individual; the discovery of roots of “belonging” to some groups becomes a source of identity, and therefore belonging becomes a true commitment (Nora, 1989, p. 11). Likewise, Chilean sociologist Tomas Moulian (1998) proposes that during the dictatorship the cult of remembering was the fuel of the political struggle. Remembering was a necessary exercise for those who participated in the fight against the dictatorship: “it was a way to reinforce their commitment” (Moulian, 1998, p. 98).

**Conceptualizations of Psychological Trauma**

In this section I present a description of the evolution of the concept of trauma, beginning from the first notions provided by Freud. I continue by reviewing the concepts of war neurosis, until the development of diagnostic psychiatric criteria of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, while addressing the limitations of this concept in describing psychosocial phenomena. I then present
the concepts of extreme traumatization and sequential traumatization. I conclude by describing
the notion of psychosocial trauma that I use in this study as a working definition.

The word “trauma” derives from the Greek language and means “wound” and it was
initially used in the medical sciences (Bekerman, 2002) Its parallel use in psychology and
psychiatry started in the late 19th century in an effort to explain the mental breakdown produced
by external events (Madariaga, 2002).

Historically, it has been documented that as early as 1666 during the Great Fire of
London, the victims were described as presenting clinical symptoms similar to what would later
be identified in people affected by traumatic events (Bekerman, 2002). However, it was not until
the 19th century that psychic trauma began to attract scientific interest. Initially the focus of the
analysis centered on intra-psychic conceptions of trauma. Thus, the first approach that attempts
to understand this concept comes from psychoanalysis. Freud and Breuer in 1893 in the book
Studies on Hysteria (1980) established that psychic trauma is the consequence of a big traumatic
event or a temporal sequence of lesser traumas that operate on the psychic apparatus and
overwhelm the protecting barriers of the individual and thus producing painful effects of fear,
anxiety, shame, and psychic pain. The theory developed by Freud focuses on the energy charge
imposed immediately after, or as a cumulative effect of, negative traumatic experiences on the
individual so that the traumatic event interferes abruptly and progressively on an individual’s
psychic processes. In the construction of his theory, Freud developed the “consistency principle”
which balances this energy charge at an intra-psychic level to allow a normal functioning of the
mental processes (Freud & Breuer, 1980). According to this conception, the internalization of the
energies coming from the individual’s relations with the external world would be regulated by a
protecting barrier that balances the energy flow. Therefore, a psychic trauma develops when the
protecting barrier has been overwhelmed and the consistency principle is broken by the intensity
of the traumatic event. It is only under these internal psychic conditions that manifestations of trauma emerge. Further development of this theory focuses on the characteristics of the protecting barrier, which would utilize associative processes for the individual to make use of when internalizing the potentially traumatic events, thus suggesting a dynamic conception of psychic trauma. One of the merits of this theory according to Madariaga (2002) is that it proposes a psychic causality of the mental processes by identifying the internal mechanisms that the individual uses to process traumatic events, which suggests that the intra-psychic activity conditions the trauma and the posttraumatic state of the individual in unique and individual ways (Madariaga, 2002).

**War Neurosis**

The First World War brought along not only the death of more than eight million people in four years, but also a renewed interest in understanding the symptomatology experienced by those survivors of the horrors of the battle fields. These symptoms included crying and screaming uncontrollably, speechlessness and unresponsiveness, memory loss, and incapacity to feel and resembled Freud’s notion of hysteria in women. These symptoms were initially attributed to a physical cause that was probably related to the explosion of grenades, and therefore this disorder was called “shell shock” (Herman, 1997). However, it became clear that the symptoms were also found in those soldiers who were not exposed to physical trauma, which lead military psychiatrists to conclude that these symptoms were due to psychological trauma and the name was changed to “combat neurosis” or “combat fatigue” (Bekerman, 2002). Initially the moral quality of the soldiers was questioned, they were accused of being cowards and weak, they were called “moral invalids”, and punishments and threats were applied to those who experienced the symptoms (Herman, 1997). For example, a common treatment for speechlessness and sensory loss was electric shock (Bekerman, 2002; Herman, 1997).
During the Second World War the study of combat neurosis received renewed interest. In 1941 Abraham Kardiner wrote *The Traumatic Neurosis of War* where he compiled early findings about this syndrome. In 1952 the first edition of the Diagnostic Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) was published, which included the notion of “gross stress reaction” that describes the symptoms of exposure to intolerable stress (Bekerman, 2002). In the following years the study and development of interventions focused on the experiences of the Holocaust survivors, veterans of Second World, Korean, and Vietnam Wars, and provided crucial information for the study and development of a concept to understand the intense psychological effects of those people who experienced traumatic events.

Current conceptualizations of trauma define it as extremely painful individual experiences that disrupt the systems that allow people to create and feel a sense of control, connection, and meaning (Herman, 1997). Trauma implies complete psychological breakdown on an individual level, which is often compared to the experience of death. This breakdown can occur in one event or over a prolonged period of time, in which case it is difficult to identify the exact moment when the psychic structure begins to collapse (Beker, 2003). Therefore, these traumatic experiences are likely to result in psychological dysfunction in both the short and long term (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Caruth, 1995; Herman, 1997; Lira, 1998; van der Veer, 1998; Viñar & Ulriksen, 1993). The vast amount of research about trauma eventually led to the development of the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder definition, which includes specific symptoms. This concept is currently included in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) (WHO, 1992) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) (APA, 2000). DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) identifies the following symptoms resulting from exposure to extreme trauma:

- persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event (Criterion B);
- persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (Criterion C);
and persistent symptoms of increase arousal (Criterion D). The full symptom picture must be present for more than one month (Criterion E), and the disturbance must cause clinically significant distress or impairinent in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (Criterion F) (p. 463).

The limitations of the individual-oriented focus of this definition have been amply criticized in recent years (Beker, 2003; Bekerman, 2002; Kleinman, 1995; Madariaga, 2002; Martín-Baró, 1996). The main criticisms concentrate on the ahistorical nature of this notion given that it does not establish specific criteria for understanding the individual's prior life events, personality, biography, and, more specifically, the socio-historical contexts in which the trauma took place. Therefore the lack of personal information about the individual will have an impact on the understanding that we might have about the individual's role in the social conflict (that is to say, the dialectical relationship between the individual and society). This restricted view of the traumatic situation will also interfere in the understanding of the real impact of the traumatic event on the individual, thus also placing the traumatic event in an ahistorical position. In addition, the definition does not include specific characteristics of traumas produced by the violation of human rights where the genesis of the trauma is associated to State issues of control and power, thus disregarding the social and political nature of some massive traumas. Consequently, the traumatic damage is only conceived as a constellation of symbols that, rather than unifying the traumatic experience, tend to separate it from the biopsychosocial impact these events have on people's lives by omitting the fact that the traumatic event is prior to the development of symptoms (Madariaga, 2002; Martín-Baró, 1996).

**Extreme Traumatization**

As already stated, the development of the concept of trauma initially focused on the individual, however the horrific experience of the Second World War began to change this individual conception by incorporating the social, cultural, and political contexts as trauma producing environments. Bruno Bettelheim (1981), survivor of the Jewish Holocaust, developed
a theory based on his own experiences and the social context in which they developed. He centers his analysis on the quality of the traumatic event, suggesting that the traumatic incident emerges and can be understood from a socio-political context, which makes this type of trauma exceptionally specific (Beker, 2003). The concentration camp trauma follows a supra national logic of confrontation of economic and political interests that explains the dehumanizing violence exercised on the Jewish population and other minority groups. The traumatic event is described as a sequence of painful events intended to produce a sense of constant life threat. The daily extermination of people creates a psychosocial climate that he calls "limit situation". This endless danger compounded by the impossibility of escaping makes it almost impossible to develop coping or defensive strategies. Furthermore, this inability to cope is further exacerbated by an altered sense of time, a different dimension in which the human suffering takes place. In such conditions, the persistence of the limited situations destroys all the psychic defensive barriers and leads to what Bettelheim (1981) calls a "state of extreme traumatization" (as cited in Madariaga, 2002, p.12). This final state not only refers to the global deterioration of the psychic functions, but also to the physical involution of the prisoner so that death is the result of the psychological and physiological deterioration of the organism. Bettelheim's contribution to the conceptualization of trauma adds two new elements: the need to contextualize the traumatic event within a socio-historical framework, and the psychobiological dimension of trauma (Baker, 2003; Del Solar & Piper, 1995; Madariaga, 2002).

Sequential Traumatization

Based on his experiences of the war conditions produced by the occupation of Holland by the Nazis, Hans Keilson (1992) expands the notion of trauma by focusing on the political context in order to define the characteristics of the traumatic event. He based his analysis on the changing conditions produced by the process of systematic violation of the right to physical,
psychic, and moral integrity throughout time. In his view, the traumatic charge on the individual is produced by concrete socio-historical conditions. These conditions are the result of political conflicts around power issues that are resolved through the implementation of domination strategies by the hegemonic forces. These strategies when transformed into State politics are implemented in violent processes that are constantly modified according to the practical results of its implementation (Keilson, 1992). Therefore, the strategic and tactical resources of State terrorism, its particular objectives, the selection of human groups that receive the repressive actions, the psychological war, the torture methods, and the genocide are continually redesigned according to the level of success in controlling the social responses to the established power (Keilson, 1992; Madariaga, 2002).

In his work Keilson (1992) identifies three traumatic sequences derived from the war experience he studied. The first one refers to the initial impact of the military invasion and following occupation of the territory; the second focuses on the massacres, persecution, deportations, and destruction of the families carried out during the period of domination; and the third one centers on the psychosocial consequences of the post-war period. The sequences proposed by Keilson identify the historical moments when sociopolitical changes and repressive strategies occurred and the subsequent qualitative changes in the psychosocial responses of the population to this collective trauma. The author develops the concept of “extreme traumatic situation” (Keilson, 1992) to identify the psychopathogenic condition that affects the population in each sequence. In his view, trauma develops as a continuous stress of extreme intensity due to the permanent situation of life threat that permeates the social tissue. Under these conditions individual psychological disorders can potentially become chronic and project themselves as transgenerational damage into the new generations.
The theoretical contribution of Keilson resides on the following issues: the significance he assigns to the meta analysis of the socio-historical causality of trauma; his role in the characterization of psychic trauma as a process phenomena that extends over time with the potential of affecting other generations; since there is no 'post' in trauma but only a continuing traumatic process, the mental health professionals who work with trauma victims are also always part of the traumatic situation and do not operate outside of it. Finally, one of the advantages of Keilson’s concept is that it can easily be used to conceptualize traumatic situations in different cultural, social, and political settings (Del Solar, & Piper, 1995; Beker, 2003; Madariaga, 2002).

**Psychosocial Trauma**

In Latin America, the conceptualization of trauma centers not only on the socio-historical roots of trauma, but it also adds the socio-economic factors that contribute to developing a traumatizing context. Ignacio Martín-Baró (1990, 1996) developed a theoretical proposal after a careful analysis of the protracted armed conflict in El Salvador. His approach is an integration of a new sociopolitical and psychosocial framework that views the traumatic experience as a process containing several stages. For him the starting point of the traumatic sequence of events is the structural inequality of historical socio-economic conditions in the Salvadorian society that triggers social violence that eventually led to a civil war. So it is this structural condition that generates perturbed social relationships that lead to deep social divisions and social and political conflicts among opposing groups and social classes that at the same time produce traumatic situations. The second stage is characterized by the intensification of the social conflicts that can no longer be controlled by pacific means; this is the beginning of an armed conflict that ends up in civil war. This is the period where violence acquires the most dehumanizing expression represented by the physical and psychological annihilation of human beings. In the last stage, or post war period, social relations are still disturbed as a result of the war conflict (Martín-Baró,
From this psychosocial conceptualization we are able to understand the social, historical, and political rather than individual roots of trauma, while at the same time he identifies the dialectical nature of these phenomena, which are always mediated by an interplay of institutional, social, and individual relations. Martín-Baró (1996) proposes that in order to characterize psychosocial trauma it is not only important to pay attention to the posttraumatic situation, but also to the pre-traumatic situation, by analyzing the "trauma as a normal consequence of a social system's way of functioning" (p. 123). By engaging in this type of analysis we can understand that psychosocial trauma can be the "normal" result of systems based on oppressive and dehumanizing social conditions. Likewise, a psychological disorder can be the normal reaction to abnormal conditions. Central to his analysis is the notion that trauma is socially produced, "therefore understanding and resolving it, requires not only treating the problems of individual, but also its social roots" (Martín-Baró, 1996, 125). Finally, trauma becomes chronic when the problems that caused the trauma in the first place remain intact. Consequently, the social problems of individuals are not only the cause of the trauma; maintaining the social structures that sustain the traumatic situation is what eventually leads to multiplying the number of traumatized individuals in a society (Martín-Baró, 1996).

**Transmission of Trauma**

In this section I present a brief overview of relevant literature regarding generational transmission of trauma. I start by providing a brief review of the studies that developed as a consequence of the Holocaust. I continue with the description of studies that identify the social denial and silencing as a factor in the transmission of trauma in the Armenian survivors of Turkish genocide, the Japanese survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and children of military personnel missing in action in Vietnam.
The study of how trauma is transmitted to other generations has been amply researched and reported in the psychological and psychiatric literature, thus constructing a theoretical body of research that focuses on modes of transmission, content of material transmitted, effects on the new generations, and psychological interventions among other areas. The first systematized works are attributed to Sigmund Freud (1986) whose studies in this area have served as the base for the development of psychoanalytically oriented theories (Kaez, Faimberg, Enriquez, & Baranes, 1996; Tisseron et al., 1997). The notion of an intergenerational transmission of trauma began to develop in the 1950s when the German government decided to indemnify victims of the Nazi Holocaust. However in order to carry out this task they needed to establish some standards. These criteria focused on the physical consequences excluding symptoms and emotional disorders, leaving therefore a great number of people without financial retribution and psychological assistance (Weber, 1988). In the 1960s the specific symptoms presented by a large number of adult children of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust began to be acknowledged in clinical settings, particularly because they were not found in other populations. These initial studies concentrated on clinical samples that focused mostly on the effects of one single event: the Nazi Holocaust (Danieli, 1998). The studies began to show that there were certain symptoms associated with survivors and their children, who experienced specific psychological and psychopathological symptoms, thus concluding that survivors had been affected in diverse degrees according to their traumatic experiences that were not directly related to pre- and post-war adaptation processes. Psychiatrist Leo Eitinger (1980), a Norwegian Holocaust survivor himself, was amongst the first to study the late-onset of psychological trauma experienced by survivors of the Holocaust who went through separation and psychological pain early in life. His findings indicate that the survivor syndrome is a specific factor among this population, which would be strongly linked to the severity of the traumatic experiences of survivors of the
Holocaust and their children. In addition he suggests that the effects of trauma in children are likely to show decades later (Eitinger, 1980). Consequently, by 1980 these initial conceptualizations were defined as “survivor syndrome” and included as a separate category in the 3rd edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III; APA, 1980).

In the history of the development of a concept of intergenerational trauma we observe that the reactions of society at large to survivors of the Nazi Holocaust had a negative impact on their adaptation to posttrauma situations and their ability to integrate their traumatic experiences. The initial reactions encountered by survivors were of indifference, avoidance, and denial of their Holocaust experiences. These reactions were partly prompted by the horrific testimonies that led people to assume that asking questions or addressing the issues would inflict further damage on the victims. Another common response was a tendency to blame the survivors by the passive way in which they reacted to their own destiny. These general reactions led survivors to conclude that nobody cared and nobody would understand them, thus becoming silent about their Holocaust experiences (Danieli, 1998). This societal denial transformed into what Yael Danieli (1998) has denominated “the Conspiracy of Silence” (1998, p. 4) between the Holocaust survivors and society including mental health and other professionals. Danieli (1998) identifies that this conspiracy of silence proved to be extremely detrimental for the survivors’ reintegration to society by exacerbating their already profound sense of isolation, loneliness, and mistrust of society. At a personal level this conspiracy affected the survivors’ integration of their traumas at the intrapsychic level, therefore their possibilities of mourning their massive losses was an extremely complicated process. In some case the survivors opted for telling their Holocaust stories to their children who became a captive audience. In others, this conspiracy of silence was welcomed by the survivors, who believed that by forgetting their stories they would be helping their children becoming normal people (Solomon, 1998). In both situations the presence of the
Holocaust invaded their children’s lives by integrating their parents’ stories or the knowledge of the Holocaust into their own lives.

Over the years the literature on Holocaust survivors and second-generation effects has been subject to fierce controversy and open criticism regarding methodological issues, such as generalizability of findings, appropriateness of samples, and a tendency to over pathologize the experience of survivors who are perceived as transmitting deep psychopathologies to the next generations (Auerhahn & Laub, 1998). These initial understandings roused readers’ suspicions and skepticisms and were even rejected by some survivors themselves, who felt that to expose the magnitude of the Nazi destruction was akin to confirm Hitler’s posthumous victory (Danieli, 1998). According to Auerhahn and Laub (1998), trying to modify this early bias has created an overcorrection that further discourages an understanding of the Holocaust as a “core existential and relational experience for both generations” (1998, p. 21). Hence the literature shows that this initial controversy helped researchers and clinicians identify the diversity of meanings found in the Holocaust suffering, which does not deny either the existence of pathologies nor the undeniable resilience and coping of the survivors and their children. Thus, the literature seems to be divided among those who focus on the negative effects of trauma, and those who search for the survivors’ strengths and coping skills (Auerhahn & Laub, 1998; Kellermann, 2001; Solomon, 1998).

In response to the overwhelming amount of literature that focuses on the Holocaust experience in understanding the transgenerational transmission of trauma, Yael Danieli, as editor of the *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (1998) introduces us to a selection of articles on transgenerational transmission of trauma. He presents the articles from varied cultural, religious, and political contexts and diverse disciplines in an attempt to address
the increasing need to expand the pool of existing knowledge while maintaining a worldwide
dialogue about these issues.

In the following section I review the impact of society’s conspiracy of silence to deal
with mass trauma, the psychological impact on the populations affected, and its role in
transmitting trauma across generations. In a review of relevant psychological literature related to
the effects of the massacre of Armenian people by the Turkish government in 1915, Kupelian,
Kalayjian, & Kassabian, (1998) found that the systematic denial of the Turkish government of
the time and its successors who continue to deny their responsibility with public campaigns of
disinformation has interfered with the ability of the survivors, their children, and grandchildren
to mourn their losses and integrate their traumatic history into their lives. In this case the silence
about this massacre came from outside their community affecting all Armenians. As time went
by silence took over because the story was simply forgotten by most non-Armenians, contrary to
what happened with Holocaust survivors where there was initially a sort of tacit agreement to
avoid addressing a painful subject, but eventually there was a full acknowledgement of the
Holocaust represented by the Nuremberg trials. However, the generalized lack of
acknowledgement of the Armenians’ suffering by the international community had similar
effects on the survivors: they felt alienated and dishonored and their suffering pointless. At a
social level the impunity experienced by the survivors until today is experienced as a form of
trivializing and denigrating the survivors and their families by denying their victimization. As
Kupelian, Kalayjian, and Kassabian explain:

They [Armenians] view the Turkish denial of the historical fact of the genocide as a
psychological continuation of the genocide, and a second continuing victimization. The
purpose of the genocide is to eradicate a people and a culture from the face of the earth;
to deny their pain is to deny their humanity, and it psychologically serves the genocidal
Boyajian and Grigorian identified the traumatic sequelae of the genocide on individuals in an early study in 1982 (as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998). In this study they found symptoms among Armenian survivors that are analogous to those of Holocaust survivors. These include anxiety, depression, compulsive association to trauma-related material, guilt, nightmares, irritability, anhedonia, and a fear of loving (1998, p. 194). In a subsequent study conducted in 1988 with survivors, their second-generation children, and third-generation grandchildren, they concluded that most participants experienced anger, frustration, anxiety, and guilt. In the case of the second-generation participants, their anxiety was strongly associated to their parents’ overprotectiveness. All of the generations presented anger and frustration associated with the modern Turkish government’s denial of the genocide, which was compounded by other governments’ tolerance of that denial (Boyajian & Grigorian as cited in Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998). These studies identify the damaging effects across generation of social invisibility of the suffering experienced by Armenian people, which are represented by the ongoing refusal of the Turkish government to accept full responsibility for the genocide. They also highlight the strategies used by Armenian people to oppose oblivion and impunity by focusing on strengthening the family and community through actively keeping their cultural identity alive.

A similar example of collective massive trauma and the following societal silencing is provided by the experience of Japanese survivors of weapons of mass destruction used against civilians during the Second World War. On August 6th and 9th, 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and then on Nagasaki in order to end the war with Japan. The killing of about 70,000 people was instant. Some were evaporated leaving their shapes as shadows on the stone walls and steps of buildings (Tatara, 1998). By the end of 1945 the death toll was estimated to be 200,000 (Sawada, Chaitin, & Bar-On, 2004). As Tatara (1998) explains,
the trauma of the bomb has been explained as extensive: it was a massive and instantaneous
happening, the cause of death after the bomb was invisible; there have been long-lasting physical
and psychological suffering, there are still many unknown areas regarding the effects of radiation
on the human body. However, in spite of the massive destruction and death the psychological
impact of this trauma on the “Hibakusha”, the name used for survivors of the atomic bomb, and
the second-generation or “Hibakusha Nisei”, has rarely been studied (Sawada, Chaitin, & Bar-

According to Tatara (1998) the reasons for this lack of attention by the research
community and the reluctance of survivors to openly share their experiences need to be
understood in the context of broader sociopolitical, cultural, biological, and psychological
factors. Tatara identifies four main reasons linked to this silence that also illustrate the
intergenerational consequences of the atomic bomb. First, sociopolitical factors include the
support of many nations of nuclear weapons, in spite of a growing antinuclear armament
movement. Therefore, for those countries that support them, nuclear weapons are a justifiable
means of defense against enemies. In addition, those Asian countries who were occupied by
Japan during the war view the atomic bomb as their liberation, believing that if the bombs had
not been used Japan would have never surrendered. Second, the biological factors include long-
range effects of radiation on the human body, particularly in relation to genetic and hereditary
aspects of radiation. Currently there is no conclusive evidence on the radiation effects, however
the Japanese government acknowledges defects in the children of survivors as one of the effects
of the bomb (Sawada, Chaitin, & Bar-On, 2004). Third, he identifies social and psychological
factors. At the social level the Japanese government covers only the medical care of survivors,
but does no provide social or economic support for their families. Many of the long-lasting
physical effects of radiation on Hibakushas result in generalized physical weakness, which
impacts on their ability to hold steady jobs. The resulting lack of employment manifests in low social status, putting them and their families at social and economic disadvantages. This is compounded by the on-going concerns of many survivors and their children who fear getting married or having children and afraid that they might transmit radiation-related physical disorders. These concerns are also experienced by the general population, who were not affected by radiation. Knowledge that a person comes from a Hibakusha family raises concerns about having “bad blood” (contaminated by radiation), therefore second-generation survivors may experience social rejection when trying to marry, thus stigmatizing the survivors, their entire families, and future generations.

The psychological and social burden of the stigmatization and rejection experienced by the survivors is expressed through silence about their experiences (Tatara, 1998). This invisibility is also manifested in the few research studies that explore their psychological suffering. In a recent narrative study, Sawada, Chaitin, and Bar-On (2004) explored the lived experiences of eight survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their findings begin to unfold the level of emotional suffering experienced by this population as well as the difficulty in disclosing personal information. In their narratives, Hibakusha focuses on the bomb experience and the negative physical and social impact on their lives afterward. To a lesser extent they spoke about their recurrent death images and related imagery, psychic numbing, the struggle to find meaning in this experience, their fears of hurting their children, survivors guilt in a few cases, and mistrust of people. The researchers concluded that the reluctance exhibited by the victims to expand on these issues and to include in their narratives the effects of the atomic bomb on others within their society reflects the fact that the “conspiracy of silence” that seems to characterize Japanese society may have a detrimental effect on victims’ physical health, and they theorize
that the physical health of survivors might improve if survivors are encouraged to talk about their past, rather than hiding it (Sawada, Chaitin, & Bar-On, 2004).

Another interesting area of exploration related to the context of the present study is the experience of children of military personnel missing in action in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War (MIAs). Unlike other wars, the Vietnam War (1959-1975) was extremely unpopular with the American public in general. The first men were missing or captured in 1964; at that time the government ordered the families not to mention that their family members were missing or imprisoned. The government also neglected to mention that there were many other families experiencing similar losses; therefore they began a lonely journey fearing that they would hurt their love ones if they talked about it. For years they coped alone since there was no support from the government and little from friends who were not aware of their loss. It was not until 1969 that the North Vietnam government threatened to execute war prisoners that the families themselves became activists. By the late 1960s these families had organized the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. The organization’s objectives are to obtain the release of all prisoners of war (POW) and to achieve the fullest possible accounting for the MIA personnel, including the return of the remains of those who died serving their country during the war.

Edna Hunter-King (1998) conducted a study in 1988 about the impact on children of missing fathers during the Vietnam War. In this initial pilot survey conducted almost 15 years after the war had ended, she identified some long-term effects on MIA children. Some of the people that participated in her survey identified some negative effects, while others were able to have a positive evaluation of the experience. Among the negative effects she found that all participants were still struggling with the prolonged and ambiguous nature of the loss, and therefore their long-lasting inability to find a sense of resolution. This inability to find closure...
translated into developing certain attitudes toward close relationships, particularly committing to marriage in the case of daughters. This hesitation to commit themselves to deep emotional relationships seemed to be anchored in their fear of experiencing loss or abandonment again. Some of the daughters reported developing a strong sense of independence over the years to protect themselves from becoming dependent on a husband who might suddenly disappear. The long-term effects on sons are somewhat different than from daughters. Especially in the case of eldest sons, the responsibility they faced after their fathers disappeared was reported as overwhelming at times. Likewise they reported that lacking a father, who they could go to for help or advice and look to as a model of husband and father, was particularly problematic.

Among the positive effects reported by participants were the advantages that their MIA status had given them, particularly the economic means to obtain a college education. Another advantage was the closer relationship they developed with their mothers and siblings that might not have happened otherwise. They also reported that having coped, the missing father gave them a stronger appreciation for life, a more mature outlook, and greater personal strengths than their peers (Hunter-King, 1998).

Strongly connected with this issue is the role of the mother in the children's coping with the loss of the father. In her extensive clinical and research work with children of MIA, Hunter-King (1998) has identified that those children whose mothers did not share information with them from the beginning, or those children whose mothers ignored the situation or blamed the father for going to Vietnam, are the ones as young adults who have developed more contradictory approaches in dealing with the situation, in particular their strong anti-government stance. In contrast, those children whose mothers involved them throughout the different steps of the search process have grown up still harboring many unresolved questions, frustrations, and incomplete grieving issues, however they tend to be mature and caring adults. Many MIA
children were too young to have memories of their fathers went they went missing. It is noted that in recent years they have persistently searched for information about their fathers. Some of them have joined the National League of Families to continue the struggle initiated by their mothers, feeling also that the government has failed them. In some cases the active participation of their mothers in MIA or POW activities made them feel as if they had lost both parents. Likewise those children who were not included in the mother’s efforts to get information about their father’s status felt abandoned as well. Brothers or sisters of MIA military have experienced similar feelings of neglect resulting from their mother’s endless activities regarding their missing sons (Hunter-King, 1998).

We observe that in the case of children and families of military personnel missing in action there was also a “conspiracy of silence” between the US government and the families, particularly in the first years when families were forbidden to talk about the issue, and between mothers and children in those cases where the mothers neglected to include their children in their search activities, or turned emotionally inward and avoided emotional closeness to protect themselves and their children against further loss and pain (Hunter-King, 1998). Similar to the previous examples of the Armenian survivors of the Turkish genocide and the Japanese survivors of the atomic bomb, we observe that most of the research emphasis thus far has been placed on studying the individual responses and family dynamics that might lead to a generational transmission of trauma. However the greater social and political implications of these traumas are just beginning to be identified, particularly in relation to the responsibility of society in silencing and denying a voice to the survivors of massive trauma. Furthermore these examples identify the concrete responsibilities of the States and governments in perpetuating traumatic conditions, neglecting the victims, or conspiring to deny the truth or not acknowledging their responsibilities. These examples show how human trauma is often the result
of much larger social and political interests and power struggles and also reflects the researchers role and responsibility in moving away from the individual and victim-oriented focus that has characterized trauma research. By continuing to maintain a narrow focus we risk becoming part of this conspiracy of silence that has been identified as an essential factor in transmitting trauma across generations.

Transmission of Trauma in Chile

Specific psychotherapy and theory applied to traumatizing states resulting from violations of human rights is a new field of scientific knowledge within the field of psychology. The series of coup d'états that devastated Latin America during the 1970s (Paraguay, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina) and their horrific consequences on the population forced mental health teams to face a number of unexpected challenges. At the clinical level they realized that in order to work under these circumstances they had to reframe theoretical models and redevelop the traditional psychological and psychiatric practices by developing new socially sensitive support techniques and interventions to assist those experiencing the effects of psychosocial traumas. The following are some examples of the areas that were redefined: (a) the issues around trust in the professionals and the empathic relationships in conditions of overwhelming terror and collective life threatening circumstances; (b) the safety and solidarity in a paranoid social context; (c) the need to have the proper interventions to deal with abreactions filled with an unusual traumatic and destructive content; (d) the political context as the main traumatogenic component of the damage inflicted on people; (e) the absolute need to link psychotherapy with other forms of support for the victims that could facilitate the recovery of health while providing protection; (f) the need to develop networks to denounce, defend, and support people and; (g) the need to frame the work within the ethical, axiological, and ideological framework of human
rights and its principles, which have been in place since 1948 by the international community (Minoletti, 2002).

The theory that mental health teams have developed during the dictatorships is the result of a multifaceted, creative; and courageous praxis that emerged in a socio-political context where providing psychological help put professionals at risk of political repression. Therefore their work is also informed by their own personal experiences during this period. The psychotherapeutic experience gathered under these circumstances has served as the basis for developing theories and intervention models that are currently used in working with people affected by State terrorism (Minoletti, 2002).

The clinical work with traumatized patients during the initial years of the dictatorships demonstrated that the psychopathology and the psychological and psychosocial disorders produced by State terrorism were essentially different from the pathologies found in traditional psychiatry and psychology, given that they do not only develop from people’s inner psychic conflicts but they are also the result of political events (Madariaga, 2003). Therefore, one of the first challenges was to conceptualize trauma as a psychosocial phenomena. The concept of “psychosocial trauma” developed by Ignacio Martín-Baró (1990, 1996) provided the conceptualization to understand trauma as a process implemented from the State. This concept emphasizes the essentially dialectical nature of the wound suggesting that there is a direct relation between the impact of State violence and people’s behaviors and personality, which will be conditioned by the social class, degree of participation in the conflict, as well as other characteristics of their personality and experience. This definition allows us to understand that the damage produced by a specific repressive socio-political context will be different from the damage experienced as a consequence of natural catastrophes (Madariaga, 2005; Minnoletti, 2002).
Another approach to conceptualize trauma is the notion of "extreme traumatization" developed by Becker, Castillo, and Diaz (1991) based on Bruno Bettelheim's concept. This specific type of traumatization is characterized by the fact that its occurrence depends on socio-political events. This process is distinguished by its recurrent and episodic nature, by its intensity and permanence in time, and by the interdependence that produces between the social and psychological aspects of peoples' lives. This type of traumatization overwhelms the psychic structure of the individual and the society's capacity to respond appropriately to this process (Becker, Castillo, & Diaz, 1991; Del Solar & Piper, 1995).

Del Solar and Piper (1995) conceptualized trauma based on the notion of traumatic sequences proposed by Keilson (1992). The three traumatic sequences defined by Keilson are discrete units that contain specific traumatic elements representing diverse historical moments and experiences in the life of the individual. Therefore, they adapted the model to the Chilean context in the following way:

1. **First traumatic sequence:** starts with the coup d'état and ends at the time that the specific repressive situation takes place (detention, disappearance). This sequence is characterized by generalized insecurity produced by the massive political threat through home searches, mass detention and executions, generating a great deal of stress, anguish and instability linked to the lost of trust in one's own capacity to discriminate reality, given that prior to that people lived in a society that provided certainty and safety within the social context.

2. **Second traumatic sequence:** begins at the time that a specific repressive situation affects the individual or the family and finishes at the end of the military regime. It is characterized by the direct experience of terror by one or many members of a family and by the exclusive dedication of family members to the search of disappeared family members or friends and to denounce the unjustified detentions.

3. **Third traumatic sequence:** begins at the end of the dictatorship and it is not clear when it will end. It is the most complex one because the traumatic character depends on the characteristics that the individual reparation of direct victims will take. In this sense unfulfilled reparation promises could be more traumatic than the most terrifying experience. In the period following the dictatorship the direct victims continue waiting that their experience will be recognized as an "official truth" and shared by the society as a group. Otherwise the victims of the repression go from being labeled "enemies of the state" during the dictatorship to the category of "sick victims" in the transition to the democracy period (Del Solar & Piper, 1995, p. 17).
Another challenge faced by clinicians and researchers has been to define and characterize the population affected. In this context traditional categories develop from Holocaust studies, such as second-generation, a common denomination for the survivors' offspring (children born after the war) (Danieli, 1998), were not appropriate in the context of children who as small kids witnessed the coup d'état and the persecution of their parents. In this regard the theoretical and therapeutic experience of the PRAIS teams\(^1\) show that, in general, the psychosocial effects of transgenerational trauma involve the family group. In relation to young people who grew up and lived repressive situations, they believe that the fact that they were alive and in some cases present at the time of the traumatic events makes them direct victims. They experienced the death, persecution, detentions, terror, early and abrupt separations, and the direct threat of their lives. Therefore to define them as second generation would be incorrect. Unlike adults, who suffered the persecution in specific and defined social situations, children and young people grew up and developed in a traumatic environment, receiving the double impact of a traumatizing social environment and a family microclimate where the parents or adults that were supposed to care for them, and help them grow up, were themselves victims of traumatic experiences (Minoletti, 2002). However, this definition and characterization present some problems given that officially and in the perception of this young adults the parents are the real victims, which suggest that they put their own suffering in a second place (Becker & Diaz, 1998). In conceptualizing this research I consider the participants as first generation given that the focus of this study is to understand their embodied experience as direct witnesses and survivors of trauma.

\(^1\) The PRAIS Program (Integral Care Program in Health and Human Rights) was established in 1990 as a result of the recommendations of National Commission Truth and Reconciliation. Its objectives are to provide reparatory assistance and integrated health (mental and physical) to those people affected by the political repression exercised by the Chilean State during the period 1973-1990. Currently the program has 18 teams throughout the country.
The conceptualizations of trauma presented above demonstrate that in order to understand the effects of political repression in Chile it becomes necessary to adopt a concept that places the traumatic event in a socio-political continuum. From this perspective the post-dictatorship period can be seen as an integral part of the overall traumatization process affecting Chilean society today, which suggests that it is continuously being traumatized.

The concept of re-traumatization is often being used to explain the effects on the population of issues related to human rights violations and their influence in incorporating new situations into an already traumatized context (Madariaga, 2006). Re-traumatization is a process of reactivation of the trauma, which is in close relation with contextual events or with intra-psychic events that were considered resolved. This process is always related to sociopolitical, moral, or legal issues connected to human rights (injustice, lack of truth, impunity) and reopens feelings of frustration, anger, impotence, or failure (Madariaga, 2006; Minoletti, 2002).

Pastrana and Venegas (2001) identified that the process of re-traumatization is generated in the social-political sphere; it is manifested in a constant and daily aggression that has a direct impact in the mood and the quality of life of people. The individual re-experiences feelings with the same intensity as in the original traumatic event that lead to the rumination of emotions and thought derived from past traumatic experiences (Pastrana & Venegas, 2001). Consistent with these findings, Bastías, Mery, Rodríguez, and Soto (2001) found that all of the 33 participants in their study reported the ongoing presence of strong feelings of injustice, rage, and impotence in their lives that leads to the use of cognitive and behavioural strategies such as a tendency to disqualify, rationalize, and react in different ways to avoid the pain, which in turn exacerbates the symptoms, and the length of the therapeutic interventions. Within the current socio-political context they perceive impunity as the most important re-traumatizing factor. Some of them are
even afraid of participating in political parties because they fear a new coup d'État (Bastías, Mery, Rodríguez, & Soto, 2001).

**Impunity in the Transmission of Trauma**

Impunity has been amply reported as one of the main mechanisms in the transmission of trauma in countries emerging from dictatorships (Bastías, Mery, Rodríguez, & Soto, 2001; Brinkmann, 2006; Kordon & Edelman, 2002; Madariaga, 2005, 2006). In the case of Chile the examples of impunity are many and often related to the way in which the current government is dealing with the legacy of human rights abuses. An example of the way in which the Concertación has contributed to the process of re-traumatization in the population is represented by the work and results of the National Commission on Political Prison and Torture, which issued the Valech Report in 2005. This commission was established in 2003 during the presidency of Ricardo Lagos, and the objectives were:

(a) to determine who were the people who suffered imprisonment and torture for political reasons by agents of the State during the period September 11, 1973 and March 10, 1990
(b) to propose to the President of the Republic the conditions, characteristics, and modes of the austere and symbolic reparation measures that could be assigned to those people who, after being recognized as political prisoners and tortured were not receiving another form of reparation benefit derived of that condition (Valech Report, 2005).

The Valech Report (2005) represents a good effort in reporting accurately the extent of the damage inflicted on the 27,255 people who qualified out of the 35,865 men and women who volunteered their testimonies. Madariaga (2005) believes that this report “establishes a historical and political judgment; it rescues the active subject of this judgment: the tortured; it generates an individual and collective testimony of the psychosocial trauma and the genocide; and it transforms the individual into a social subject, who co-construct a social political and human memory of the State terrorism” (2005, p. 4). However what becomes unacceptable and reproachable was the determination of the Commission of concealing from the public and the victims the testimonies and more importantly the names of those torturers identified in the
process for a period of fifty years. This period ensures that all those involved in the violations of human rights will be dead thus restraining any legal actions that can be taken against those members of the State who participated in torture, thus ensuring a mandate of silence and impunity for 50 years (Cortez, 2006). According to Birkmann (2006) the re-traumatizing effects of this decision resides in the fact that “by not sanctioning a crime, justice cannot accomplish its symbolic reparatory function” (2006, p. 27). That is to say if there are not people responsible for the crimes, it also means that the victims are not worthy of justice. Furthermore, it reaffirms the notion that not only during the dictatorship, but also under this current government the victims and their families are not considered citizens deserving of dignity, respect, and entitled to their rights (Birkmann, 2006). Another impunity-related mechanism identified as re-traumatizing is the fact that some of the interviewing centers were established in city halls and other government buildings, the same places from where the dictatorship exercised the State power, which not only prevented many victims from participating, but also re-opened traumatic experiences of fear. Likewise, the convocation to participate was conducted in a very silent manner, and through very restricted channels. The issue was virtually absent from the media and the public discourse at the time. These two factors reinforce the experience of torture represented by the forbidden, the sinister, the social silence, and the lack of social encouragement and validation. Even more re-traumatizing was the experience of those people who wanted to give their testimony but did not know about the Commission in time, those who were scared, and those who had their testimonies rejected for not providing enough evidence (Madariaga, 2006). In Madariaga’s view (2005) this is not only a clear example of the doctrine of the Conceración of dealing with justice in la medida de lo posible (to the extent possible) but also it “represents a form of social control and a manipulation of the consciousness of people” (2005, p. 5).
Long-term Effects of Psychosocial Trauma

The long-term effects of psychosocial trauma have challenged clinicians and researchers to develop new concepts and definitions to account for the recurrent psychological and somatic pathologies experienced by the traumatized population. In this regard the PRAIS Program Technical Guidelines (2002) identifies politaumatization as a common category among the beneficiaries of the program. Politraumatization is defined as the effects generated by the experience of living more than one traumatic repressive event, producing specific effects on the health of the population, thus making it difficult to assess what traumatic situation has influenced with more intensity the overall health condition (Minoletti, 2002). It is often observed in traumatized people as tendency to develop chronic reactions to stressful situations, which further complicates the diagnosis. Studies about the characteristics of the PRAIS beneficiaries show that only 43% of the families would have suffered one single traumatic event, while 30% would have been affected by two events and 19 % by three or more traumatic experiences. That is to say that close to 57% of the families would have suffered more than one traumatic experience sequentially or at the same time (Castillo, Del Rio, Castañeda, & Lefebvre, 1995; Minoletti, 2002). The same protocol identifies the following characteristics associated with the re-traumatization of the affected population:

Symptomatic Relapse: It refers to the exacerbation of the symptoms that originated the initial clinical condition. In some cases the patient presents new symptoms, which are usually motivated by a combination of personal and social events related to impunity.

Development of a new crisis: These are produced by biographic destabilizing events, unmanageable emotional conflicts, and/or different dysfunctions that overwhelm the capacity of emotional containment of the person and his/her family.
Chronification of damage: It relates to a number of people whose symptoms have become chronic and unmanageable and whose quality of life is stationary and unchangeable. Many of them experience small changes after long therapeutic processes, but immediately and spontaneously go back to their previous state of severe global health deterioration (Minoletti, 2002).

In addition the document identifies two forms of marginalization that have a direct incidence in the development of psychological and physical pathologies:

Social marginalization: Describes the process whereby people were deprived of their social and political power after the coup d’état or during the dictatorship. This process led people and family groups to be excluded from economic production, welfare services and benefits (retirement plans, health and educational benefits), and participation in social, labour or community associations, thus resulting in losing their power in decision-making processes and the subsequent social stigmatization and marginalization. The conditions have been found to influence the overall deterioration of the mental and physical health of the population.

Individual Marginalization: It is the process through which people, as a result of trauma, (usually political prisoners who were tortured) experience a lack of social skills and knowledge, and therefore a diminishing sense of cultural integrity, which leads to a progressive erosion of their self-esteem. In many cases the individual marginalization leads to physical and psychological problems that result in suicide (Minoletti, 2002).

Psychosomatic Manifestations of Trauma

The clinical work of mental health teams has observed over the years a considerable number of relatives of the disappeared present some type of cancer. In the case of women (mothers, wives, sisters, daughters) the most common forms are ovarian and breast cancer, while men (fathers, brothers, sons) tend to develop brain or different forms of stomach cancer (Del
Solar & Piper, 1995; Madariaga, 2003). There is also a significant number of people who experienced torture who have severe digestive disorders, high levels of dermatological problems, and hypertension. These pathologies are very different from those specific physical problems derived from torture itself, which in most cases are related to muscle problems, chronic joint or back pain, eyesight and hearing loss, as well as neurological problems. Some of these physical problems are also found in the general population who were directly affected, however what becomes evident in the general population is the elevated number of people suffering from high blood pressure and diabetes (Del Solar & Piper, 1995; Madariaga, 2002).

Transmission of Trauma

In this context of impunity it becomes evident that the transmission of trauma is a process currently taking place at the social and individual level, which makes understanding and categorizing the specific mechanism of its transmission a difficult task to accomplish. Recent studies have identified that the effects of traumatic situations resulting from State repression are multigenerational (many generations were affected simultaneously), intergenerational (it translates into conflicts among generations), and trasngenerational (its effects appear in different ways in the following generations) (Bastías et al., 2001; Castillo & Piper, 1996; Diaz, 1995; Kordon & Edelman, 2002; Scapusio, 2006).

As already established the psychosocial trauma in Chile is the result of the strategies of social control exercised by the military dictatorship through massive repression, fear, and the destruction of the social organizations, social interactions, and the bodies of those who were considered enemies of the State. At the individual level, trauma generated by political repression is defined by its biopsychosocial character. This means that it always involves the body, the psychic life, and the social relations, although in varying degrees according to the person. Therefore the individual is the materialization of the social trauma in its singular and unique
representation. It is through the experience of each person that it is possible to identify the
general components of trauma that are also common to other individuals but that are mediated by
the individual psychic characteristics (Brinkmann, 2006; Madariaga, 2003). This
conceptualization of trauma is linked to the notion of ‘traumatic situation” identified by Keilson
(1992) given that the trauma of the dictatorship is not only an isolated episode, but rather a
continuum of traumatic events that extends into the present. Consequently, the person
experiences trauma with different levels of intensity throughout the person’s biographical
moments. This situational perspective places the individual traumatic experience in a social and
historical context (Del Solar & Piper, 1995).

In relation to the individual transmission of traumatic experiences, Argentinean
psychologists Diana Kordon and Lucila Edelman (2002) begin by addressing the fact that
traumatic events can cause individual specific psychic effects and traumatic consequences that,
when not elaborated, can influence the symbolic and imaginary processes of their descendents.
Furthermore when the individual is confronted with the impact of State repression, the person
has no means to resist the tanatic action of trauma given the overwhelming amount of terrifying
situations the person is experiencing, therefore the psychic apparatus is unable to elaborate and
integrate the events and their intensity. Consequently, the impact of the events experienced
remains encapsulated as a foreign body. This embodiment of the traumatic material can modify
substantially the value systems, myths, fantasies, and personal, familial, and social beliefs,
linking them to the predominantly shared meanings of a traumatized society (Kordon &
Edelman, 2002).

In this regard, Bastías, Mery, Rodríguez and Soto (2001) argue that the transgenerational
character of trauma in Chile develops independently from the repressive situation, or the time
and social context that originated the traumatic experience. Some of the personal factors that
influenced the transmission in the present are the level of information the person has in relation to specific events (disappearance or torture of a relative, friend, acquaintance), specific personality aspects (tendency to structure current life around trauma), and the mechanisms used to ensure the maintenance of a historical memory about the event and the survival strategies. These elements affect their social insertion and the corresponding socialization of their traumatic experiences (Bastías et al., 2001).

The individual and collective forms of transmission are many and are beginning to be investigated in the context of the violations of human rights in Latin America. Some theories used to understand and explain this phenomenon are derived from psychoanalysis. Serge Tisseron (1997) proposes that the individual is an "internalized group whose psyche is subject to the proof of generations" (1997, p. 11). This conceptualization of the transmission process links social relations to the individual intra-psychic processes. He suggests that the psychic functioning of each person is determined not only by "the conflicts common to the human species and the individual experiences of each person but also by the experiences and situations that marked the life of the parents, grandparents, peers, and friends" (1997, p. 17).

Tisseron (1997) proposes that sometimes the parents experience extremely painful events generating a psychic trauma. The elements of that parental trauma such as feelings, emotions, thoughts, and images are condemned to become a secret by repressing them, therefore they are buried without any meaning in the unconscious waiting to be given meaning in the family mesh, in the hope that there would be a possibility to elaborate them in the future. This incapacity of the individual to recognize, integrate, and elaborate these traumatic aspects creates a fracture in the individual’s psychic continuity or cleavage of the self. Thus the unrecognized areas of the traumatic events become partially symbolized objects, which form a crypt, or psychic fossil (Gomel, 1997; Tisseron, 1997). This parental crypt is transmitted to the children even though
they do not have direct access to the traumatic event. This lack of specific knowledge generates a “phantom” in the descendants that corresponds to the effects of the “secret” in the unconscious of the parents related to the traumatic experiences lived. As a result of this process the traumatic event for the first generation becomes “unspeakable” to the extent that the parents choose not to speak about the event, even though it is present in their psyches. The children on the other hand, are born without the possibility of accessing important elements of their family life thus transforming the “unspeakable” in their parents into “unnamable” in the second generation as a result of the symbolic gaps. That is to say, the children do not have a name or a word they can use to grasp the facts, because the parents have not been able to provide them with the elements to make meaning of the trauma given that they are unable to do it (Tisseron, 1997). This theory provides some understanding of how trauma operates at the family level, while it also emphasizes the idea that in order to understand the trauma both in the first as well as in the following generations it becomes essential to apprehend the totality of the social and historical relationships of all those involved.

Finally, the complexity of the mechanisms involved in the transmission of trauma has confronted the terminology traditionally used to describe this phenomenon. Uruguayan psychologist Miguel Scapusio (2006) proposes the concept of “transgenerationality of damage.” In his view transgenerationality “draws a line that shows how the multiple situations of damage that affect different generations without necessarily blaming any of them for their responsibility in reproducing or transmitting the trauma” (p. 19). Terms like “transgenerational transmission of trauma” suggest that the transmission is exclusively done by the individual, like this notion suggests, and not the result of complex field of interactions which involve society, social practices, and subjectivities. In his conceptualization of transgenerationality there is an acceptance that there was indeed a process of intersubjective transmission in the family context.
derived from a number of feelings that were not elaborated at the time of terror or even after. However, his definition focuses also on what was indeed transmitted as an “ethic legacy of ‘good life’ where affections and ideals were assembled” and transmitted to the future generations (Scapusio, 2006, p. 19).

**Notions of Body Memory and Trauma**

In this section I offer a definition of embodiment that draws from sociology, anthropology, psychology, and neurobiology. I begin by conceptualizing the notion of social body in the context of the experience of the disappeared and its impact on the rest of society. I continue by defining the connection between the individual and the social body from a phenomenological approach. I then describe the senses and their connection to embodied memory from a social and neurobiological perspective. Following that I present the concepts of deep memory and their implications in the transmission of trauma and I conclude with my version of embodiment that has assisted me in conducting this study.

The sociology of the body is the area of sociology that studies the corporeal human existence as a social and cultural phenomenon; the symbolic nature that originates representations and the imaginary (Le Breton, 1992). From this perspective the body is shaped by the social and cultural contexts. According to Le Breton (1992) existence is first and foremost corporeal: to exist means to move in space and time transforming the surroundings. Bodies do not exist in a natural state as they are always inserted in a web of meanings. Consequently the body is the semantic vector that produces meaning through the relationship of people with the world. The meanings that constitute the base of the individual and collective existence originate and disseminate from the body, therefore the body becomes a metaphor for the social and the social becomes a metaphor for the body. The body as a space of meaning is “an interface between the social and the individual, between nature and culture, and between the
psychological and the symbolic” (Le Breton 1992, p. 97). Organs and functions of the body are attributed representations and values, which change from society to society. The body is also an instrument used to convey dual messages like strength and weakness or life and death.

When the State wants to impose political principles they use violence, coercion and restrictions over the body (Le Breton, 1992). In this regard Chilean psychiatrist Marco Antonio De la Parra (2002) asserts:

the fatal model of the coup d’état and it politics of ‘extirpation of the Marxist cancer’ introduced the notion of a body that could be opened up to take out whatever was considered contaminated without anesthetic. The disappeared bodies are the organs that we feel absent. We are lacking pieces, we feel mutilated” (2002, p. 130).

In his reflection about the body, De la Parra (2002) maintains that the social body includes all bodies, even those ones who are absent. “Society is bodies; we are a body of the society we live in, therefore to lose one’s body is to lose one’s community, to touch each other is to find oneself” (De la Parra, 2002, p. 110).

Consistent with this notion of a social body formed by the bodies of everybody, Le Breton (1992) affirms that in societies that are still more traditional and collective, the body is the element that links the collective energy. It is through the body that every person is included in the group; hence the body is the mediator of the human presence in any social practice, unlike more individualistic societies where the body sets the limits of the individual existence; where the individual begins and ends. The body also serves many functions in bringing people to life and preparing people for death. According to Le Breton (1992) when societies fail in their “anthropological function of providing orientation about existence the only alternative left is to ask death if life has any meaning. Death is an instance that can generate meaning when the social order fails” (1992, p. 94).

In the context of this study, the existence of detenidos desaparecidos represents a profound rupture in relation to the commonly accepted notions about death. There is no longer a
certainty about the life or death of the person, thus placing the relatives in a confusing situation; by accepting death it would seem that they are killing them, by accepting the relative is alive they are forced to wait in limbo until there is a certainty of death, and furthermore until there is a body to materialize death. In this context the body of the desaparecido represents a symbolic, existential, and social challenge for the entire society.

Sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (2006) in their seminal book The Social Construction of Reality introduce us to the concept of “symbolic universe” to explain the intertwined webs of meanings that people construct to make sense of existence. Social universes are conceived as the matrix of all the meanings constructed socially and subjectively; the entire historical society and biography of an individual are facts that happen within that universe. These symbolic universes also include dreams, fantasies, and ideals that even though might not belong to the everyday existence of the individual, are also part of them within the symbolic universes. These ideals and dreams are integrated to the totality of meanings that explain and justify them (Berger & Luckmann, 2006).

The legitimating functions of the symbolic universe are extremely important for the individual’s biography in the location of death. The experience of somebody else’s death and the anticipation of our own death represent the biggest threat to the everyday life of the person. The symbolic universes help people legitimate death by preparing the individual to continue living in society after the death of other significant people and to anticipate their own death. This is a long process that involves the gradual incorporation of death within a symbolic universe (Berger & Luckmann, 2006).

The symbolic universe orders history and places and all the collective events within a coherent unity that includes past present and future. In relation to the past, the symbolic universe establishes a memory that is shared by all the individuals that are part of a collectivity. With
regards to the future, the symbolic universe creates a common social framework for the projection of individual actions. Therefore the symbolic universe links people with their ancestors in a meaningful totality that helps transcend the finitude of the human existence and that assigns meaning to the death of the individual. Consequently all the members of a society can conceive themselves as belonging to a significant universe that already existed before they were born and that will continue existing after their death (Berger & Luckmann, 2006).

Similarly, anthropologist Louis Vincent Thomas (1993) reminds us that there is a symbolic value in the "biology of death" (p. 33). A dead body is always the materialization of a concept that otherwise is often timeless and illusive, perhaps because the organic aspect of death is always a reminder of our own temporality as embodied organic beings. We begin to accept death when it is socially accepted. This acceptance is provided by knowledge of the causes, signs, proofs, circumstances, time, place, and the way in which it happened, but more than that, the verification provided by the authority accredited to certify it. Only when we know that can we continue with the rituals of a funeral, the burial, the commemoration and the mourning process. These rituals have profound symbolic, cultural, and religious, meanings in all societies. The differences are given by the ethnic, religious, and geographic differences. However, they have one thing in common: the presence of the body in the final ceremony (Thomas, 1993).

Regarding the social meaning of death, Thomas (1993) states that death rites and grieving rites are associated. The gathering of people at a funeral is a symbol of social cohesion. Thus the community recovers the unity and stability that was perturbed by the death. The family feels accompanied in their pain and the soul of the death person is not lost because the grave provides a fixed place, ritually codified and known (Thomas, 1993). The death rituals are the individual and social responses to confront loss and involve a number of attitudes related to the dead person and the mourners. Thomas (1993) speaks of the "rites of separation that extend over time and
coincide with the period of transformation of the corpse; and the rites of reintegration where the
dead person reunites with the ancestors while the mourners go back to their normal lives” (p.
63).

According to Pizarro and Witebroodt (2002), who conducted a study with eight mothers
of disappeared, the term pathologic grieving does account for the peculiarities of this process in
relatives of the disappeared. They established three elements that make up this complex
dynamic: (a) the impossibility of having the remains, (b) the impossibility of burying them, and
(c) the hope to find them alive. From their findings they developed the concept of grief in
impunity. This concept refers to the distorted nature of the grieving process that together with the
existing impunity translates into lack of justice and absence of the bodies. One of the dimensions
that distinguishes this specific type of process is the search for their children. The search has
been endless, debilitating and lonely, keeping them in a constant state of alert and tension
impeding their psychological rest and deeply affecting their mental and physical health. The
search has become a central element in the impunity-related grieving processes, transforming
this activity into an existential part of their lives and a profound traumatic wound. Another
important element is the lack of the physical remains. The impossibility of finding them and
therefore burying their children exposes these mothers to prolonged feelings of frustration and
uncertainty. This absence, always present, leads them to still have expectations that they might
find them alive walking on the street, suffering from amnesia or another mental illness.

Argentinean psychologist Juan Carlos Kusnetzoff (1986) speaks of “percepticido” or the
“death of perception” to explain the collective loss of perception that is generated by the
individual survival and resistance strategies as well as denial, complicity, or indifference of
society resulting from the fear imposed by State repression. These “psychopathic techniques”
affected the whole Argentinean society leading many people to behave as if the “absence of the
disappeared did not exist” (Kusnetzoff, 1986, p. 108). In the case of Chile the causes of this percepticide can also be found in the systematic use of contradictory information used by the dictatorship to control the population. In 1977 in response to accusations about the disappearance of a 13 year-old boy, the government delegate to the United Nations, Sergio Diez, declared publicly to the world that this boy did not have a legal existence, that is, he had never existed. His remains were found in August 2002 with 12 gunshots to his body. Likewise, Pizarro and Witebroodt (2002) explain that the percepticide suffered by relatives of the disappeared affected the psyches and deeply altering their sense of reality. In their study this social phenomena is observed in the narrative of a mother who wonders ‘so did I dream that I gave birth to a son? (Pizarro & Witebroodt, 2002, p. 31).

A similar emotional process is experienced by the adult children of disappeared and executed prisoners. However, for the sons and daughters of the disappeared they are still experiencing a grief in impunity process. They also face a family mandate of continuing the search after the mothers die. In addition the processes of separation and individuation have been altered resulting from the same family dynamics linked to the absence of a paternal image, and emotional and economical support. Furthermore, the construction of an idealized image of the parents has impacted in many cases the childrens’ construction of their own identity as well as their sense of future which makes it difficult for them to engage in relationships and construct families (Díaz, 2006; Kodon & Edelman, 2002).

According to Berger and Luckmann (2006), the symbolic universe provides the order to apprehend subjectively our biographical experiences. In other words they organize and put into place our individual experiences, particularly when our every day lives have been altered. Institutions are also another important legitimizing element within the symbolic universe. The institutional order provides a sense of security in the world by defending the individual against
the terror of existence and particularly against anomie. Furthermore the symbolic universes provide an integration of all the institutional processes, therefore society acquires meaning. For instance a political order is legitimized according to a cosmic order of power and justice and consequently the political roles are legitimized as representations of this order. However this institutional order like the individual biographies are always threatened by chaos given that every social reality is precarious leading societies to confront chaos. Berger and Luckmann (2006) argue that every time there is an abrupt or violent change in the social order it will bring "the terror of chaos to a conscious closeness" altering profoundly the symbolic universes of society (p. 132).

From this perspective we can infer that the coup d'etat in Chile altered significantly the symbolic universes not only of the relatives of the disappeared, but also of the rest of society. In this regard De la Parra (2002) summarizes the symbolic meaning of the disappeared, the dictatorship, and the tasks of the future in the following way:

There are no bodies to be returned to their families, there is no history to get from an experience that broke us in two. Exactly two. Two pieces, two countries, two parties, two sectors, two halves that will never be able to reconcile or reintegrate if we don't go through the proof of wisdom. To listen to the lesson of our dead is the humility of a wise country. We have said it, death is not the past it is the future, it is from our dead that we construct a tradition and we know who we are (p. 170).

Body, Perception, and Memory

From a phenomenological perspective Merleau-Ponty (1968, 2006) expands our understanding of the socially constructed nature of the body. In his view the body is a living organism by which we move in the world, suggesting that our intentional consciousness is experienced in and through our bodies, therefore we can never experience things independent of our experience as a bodily-engaged being in the world. Unlike traditional mainstream psychology, Merleau-Ponty proposes that perception cannot be reduced to the mind or brain of the individual. In contrast he proposes the notion of perceptual faith (2006). Perceptual faith is
what we initially perceived, and what we carry as perceptual faith throughout the rest of our lives
at some fundamental level of our being is the relationship between our embodied selves and the
world, through the perceptual fields in which we are embedded. (Merleau-Ponty, 2006; Sanz &
Burkitt, 2001). The interconnectedness between our body and the world transform us in what
Merleau-Ponty calls “sensible sentients”, that is to say, we have the capacity to relate to the
embodied experience of other people because we are made of the same material (Merleau-Ponty,
2006, p. 247). This perception of our bodies and the world is multidimensional and exists at
different levels of our being allowing us to connect with other human beings or groups because
we belong to the same world composed of similar fields made up of shapes, contours, light, and
colors. From an individual perspective, each person within the social group is located at a
different relation to the perceptual field and as we move we are continuously changing
perspectives, which reflects our individual situated relation to the world (Sanz & Burkitt, 2001).
Strongly linked to perception is the notion of memory, as an embodied social experience. Nadia
Seremetakis (1994) explains that our senses are meaning-generating apparatuses that operate
beyond our consciousness and intention. In her view, the interpretation by and through the senses
becomes a recovery of truth as collective, material experience. Furthermore, she reminds us that
the senses have traditionally been implicated in historical interpretation as witnesses or record-
keepers of material experience. Memory is therefore a meta-sense that bridges and crosses all the
other senses, but at the same time memory stores and restores the experience of each sensory
dimension in another, as well as outside the body in the surrounding objects and places
(Seremetakis, 1994). To understand memory as a meta-sense implies to accept its
phenomenological nature. Memory is activated by embodied acts and by a sentient body in
motion. Senses like smell, sight, taste, sound, and motion act as triggers in activating embodied
memories. Therefore, the body can be conceived not just simply as material and objective entity
but rather a phenomenological body, a lived body that is socially constituted and shaped (Seremetakis, 1994).

From a biological perspective, the sensory system is the one implicated in memory production. According to Rothschild, (2000) all memory begins with sensory input. It is through the senses that we perceive, understand and make meaning of the world. The senses provide feedback to the brain on the status of the internal and external environment. There are two main sensory systems: exteroceptive and interoceptive. The exteroceptive system is composed of nerves that receive and transmit information from the outside of the body through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin. In contrast the interoceptors are the nerves that receive and transmit information from the inside of the body, from the viscera, muscles, and connective tissue (Rothschild, 2000). In the case of individuals who suffer PTSD, they suffer an inundation of images, sensations, and behavioral impulses (implicit memory) disconnected from context, concepts, and understanding (explicit memory). They cannot make sense of their symptoms in the context of the events they have endured. Their traumatic experiences free float in time without a place in history (Rothschild, 2000).

The sensory, autonomic, and somatic nervous system divisions are associated to trauma. The nervous system transmits sensory information gathered from both the periphery and the interior of the body via synapses, through the brain’s thalamus, on the way to the somatosensory area of the cerebral cortex of the brain. This is the first step of memory, the processing and encoding of information. Memories of traumatic events can be encoded just like other memories, both explicitly or implicitly. However, individuals with PTSD are missing the explicit information necessary to make sense of their distressing body sensations, many of which are implicit memories of trauma. Bessel van der Kolk (1994) has argued that traumatic stress interferes with the consolidation of a verbalizable explicit memory, but has no effect on implicit
sensory, motor, or affective representations of the traumatic event. Furthermore, by virtue of high levels of adrenaline and other stress hormones, such implicit representations are deeply imprinted in memory, and can intrude on consciousness in the form of annoying sensations, images, feelings, and motor activities. In other words, traumatic events are well preserved in implicit memory, as vivid images, sensations, and feelings, but not in explicit memory, as verbalizable narratives (van der Kolk, 1994).

Consistent with the work of van der Kolk (1994), social research and theories about the trauma experienced by Holocaust survivors and the second-generations have been able to identify the impossibility of verbalizing traumatic memories, as well as the depth, and the timeless nature of trauma in the body. After working with Holocaust survivors, Lawrence Langer (1995) developed the notions of "deep and common memories" to distinguish between two types of memories that survivors and their children experience and how they are socially transmitted (p. xi). Deep memory refers to the part of the experience that cannot be verbalized, but that lingers in the body of the survivors preventing them from forgetting the Holocaust trauma. In contrast, common memories are the ones that can actually be transformed into a chronological narrative of events placing the trauma in a continuum. According to Baum (2000) when Holocaust survivors are unable to verbalize "deep memory", the risks for the second-generation is that they too begin to incorporate them into their bodies as if they were their own, integrating an experience they did not have. Therefore, just as Holocaust survivors have difficulty sharing their deep memory with others, their children as well bear a memory that is difficult to share and that resemble their parents’ obsessions and nightmares and reminds them of the way in which the Holocaust changed their lives forever (Baum, 2000). In Baum’s experience the narratives of second-generation Holocaust survivors reveal a deep sense of shame, guilt, and responsibility that reflects the impossibility of separating the deep memories of their parents and
their own experience of encountering the Holocaust as witness. The implications of this
transmission of deep memories are many and affect people as a whole in the present as well as
future generations. In this regard Baum and others (Di Paolantonio; 2000; Simon, Rosenberg, &
Eppert, 2000) propose the concept of "pedagogical memory/remembrance" to educate new
generations about the Holocaust experience attempting to separate deep memory from the
embodied experience of second-generation Holocaust survivors. Central to this notion is the
creation of people's narrative about their own relation to the Holocaust, one that differs from the
relation survivors have with their past, while acknowledging that the Holocaust is still present in
their lives (Baum, 2000). In general terms Simon, Rosenberg and Eppert (2000) describe
"remembrance / pedagogies as political, pragmatic, and performative attempts to prompt and
engage people in the development of particular forms of historical consciousness" (2002, p. 2).
In their view this pedagogy transfers the question of the type and characteristics of the learning
that needs to be accomplished in order to enact possibilities of hope when we encounter
traumatic traces of the past. In essence remembrance must have a purpose in initiating of process
of continuously asking pedagogical questions about what it means to be taught by the
experiences of others. Therefore, remembrance as a hopeful practice involving a critical learning
demands the reworking of notions of community, identity, embodiment and relationships of all
those affected (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert, 2000).

Embodiment

Based on the theory and research discussed I have conceptualized a notion of
embodiment that accounts for the individual and collective experiences of being engaged in the
flux of life through a body which is located within a social framework. My understanding of
embodiment is based on the central notion that the body is a meaning-generating organism. As
individuals we generate and we receive information through our senses, perception, body
motions, and language that in turn allows making meaning of the world while at the same time connecting us with the embodied experiences of others. Therefore at the collective level we are part of a social body conformed by the embodied presence of others. As collectivities we develop and engage in social and cultural practices, and traditions to sustain identity, to confront death, to anchor ourselves to life thus constructing a social reality. Within this context symbolic universes provide a meta framework that allow us to place our entire life experience in a supportive context that gives meaning and security to our lives.

From this perspective we can understand that when the institutions that conform this symbolic universe fail to protect us as individuals and society we go into existential chaos. The absence or destruction of these meaningful frameworks particularly when they are associated to violence, repression, fear and destruction of the individual bodies that conform a social body, would explain the existence of collective trauma. At the individual level the body registers those traumatic experiences through the sensory system leaving those memories locked and unable to be expressed. At a social level we see that a similar process takes place when the institutions that conform the State are unwilling to provide the spaces or instances for people to construct these collective narratives, by imposing oblivion or a conspiracy of silence. Furthermore, this impossibility of voicing traumatic narratives is augmented when impunity replaces justice within the symbolic collective universes. Collective memories appear then as an alternative to balance the broken symbolic universes by restoring a sense of continuity, identity and tradition, linking past, present and future. However, many questions remain unanswered: is remembrance in itself a healing alternative? How do we learn the lessons so that we actually do not repeat the horrors of the past? How do we give voice to the memories locked inside the individual and social body? The challenges for psychologists, counsellors, and social researchers and practitioners are many and far ranging. Perhaps some of the answers lie in shifting the focus of how healing should
work by incorporating a pedagogical framework that allows us to critically learn from people’s trauma stories while at the same time guiding and reframing memory processes and social practices. In this context artistic expressions provide a fertile field to encourage those who have experienced traumatic experiences in “acts of active hope” that involve an engaged reflection about the past through the construction of artistic embodied individual and collective narratives.

**Notions of Art, Memory, and Healing**

In this section I briefly discuss some of the main psychological theories that can serve as a framework for interpreting artistic and creative material. I also describe some of the collective artistic expressions that developed in Chile during the dictatorship as a form of communication and memory. I conclude with the analysis of an artistic creative collective project that explores the research possibilities and the healing potential of using art to explore memories of massive trauma.

Artistic activities and expressions are a characteristic of every society and culture. Artistic representations have allowed us to know about the life and culture of old civilizations and the different stages of their development. Artistic activities are a natural expression of human beings to release their need of expression, thus facilitating intra- and interpersonal communication. Art as a social practice can be viewed as a medium to express personal and social processes while at the same time understand the creative and emotional processes involved. In this sense art uses a non-verbal symbolic system of representation that is particularly appropriate to open up hidden mental processes that are not commonly used by people, given that we often favor verbal communication over artistic representations, graphic signs or visual marks of our own experiences (Capponi, 1999). In this regard Chilean psychiatrist Ricardo Capponi (1999) has argued that art represents an invitation, without imposition to a search for meaning and understanding of our conflicts, but only within our own emotional
boundaries. Therefore the artistic product becomes “the result of the reparation of destroyed objects” (1999, p. 197). It requires contact with the pain and suffering, so that from that space we can create and recreate a new object. Similarly, Fred Alford suggests:

It is through the artistic representation of pain, repulsiveness and horror, that art reconciles us with that that we frequently know, but that we do not admit, that we are full of hatred, cruelty, filthiness, ugliness, hopelessness and emptiness. Art reconciles us with that negative part in others and in ourselves, thus, one of art’s task is to make us feel at home in the world (Alford, 1978, as cited in Capponi, 1999, p. 204).

The analysis of individual and collective artistic representation poses an interesting challenge for psychotherapists working from that perspective. In that regard psychoanalytical theory offers a number of concepts to understand the psychological experience behind an artistic representation. Concepts like transference and counter-transference have been used to understand the relationship between the artist and the artistic work, and the artistic representation and the spectator (Cornejo & Brik Levy, 2003). For Lev Vygotsky (1990) artistic work is a direct representation of unconscious processes, similar to dreams in Freudian theory. Artistic work brings about a combination of conscious and unconscious desires and affects, which are often surrounded by opposing feelings. Thus, the work of art has the capacity of merging these different types of desires by expressing them through the artistic activity. The product created not only reflects the person’s inner conflicts, but also transmits these personal contradictions to the therapist or spectator. Therefore by understanding the therapeutic potential of artistic creation we can assume that both artist and spectator could potentially identify, work through, and resolve their unconscious conflicts. Moreover, Vygotsky (1990) proposes that given that art is an expression of human feelings and passions they are embodied in the content of the artistic work hence by transforming the materials, colors and textures to express them, these feelings and passions are transformed as well.
Particularly relevant to interpreting artistic work is the conceptualization of symbols developed by Carl Jung (2001). He proposes that symbols are the best description or formulation for a relatively unknown issue. By that he means, that symbols allow us to describe something that is indefinable. He viewed symbols as an accurate representation of the unconscious and archetypal information and therefore the only information we have about the unconscious. When working with symbols he proposes an exploration of the reasons why certain symbols are used and not others, as well as the texture and quality of them, rather than just focusing on what lies behind a symbol. For him symbols have multiple meanings and once they are identified at the conscious level, they can stimulate the conscious to develop a process for interpreting them. Symbols can appear spontaneously, therefore the therapist’s role is to encourage the client to pay attention to them in order to identify how they relate to their current conflicts. Furthermore Jung asserts that in the individual and collective life of a person there is a process of birth and death of symbols. Some of them live for a long time and are associated with certain stages and archetypes. For Jung symbols always have a conscious element, while archetypes can function at a completely unconscious level, So that when we describe a symbol there are always two realities: one conscious and one unconscious, thus the symbol is the bridge that links these two realities. Furthermore a symbol, in his view, unites the body, the mind and the soul through creativity and imagination (Jung, 2001). This interpretation of the functions of symbols in unifying people’s live experiences suggests that each of these representations constitutes in itself a narrative of aspects of the self that have the power to create more integrated self narratives. From a collective view, social constructionism bridges the individual and social allowing us to understand artistic representations from a narrative perspective.

Social constructionism focuses the communal basis of knowledge, processes of interpretation of reality and the meaning-making derived from social, cultural and historical
processes. Central to constructivist ideas is the notion of language and storytelling as shared activities used for constructing meaning of the world (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionists focus on language as a form of social analysis and how it is structured into different discourses, or systems (stories, images, metaphors, representations) that together produce a particular interpretation of events (Gergen, 1985; McNamee & Gergen, 1996). Consequently language in all its forms represents the matrix of meaning that constitutes the reality in which one positions oneself (Neimeyer & Raskin, 2000). Consistent with this view, narratives are defined as units of meaning that provide a framework to situate and understand the lived experience. As stated by Epston, White, and Murray (1996), “we enter into narration, others invite us into their narrations, we live our lives through these narratives” (p. 122). Within this context artistic expressions are a medium people use to materialize their own narratives, so that “art becomes the vehicle through which we generate the reality of life, given that we live through stories both in the narration and in the construction of the self” (Gergen & Gergen, year, as cited in De Amorim & Goncalves, 1996, p. 179). From this perspectives the research and therapeutic potential for analyzing artistic material is provided by understanding the nature and function of narratives in people’s lives. By conceptualizing artistic creations as individual or group narratives we can explore how people link aspects of their experiences through time. The fact that narratives construct beginnings and ends opens the possibilities for identifying and making sense of patterns and changes in their lives thus identifying the flux of live experiences. According to Epston, White, and Murray (1996), we construct units of experience and meaning from a sense of continuity in life, hence every narrative is the arbitrary imposition of meaning when memory flows because we highlight certain things and disregard others, that is to say every narrative is interpretive. Likewise the narratives we use to situate our experience in time not only determine the meaning we give to that experience, but also the selection of the aspects of the experience that will be
expressed in the artistic production. Consequently, narratives help us organize memory given
that the self narratives we construct are immersed in processes of emotional interchange linking
the past and the present, but they also help us organize the meaning that we want to give to the
future trajectory of our experiences (Gergen, 1996).

Artistic Expressions in Chile

Artistic expressions were at the centre of the collective activities carried out during the
dictatorship. As the fear and repression progressed different forms of art developed to counteract
the government’s violence. These forms of communication served many purposes. They became
not only a medium to represent the profound impact of the violation of human rights, but also a
way to invite people to come out, to organize and to fight. The creation of collective memories
through poetry, essays, novels, clandestine writings, films, plays, paintings, photographs, murals
and “art actions” developed almost spontaneously, first among small groups of people and then
expanding as people began to feel less fear and more confident of collective forms of support
and resistance (Sagaris, 1996). Art actions were “interventions” in public spaces staged in the
streets, plazas, buildings, or museums to draw attention to the political violence and its effects on
human beings and social life (Lira, 1998). After the dictatorship collective artistic expressions
particularly murals have continued to be used as a spontaneous means of calling attention on
important social issues, to denounce impunity, to demand justice and to remember the past in
social and public spaces. These forms of expressions have also influenced the new generations
who have developed their own forms of graffiti to show their discontent with society.

The Gesher Project

An interesting approach to exploring transgenerational collective trauma through artistic
expressions is provided by the “Gesher Project” developed in Vancouver by Alina Wydra
(1998). The participants of this project were 23 adult Holocaust survivors, child survivors
(hidden during the holocaust) and children of survivors. They met for three hours each week during five months to talk, paint and write together about their personal experiences as survivors of the Holocaust. The main premise of this group experience was that there is a generational transmission of trauma and that in order to deal with it a multidisciplinary approach needs to be used. The weekly workshops were organized using two activities per night – painting, writing or talking – and a debriefing session at the end of each session. A psychologist, a painter and a writer facilitated the workshops.

In order to access the participants' trauma, the facilitators used a chronological approach. They explored the participants' life experiences before and after the Holocaust by concentrating on themes relevant to each generation. Some of the themes explored were: identity, silence, darkness, forgetting and remembering, death, life, and mourning. They used a number of techniques like visualization, poetry writing, painting and color analysis in relation to emotions. At the end of the project, the participants made a collage with photographs and family mementos to create a piece, which also incorporated painting and writing. Through this experience, people were able to access their painful emotions and trauma in a combination of ways. By remembering, mourning and telling the truth about the horrible events they experienced and their effects, people were able to create a physical testimony of their trauma and start the healing process (Wydra, personal communication, September 21, 1999). Although the Gesher project was not developed as a research study, the healing effects of the project as well as the impact of using artistic expressions as a tool to access traumatic memories were evident to the facilitators involved in designing and implementing it.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Constructionism places no particular constraints or demands on the scholar in terms of preferred visions of the future. However, there has been perhaps an inevitable tendency among constructionist scholars to develop theories and practices that favor communalism versus individualism, interdependence over independence, participatory over hierarchical decision making, and societal integration as opposed to traditionalist segmentation (Gergen, 1996, p. 7).

As described by Gergen (1996) constructionism provides a theoretical framework that is flexible enough to encourage researchers to find their own visions of the future, while engaging themselves in non-traditional, wide-ranging research practices to explore the boundaries of human inquiry. My vision was to expand our understanding of embodied social practices created in the context of collective trauma as a dialectical response to the destructive power of political repression and impunity exercised by the Chilean State. I describe this text as a partial, limited and imperfect representation of the rich and life-affirming stories of the participants that came to life and acquired new meanings through the social interactions and reflective experiences during the research process. The text reflects also a tentative theorizing about the body as a meaning-making organism where individual and collective meanings are created.

The overarching goals of this study were the following: (a) to explore the embodied experience of members of HIJOS in practices of memory and resistance; (b) to empower the participants by exploring and validating the personal and collective meaning they make of these practices; (c) to determine the healing value of exploring these practices through a series of innovative expressive workshops; (d) to compare the individual experiences of memory to the public discursive construction of memory; (e) to explore the trans-generational effects of psychosocial trauma in this segment of the population; and (f) to consider the use of memory and resistance in pedagogical and therapeutic practices.

This dissertation is defined as an exploratory qualitative study. I used the following techniques: narrative case studies, semi-structured interviews and workshops. For the
methodological approach I designed a *Liberation Action Research Method* and *An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method* for the analysis of the data. The co-investigators were five men and five women members of HIJOS. The data collection process included three levels of data collection. The first level integrated individual interviews and conversations and social interactions (attending conferences, workshops, protests and movies) that provided the pragmatic and experiential support for adapting and improving the theoretical methodology base. The second level of data collection is represented by the artistic material and the group debriefing information gathered in the six artistic workshops. In the third level of data collection I included ten individual validation interviews and two group validation meetings. The objectives of these validation meetings were to corroborate the accuracy of my analysis of the data gathered in the workshops and to get their personal experience of the research process.

In the following section I present the main theoretical framework used for developing the Liberation Action Research Method. I continue by describing this method in the context of the research. Then I provide a detailed description of the study. Following this, I describe the theoretical premises used to develop the Embodied Participatory Narrative Method. Then I present the data collection strategies and the analysis process. I conclude by detailing the criteria used to assess the rigor and worth of the study.

**Theoretical Framework**

Within traditional (positivist) forms of psychological research, knowledge has been understood as a way of accessing reality through a relationship between a subject who "knows" and an external object of study who can be known (Burr, 1995). This idea of objectivity takes for granted social reality as an entity independent of the knowledge and experience that we have of it, assuming that scientific knowledge is a true and generalizable representation of that reality (Fernández, 2006; Ibáñez, 1994; Piper, 2002).
Qualitative research methods on the other hand, are based on the premise that the social world is constructed by meanings and symbols. It can be defined as a multimethod and relational approach where researchers study issues or problems in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). From this perspective social reality is made of socially shared meanings, so that intersubjectivity is the key component in this type of research and the starting point of understanding reflexively to investigate social meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Parker, 2002).

The theoretical underpinnings of this study are drawn from social constructionist ideas (Gergen, 1985, 2001; Ibáñez, 1994; Parker, 2002), and critical social psychology (Fernández, 2006; Piper, 2002). For the methodological approach I designed a method called A Liberation Action Research that draws from liberatory and participatory perspectives (Boal, 1995; Fals-Borda, 1985; Freire, 1986, 1994; Martín-Baró, 1990, 1996), and for the analysis I propose An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method that draws from three complimentary methodologies: narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993), body-centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006) and participatory action research (Fals-Borda, 1985; Montero, 2000; Rahman, 1985).

**Social Constructionism**

Social constructionists study psychosocial phenomena by exploring the mutual influence and reciprocity between the individual experience and the socio-cultural aspects surrounding it. They focus on the existing relationship among the individuals who participate in a common culture and how from their own subjective experiences construct realities through social language (Donoso, 2004). Social research is not a process of representation of a reality that pre-exists, but rather a process that participates in the construction of social reality given that it produces a representation that has some effects that contribute to the reproduction or
transformation of this reality (Fernández, 2006). The researcher explores the meanings, the
descriptions, and the value that each person assigns to the situation/problem being studied from
the participant’s individual experience. This emphasis on the relational aspect of research
assumes that knowledge sits in the space *in-between* those people interpreting it (Donoso, 2004).
The spontaneous narratives that emerge portray personal knowledge of the reality being
constructed by people throughout their lives and up to the present. From these narratives the
investigator elaborates a comprehensive text of the phenomena being investigated. Language
allows engagement in narration or storytelling to organize and to make sense of the world
operating as a form of social participation (McNamee & Gergen, 1996).

Interpretation is then, a process of gathering interpretations of interpretations of all those
involved in the process of constructing their social reality. In this process of interpretation the
researcher is always situated in a social, cultural, historical and political position that makes
possible the production of knowledge that is therefore restricted. Contrary to the notion of
neutrality and objectivity of knowledge promoted simultaneously by positivist views, qualitative
research proposes the idea of reflexivity (Gergen, 2001; Ibáñez, 1994; Parker, 2002). Reflexivity
is an invitation to the researcher to explicate the conditions that his/her position in the world
imposes on the investigation. It also forces the researcher to be responsible for the commitment
that orients his/her work by evaluating the effects of the research on social reality (Fernández,
2006) and on the self of the researcher.

**Critical Social Psychology**

Critical social psychology (CSP) assumes a radical non-conformity within the
conventional perspectives of traditional psychology whose main premise is to treat and solve
people’s individual and social problems by “experts” through the application of generalized
diagnostic measurement and techniques. In contrast CSP is conceived, as a “political practice”
given that its main objective is to contribute to the critical analysis and transformation of social reality. In this regard Piper (2002) posits: “We seek to produce problematizing debates that reflect on the kind of social reality that our practices construct, which implies generating new practices and, therefore, opening up new meanings, producing new realities” (p. 30).

This political dimension implies breaking with the assumptions that sustain traditional psychology as well as supporting process of emancipation, and social transformation (Ibáñez, 1994; Piper, 2002). From CSP the social sphere is inseparable from the individual because it is constituted by individuals in dynamic social interactions, thus “society materializes through individual practices, and individuals exist as social beings through the production of society” (Piper, 2002, p. 25).

Critical social psychology proposes a constructionist epistemology by assuming that the knowledge of social reality is an intersubjective and symbolic construction made up of shared meanings that define it in specific socio-historic contexts, but not in a homogeneous way (Fernández, 2006). Thus, social reality is comprised of a multitude of meanings that weave and create tension, generating a complex field of discourses (Fernández, 2006; Ibáñez, 1994; Piper, 2002). From its constructionist perspective CSP also assumes that “what is constructed is not reality itself, but knowledge of it, assuming therefore that reality pre-exists the act of knowing it” (Fernández, 2006, p. 5).

By asserting the socially, and culturally situated nature of knowledge we also assume its historical and procedural character. According to Ibáñez (1994) “social phenomena, social practice and social structures have ‘memory’ and what they are at any given moment is inseparable of the history that produced them” (p. 229). This to say that the social reality is intrinsically historical and it is produced to a great extent by the cultural peculiarities, the
traditions, and the ways of life that a particular society has been constructing throughout its
development (Garay, Iñiguez, & Martínez, 2002).

Social constructionism and critical social psychology are distinguishable from other
forms of psychology by their non-conformity within conventional psychology and research by
rejecting the notions of generalizable truths and objective, neutral and ahistorical research, which
has dominated mainstream psychological research. Therefore, these alternative psychologies
upon which this study is situated represent in itself a resistance to the mainstream constructions
of psychology (Parker, 2002).

Methodological Approach

The methodological design of this research I have chosen to term “A Liberation Action
Research Method”. This methodology is consistent with the main theoretical framework of this
study. In the development of this method I have taken Brazilian educator Paulo Freire’s main
premises of liberatory education that seeks to develop critical consciousness for the liberation of
oppressed peoples through a praxis of action – reflection – action by which individuals are
encouraged to engage in a process of mutual questioning, learning, reflection and meaning
making. Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal (1995) brought to life the principles of liberatory
education through community-based theatre, in order to develop an understanding of the power
of collective experience through engaging participants in an exploration of emotions, sensations,
actions and cognitions for developing and empowering individuals and communities. In the field
of Psychology Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996) expanded these ideas by developing a theoretical
body of knowledge that proposed a new praxis-based theoretical approach to dealing with social
issues that questions and reframes the role of psychologists. Colombian sociologist Orlando
Fals-Borda (1985, 1991) began to develop a community-based, participatory method for
researching social issues known as participatory action research in the late 1950s and throughout his career he used Freire’s ideas to complement his work.

Liberation theories as identified by Freire (1970), Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996), and Augusto Boal (1989, 1995) focus on the roots of the dominant oppressive living conditions that marginalize and control people in Latin America. Based on the notion that social change is possible through collective processes that involve reflection and action, they provide a theoretical framework for the understanding of how people construct reality when faced with oppressive conditions as well as the techniques and practices to transform these situations. Participatory Action Research, on the other hand, represents the methodological expression of principles derived from a cross discipline practice drawing on different kinds of knowledge and worldviews that allow access to people’s experiences while engaging them in a process that is concerned with: (a) the development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants; (b) the improvement of the lives and empowerment of those involved in the research process; and (c) the transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships (Burton, 2004; Kagan, Burton, & Siddiquee, 2006).

Consistent with social constructionism and critical social psychology, participative perspectives have developed a critical model that refutes the positivist theorist in views of science arguing that (a) both research and interventions in social science have to have a social relevance given that it involves human suffering (b) knowledge is mediated by the people who produce it, therefore there is no neutrality either in the way knowledge is accrued nor in the knowledge produced. This brings into question the role of the researcher in relation to the people the researcher works with. Within these critical perspectives there is an explicit commitment to work with and for the transformation of oppressive conditions (Montenegro & Pujol, 2003; Montero, 2000).
In combining these different approaches I make the following assumptions: (a) all phenomena are socially constructed; (b) reality exists prior to our knowledge of it, however, we construct a knowledge of it through social interactions and shared meanings; (c) social reality is a historical and symbolic construction; (d) the meaning derived from social interactions is historically, culturally and socially situated and arise from contested visions of reality; (e) language is a form of social action that produce meanings; (f) theory and praxis should work towards enhancing people's living conditions; and (g) it is possible to expand our understanding of how we construct social meanings by connecting with our embodied experiences.

I begin this next section by describing in more detail the main premises of the liberation theories used for the design of Liberation Action Research. Then I describe how I have integrated these premises into this design. Following this, I illustrate in some detail the methods used for data collection, sources of data and the Embodied Participatory Narrative Method that I have developed to analyze the information.

**Liberation Theories and Practices**

The concept of *liberation* in conjunction with *social transformation* has been around the fields of psychology in Latin America since the beginning of the 1960s (Montero, 2004). The first person to introduce this concept in the social sciences was Paulo Freire (1986, 1994) in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* originally published in 1964, in which he reminds the world of the potential of human agency in the process of social change. He develops a discourse of liberation based on the belief in the possibility of personal and political transformation. In his view any structure, system, or institution of oppression can be transformed by the oppressed by changing the relationship between oppressor and oppressed. The dialectical basis of his theory assumes that this relationship is sustained by the status, power and domination of the oppressor and the existence of the oppressed. Furthermore, he views both the oppressor and the oppressed
as manifestations of dehumanization since the oppressor is dehumanized by the act of oppression, while the oppressed are dehumanized by the experience of oppression and the internalization of the image of the oppressor. Therefore, Freire proposes that the “authentic liberation of people is a process of humanization” (1986, p. 30). The goal of liberation as he proposes is mediated by another dialectical relationship between the world and human consciousness. In this regard the concept of *concientización* or critical awareness is foundational to Freire’s radical pedagogy. Critical awareness is made possible through praxis, which he defines as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1986, p. 33). In sum he connects reflection and action together as part of a process that focuses on identifying and transforming social, economic and political contradictions. (Freire, 1986, 1994).

**Liberation Social Psychology**

Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Spanish Jesuit priest and social psychologist is often acknowledged with the development of liberation social psychology in Latin America. He proposes that Latin American social psychology should have as its main goal the liberation of oppressed people. He centers his theoretical analysis of liberation on three main ideas: (a) that psychology should concern itself with searching for the truth within the popular masses (*el pueblo*), those underprivileged voiceless people who remain absent from the academic debates and social practices; (b) to create a psychological praxis to recover and transform people’s human potential which is often invisible for them due to historical, social and cultural conditions; and (c) to turn psychologist away from the internal problems of psychological research. He proposes instead that psychologists should turn their attention towards social problems such as poverty, overcrowding, land reforms, psychosocial traumas, and violence with the purpose of transforming these oppressive conditions (Martín-Baró, 1990, 1996; Montero, 2004).
Drawing upon Paulo Freire’s concept of critical consciousness (*concientización*), Martín-Baró (1996) identifies three main aspects of the process of critical awareness that should guide psychologists into a new praxis. First, the human being is transformed by changing his or her reality through an active dialectical process that can neither be taught nor imposed on them. Second, people are able to grasp the mechanisms of oppression and dehumanization by a gradual process of decoding or de-construction of their world. This process transforms the consciousness that mystify the situation as natural or acceptable and opens up for new meanings and possibilities for action. Third, people’s new knowledge of their surrounding reality carries them to a new understanding of themselves and, most important, of their social identity. They begin to discover themselves in their actions, and in their active role in relation to others. In this process they do not only discover the roots of what they are, but also the horizon of what they can become. Thus the recovery of historical memory offers a base for a more autonomous determination of their future. Based on these constructs, Martín-Baró, (1996) identifies three approaches for those psychologists working from this approach: recovering historical memory, utilizing the virtues of people, and de-ideologizing commonsense and everyday experience.

In relation to the recovery of historical memory he asserts that the every day struggles of people in Latin America forced them to live in the here-and-now, thus preventing them from deriving lessons from past experiences and most importantly finding the roots of one’s identity which is essential for interpreting one’s sense of present and therefore searching for future possibilities. This is compounded by the prevailing ahistorical discourses that promote an apparent sense of normality that tends to be accepted without questioning. Thus, recovering historical memory has to do then with recuperating not only a sense of one’s own identity and the pride of belonging to a people, but also a reliance on a tradition and a culture. Therefore, the
recovery of historical memory should focus on the reconstruction of patterns of identification that can help them moving towards liberation and fulfillment.

He also urges psychologists to utilize people’s virtues by engaging themselves in practices that can allow them to get to know people’s tremendous faith in human capacity to change the world, their capacities to sacrifice themselves for the collective good, their uncompromising solidarity with the suffering of others, and their endless hope for tomorrow. In his opinion these virtues are present in their everyday life struggles, but also in popular traditions, and in religious and cultural practices.

Finally, he proposes a critical position of de-ideologizing everyday experiences by deconstructing prevailing social discourses that deny or disguises essential aspects of reality. For him to de-ideologize means “to retrieve the original experience of groups and persons and return it to them as objective data” (Martín-Baró, 1996, p. 31). By doing so, people can use the data to articulate and reframe a consciousness of their own reality through the verification and validation of the acquired knowledge. Influenced by the work of sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda (1985), Martín-Baró conceives this process of de-ideologizing common sense and everyday life should be a critical participatory process involving communities and people affected by oppression or marginalization, thus moving away from the predominant forms of research and analysis. Consistent with his views on research practices, he proposes that theory should have a supportive role in guiding the research process as he explains: “It shouldn’t be theories that define the problems of our situation, but rather the problems that demand, and so to speak, select, their own theorization” (as cited in Burton, 2004, p. 585).

Consequently, liberation social psychology must be understood as a critical theoretical and praxis oriented approach that is conceived as a democratic process that aims at strengthening the capacities of people and communities while exercising its ethical, critical and democratic
character (Martín-Baró, 1996; Montero, 2004). The cyclical nature of this method (action – reflection - action) derived from Freire’s approach (1986, 1994) produces a reflective praxis that generates theory, which is in turn analyzed and used to inform praxis thus creating a dialectical movement that incorporates the knowledge and the action of those sectors of society who are usually absent from theoretical discussions.

**Theatre of the Oppressed**

The influence of Freire’s ideas is also present in the work of Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal, who developed a method to encourage people to uncover the causes of social oppression through a series of games and techniques that use the body and reflection to identify and transform social inequalities thus achieving a form of liberation. In his view, theatre of the oppressed developed in Latin America “as an aesthetic and political response to the unbearable repression exercised on the continent by dictatorial regimes under the influence of the United States” (Boal, 1989, p.14). Theater of the Oppressed offers a constant dialogue with the oppressed, allowing them to show where the oppression is, and at the same time letting them discover the roads to liberation by creating their own liberation scenes. In Boal’s view there are two fundamental principles that guide this form of theatre: (a) to transform the spectator from being passive, and receptive, into the protagonist of a dramatic action, that means, to help people become active subjects capable of transforming their own reality, and (b) to allow people to reflect on their present situation with an emphasis on future possibilities in order to transform reality. He based these principles on the following assumptions: that a spectator, who has experienced a liberatory transformation in a theatre session, will be willing later on, to experience it again in real life.

The workshops designed by Boal (1995) bring together community members in a series of exercises and games that aim to: (a) engage them in a process of connecting with each other
and with their experiences; (b) develop greater awareness of their values, perceptions and assumptions; and (c) explore the challenges and solutions to issues affecting them. Participants are also encouraged to deconstruct the prevailing discourses and mythologies, preconceptions, and identify contradictions in their experiences through dialogue and praxis. This methodology allows for an expansion of their understanding of what the problem is before collaboratively developing solutions.

**Participatory Action Research**

The history of action research (AR) in psychology can be traced back to the 1940s both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. In the US these early approaches developed in response to important social problems namely enhancing inter-group relations, reducing prejudice, and understanding and improving American Indian affairs through action-oriented knowledge. In the UK, interdisciplinary teams developed a parallel action research orientation to address the practical post-war problems of personal selection; treatment and rehabilitation of wartime traumatic stress and the reinsertion of war veterans into the work force (Elden & Chisholm, 1993; Kagan, Burton, & Siddiquee, 2006). Action Research soon began to be applied to intra-organizational and work-life problems. In this context it was seen as a socializing tool for improving working and social relations related to issues such as alcoholism and absenteeism. The initial enthusiasm produced by the use of AR declined in social psychology in the 1950s and 1960s due, in part, to a tendency to move back towards a disconnection from the study of social problems in natural settings and a renewed focus on the study of individual behaviors in laboratory settings. However, the so-call *crisis in social psychology* (Gergen, 1985; Parker, 1989) and the beginning of a new paradigm, with a clear anti-positivist emphasis paved the road for its re-appearance (Gergen, 1985,1996: Piper, 2002).
Grundy (1982) distinguishes three broad types of Action Research: technical, practical, and emancipatory or participatory. The goal of technical action research is the promotion of efficient and effective practice. In this type of investigation the researcher identifies the problem and the intervention, which is then tested. While this approach continues in psychology, it tends to be applied as a positivist approach (Kagan, Burton, & Siddiquee, 2006). In practical action research instead, both practitioners and researchers come together to identify potential problems, their underlying causes and possible solutions. The goal is to understand practice-oriented problems and to develop the strategies to solve them in an immediate situation. This type of research is common in the fields of education and human development and reflects the concerns of industrialized countries in the North with problem-solving strategies in organizations for greater efficiency through working with organizational decision makers (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Rahman, 1985). Emancipatory action research seeks to assist participants in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising their collective consciousness. This type of research focuses on the collaborative exploration of an existing social problem and reflects the concerns of developing countries in the South with understanding and changing communities and societies through a commitment to working with grassroots groups to promote social transformations (Grundy, 1982; Kagan, Burton, & Siddiquee, 2006). A particular form of emancipatory action research known as Participatory Action Research (PAR) developed in Latin America and has been largely adopted by community social psychology and those working with liberation social psychology (Burton, 2004; Montero, 2004).

Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda is mainly credited along with a handful of other people for the development of participatory action research methodology in Latin America. In essence PAR seeks to articulate the production of knowledge with social change based on the
belief that every person and community possesses the self-knowledge that must be considered the key element in designing any research project and/or political work (Rahman, 1985).

Particularly important to Latin American social psychological action research, was the critical pedagogy of Freire, who encouraged the viewing of research participants as active members of inquiries concerning themselves and their environment, as well as the role of dialogic methods for exploring ideas participatively, in order to arrive at new understandings (Fals-Borda, 1985; Montero, 2004; Rahman, 1985).

PAR as defined by Fals-Borda is based on two main concepts. First, the existential notion of vivencia, (lived experience), or Erlebnis, a concept developed by Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who believes that it is through a lived experience that we intuitively grasp the essence of something, we apprehend its reality, thus we feel, enjoy and understand every-day phenomena, and we experience our own being in its entirety. Second, this lived experience is complemented with the notion of authentic commitment derived from historic materialism and classic Marxism (Fals-Borda, 1985).

According to Fals-Borda the main objectives of PAR are: (a) the collective process of inquiring social issues to produce new knowledge; (b) the critical recovery of history; (c) the use and validation of popular culture; and (d) the devolution and dissemination of new knowledge (1985). The collective research process involves the use of information gathered and systematized by the group as a source of objective knowledge of facts and issues through communal meetings, sociodramas, artistic techniques, and cultural gatherings. These collective and dialogical data collection strategies not only allow the compilation of information but also the social validation of knowledge, which is often not possible in other individual methods such as in-depth interviews, or questionnaires. In addition, the information is corroborated immediately through dialogue, argumentation and consensus for objective research purposes.
These dialogical group techniques also make possible the recovery of historical facts and collective strategies of resistance. Collective memory is used to discover and explore facts and issues that in the past proved to be efficient in defending the interests of the oppressed and that in the present may become useful for the development of critical consciousness. In this context PAR works with oral traditions, witness testimonies, family and community archives and with popular stories and other techniques that seek to activate collective memory.

In order to motivate and mobilize communities PAR uses popular culture. This technique allows researchers to incorporate into the study the action and popular values as well as cultural and ethnic elements often ignored by "traditional science" such as art, music, theatre, sports, beliefs, myths, storytelling, and other elements connected with feelings, imagination and ludic expressions that are re-integrated into people's experience as part of the research and recruitment procedures. Likewise, the concept of authentic participation as used in PAR is rooted in cultural and historical traditions that converge with feelings and altruistic attitudes of mutual cooperation and resistance that have survived the destructive impact of violent invasions. These social communal practices include the collective use of land and water, the communal construction of houses (Minga), the belonging to extended family and many other practices that change from region to region in the Latin American continent (Fals-Borda, 1985).

In the development of a methodology of PAR, Fals-Borda identifies internal and external agents for change who are united in their commitment to transform social reality. Therefore, the knowledge generated by both types of agents who bring academic and popular knowledge creates true scientific knowledge (Fals-Borda, 1985). According to Fals-Borda (1985) this type of research not only rejects the asymmetric relation of subject/object, which characterizes traditional academic investigation, but also changes the relationship into subject/subject. In this
context participation is viewed as a voluntary and experiential engagement that breaks that subject/object relationship.

The production and dissemination of new knowledge is an essential part of the research process given its value in providing evaluation and feedback. Fals-Borda (1985) identifies four levels of communication depending on whether the systematized knowledge is going to the people (literate and illiterate), the community organizers, the researchers or other intellectuals. Therefore PAR demands of researchers to know how to convey the knowledge efficiently to the four levels using written, audio and visual means. In returning the information back to the communities he suggests the use of artistic language such as images, sound, painting, mimes, photography, popular theatre, poetry, music, audiovisuals, puppets and exhibitions through the existing organizations and community networks such as unions, cooperatives, cultural centres, women’s and seniors groups and training centres (Fals-Borda, 1985; Montero, 2000; Rahman, 1985).

PAR’s epistemological position opposes other epistemologies such as empiricism, positivism or structuralism, which reject social value-bias in what is considered to be ‘scientific’ research. According to Rahman (1985), the generation of knowledge of PAR is also a scientific activity that is achieved through the dialogical process of collective reflection when people ‘withdraw’ from action for review and decision–making. This process is based on consensus rather than on a set of pre-established set of rules to be applied mechanically. In Rahman’s view this process is no less scientific or objective, as long as “the necessary criteria for objectivity are satisfied” (1985, p. 128). In this regard ‘objectivity’ can be achieved by having the researched product go through a process of social verification.
A Liberation Action Research Method

In designing this method I have taken several theoretical elements from the four liberatory approaches mentioned above and I have adapted methodological aspects from Participatory Action Research. I have also incorporated basic notions of trauma therapy into the methodology such as “vínculo comprometido” [committed bond]. This concept developed in the context of therapeutic work in Latin America during the dictatorships, suggests that there needs to be a political, social and psychological alliance between the psychologist and the client which implies that the psychologist, researcher in this case, has an ethical stand that is not neutral when confronted with the people’s trauma stories. It also establishes the minimal conditions to allow space for trust to develop (Castillo, Del Rio, Castañeda, & Lefebvre, 1995). The artistic workshops were envisioned as a sharing and production space where the participants could share their embodied experiences while creating tangible objects. My assumptions were that “knowledge construction” is a situated and relational process that emerges when narratives are told, and opinions exchanged, therefore new meanings are created from this interpretation and negotiation process. Another assumption was that when people learn and remember by doing so there is a dialogical relationship between the participant and the artistic piece being created, hence this individual narrative or artistic representation informs the group dynamics and knowledge production process.

I propose a method for undertaking embodied research that is participatory, reflexive, future-oriented and that aims at learning and producing knowledge that serves the needs and interests of those involved in the process. To that extent, I attempted to advance academic knowledge, while also improving the lives of the co-researchers. This method also provided the participants with potential tools for future personal development such as reflective practices,
experience in using different artistic medium, familiarity with the use of embodied theatrical skills as well as relaxation and imaginary techniques.

I conceived Liberation Action Research as a situated practice confined within the particular historical, social and cultural contexts of HIJOS. Therefore part of the research process was to identify the extent to which the knowledge from this particular group could be applicable to other situations or groups. The method is designed as a collective process of inquiry that focuses on the development of a reflexive critical awareness that helps me, as a researcher, and the participants to understand their embodied experiences in practices of memory and resistance as well as the meaning derived from them.

In order to clearly define the nature and scope of this research I have attempted to articulate a notion of oppression that explains the context in which these particular social practices were developed by this particular group of people. I have also articulated a notion of liberatory therapeutic effects to help me determine the emotional benefits of this reflective, research practice upon the participants.

For this research I have conceptualized *oppression* as a socio-political and therapeutic concept that reflects the multi-layered factors that influence and disrupt the individual and social relationships, control and subdue people’s social participation contributing to make chronic the effects of trauma.

At a macro-level the psychosocial trauma produced by the dictatorship and the post-dictatorship governments can be conceptualized as the result of a cause and effect relationship that is rooted in preexisting economic conditions. The military dictatorship installed in Chile represented the materialization of the need of certain powerful economic groups to stop the process of social and economic transformations, and to impose a new phase of the modernization of capitalism - the neoliberal model – that currently dominates the Chilean economy (Madariaga, 116)
2002; Moulian, 1998; Salazar, 2002). Within this context the war against the “internal enemy” launched by Pinochet on September 11th, 1973 can be identified as the direct cause of the psychosocial trauma produced by the indiscriminate repression exercised on the population. On the other hand, *impunity* was established at the same time as a control mechanism that included the systematic violation of human rights, the implementation of amnesty laws and the participation of the legal system in protecting the military involved. Thus the population lived in a context of almost an absolute lack of truth and justice for 17 years. During this period people experienced impunity as a constant traumatic experience that deepened the psychological perturbations generated by everyday violence, becoming a strong re-traumatizing agent affecting most of Chilean society. That is the reason why the maintenance of impunity into the post-dictatorship period has ingrained in the population one of the most efficient instruments of moral and psychological control and destruction (Madariaga, 2002). From this perspective, impunity emerged as the central mechanism connected to the re-traumatization of people, to the transmission of trauma to the new generations and to the chronification of trauma in the population (Madariaga, 2003; Minoletti, 2002). Re-traumatization refers to the appearance of new disruptive processes in the individual and collective psyches that develop as a result of social or political issues or events that reproduce a pre-existent traumatic condition and impede the grieving and psychological reparation processes of those who were affected and their families. This political context creates a double traumatic expression: individual trauma and psychosocial trauma. At the individual level the person is affected as a biopsychosocial unit. Therefore, trauma is a reflection of the social character of the conflict (historical process) and the individual’s psychic characteristics (intra-psychic, medical and social condition, and relational conflicts). The resulting psychological damage on the individual is a synthesis of his/her position
in the macro system as well as his/her personal characteristics (Martín-Baró, 1996; Madariaga, 2002).

The individual and social effects of trauma described above are compounded by the implementation of the current economic system and the imposition of the politics of social reparation that tend to privatize the individual and social traumas while promoting oblivion of the past in favor of social peace and reconciliation. This new economic scenario places the individual at the centre of a system of ideological, cultural, and social domination by promoting an unrestrained consumerism that changed previous patterns of community socialization. This consumerism is also supported by a growing individualism that emphasizes the individual benefits over the collective generating a “disruptive influence on the psychosocial traumatic processes hidden in the collective subconscious” (Madariaga, 2003, p. 11), thus maintaining the prevailing forms of psychosocial trauma through the imposition of alienating forms of socialization (Salazar, 2002).

In this context memory and oblivion emerge as a necessary dyad to understand social, cultural and historical processes. Their role in defining and guiding individual and social actions can be either detrimental or liberatory in healing past traumas. Chilean historian Gabriel Salazar assigns the government official memory a “perverse” character by contaminating all aspects of public and often private life. This type of memory “controls the education, the mass media, the legal system, culture, justice, social relations etc” (Salazar, 2002, p. 4). Collective memory instead, favors the development of new movements and the creation of new social representations in order to develop new meanings of the traumatic past. Jean-Louis Dèotte (1998) proposes two types of oblivion: passive oblivion and active oblivion. Passive oblivion refers to the implementation of a strategy of avoidance, denial and silencing. This is the type of oblivion that has been operating in the post-dictatorship period through the mechanisms of
impunity (applying the amnesty law, delaying trials, pardoning convicted military, etc). Active oblivion on the other hand, understood as a process complementary of social memory, is a process that promotes forgetting, after there has been a full processing and integration of the traumatic experience (Méndez, 2005). Individual psychotherapy allows the space for the person to integrate aspects of the traumatic experience so as to restore the meaning of the traumatic events at the symbolical level, and to inscribe them in the individual historical continuum that allows the creation of the mechanisms to integrate into their life experience. The challenge is to reproduce this mechanism at the social level, given that we would need not only the will to generate the social conditions for people to narrate what happened to them, but also a hierarchical public space to allow the proper social validation and healing (Madariaga, 2006; Méndez, 2005). Unfortunately, the government has opted for a passive oblivion to comply with the agreements established at the beginning of the transition process with the right-wing parties and the military, to maintain and promote the current economic model. This dynamic is at the base of their lack of political will to establish and promote memory policies based on the recovery of memory, the unearthing of the truth, the derogation of impunity and bringing to justice the perpetrators so that victims can begin to heal the wounds produced by the State (Madariaga, 2006; Méndez, 2005; Moulian, 1998; Salazar, 2002).

From a therapeutic perspective group workshops or group therapy can provide a safe collective space for this process to take place. Even though they may not provide the social validation from the government required by many people for their healing process, they offer a first step for the processing, integration and inscription of the traumatic events in the individual and group historical continuum and into their life experiences.

Taking into account the socially constructed and contested discourses on memory and oblivion, I am using the main premises of narrative therapy for identifying therapeutic changes.
White and Epston (1990) propose that problems are manufactured in social, cultural and political contexts. Change therefore occurs by exploring how language is used to construct and maintain problems. Once the language of the oppressive cultural discourse is identified, the therapist (researcher) searches for the language of resistance, protest and counter-action that has been unconsciously developed by the client. Once the client sees the problem as separate from the person's identity, a possibility for change has been opened. Actively exploring resistance in relationship to memory practices through artistic expressions offers the possibility of opening new spaces of self-awareness, and transformation.

The notion of oppression that I propose combines the understanding of trauma as an individual and a psychosocial phenomena that are sustained in time through concurrent mechanisms such as alienating social and economic conditions; prevailing impunity that leads to re-traumatization, the transgenerational transmission of trauma, and the imposition of a government-sponsored discourse that promotes passive oblivion. These conditions operate at the individual and collective levels refraining and controlling people from embarking on transformative social processes. The concept of liberatory therapeutic effects is based on the notions that the exploration of memory and the externalization of prevailing social discourses can help the participants transform traumatic experiences. This transformation is created through their engagement in art-oriented trauma workshops.
Description of the Study

In this section I describe the specific methods of inquiry used. I begin with an overview of the research context that includes a brief description of the participation of the co-investigators in the process and the role of the researcher. I continue with a detailed description of the data collection strategies employed. I end this section with a comprehensive account of the analysis strategies used and the criteria to evaluate the worth of the study.

Although full participation throughout the research process is a central feature of PAR, Kagan, Burton, and Siddiquee (2006) point out "there is no such thing as a purely participative project – there are always limits on the participation possible" (p. 17). In this study I was only able to include this aspect fully in the analysis and interpretation stages of the process. One of the reasons was the fact that I initially designed this research project in Canada to fit my academic needs for completing a doctoral degree. In addition, the academic and financial research constrains did not allow for the development of a large grassroots project. However, in an attempt to make this process as participatory as possible, I met twice in Chile (2004, 2005) with members of HIJOS to present the first stages of the project, and to get their support, comments and feedback. The information received was incorporated into the final design of the project. However, the participation of the co-researchers was essential in the analysis, social validation of the findings, and in the process of devolution to the community.

The Researcher

As identified in the qualitative research literature, the researcher, particularly those who assume a critical and constructionist position as well as those working from a participative perspective, has a number of responsibilities regarding authorial presence. Briefly summarized these responsibilities point to: (a) the transparency in identifying the researcher’s place in the
study; (b) the nature and source of interpretation and; (c) the social and political responsibility
and consequences of the reality studied (Fernández, 2006).

As a researcher, I have positioned myself as an external agent for change. My
commitment to understanding these practices and exploring alternative therapeutic interventions
is prior to conducting this study and comes from what I have identified as my personal
responsibility as a member of this society, which is grounded on my own experience
participating in practices of memory and resistance, my commitment to working for social
justice and my therapeutic experience working with survivors of political violence both in
Canada and Chile.

My interest in exploring social practices of resistance and memory developed out of my
own reflections when trying to understand the social, cultural and emotional responses that we
develop when confronting traumatic experiences. These reflections have inspired my interest in
understanding how we construct and perceive social reality. These general interests led me to the
examination of different forms of conceptualizing social phenomena particularly the impact of
post-traumatic stress, the social role of memory and oblivion in healing trauma and the
responsibility of psychologists and counselors in these endeavors. The fact that I was born in
Chile and lived through the dictatorship and that I have trained in counseling psychology in
Canada puts me in an interesting intersection of embodied experience and theoretical knowledge.
From a personal experience, the discourse about posttraumatic stress disorder used in the
literature and the DSM-IV has never fully satisfied my embodied experience of it. By reflecting
on these issues I have come to realize that the dominant discourse of psychology that focuses on
an individually bound view of human suffering becomes a barrier in understanding complex
social issues. The fact that I am bilingual has placed me in a privileged position by allowing me
to read clinical and theoretical literature on trauma in both languages; I have also attended and
presented at conferences both in Latin countries and North America. From these experience I have become intrigued by the differences I have encountered in North American and Latin American literature and research in the way psychologists and researchers understand and position themselves in relation to human suffering and healing interventions. These discrepancies motivated me to search further into other fields and disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, politics, economics and particularly social constructionism and different versions of social psychology. I have tried to follow the theoretical developments in the study of memory from different disciplines (Halbwachs, 1992; Ricoeur, 2004; Vázquez, 2001) transgenerational trauma (Madariaga, 2003; Scapusio, 2006), critical social psychologies (Ibáñez, 1994; Martín-Baró, 1990, 1996; Parker, 2002; Piper, 2002) and more recently body-centered epistemologies (Hamington, 2004; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). In Chile I have paid close attention to the debates on memory and oblivion, impunity, human rights and trauma interventions. I have also experienced the dichotomy of finding a new ethical stand in relation to my Canadian training and the cultural demands and responsibilities of doing research and clinical work in Chile.

Over the years I have listened with admiration and profound respect to the stories of survivors of torture, and other forms of political repression looking for resistance and memory narratives and trying to understand how they connect to their embodied experiences. I have been particularly interested in the experience of the relatives of the disappeared in dealing with the loss. This interest comes from an unresolved connection with the symbolic presence of the disappeared in our society. In my perception their presence/absence represents the essence of the losses brought about by the trauma of the dictatorship. The present study is the culmination of a long process of personal reflection and growth where my personal, clinical and theoretical interests have fused.
An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method

For this study I developed an exploratory analytic approach, which I have termed *An Embodied Participatory Narrative Method*. This method is grounded on the main premises of narrative inquiry (Arvay, 1998, 2003; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993); body-centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006); and participatory action research (Fals-Borda, 1985; Montero, 2000; Rahman, 1985). The analysis process proved to be extremely challenging, which required me to be flexible in responding to the data and the co-investigators in creative and respectful ways. The following is a first attempt to developing a model for analyzing embodied social practices in a group setting using both artistic material and individual and group narratives.

**Narrative Inquiry**

The basic premise of narrative inquiry is that humans are storytelling organisms that have the ability to experience, construct and interpret meaning in diverse contexts and languages (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; McAdams, 1993; McLeod, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative inquiry attempts to understand how people experience and think through events and how they make meaning of them. We learn this through a close examination of how people talk about events and whose perspectives they draw on to make sense of such events. Therefore, narrative inquiry describes how people make sense of the world (Riley & Hawe, 2005). Narrative research becomes a collaborative document that reflects a mutually constructed story out of the lives of both the researchers and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

One of the characteristics of narrative inquiry is that it accounts for the integration of time and context in the construction of meaning (Riley & Hawe, 2005). Consequently, past experiences and future possibilities co-exist within the present in the mind of the narrator, thus allowing for the transformation of the narrator's interpretations as new information and
meanings arise. Another characteristic is that narrative analysis contextualizes the sense-making processes of the participants by focusing on the person and group in this case, rather than on a set of themes. Narrative analysis is also concerned with how broader institutional or societal values and cultural norms are expressed in the language and how language is a form of action. Finally, it acknowledges that the data emerges from within the relation between the teller, the listener and the context of the telling of the story. Therefore, narrative analysis recognizes and accepts that people may exclude details of events or exaggerate aspects of stories. This is particularly relevant in a group context given that other members may influence participants. What becomes relevant to the researcher in these cases is why these exclusions or exaggerations exist (Riley & Hawe, 2005).

**Embodied Knowledge**

Most feminist critiques of traditional epistemology argue that the Western tradition defines the objects of knowledge as the publicly, verifiable, provable, objective structures of reality (Wilshire, 1992). Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that positivist epistemologies assume “a disembodied knower that constitutes abstract, universal truth” (Heckman, 1995, p. 30). Since the body plays little or no part in these approaches to epistemology the body has become marginalized from knowledge, therefore knowing and reasoning are purely mental processes disembodied in that the body has no constitutive role in characterizing the nature of meaning (Johnson, 1987). In this regard the theoretical work of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty is pivotal in illuminating the role of the body in accessing knowledge, retaining it and using it to make meaning.

**Body-centered Phenomenology**

In the conceptualization of this method I have used two of the main premises of Merleau-Ponty’s body-centered epistemology, the notions of “perception” and “flesh”, to guide me in the
process of understanding, analyzing and interpreting embodied practices and individual and group interactions. Merleau-Ponty challenges the dualistic Western tradition that valorizes the mind over the body. For him embodied knowledge begins with perception, given that it opens up new possibilities to expand our knowledge. Perception in his view is not an act of the mind separate from body suggesting that subjectivity is physical (Hamington, 2004). Perception is always embedded in culture and history therefore the meaning we generate through our embodied engagement in the world develops from the perceptions of our body and its relation to the world from that situated position. In this regard he speaks of “knowing by sentiment” referring to that embodied knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, p. 249). He also suggests that by choosing to ignore our bodies we lose the possibility of reconnecting with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). One of the main features of his theory of perception is precisely the focus on interconnectedness because perception cannot be separated from the body or the world. In that regard our bodies participate in providing us with other types of unarticulated knowledge that create webs of understandings that might remain unnoticed but that exist nevertheless. The information our bodies get when confronting others, for instance, the knowledge of their expressions, mannerisms, gestures, smells and sound, far exceeds what is available through our consciousness thus allowing us to know others as perceptual wholes (Hamington, 2004; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2007). But perhaps the concept that is most relevant to this research is the notion of flesh. According to him we become aware of other people and things because we too are a material presence in the same way that they are. However, we are also sensible of our presence in the world in the way that inanimate objects are not. As humans we can feel ourselves touching other people or things, and are also aware of touching ourselves. And it is in that moment that we become aware of our continual existence as both object and subject. We are aware of our existence as sensible sentient beings woven into the whole fabric of life, in which
we and other people or things share the same flesh. Therefore the flesh of the world is the
relation of all the people or things in the world to one another and the mutual effects of these
people and things upon one another. And it is of this flesh that perception is made (Humington,
2004; Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Sanz & Burkitt, 2001). The knowledge of our bodies is made up of
every sensory experience we have from birth, both tacit and explicit and these experiences are
integrated with previous and new experiences, giving rise to structures and patterns that are
further blended with the experience of others in the ongoing emergence of intersubjective
meaning (Humington, 2004) Therefore, the perception we have of reality is multidimensional
and exists at different levels of our being making it possible for us to connect with other people
at different levels of these perceptual fields (Humington, 2004; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2007; Sanz
& Burkitt, 2001). Throughout his work Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that the body is not simply
the vehicle for acquiring knowledge but also an active participant in constructing meaning (1968,
2006).

**Data Collection Process**

A common feature in PAR is the combination of methods for data collection. Cresswell
(2002) suggests that researchers using PAR can draw from three different sources for gathering
information: *Inquiring* where the researchers collect information in different ways such as
interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and guided conversations. *Experiencing* where the
researchers draw on their own involvement in the research process. This category includes
performance and other creative arts as well as photography, writing, folk customs, story telling,
self-reflection and intentional conversations. *Examining* where the researchers use and make
records, which include archives, texts, maps, audio and video, artifacts, narratives, field notes of
observation, feelings, and reflections (Cresswell, 2002, p. 74-75). For this study I have used and
combined methods from these three categories, which represent different levels of data collection.

**Inquiring**

From this category I used mostly interviews from the beginning and throughout the research process. The main goals of these interviews were: (a) to explore the subject of the research; (b) to get to know the members of HIJOS; (c) to explore their interest and commitment to the project; (d) to insert myself into the social, cultural and political context of the research; and (e) to learn about their life experiences related to these practices. These interviews represent a first level of data collection that established the bases for any modifications or changes required during the process.

**Initial Interviews and Conversations**

During my visit to Chile in 2003 I visited the place where members of HIJOS were conducting the Luciano Cararsco hunger strike. This was my first contact with members of the group. Through informal conversations I was able to meet some of the members and gather information about their organization, activities and objectives. I also conducted an initial interview with Beto, one of the participants in the hunger strike. This informal conversation introduced me to the concept of embodied memory and resistance practices and I began to understand the therapeutic potential of exploring these practices. These initial conversations and interviews were essential in inspiring my passion and interest in the topic. After this initial contact I kept in touch with members of HIJOS and I met again in August 2004 with two members (Pablo and Lalo) to inform them of my interest in conducting my dissertation research with them. I presented them with the preliminary ideas regarding the topic, the methodology and the estimated time commitment. I also asked them for their support in recruiting participants and
in the overall completion of the project. Their ideas and feedback was incorporated into the final design of the study.

The Pilot Interviews

Prior to commencing the research process in 2005, my co-facilitator and I conducted two pilot interviews with (Pablo and Beto) two of the people who participated in the hunger strike. The objectives of this interview were: (a) to develop rapport with members of the group; (b) to explain my interest in the subject and the research study; (c) to describe the research process; (d) to get their feedback on the research topic and design (artistic workshops, time commitment); (e) to get their insights and opinions about the best way to recruit the co-investigators; (f) to get their support for the project; and (g) to explore their personal experience in the hunger strike as a source of knowledge in order to understand the specific contexts in which this research practice was going to be situated.

Invitation Process

In order to access potential participants I contacted Beto, Lalo and Pablo to help me in the process. I gave them the Letter of Initial Contact (Appendix A, Letter of Initial Contact), and a written summary of the research proposal (Appendix B, Research Summary) to pass on to other members of HIJOS and I asked them to tell possible participants to call me to let me know of their interest in participating. However, this method did not work out very well, perhaps because people tend to be reluctant to make phone calls to people they do not know. Therefore, I had to change my strategy and I called those people who were interested to set up an interview. Once there were about five people committed to do the research, they invited others and I eventually had ten co-investigators.

Overall, the recruitment process proved to be a very interesting bi-cultural experience. I developed the recruitment criteria guided by my Canadian training, the ethical standards outlined
by the University of British Columbia, and the needs of the study. These criteria included a
group (maximum of 12) of young people, members of HIJOS, whose parents were disappeared
and killed by the military during the dictatorship and who had participated in memory and
resistance practices in their lives. Men and women who were children, adolescents or young
adults during the dictatorship were also included. The approximate age range of the participants
was between late 20’s to early 40’s. People of all political affiliations were encouraged to
participate. Another criterion was that participants were people able to articulate, commit
themselves to the completion of the project, have an interest in the topic and who possessed the
ability to reflect and interpret their individual and group experiences. Another criterion was that
participants were not related to each other (i.e., brothers, sisters, cousins, or couples). The
purpose for this exclusion was to avoid personal or family issues or discrepancies that might
arise during the workshops or group interviews. However, there were some issues that I did not
know or anticipate while designing the study. One of these issues related to their previous
experiences participating in other studies. During the pilot interviews this issue became apparent,
especially their mistrust about the use of the information afterwards or the interpretation of the
information given. The other issue related to the trust among members of the group. The
participation in this study was greatly influenced by the trust they had on other members of
HIJOS who were going to be participating. It was extremely important for them to feel safe
among the group so as to disclose personal information and expose themselves to the group.
These concerns were made evident during the initial interview, where people asked who else was
going to be participating, and if they could invite relatives (brother, cousin and partner) to
participate because they felt their relatives would benefit from the experience. Therefore, I
changed the initial criteria to accommodate these unforeseen cultural challenges. In addition, I
encountered two other cultural challenges. The first one relates to the fact that all of them
requested the workshops be videotaped so that they could have a personal copy. We also discussed the use of the material (photographs portraying them, photographs of the artistic material produced and video-clips) for social and academic purposes and they agreed to approve the use of the material for these purposes. Likewise, I asked them to choose a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity and they all insisted in using their names or nicknames because they are an important part of their political identity. Consequently, I wrote a consent form including their permission to videotape, use the material and use their real names in the text (Appendix C, Consent Form to Videotape, Use of the Research Material and Family Names or Nicknames). I think this experience clearly highlights the contradictions encountered by investigators when doing research in culturally different contexts. In this case the specific issues affecting the group (trust and political identity) modified the criteria I had set up following standard procedures used in North America in terms of the responsibility of the researchers in offering anonymity to the participants while providing a trustworthy environment. The final recruitment process ended up mirroring the selection and recruitment processes used in participatory actions research where community and group trust is constructed by both the group itself and the researchers.

**Introductory Interview**

In designing this initial interview I had a couple of personal objectives outlined. These included assessing the participants’ ability to self disclose, self-reflect and interpret their own and group experiences in a safe environment, to evaluate if the participants were likely to experience re-traumatization by remembering and talking about painful memories, and to begin to know their personal life stories. I also used the protocol designed by Arvay (2003) that proposes that the main purposes of the introductory interview are: (a) to develop rapport, (b) to begin facilitating a dialogue related to the research questions, (c) to explain the research process by detailing all the stages of the research (workshop structure, time commitment), (d) to describe
the role and responsibilities that both the researcher and the co-investigators will have in the research, (e) to articulate the researcher’s own values regarding the research relationship, and (f) to explain the basic philosophical values upon which the research design rests. In order to accomplish these objectives I designed an interview protocol where I organized the structure of the meeting (Appendix D, Introductory Interview Protocol). The format of the protocol was semi-structured to allow the flow of the conversation. I used open-ended questions to access particularly difficult emotional issues such as: what do you often do when you remember your father/mother? What is your common reaction to fear/sadness? Have you noticed anything different that happens to you after you have talked about your father/mother? What are the things, people, or activities that help you recovered after you have had a painful experience? Have you ever talked about the loss of your father/ mother in public? The questions were very helpful in allowing me to evaluate the emotional suitability of the participants. All of the people who showed an initial interest in participating were invited to be part of the research process after this interview.

During the second part of the interview, I explained that the interviews would take place at the University Academy of Christian Humanism, which is sponsoring my research, and that there would be specialized psychologists from the PRAIS team available if they needed personal counselling. I also gave them a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix E, Informed Consent), and I explained confidentiality issues, and their right to withdraw from the process. We agreed that they would have some time to think about it, and that I would contact them the following week to know their answer and then a week before the first workshop. Finally we agreed that they would sign the consent form before the commencement of the first workshop and that I would also give them a disposable camera to take pictures of places or objects of memory and resistance to be used in the fourth workshop.
Experiencing

This category involves the participation of the researcher in community forms of social, cultural or artistic manifestation or performances. In this study I have adapted this idea by developing art-oriented workshops where the co-investigators create narratives, and use theatre of the oppressed and collage techniques to explore the main themes of the study. As a researcher, I also participated in workshops, artistic performances, marches, memorials, and conferences to immerse myself in the topic of the research. In addition I incorporated individual and group validation meetings, which represent a third level of data collection.

Audiotape, Videotape and Transcription

In the text the co-investigators are identified by their self-selected name. All the semi-structured interviews for this study were audio taped and back-up copies were dubbed. All audiotapes were stored in a locked filing cabinet. The six workshops and the final group meeting were videotaped in a digital mini DVD camera. The original cassettes and 2 dubbed VHS copies were also kept in a locked filing cabinet.

The Transcription Process

As identified by Riessman (1993) transcripts are often “incomplete, partial and selective” (p. 11), thus suggesting that there is always information that is left out, which reflect the assumptions guiding the transcriber/interpreter (Mishler, 1986). In the transcription process I attempted to account for the possibility of overseeing or losing information by thoroughly reviewing the transcripts. All the co-investigators’ interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber. Once I received the transcribed documents, I reviewed them by listening to the audiotapes and proofreading to ensure their accuracy. For the transcription of the workshop material I followed the same procedure, but I added a new element. This time I reviewed the videotapes several times, first to proofread the accuracy of the text and later to
reflect on the entire experience. I paid particular attention to the body language of the participants, the interaction among themselves and the responses to each other’s interventions.

Description of the Co-investigators

The participants were ten young people: five men and five women. Their ages range between 29 – 38 years of age. All of them have secondary education and most of them have graduated from university or are in the process of completing their university undergraduate and graduate degrees. All of them are members of HIJOS, and have participated in memory and resistance practices. Four of them (Tamara, Pablo, Lalo, and Juan Carlos) have their fathers disappeared; five of them have their parents executed by the military (Beto, David, Alexandra, Kayito, and Daniela); out of them two have their mother killed (David and Alexandra); two of them have their fathers killed (Daniela and Kayito) and one of them have both parents, his grandfather and an uncle and aunt killed (Beto). The other participant, Vivi, has two sets of married uncle and aunts and his grandfathers executed. Most of them have children, except for one. Two of them are brother and sister (David and Alexandra); two of them are cousins (Beto and Vivi) and two of them are a couple (Beto and Kayito). There is only one participant who is married (David), the others are separated or living in common-law. The range of ages when their parents or relatives were killed or disappeared fluctuates between 21 days old to 8 years. Finally five of them (David, Alexandra, Juan Carlos, Daniela, and Vivi) lived in exile when they were children until they were teenagers, in countries such as Denmark, France, Holland, Sweden, Nicaragua and Cuba.

The Artistic Workshops

The material gathered during the six workshops represents a second level of data gathering. I videotaped and audio taped all the workshops so as to have a record of both their voices for the transcription and visual images of their interactions and body language during the
process. I also registered the research process through flip charts, pictures and the artistic material produced. I kept a journal and I wrote notes after each workshop with my impressions. I also asked my co-facilitator to write notes and keep a journal so as to use his insights and opinions to expand my understanding of the process. During the workshops my co-facilitator, psychologist Jorge Pantoja, and I had similar roles in terms of guiding the process, however we had decided that should any traumatic material arise, he would take care of assisting the participants while I would continue with the session. After each workshop the co-facilitator and myself met for about an hour to debrief the workshops. These meetings had two objectives: (a) to discuss the progression of the workshop and (b) to comment on the emotional state of the participants so as to prevent any emotionally distressing situations that could develop. The information from the interactions during the workshops and the debriefing sessions were extremely important because of the closeness of their reflections to the exercises themselves.

Another advantage of the group format was that it created a shared social atmosphere and that the interactions taking place among the individuals were representative of everyday interactions.

**Workshop Description**

Each of the workshops was designed with certain objectives in mind in order to address specific aspects of the study. All of them followed the same general format and varied according to the specific artistic expression we used. They took place at the University Academy of Christian Humanism on Fridays for four hours. All the workshops began with a check-in exercise to find out how the participants were doing, and to discuss any relevant issues that might have come up for them from the previous sessions. After the check-in we had a visualization exercise to create safety and to prepare them for the artistic activity. Following this first part, each workshop focused on specific activities described below. All the workshops ended with a debriefing section that was divided into two parts. The first concentrated on their
reflection and meaning-making process related to the workshop itself. The second part focused on their personal experience in order to allow the participants to process the emotional material that might have come up for them. Every workshop ended with a brief exercise to release the stress they may have experienced. Finally, I was able to provide food and beverages in all the workshops; babysitting and the cost of transportation to and from the university. Photos of the workshop are provided in a separate appendix (Appendix F, Photographs of the Workshops).

Session One: Introductory Workshop

At the beginning of this first workshop I spent some time reviewing the logistics of the process. I explained the research development and the activities that we would be doing. I also reminded participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Finally, I gave them the names of two psychologists who were scheduled to provide individual counselling if needed.

This first workshop was designed with two main objectives in mind: (a) to build group safety through games and exercises in order to develop trust in each other, the facilitators and the group process; and (b) to explore their initial individual and group concepts of memory and resistance to use it as a base to assess the growth in their understanding and awareness of these concepts throughout the study.

We began by doing some exercises to break the ice and to create a safe environment. In the second part we made a list of the individual and group expectations of the workshops and the general research process. Then we introduced the concepts of memory and resistance through an exercise. Participants were given a card with a sentence defining the concept of memory. They worked in couples exchanging opinions about these definitions. Then we discussed their own concepts of memory in relation to these sentences. We used the same exercise to discuss the concept of resistance. As homework they were given blank cards that they were supposed to
complete with their own definition of these concepts. We debriefed the workshop and explained what we were going to be doing the following session.

**Session Two: Unveiling our Memories**

The objective of this workshop was to start the exploration of the concept of memory. I designed this workshop based on the main premises of narrative inquiry (Cabruja, Íñiguez, & Vázquez, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) narrative therapy (Payne, 2002; White & Epston, 1990) and trauma therapy (Herman, 1992; Lira, 1997). These premises are: (a) humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives, (b) people reconstruct their own experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu, (c) narratives are a framework that give meaning to the temporal and personal experience by placing them in a historical continuum, and (d) sharing the traumatic experience is necessary for the reconstruction of a meaningful world.

The main exercise of this workshop is a visualization exercise called the “memory container.” The participants were asked to imagine a big memory container that was located outside of the room and that keeps all the memories of our collective past. Once participants were able to visualize the container, they were guided to bring it in, to open it up and to search for visual memories, objects, letters, music, people that are part of our individual and collective memory that live in that container. Then they were asked to choose from those memories one image that represents their past. Once they identified that image they were asked to feel it with all their senses until they were immersed in that memory. After that, participants were brought out of the visualization back to the room and we debriefed the experience by allowing whoever was ready to share that image with the group. Following that section of the workshop, they were given some guideline to write a narrative of that image. There was also a long piece of cardboard on the floor that represented a “historical continuum”, which was marked with different dates.
such as 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Once they completed their narratives, they were asked to identify the period, in which this memory was created, to place themselves on the timeline and to read their story from that position to the rest of the group. Following this exercise, they were asked to draw, paint and decorate the timeline. After the exercise was completed, there was a period of analysis and emotional debriefing of the experience.

**Session Three: Liberating Our Bodies**

The use of the body through techniques drawn from theater of the oppressed was the focus of the third workshop. The objective of this session was to introduce the participants to some exercises to bring them into contact with their bodies in order to explore the concept of resistance. In conceptualizing this workshop I have used the notions of theatre of the oppressed (Boal, 1995) and body-centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2006). The assumptions are that by physically representing scenes of resistance people can: (a) identify embodied forms of oppression, (b) learn different forms of resistance to that oppression, (c) transform their cognitive and embodied understanding of this oppression – resistance – transformation process, and (d) therefore, use their perception to understand their experience and the experiences of others in the world.

The workshop began with a number of exercises and group interactions with the purpose of bringing the participants in contact with their own body and with the bodies of the others. The main exercise used in this workshop was the *sculptor and clay activity*. Participants were asked to visualize an image related to how they have used their bodies, or seen others using their bodies to resist during the dictatorship. Then they broke up into pairs. In each pair one person was the "clay" and the other the "sculptor". The sculptor worked with the "clay" to form a statue, which represented his/her image of resistance. The sculptor did not talk or explain the image or the feelings associated with it; rather she/he used the body of the other person to embody it. The
The purpose of these next two workshops was to create a narrative using the concepts of memory and resistance by constructing a human figure using collage techniques. The assumptions guiding this workshop were that: (a) people create new meanings by reconstructing their life stories, (b) by externalizing memories they become part of the social, thus transforming themselves into an object that can be explored and transformed by the participants, and (c) art allows us to get in contact with our feeling within the boundaries of our own created safety.

For this workshop the participants were given in advance a disposable camera and they were asked to take pictures that represent their personal or collective embodied experience of the dictatorship. The pictures were developed by the facilitators and given to the participants on the day of the workshop. They were also asked to bring memory objects such as letters, music,
poems or a piece of their writing and anything else they found relevant to make a personal memory collage. All the group pictures taken in previous workshops were also available to the participants to use in this exercise as well as crayons, paint, ribbons, shells and other objects to be used in their collage. Participants were also given a large size image of a human being on a piece of white wood. The participants had been previously asked to think of a posture for this image. They decided that it should represent a genderless person with one hand reaching down as if it was holding a child, and the other hand extended up as if it was reaching for a hand\(^2\) (See Appendix F, Photographs of the Workshops). They were asked to use the image to tell a story based on their own understanding of memory and resistance by placing these objects onto the figure. In both sessions we played resistance music from the time of the dictatorship. During these workshops the participants were very involved and animated and also frustrated because they did not have enough time to finish their work, so they asked for an extra session. Therefore, a new session was added the following week.

In the last session they completed their individual pieces and they were asked to place the figures forming a line up in order to analyze them first individually and later collectively. The analysis part of the session focused on the meaning of memory that they found in each individual piece and in the collective construction. At the end of the workshop they were asked to participate in a collective representation of memory by holding their images as a group sculpture. The workshop finished with a debriefing of their feelings and emotions brought up by creating their images.

\(^2\) I used a human figure because this was a common image used during the dictatorship to symbolize the disappeared in public commemorations, social and political events and as a way to denounce their disappearance and to remind the general public of the use of this political practice by the State. The difference is that those images were painted black and were still.
Session Six: Moving Into Action

The objectives of this workshop were to: (a) integrate the embodied understanding of exploring memory and resistance, (b) to acknowledge and honor the individual and group experience in the workshops, (c) to evaluate the research process, and (d) to get the co-investigators’ opinion about replicating the workshops with other groups.

We began this closing session by constructing an artistic piece to symbolize the collective memory of the experience of participating in this series of workshops. First the participants were asked to use their bodies to create a sculpture to represent one feeling associated with their experience of being in the workshops. The facilitators then took a Polaroid picture of that individual image. Then they were asked to represent the same image and create a group sculpture of these group feelings. A group picture was also taken. In the second part of the workshop people were given a large paper flower petal and the Polaroid picture of their individual image to be glued onto it. The group picture was glued to a large circle representing the centre of the flower. People were asked to use their individual petals to draw, paint or write those elements that have helped them in the workshops or the meaning or feelings they had experienced. In the third part of the workshop, the participants sat together on the floor in a circle around the centre of the flower that contained the group picture. The following part was a game similar to musical chairs. As music was played, the participants were asked to draw, paint or write on the centre of the flower what they had in their minds in relation to the collective experience of the five workshops. When the music stopped people moved to the seat next to them and continued what the other person was doing or did something new. The exercise continued until people were back to their original position. At the end of this exercise each individual petal was glued to the centre of the flower. The analysis and debriefing session was divided into two sections. First, we reviewed the initial expectations they had identified for the
process and discussed how they were fulfilled or not. Then we invited the participants to offer their opinions and feedback about how to repeat these workshops with other groups. Finally, we debriefed the total experience of the six workshops and the collective experience of creating memory and meaning as well as their emotional experience during the process.

The Analysis Process

For the analysis of the material gathered in the interviews, workshops and the individual and group validation meetings I am using a modified version of the collaborative narrative approach. This narrative method developed by Arvay (1998, 2003) is a reflexive process that involves seven stages within the research development. The fourth stage implies the collaborative participation of the researcher and co-investigator in the analysis of the transcribed material by focusing their interpretation on four separate readings. These readings look at: (a) the content of the research interview, (b) the narrator’s self in the text, (a) the co-investigator’s response to the research question, and (d) power and cultural discourses in the text. First the co-investigator uses these readings on the transcribed material and later the investigator interprets their transcription using these guidelines (Arvay, 2003).

Given the individual and collective nature of this research, and the different areas of information asked for through the three research questions, I adapted Arvay’s fourth interpretive readings to suit the particular needs of this study. I then designed four interpretive readings to be used with the individual stories and with the group narratives. The first reading looks at those elements that describe their experience or understanding of using the body as a site of memory. The second reading focuses on those elements that reflect or speak of the participants’ embodied experience of resistance, that is images, sensations, memories. The third reading centers on the participant’s meaning assigned to these two experiences of the body that is, as a site of memory and resistance. This analysis concentrates on their personal meaning as well as meaning in
relation to others (family, friends, or society in general). In this context, the analysis also focuses on relations of power as they pertain to oppression, racism, and sexism. Particular attention was placed on identifying different voices in the narratives such as self-silencing, implicit messages, cultural discourses (e.g., dominant narratives, etc). The fourth interpretive reading analyzed those elements that identify and describe the therapeutic value of participation in the workshops.

I did not use these four interpretive readings for the first level of data collection represented by the initial interviews and conversations I had prior to commencing the workshop stage given that they were designed to provide me with the base information I needed to set up the context, getting to know the co-investigators and the general areas of the study. A preliminary analysis was conducted applying these four interpretive readings to the transcribed data gathered in the six workshops. This information was then organized by narrative categories following the same themes explored (memory, resistance, individual and collective meaning and therapeutic value of the workshops). By analyzing the six workshops applying the same method, I was able to track how a different group narrative was developing about each one of the themes. These group narratives were formed by the collective opinions and experiences of the participants. However, I also needed to construct the individual stories that make up these narratives, therefore, I tracked the individual stories of each participant in a separate file to be included in the individual validation meetings and in the interpretation process.

The four interpretive readings were also used in the individual and group validation meetings, which represents the third level of data collection. By applying this method to the information received as feedback from the first analysis in the group validation meeting, I was able to refine and confirm the findings. There was also an added meeting where I met with each co-investigator to jointly construct a narrative of their life story, which is presented as a chapter. For that meeting they prepared their own autobiography and I had prepared my own
interpretations of the embodied narrative they constructed with the image. We read the material and arranged it until both parties were satisfied with the end product.

Given that there is no standard method to analyze artistic narrative material I developed my own. I began by watching the video reflecting on the process and taking notes on these reflections. Then, I wrote a detailed description of the artistic material and I applied the four interpretive readings. I used this method with the life continuum (workshop two), the flower (workshop six) and the human figures (workshops four and five). However, in the case of the human figures I added an extra step. After I completed the descriptions and interpretation I realized there were a number of themes that repeated themselves in almost all of them. Therefore, I designed a category system based on them. Finally, I applied this category system to all of the descriptions. The categories are the following: (a) representation of the internal/external world, (b) localization of affects, (c) grounding elements, (d) representation of life energy, (e) sense of life, (f) sense of death, (g) symbols used in the hands, (h) representation of parents as a mythical symbol, (i) representation of memory (present, past, future), (j) personal life (private or public), (k) representation of memory (cognitive or emotional), (l) representation of resistance (cognitive or emotional), and (m) masculine and feminine aspects. The final analysis and interpretation of the human figures was the basis for the narrative description I prepared to be included in each participant's chapter.

In order to reconstruct the embodied essence of the experience of each of the workshops I reviewed the videotapes several times in some case without audio to be able to understand how memories, emotions and relationships were being portrayed by each participant and by the whole group. While doing this I concentrated on my own experience of watching their interactions and I also reflected on the embodied memory of being in the workshops. This method although
incipient, revealed an unexpected amount of additional information that I may have not obtained otherwise.

Language Issues

This research process was conducted in English and Spanish, which created a number of challenges for me as a researcher. Even though the research was conceptualized and the proposal was written in English, the actual research was conducted in Spanish. The final dissertation was written in English to comply with the language requirements of the university. Furthermore, the collection of the data, and the analysis, and interpretation were done in Spanish as well. The rationale for this decision relates to the need of presenting the material to the co-investigators and peer committee for validation in Spanish, and also the fact that once I was immersed in the actual research process I needed to concentrate in writing in just one language. In addition Riessman (1993) cautions researchers analyzing narratives of Spanish-speaking participants of the danger of conforming to the linear, temporally ordered structure taken as normal in Western, industrial, countries, as opposed to the sequential, episodic fashion in which Spanish-speaking people structure a story (as cited in McLeod, 1997, p. 49). In addition, and based on my experience going through a similar process when I conducted my master’s thesis, I realized that once I completed the analysis in Spanish, writing in English allowed me the necessary emotional distance in order to enter into a reflexive process where I could be intellectually engaged.

However, the process of working in two languages added a considerable amount of time that resulted in extending the research process.

Individual Validation Meetings

Individual validation meetings corresponded to the third level of data collection. They had two purposes: as members check to validate the accuracy of my analysis of the data gathered in the workshops and to get their personal experience of the research process. They focused on
five areas: (a) their reflective understanding and experience of using their body as a site of
resistance and of memory; (b) the personal meaning they assigned to these practices, (c) their
experience of participating in these workshops, (d) their opinions and feedback of the analysis of
the workshop material, and (e) my interpretation of the image they constructed. These five areas
were designed based on research questions and the interpretive readings used in the analysis.
During the first part of the interview I used a semi-structured interview format (Appendix G,
Interview Protocol for Individual Validation Meeting) to help the interviewees’ access their
emotional, cognitive and bodily experience and the meaning-making process associated with it.
The questions were only meant to serve as a guide for the conversation since I did not want in
any way to be controlled by the questionnaire or to stop the participants’ recollection process. In
these interviews, the co-facilitator and I incorporated elements of our own life experiences and
well as comments about the experience during the research process. During the second part of
the interview I focused on the analysis I had prepared of the information obtained from the
workshops. I began by describing the transcription process and the analyses method used. Then I
used a flip chart to present the findings from each workshop, stopping to allow for comments
and reflections on this analysis of the material. In this process I mentioned each of the comments
that the co-investigator made during the workshops and how they contributed to my analysis.
Regarding the fourth and fifth workshops where participants constructed the body figure, I
offered my interpretation of their image, in order to get their feedback to add to my
interpretation. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed to incorporate the new layer of
meanings that resulted from these individual meetings.

There were a couple of things that emerged during this part of the process. One of them
was to see how the participants had begun to integrate the concepts of memory and resistance in
the collage they made on the human figure in workshops four and five. These two workshops
were the ones that best captured the individual embodied experience of each co-investigator. My fear was the richness and the uniqueness of their work and life experience would be lost in the general interpretation of the results. In addition, I was surprised to see how these interviews allowed me to access different aspect of their personal stories through the privacy of this interaction. These two aspects of the research process inspired me to present each co-investigator’s individual story portrayed in the collage in a separate chapter. I decided then to co-construct these chapters by asking each one to write a personal biography to contextualize and bring meaning to each figure using the personal information they would feel most comfortable being published and by using a co-constructed interpretation of the analysis of the human figure.

I consulted with each co-investigator about how they would feel to have their personal life stories presented separately and my idea about the format of the chapter, and the extra time they would need to spend writing their biographies and meeting again. Once they all agreed, I wrote a story of each participant using their own explanations and descriptions of the story they had narrated in the figure adding my own interpretation. The story was presented to them in a new meeting for verification, to check if it seemed coherent, and to obtain their approval and we then added their autobiographies and pictures of the image. The result was a co-constructed story that narrates the individual life of each person and how they embodied these life experiences into an artistic piece to represent the findings of the research process.

**Group Validation Meetings**

A fourth level of the data collection process was the final group interview. The objectives of this meeting were: (a) to present the analysis and a preliminary interpretation of the results including the individual feedback provided in the individual validation interviews, and (b) to get their feedback and recommendation about the overall process. The meeting was separated into three sections. First I presented the information using a power point format. The presentation
included a brief description of the theories informing the research, the main trauma related
concepts used, and the results divided into theoretical, methodological and therapeutic
contributions of the study. It also describes the questions raised by the co-investigators as a result
of this reflexive process about the meaning of these memory and resistance practices in the
future. The presentation ended with a tentative interpretation of this issue that I posed to the co-
investigators to open up a group discussion. The second part of the meeting was a discussion
about this interpretive proposal and the general results. In the last part of the meeting the
participants talked about their overall experience and learning throughout the research process.
This session was also transcribed and incorporated into the final results.

The analysis process was designed as a process of inquiry and reflection that
incorporated different levels of data gathering and analysis that worked as a spiral allowing
deeper levels of analysis of the phenomena studied. In addition, this process allows the
participants to evaluate their own learning process and emotional changes throughout the stages
while at the same time allowing them to visualize different form of future actions and
engagements.

Examining

In order to learn more about the themes that were emerging from the process, I used a
number of sources of information from this category such as archival material, videos, and
testimonies. I also made my own records by audio taping my thoughts and ideas to help me
organize, analyze, and interpret the material. The objective was not only to learn, collect and
organize the information but also to develop and maintain a reflexive praxis.

Reflexive Practice

Throughout the research process, I documented my own subjective experiences analyzing
them for biases and emotional/visceral responses to the workshops, interviews and the general
environment. I also watched movies, attended conferences and presentations, and participated in street protests, and I recorded and analyzed the new knowledge that was emerging for me. There were also a couple of national events that brought up the issues of memory and impunity among people. One of them was the government’s official announcement that the identification of at least 96 human remains out of 126 found in 1991 in a plot of the General Cemetery known, as “Patio 29” was probably wrong. This event generated a national turmoil, and emotional distress not only for the direct relatives, but also for all those relatives of disappeared people who are still waiting to find and identify their loved ones, and for the general community who interpret this error as another form of impunity of the government. The other event was the death of Augusto Pinochet in December 2006. Both events had the power to produce in me profound experiences related to the impotence and anger associated with impunity, and a sense of sadness and remembrance of all those who have suffered the trauma of the dictatorship. By reflecting and analyzing these experiences I connected with my own embodied previous experiences of memory and resistance. Knowing and experiencing this brought me closer to the subject of my research and to my co-investigators. As part of my reflexive practice I also talked about the subject and my findings with friends, colleagues and the members of my peer committee. In relation to the co-investigators, I positioned myself as a peer in the process. I also used a “vínculo comprometido” (committed bond) stance in my research work. Finally, another important source of insight and reflection were the clients that I had been seeing at the time. During this period I was also doing my clinical internship at PRAIS where I was working with survivors of political violence. Their personal stories provided extremely important therapeutic knowledge that I incorporated into my own experience as a researcher. In addition, I developed a group of close friends who supported me emotionally throughout the process.
Criteria for Evaluating the Rigor and Worth of the Study

The combination of a variety of methods implies a mixture of criteria for evaluating the rigor and worth of this study. Currently, there is no standard method to evaluate the worth of narrative research and particularly a combined individual and group methodology like the one I have designed. Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993) warns us of the difficulties of evaluating narratives, given that individuals construct very different narratives about the same event. Furthermore, “describing complex and troubling events should vary because the past is a selective reconstruction” (p. 64). Based on the complexities of analyzing and interpreting individual and collective historical narratives, I designed the following guiding principles to direct my research and to establish methodological rigor: (a) that the research design and methods recognize, acknowledge and describe the plural ways in which the researcher, participants and others involved construct meaning; (b) that the methodological approach is sensitive and respectful of the diversity of experiences of the participants; (c) that the research method and design recognize and question the researcher’s authority and privilege of academic knowledge and interpretation; (d) that the research process and product contribute to the experience, and debates about resistance, memory and meaning outside of strictly academic circles, and (e) that there is clear dialogue between the researcher and the participants in term of concrete forms of retribution to be gained by both parties. The criteria I propose is based on these principles and also draws on narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993), participatory action research (Fals-Borda, 1985; Montero, 2003) social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1996) and critical social psychology (Fernández, 2006; Ibáñez, 1994), and reflects the epistemological positions that inform this study. Therefore, I used the following methods to evaluate the rigor and the worth of this study: by assessing (a) the researcher’s reflexivity, (b) the persuasiveness of
my interpretation, (c) the coherence of the narratives, (d) the social validation of the findings, and (e) the study's pragmatic usefulness.

**Reflexivity**

Reflexivity has been identified as one of the central features of research methods informed by social constructionism to measure the rigor of a study (Burr, 1995). Reflexivity refers to the constitutive nature of the researcher, the data they collect and the way in which it is analyzed and interpreted (Hall, 1996). Reflexivity can be defined as the capacity to constantly examine what we do, to open reflexive processes about this work with all the people we work with, as well as the capacity to be *responsible* for the work being done, and have a *critical commitment* with the people we work with (Matín Baró, 1996; Montero, 2003; Fals-Borda, 1985). Another characteristic of reflexivity involves the researcher's ability to be self-aware. However, being self-aware according to Ruby (as cited in Hall, 1996) means to be “sufficiently self-aware to know what aspects of self are necessary to reveal in the process of reporting, so that an audience is able to understand both the process employed and the resulting product” (p. 31) Therefore, to be reflexive in research is to recognize and work with the notion that the researcher is constitutive of both the data and the final research process.

I understand reflexivity as a way of making my presence known as a researcher; this is reflected in my ability to be self-aware, and critical, and have the candidness to share the methodological struggles and in my constitutive strength in the production of the research findings and the text (Burr, 1995; Hall, 1996). In this process I moved across different shifting subjectivities in an effort to negotiate my identities as a researcher, therapist, observer, member of the community and participant of the process. Reflexivity was an essential element in my attempt to maintain my ethical practice at all times.
The following are some of the strategies that I have used in order to make my reflexivity known to the reader: (a) I reflected systematically on the research design, method and analysis, therefore modifying my practice according to the purpose, context and the needs of the participants and the research process; (b) I shared my reflections with my participants, co-facilitator and peer committee to enrich my own reflective process and the research itself; (c) I kept a journal and I audio taped my reflections to document not only my reflective process but also the relationship between myself and the participants, my co-facilitator and the peer committee; (d) in the text, I have included my own epistemological, and ideological position and the way in which they have influenced my choice of research design, method as well as the selection, interpretation and analysis methods; (e) I have also included all the personal and professional background experience that contributes to the research process and product, and (f) finally, I have identified and explained in the text those instances where my process of theorizing was influenced by academic work, personal experience or the experience, knowledge or insights of others.

**Persuasiveness**

Persuasiveness helps us identify whether the interpretation is reasonable and convincing. Given the historical nature of this research, its participatory focus, and the particular population being studied, my goal in achieving persuasiveness was threefold: first, that the interpretation clearly reflected the dialogical process between participants and researcher; second, that the interpretation was convincing and resonated with the experience of other members of the Chilean society who experienced the repression during the dictatorship and, third, that the interpretation was reasonable and compelled the general reader to open him/herself to the stories of the participants assuming that they were not necessarily acquainted with the specific historical and traumatic components of the experiences presented. Persuasiveness was ascertained by
conducting individual and group validation meetings with the co-investigators and by presenting the research findings to the peer review committee. The co-investigators agreed that the interpretation was in general accurate and clarified some aspects that were unclear. (See chapter 12 for full description of the process). Regarding the meetings with the peer review committee, they focused their comments on the research and therapeutic implications of the findings.

**Coherence**

Coherence refers to the narrator’s goals and structure, to what the narrator is intending to say. Agar and Hobbs (as cited in Riessman, 1993) have developed a coherence criterion. They describe three types of narrative coherence: global, local and themal. Global coherence refers “to the overall goal a narrator is trying to accomplish by speaking to justify an action” (Riessman, 1993, p. 67). Local coherence is what a narrator is trying to effect in the narrative itself, such as the use of linguistic devices to demonstrate how the different parts of the story are related. Themal coherence relates to the content, that is, how “chunks of interview text about particular themes figure importantly and repeatedly” (Riessman, 1993, p. 67). Although it has been argued that coherence is a subjective criterion (Arvay, 1998) and difficult to apply (Riessman, 1993), I find this particular set of criteria fits the political, social and cultural background of the participants given that it offers the possibility of understanding individual and group narratives from different levels. In addition, and to ensure that the narratives I have constructed were coherent, I designed an additional criterion by including the participants in a review process. The analysis and interpretation I made of the participants’ collage was presented to them as a narration to be reviewed by them and once they approved it we included it together with their autobiography in their individual chapters.
Social Verification

In order to be consistent with the principles of PAR that encourage social corroboration from different sectors of the communities involved, I have included social verification as a category to assess the worth of the study. This category had two objectives: to (a) validate the analysis and interpretation of the findings, and (b) return the information to the community. In order to achieve these objectives I organized a peer committee. This committee is a group of people who have been involved over the years in different aspects of human rights work in Chile during the dictatorship and the democratic governments. This committee is comprised of two psychologists, a sociologist, a historian, a family doctor, a psychiatrist, a documentary maker and a group of PRAIS beneficiaries. The group of PRAIS beneficiaries included former political prisoners, survivors of torture, exiles, and relatives of the disappeared. The role of this committee was to provide information, resources, and feedback through their professional knowledge and personal experiences. The findings and their interpretation were presented to them individually in some cases, and in a group meeting. Their contribution assisted me in ensuring that the final product was coherent, and politically, culturally and historically accurate.

Another form of social validation I used throughout the process was to present the findings to the community as they were emerging with the purpose of generating discussion, obtaining feedback, and evaluating the value of the study. In April of 2005 Jorge Pantoja and I presented a paper entitled Cuerpo y Duelo: Practicas políticas del olvido y la memoria (Body and Mourning: Political Practices of Oblivion and Memory) at the Conference of the International Association for Counseling “expanding the counseling profession within a context of profound and ongoing change” in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This paper was based on the initial finding derived from the pilot project conducted with two members of HIJOS. The paper was presented to the two co-investigators for their comments and feedback prior to the delivery
at the conference. In June 2006, I presented a paper with the initial results of the research project entitled *El cuerpo político como resistencia y sanación (The Political Body as Resistance and Healing)* at the IV World Congress on Traumatic Stress, Trauma and Community in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In addition, in order to explore the therapeutic value of the findings, I have shared parts of the information with members of the group therapy I was conducting while I was working at PRAIS, with positive feedback and promising therapeutic potential.

**Pragmatic Usefulness**

Consistent with the notion of devolution used in PAR, pragmatic usefulness refers to how this study could be personally meaningful for the participants and for the research community, particularly scholars investigating similar issues in Chile or elsewhere. This criterion “is future-oriented and collective and assumes the socially constructed nature of science” (Riessman, 1993, p. 68). Furthermore, pragmatic usefulness also refers to whether the findings of this study inspire action among participants. Riessman points out that “social movements aid individuals to aid their injuries, connect with others and engage in political action” (1993, p. 4).

Based on Riessman’s description and value of pragmatic usefulness and my own understanding of collective research possesses I have purposely crafted liberation action research as a methodological design that would allow participants to be motivated into further action once the research was completed. The criteria for designing and choosing the activities and exercises used in the workshops were also inspired by their potential pragmatic usefulness. Finally, Riessman (1993) suggests “returning our interpretation back to the communities is also politically important” (p. 66). I incorporated a section in the workshop feedback sessions as well as in the individual and group interviews where we discussed and planned collaborative ways in which the results of this research could be made public through workshops, articles, public presentations or other means both the researcher and participants deemed appropriate.
There are several ideas that developed from the research process in terms of presenting the findings and artistic material produced to the community. We are planning to organize an art show to present the artistic material at the University Academy of Christian Humanism. Furthermore, some of the co-investigators have shown interest in co-writing an article about the experience. Finally, I have committed myself to write a short version of this dissertation in Spanish to give to them once I finish the English version together with an edited copy of the workshop material.
CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

In the following six chapters, I present the findings of this exploratory study about the memory and resistance practices of HIJOS in response to the lack of justice and prevailing impunity during the dictatorship and the current government. The study intended to understand how the participants used their bodies as a site of memory and resistance, the meaning they assigned to these practices, and the therapeutic value of using artistic oriented workshops in exploring these practices. By conducting a study that extended over a year I was able to observe the process of deconstruction of the concepts of memory and resistance and the construction of new meaning during the workshops process and the subsequent period. Likewise I was able to track the emotional changes reported by the participants throughout the process, which provides some verification about the therapeutic value of exploring these concepts through artistic techniques.

The research was characterized by a constant reflexive process that included the participants, the co-facilitator, and myself. The intensity and richness of each workshop inspired new questions and opened new spaces for the exploration of these embodied practices. The process was also marked by the appearance of a wide range of memories and their corresponding emotions during the creative process of constructing artistic pieces. The result for the participants was a new and transformed understanding of the role and value of memory and resistance in their everyday life, a new connection with their body as a meaning making space, and a renewed hope in the future.

The text I present is interpretive and as such, it reflects the multiple layers of meaning and interpretation involved in the process of interacting with the co-researchers, my co-facilitator, the videos produced, the transcribed texts of interviews and meetings, and my reflection notes. It also represents the many subjectivities I bring into this work by virtue of
being an academic researcher, a psychotherapist, and a member of the Chilean and Canadian societies.

The Findings

I have chosen to present the findings in a sequential manner in order to make evident the process-oriented nature as well as the participatory focus of the methodology used. I wanted to stress the benefits of conducting research that is situated over a long period of time, and that involves multiple interactions with the co-participants and the findings because it demonstrates the cyclical nature of the meaning-making processes, the relational nature of social phenomena, the depth of the analysis developed, and the therapeutic potential of this methodology.

Chapter 6: A Window into the Past: The Social Burden of Memory

In this chapter I set the context of the research by introducing the reader to the issues addressed in this study through a summary of the interviews of Beto and Pablo, two members of HIJOS, who participated in the Luciano Carrasco hunger strike in 2003. These interviews were conducted as a pilot project before commencing the workshops. I also present the findings of the opening workshop, which was designed to introduce the co-investigators to the research process by exploring their initial concepts and understandings of memory and resistance. This information provided a knowledge base for tracking the changes in their embodied understanding of memory and resistance throughout the research process. The name of the chapter reflects the beginning of an exploration process into the social nature of memory and its role in transmitting a personal and social legacy to the other generations.

Chapter 7: Weaving our History: The Construction of Personal and Collective Memories

In this chapter I describe the findings of the second workshop, entitled “Unveiling Our Memories”, which is devoted to exploring their embodied memories through an imagery exercise that was used to construct personal and collective narratives of past memories. The text
introduces us to the participants and transforms us in witness of some meaningful narratives that reflect personal explorations and confrontations with their childhood experiences. The analysis focuses on the individual elements (objects, people, places) that the participants use to construct a narrative of childhood memories. These stories are then weaved into a group meta-narrative by placing them in a historical continuum. This chapter reveals how people construct narratives out of those elements that are safer to explore, while it also uncovers how people use memory to counteract losses. Finally, it shows how individual stories build up collective narrative

Chapter 8: Constructing the Political Self: The Body as a Space of Resistance

The findings of the third workshop “Liberating Our Bodies” are described in this chapter. The main exercise of this workshop was the construction of individual and group embodied sculptures representing images, memories, or experiences of resistance using their own bodies and the bodies of the other participants. The participants were able to identify different types of individual and collective forms of resistance. The analysis demonstrates that some forms of resistance were developed by the participants in their childhood as an emotional protection. At the collective level resistance is linked to the armed struggle, human rights work, and physical forms of protection. The findings also revealed the specific functions and meaning of resistance from childhood and throughout their lives. In addition, participants begin to identify how strongly interconnected memory and resistance are in their personal lives.

Chapter 9: Transforming the Meaning of our Bodies by Externalizing Memory and Resistance

In this chapter I present the findings of the debriefing sessions following workshops four and five “Memorializing Our Bodies” and a summary of the individual analysis of each of the participants body collages constructed during the workshops. This chapter is divided into ten sections or mini chapters about each one of the co-investigators. Each chapter includes an
autobiography and the co-constructed interpretation the participant and I made of their human
collage.

The figures constructed symbolize the materialization of the embodied relationship with
their parents. Through this visual representation they express their feelings and memories of a
relationship that was abruptly interrupted. The participants also express their own hopes and
dreams for the future embodied in their children. In the collective debriefing they begin to
identify a concern about the type of memories they are transmitting to their children and their
need to leave a truthful legacy about their parents. The analysis shows how the co-investigators
collectively constructed a definition of memory and resistance, including their main
characteristics, and identified how these two concepts have been a part of their lives.

Chapter 10: Closing the Circle: Evaluating our Experiences

In this chapter I offer an analysis of the final workshop “Moving Into Action”. The first
part of the chapter is an account of the closing exercise and includes an analysis of the final
collective reflections about memory and resistance. In the following sections I describe
participants’ evaluation of the workshops, the therapeutic value of the workshops identified by
the participants, their methodological suggestions to transform these workshops into a group
therapeutic intervention, and their suggestions for the artistic material produced. The results
reflect a transformation in the participants’ awareness about memory and resistance. This new
meaning is reflected in their understanding of the collective nature of memories by identifying
elements of their own childhood experiences in the narratives of others. The also recognize that
in their lifelong journey searching for justice and validation for their parents, they have left
themselves aside, augmenting their sense of invisibility and vulnerability. The participants offer
important ideas about transforming these workshops into a group therapeutic intervention for
different segments of the population.
Chapter 11: Some Time After: Validation Process

In this chapter I present the analysis of the findings collected through the individual and group validation meetings conducted after the workshops were completed. The analysis shows a deeper level of individual and collective reflection. One of the main issues that came up for them was their own relationship with their bodies, particularly their engagement in potentially dangerous actions. This awareness also led them to reflect about memory and resistance practices in the present and how over the years they have lost their original meaning. This ambivalence has made some of them confront their current lives and how they foresee their commitment to justice in the future. This process has also led them to begin a process of differentiating themselves from their parents in order to construct their own lives. However, this process implies confronting the social and familiar legacy of vindicating their parents in a social context that makes them feel invisible for being children of militants of the MIR. Their evaluation of the overall research process indicates that the workshops as well as the validation meetings have a strong therapeutic potential.
CHAPTER 6: A WINDOW INTO THE PAST: THE SOCIAL BURDEN OF MEMORY

In this chapter I present a summary of the main issues gathered from the interviews with Beto and Pablo conducted as a pilot project in March 2005. I also introduce the findings of the first introductory workshop that sets the context for the five following sessions. Then, I offer a general interpretation of the research process that begins to unfold and I finish with a summary of the chapter.

The Pilot Interviews

The objectives of the pilot interviews were: (a) to develop rapport with members of the group, (b) to explain my interest in the subject and the research study, (c) to describe the research process, (d) to get their feedback on the research topic and design (artistic workshops, time commitment), (e) to get their insights and opinions about the best way to recruit the co-investigators, (f) to get their support for the project, and (g) to explore their personal experience in the hunger strike and other memory and resistance practices. In this brief summary I describe the most relevant issues that came up in those interviews, which provided me with background information about the nature and the meaning of memory and resistance practices and particularly their experience of the hunger strike.

Origins and Influence of Memory and Resistance Practices in Their Lives

Beto and Pablo traced the roots of these practices to their families and specifically to the moment in which their parents where taken by the military. In the case of Beto, his family grandfather, grandmother, mother, an aunt, two uncles, a cousin and himself were detained in 1976 and taken to the police station. He was six months old at the time. After that Beto was brought up by his grandmother alone since the military killed her husband, a son, a daughter-in-law, a daughter (Beto’s mother), and the other son and daughter went into exile. Before being arrested, his mother and father had an agreement that if one of them was detained, the other one
would continue the armed struggle, so the father continued fighting in clandestinity until he was
detained and executed eleven months after the rest of the family. Beto is not sure when exactly
these practices started because they were a part of his life since infancy. He always knew that his
family had been killed by the military and therefore to protest and demand justice was something
normal. His grandmother joined other women in similar situations and began fighting for justice
and together they formed the Agrupación de Familiares de Ejecutados Políticos (Association of
Relatives of the Politically Executed). His childhood is full of memories of meetings, activities,
and seeing his grandmother participating in different actions, like the time, for example, when
she and a group of women draped themselves with the national flag and protested in front of
Palacio de La Moneda at the National Palace. He also remembered feeling bored at these
meetings, since there were no other kids to play, and decided not to attend anymore. Eventually,
as a teenager, he began participating in social activities and drug prevention programs in his
neighbourhood. Later on he moved to a southern city to study in the local university and joined a
street theatre group that performed social and political plays. These experiences were essential in
developing his social and political consciousness until he joined HIJOS in 2000. His
participation in HIJOS was also motivated by the fact that he had not found a space for himself
in the organization where his grandmother participated because of their rigid and "stagnated"
political views and organizational structures, unlike, HIJOS, where he found people of his age
with similar language, views and issues.

For Pablo these practices were also linked to the time soon after his father was arrested.
At that time his mother began to search for her husband everywhere and soon joined a group of
other women of mothers and wives who were also looking for their relatives. Her participation in
the Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos (Association of Relatives of the
Disappeared Detainees) was fundamental in influencing Pablo in the future. He remembers his
mother protesting, chaining herself to the building of the former parliament, participating in hunger strikes, and carrying the picture of his father on her heart. He is not quite sure exactly when he began participating as a kid; he only remembers that he became involved with his brothers, mother, and relatives as part of a family practice. In fact, over the year the family developed other forms of remembering the father through memorials, and other ceremonies. As a child growing up he remembers many times when he was left in charge of his younger brothers so his mother could go to the police station, torture centers, the cemeteries, or the morgue looking for his father. As time went by he began participating in these practices with friends, neighbors, and relatives until he joined HIJOS and he began working with them. Like Beto, he also felt there was no place for him in some of the traditional human rights organizations given their politicized views on different issues, their victim-like approach, and their segregation practices. He thinks that memory and resistance practices have been part of his life and he has participated in many of them because they represent one of the few ways to express his feelings while demanding to know where his father disappeared.

The Hunger Strike

The hunger strike organized by HIJOS in 2003 developed as a response to the immunity laws proposed by the government for the military involved in torture and killings in exchange for information. They felt that once again the government was turning its back on them by closing the doors to justice and knowledge about the past. By doing so the government made them invisible. Furthermore another implication of these laws was that they would be closing the doors to the future generations to know the real truth since there is not enough information in the school programs. Therefore, their decision to strike responded to the rage all the members of the group felt. They decided to name the strike Luciano Carrasco to honor and remember the life of
a member of HIJOS who committed suicide the previous year. They felt Luciano’s death was a
direct result of the tragic life he had after his father’s murder.

In both cases the hunger strike had a profound impact on them at the time and thereafter.
They identified a mixture of personal and social reasons for participating. At a personal level this
action was profoundly motivated by a commitment to their parents and the social and political
work their fathers had done as young people, but also there was an emotional connection related
to their love and admiration for them. Furthermore, it came apparent that there was a tendency to
compare themselves to their parents in term of their political commitment and participation;
therefore, the hunger strike represented an opportunity to show their own commitment to a
political cause that symbolized fighting against the same injustice that killed their parents, and
the system that was now proposing immunity to the military involved. Both mentioned that if
their parents were alive they would have done it as well. But there were also social reasons for
participating and these were related to the need of “doing something with their bodies” to show
their disgust and rage with the proposed amnesty laws. As Pablo explains:

You find yourself confronted with the obligation of putting your body as a mechanism of
protest, that is why the action of the strike was very dramatic. The body becomes a
fundamental part of memory given that to a certain extent we are the reflection of our
parents, of our fathers, our mothers in some cases. It is as if they were present in this
action (Pablo).

In this statement we can identify that there is a strong responsibility to use their bodies as
the ultimate alternative in their fight against injustice. There is also a connection between their
embodied actions and memory as well as a commitment to use their bodies to reposition their
parents in the public scene. This is also perceived in Beto’s statement: “It is not that they just
died. Our bodily energies, our lives, what we are, the life that ended and died, remains with us; it
remains in the things and the places where they lived” (Beto).
Both Beto and Pablo had different personal experiences after the hunger strike. At the political level they were extremely pleased with the results given that at least part of the proposed law was eliminated, and this also meant to bring up the issue of human rights in the public domain. However, at the personal level their experiences were somewhat different. Pablo was sick for sometime after and his liver was damaged as a result of the strike, which has somehow influenced his personal evaluation of the experience. Beto on the other hand, had an extremely positive experience which involved reconnecting with his body and also with himself:

...what I do know is that the strike helped me look inside myself... to begin from a sociopolitical development... I realized what it was that I needed, things that other people know... I have more certainties and more questions now... the commitments are different... I feel different compared to five years ago, even two years ago... I absorbed many things... they fortified me deeply and I was left without guilt as well (Beto).

It becomes apparent in their narratives that for both Pablo and Beto, their initiation in practices of memory and resistance was strongly related to a major event in their lives: the killing and disappearance of their fathers by the military. As children they witnessed and participated in these practices as part of a family response to injustice, which is also inserted within larger social practices. It is worthwhile mentioning the strong presence and influence of female figures (mother and grandmother) in their lives as family heads in the absence of men to provide emotional and economic support for them. The presence of these women is also manifested in the transmission of values and social responsibilities as a family legacy, which was evidenced in their strong sense of continuing the social and political work that their parents were doing at the time they were killed. Within this context the hunger strike represented not only a way of repositioning their parents in the social scenes as a clear message to the authorities, but also a materialization of their embodied commitment to continue their parents’ legacy.
**Introductory Workshop**

The objectives of this workshop were: (a) to build group safety in order to develop trust in each other, the facilitators, and the group process, and (b) to explore their initial individual and group concepts of memory and resistance. In order to achieve these two objectives, the co-investigators participated in a number of group games and exercises as well as working in pairs and having group discussions about their understanding of the concepts of memory and resistance (for a full description of this workshop see Chapter Four).

The interpretation of the research material obtained during the six artistic workshops, together with the individual and group validation meetings, clearly shows a process of assimilation and integration of the concepts of memory and resistance. This is delineated in their own reflective process, which is mirrored in the experiences of their fellow participants. This becomes evident when we compare the conceptualization of memory and resistance that the participants had when we started the study and the awareness and knowledge they had when we concluded the process. In this sense the initial exploration of memory is significant in providing an understanding of the processes involved in the creation of memories, the uses of memory, and the individual and collective meaning derived from the workshop exploration. Concerning resistance, there is an initial conceptualization that is framed around a personal and familial context, and their participation and belonging to HIJOS.

A first interpretation of the participant’s understandings of the notion of memory suggests an elaborated conceptualization of how memory has inhabited different aspects of their lives throughout their lifetime. The memories of their disappeared or executed parents or relatives have been changing according to their particular needs, social responsibilities, and personal healing desires.
Fragmented Personal and Family Memories

One of the first elements to be externalized in the narratives of the participants was their sense of having fragmented memories of their childhood. This fragmentation seems to be related to a number of familial, social, and political factors. At a political level, they identify the coup d'état as the main event leading to the disruption of their childhood family life. This was incremented by the subsequent disappearance and killings of their parents or relatives and in many cases exacerbated by the unwanted exile they were forced to endure as result of these political events.

At the social level, the political climate of terror experienced during the dictatorship, the economic insecurity, and the social silencing also influenced the fragmentation of these memories. At the family level, most of the participants identified that the lack of personal knowledge about their parents or relatives had a profound influence on how they had to deal with and process their death or disappearance. Most have very few or no personal pictures, objects, or mementos of their parents. This lack of personal information translated into not knowing what they were like, who their friends were, what their favorite color was, or what kind of food they liked, which affected the knowledge of who they were as regular human beings. In addition, there seemed to be two main tendencies related to how their families and surviving parent dealt with the information given to them as children. In some cases the entire family engaged in the search for the disappeared person, the political fight to denounce the disappearance, and to demand knowledge of the truth and justice. In this context the image of the parent or relative was transformed into a political symbol with heroic characteristics. In other cases, the surviving spouse or the relatives avoided conversations or memories of the absent parent for a number of reasons. These include an attempt to protect the children from the pain because they believed the children would not understand due to their emotional inability to deal with their own pain, the
fragility of their own memories, deep feelings of guilt, self-imposed silence, or the consequences of torture or exile. In this regard Alexandra offers a personal example:

...the rest of our parents, of our compañeros, have broken memories. Their own memories are quite broken, like my father never talks about my mother, never, like I have to ask him, I have to investigate, I have to ask him, because he was also tortured, he was involved, was arrested, they beat him up. So to talk about the mother of his children... there is a whole story there, and guilt, there is his own pain, and there is a whole context as well (Alexandra).

This brief testimony opens up another layer in their stories that reflects that they are quite aware of the pain and emotional state of the surviving parent, which they experienced as a limitation of their father or mother in remembering and dealing with pain. Furthermore, the lack of or insufficient amount of information received from the adults around them made them feel a step behind in the process of re-constructing memory. They identified a fracture in the generation of their parents resulting from the many losses they experienced: killings, disappearances, exile, torture, and the unstable emotional state of the survivors. Therefore they felt it is difficult to reconstruct memory from the generation of their parents, thus they felt they had to do it from their own experiences meaning they had to ask and research everywhere.

At a cognitive level, the process of construction of memories was also altered by the personal events lived in childhood. The participants reported having a hard time understanding how memories were formed since it was difficult for them to distinguish which memories were their own and which ones were a composite of the memories, anecdotes, and stories of others that they had internalized as if they were, in fact, lived by them. Most of them agreed that they did not have memories before the age of eight and only had what they called "flashes of memories". But even these flashes or nebulous memories were difficult to classify whether they were their own or somebody else's. Some of them only have pictures that were taken four or five years before they were killed or disappeared which made their process even harder. This memory process was further complicated by the fact that the memories transmitted to them by
family members and friends were mediated by a sense of justification, that is, an attempt to rationalize their parents’ and relatives’ disappearance or killings. This was evidenced in the stories or memories that portrayed their parents as courageous militants, with a high level of social consciousness who died fighting for the most underprivileged members of society.

This fragmentation of personal and family memories can be understood as individual "memory gaps" that lead the participants to a personal and collective search to find those elements that allowed them to complete the necessary information to understand their parents in a more holistic manner. As such this was also an individual quest for a personal truth to allow them to resolve unspoken conflicts with their parents.

**Uses of Memory**

One of the first elements provided by these narratives in order to conceptualize memory, was the use they made of memory to resolve the emotional ambivalence of the memory gaps left by the insufficient information received from adults when they were children. These resources seemed to have helped their emotional as well as the social survival during childhood and adolescence.

**Memory as Fantasy and Imagination**

The general atmosphere of silence and fear led the participants to wish they could have just “normal” regular memories of their deceased parents or relatives, just like any other kid. They wanted desperately to fit-in with the rest, or to be accepted by their peers. However, some of them experienced discrimination or were even expelled from school since they were seen as political or dangerous because they were children of the disappeared. This situation is defined by them as a “stigmatized identity” that was worse for the children of those emblematic and well-known political leaders, since their children were recognized publicly by their last names. This
impossibility to adjust to a "normal" family life led them to resort to fantasy and imagination to deal with these abnormalities, which is reflected in the following passage by Pablo:

...they kicked me out of school when I was a kid... and they didn’t even give you any explanations, but you knew that somehow they had found out that your father was a disappeared or had been executed, or was involved... I would play the fool and that’s it, I would make a father’s day card and at the end your father existed for everybody, your father existed, it kind of worked out. Or I would say no he is working, or he died, because it was complicated to tell them what happened (Pablo).

The ambiguity of not knowing whether his father was dead or alive, aside from the fear of being discriminated against, seems to be the cause of the contradictory information he provided to people. This generalized lack of personal information about their parent or relatives also led another participant as she was growing up to imagine what her relatives would do, feel, or think in the same situations she was confronting as a teenager. This strategy of trying to understand her relatives’ decisions allowed her to gain a bigger sense of social consciousness about the injustices her relatives were fighting against and allowed her to get to know them from a more personal perspective.

**Sociopolitical Memories**

For many, the fragmentation and lack of memories and personal information about their parents and relatives led them to a personal search through their political commitment and work. In this process they were able to begin filling the gaps in their memories, by incorporating information, interpretations, opinions, and memories of friends, neighbors, or other political militants. This process could also be understood as a characteristic of memory that moves in time thus changing to the extent that there are new needs to know specific aspects of the personal and political lives of their parents or relatives. This is how the participants engaged in a process of constructing a *public memory* of their parents and relatives. This public memory is also supported and maintained through time by a social/public discourse about the victims of the dictatorship and particularly about the image of the *disappeared and the executed prisoners* who
were turned into symbols by the end of the dictatorship. However, this construction and interpretation of a public memory also translated into concrete actions of memory and resistance.

It is in this context that the use of the body acquires special significance given the fact that many of these practices of memory and resistance were performed on the streets or in public places. They included chaining themselves to buildings, using their bodies as human shields to protect people from being arrested, or participating in hunger strikes. Thus their bodies are used as a living symbol, or a materialization of the body of their disappeared or executed parent or relative. This is expressed in the words of Beto who participated in the Luciano Carrasco hunger strike in 2003:

I felt an inner force, big, powerful... we were interested in setting a precedent of our history... we said no to the amnesty laws, like our families, mothers, grandmothers did in the past,... I feel I am continuing their legacy (Beto).

This suggests that the use of their own bodies as a form of resistance, memory, or as a public form of denunciation, serves at least two functions: (a) to reposition the bodies of their parents and relatives in the public scene from where they were violently taken, and (b) to continue the legacy of political work. Thus, the bodies of these young people become the incarnation of the bodies of their parents.

**Memory as Social Responsibility**

The participants also felt they had a huge social responsibility as sons, daughters, and relatives to validate and vindicate the social image of their relatives due to the widespread bad image created by the military. At a more personal level they felt a deep sense of loyalty to continue the social and political work initiated by their parents, although they agreed that this had not been a personal choice, but rather, one that was somehow imposed on them by family, friends, society, and by a sense of moral obligation and social responsibility, like in Pablo's case:

...but I feel that it would have been much healthier, it would have been more beautiful that we had got involved in politics moved by our own interest, and not because we had
to vindicate your father, because he was been accused of being a terrorist, that he was an assassin, or because they were saying that he had left the country with another woman, or because they would say that he was never born (Pablo).

This contradiction seems to harbor deep feelings of discomfort and even anger because for many of them this was not a political choice they would have made were their parents and relatives alive. At a much deeper level I can perceive them feeling neglected and abandoned by their parents because they chose a political cause over a family life. However these feelings are not explicit in the public discourse. Furthermore, there is a clear sense of frustration and tiredness of having this responsibility given that it should be taken by the members of their parents’ generation, their friends or other militants, as Pablo explains:

...what really angers me with the military is that we have to beg for your father, or that you don’t have the space like the rest of the world, like the one whose father died in a car accident, so that you can remember your father, you can say my father this and that, but without the social burden to have to vindicate them, like they did something wrong, and besides because it is not our responsibility, I think it is the responsibility of the people of their generation (Pablo).

The frustration identified in Pablo’s narrative is also related to much deeper feelings connected to the relationship with their parents and the experiences lived in childhood, as Alexandra expresses:

...I feel that there is duality about the issue of my mom, with the issue of remembering, I think there is a part that has to do with the story of the parents but also it is a burden for us, that is cyclical, that sometimes is good and sometimes is bad and... the story of the parents you will always have and will always have respect until you are no longer around, but you also have your own story, to remember what happened with the parents, but you have other things as well. And when is memory an obstacle for you?... when you have a bad time, when you are sad, when you are scared, when it stops or limits you to do other things, I think it is then when it becomes a burden (Alexandra).

Alexandra’s narrative highlights the fact that there seem to be two elements in this conflict. On one hand we find the political and social demands to perform a certain role as “children of” the disappeared or executed, but on the other hand we find that this social
responsibility has an emotional cost associated to the painful side of remembering traumatic events, which has the power of paralyzing them, limiting their possibilities of moving forward in their healing process.

**Resistance**

This part of the analysis looks at the participants’ understanding of the concept of resistance in their lives. All of them agree that to be part of HIJOS, that is to get together, to share memories, to feel accepted and validated by their peers – since they all have similar life experiences – represents the most important form of resistance in their lives. Therefore, resistance is understood, as “not feeling alone in the world”. This feeling of invisibility is influenced by the reactions of other people who often do not want to hear them talk about their personal story, not even their closest friends. In addition, they also get some sense of power and control by being part of the group and by acting collectively.

At a personal level resistance is understood and experienced as the capacity to develop as a happy person, in spite of the traumatic events in their lives. This personal resistance includes: having a family and children, and enjoying them; developing and maintaining friendships; and, developing as professionals. Some participants identify happiness or the capacity of being happy as a form of individual resistance, like in Lalo’s experience:

...like with everything that we have gone through we have the capacity to develop as a person and that’s resistance, to have children and be happy with them, to have a group of friends and be happy with them also... there is a generation that I think has almost achieved that... I think that having your life like I say happiness is part of the present, like I am a happy person, although I get sad sometimes (Lalo).

**Collective Resistance**

At a collective level, belonging to HIJOS emerges clearly as an important form of group resistance. This shared space allows them to connect, recognize themselves in others, and validate their experiences, thus forming a common identity that bonds them together.
emotionally. This sense of belonging has been constructed through a strong sense of solidarity among them, which is expressed by supporting each other at all times, by laughing and crying together, and by understanding what the other is feeling or thinking in difficult moments, since they often do not feel this type of support from other people outside the group. This sensibility, when confronted with their own pain and that of the others, is also demonstrated through black humor. This type of sarcastic humor has developed into a common language and is identified as a form of emotional resistance as well. In their experience black humor becomes useful when they face a difficult situation or memory that is hard to deal with, therefore it is being used as a shield to protect them from being hurt or hurting others. However, it is important for them to clarify that black humor is not part of their lives at every moment. They resort to it when they feel the circumstance requires it in order to be able to handle a dramatic or painful situation. In those situations humor allows them to regain control and to take some distance to reflect, “it allows you to look from the outside”. This linguistic resource is already an integral part of their group story that is understood by all of them and that relates to the shared experience they live.

This initial conceptualization of resistance indicates that at a personal level this concept is linked to a need or desire to lead a “normal life” through the development of stable relationships, having a family of their own, and particularly having children, which seems paramount in dealing with their past losses. Likewise, there is a strong desire to achieve personal and professional development. At a collective level, belonging to HIJOS is perceived as a strong form of resistance and source of strength, given the discrimination they have received in their lives. In this group context they find understanding, protection, love, and unconditional support, and is the space where they feel free be who they are. This strong connection among the members of HIJOS was also one of the reasons identified for participating in the research, since they would have the chance to spend some time with their friends once a week for more than a
month. It is interesting to see the meaning and value of emotional support and containment they experienced among the group members, which can be compared to the therapeutic value of self-help groups, even though the roots and objectives of the group are somehow different.

This chapter represents a first attempt to understand how members of HIJOS use their bodies as a site of memory and resistance and the meaning associated to these practices. From the information gathered in the pilot project as well as in this first workshop we could see how individual narratives begin to emerge around these issues. All of them are personally marked by a combination of what Denzin (1989) would call major and cumulative epiphanies. The major epiphany can certainly be equated with the coup d'état experienced by the entire society and cumulative epiphanies would be then the individual events that have happened in the participants’ lives and that have led them to such radical actions like the hunger strike. The recognition of these epiphanies in the individual and group narratives have allowed me to identify the beginning of a collective narrative that relates to the co-investigators sense of “burden” in relation to their social responsibility in vindicating their parents. Most of their stories about the topic felt like a complaint being passed on to us, which made me pay attention to the tone of voice and body language of the participants during the analysis process. This is certainly one of the topics that unfolded as the research progressed.

Summary of a Window into Past: The Social Burden of Memory

In this chapter I have presented a brief summary of the interviews of Beto and Pablo conducted as a pilot project prior to commencing the workshops. These interviews situate the origin of these practices in their families, who organized themselves to look for the disappeared father and to demand justice. These practices appeared then as an organized response that started in the family and expanded to the social sphere. The influence of women as initiators of these practices was also identified. The hunger strike on the other hand, unveiled the personal and
social responsibilities they both felt regarding their role in continuing the social and political legacy of their fathers.

I have also provided an analysis of the conceptualization of memory and resistance that the participants brought to the research process. This information gives us the possibility of establishing a knowledge base so as to compare it with their understanding and embodied experience at the end of the research process. The participants identified the coup d'état as the most significant event in their childhood life. This disruptive event led to the disappearance, or execution of their parents and in some cases their own exile, thus dividing their lives in before and after. This abrupt change in their lives influenced significantly their ability to remember, and their capacity to distinguish how their own childhood memories were formed. In addition, the lack of personal information about their parents or relatives led them to a search for information that has extended until adulthood. In childhood they resorted to using imagination and fantasy as a way to fill in the memory gaps produced by the lack or little information received. As adolescents they turned into political and social activism as a way of continuing their search for personal information about their parents. In this process they joined HIJOS, a group of young men, women, and children of the disappeared and politically executed. Their political participation in the context of human rights organizations facilitated the construction of a political memory of their parents, which becomes part of the political discourse of these organizations. Eventually this political activism turned into embodied practices of memory to return the disappeared or executed body of their parents to the public context, as it is evidenced by the Luciano Carrasco hunger strike in 2003. However, this active political fight to vindicate and validate the memory of their parents, which started as an inherited social responsibility, is taking a toll. Finally, I provide a tentative first approximation of how a group narrative is beginning to develop in relationship to their social responsibilities as sons and daughters of the
disappeared and executed, which is also connected to the negative memories of traumatic experiences.
CHAPTER 7: WEAVING OUR HISTORY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

In this chapter I present an analysis of the second workshop “Unveiling Our Memories” that introduces the participants to an embodied encounter with personal memories. I begin by presenting a brief analysis of the initial exercise that re-introduces the participants to the concepts of memory and resistance. Then I present the co-investigators through their own narratives of the images evoked by a memory imagery exercise. Then I continue with an analysis of these individual experiences. Following this, I present the analysis of their experiences derived from the “Historical Continuum Exercise”, and I finish with a summary of the chapter. (For a full description of the workshop see Chapter Four, page 137).

Unveiling Our Memories

The purpose of this workshop was to set up the context for the exploration of memory from an embodied perspective. We began the workshop by analyzing the concepts of memory and resistance that the participants had written as homework the previous week. Their definitions show a more personal understanding of these concepts than what they expressed in the first session. The following are their definitions:

Memory is to re-live and to actualize current and past episodes of our collective history, it is to construct identity. Resistance is to struggle in everyday life (Daniela).

Memory is everything that has been born from the experiences that we have had and resistance is the will of life (Tamara).

Memory is what reminds me where I come from, who I am, what sets the guidelines to continue my life, what torments me and what saves me. Memory is the social and individual history that allows us to recognize a past and design a future, it is to have continuity in life, what alerts us not to make the same mistakes, it gives us hope to improve. And resistance is not to accept what damages us, or what we think that damage us. In politics is rebelliousness in front of the arbitrary power. I don’t insist in a life like a copy of yesterday’s or to accept the mistakes and the bad emotional habits, to resist is also to look for the means to survive adversity. Sometimes to resist is to be silent or to speak, to sublimate or to somatize (Vivi).
Memory is trying to get that memories become transcendent individually and collectively. And resistance is to live with consequence and harmony bearing those memories (Alexandra).

Memory is a living image, a strength over which my present is constructed, and from where I project my own future giving an existential meaning to my own being. Resistance is to live in spite of everything, is to dream, is to imagine new words and take them to the paper and to the consciousness of everybody, it’s like very personal, but besides I like to write so writing is a form of resistance (Juan Carlos).

I was thinking, and at the end it’s like really memory and resistance are like...I feel there is a relation between the two concepts, without one the other doesn’t work and memory is the capacity, I mean for me only, is the capacity that one has to defeat oblivion, the absences or the silence, so in that context it’s like a moment I have to be with myself, with my roots, that in this case could be my father, but also has to do with my mom who is part of the same generation but she is alive. And resistance is like the everyday frontal struggle, that has nothing to do with a street fight, but it has to do with not accepting, not only the human rights issues, but life in general, many things that are distant from my father, the disappearance of my father, but that are related to life to the everyday life injustices (Pablo).

These individual definitions of memory and resistance reveal a very personal and intimate relationship of the participants with their pasts where memory and resistance are strongly connected. Most of them link memory to the social or collective experiences, while there are others that connect memory to their own individual experience. In their definitions we can see that memory has the capacity of reconstructing something that is broken or destroyed while at the same time liberating from oppression, silence, and oblivion, through providing strength and existential meaning, thus creating a personal and collective identity. However, memory is also identified as having the capacity to torment people by bringing up unwanted or painful episodes, yet the transformative qualities of memory are also capable of changing bad memories.

Resistance is also conceived as a complement or a part of memory given that it performs similar functions. Consequently resistance is the capacity to survive, a will to life that is present throughout life and that manifests in everyday actions as well as in public rebellious actions. Nevertheless resistance is also described as having dual functions given that while it can help
achieve harmony and peace, it can also produce unhealthy effects by neglecting to express one’s own feelings. What I identify in their definitions of resistance and memory is a strong sense of life and hope that at the same time suggests an inner fear to succumb to death, silence, and invisibility. This exercise provided the conceptual base for the embodied exercise that followed. The main exercise used is designed to begin a process of reconstruction of the past through individual and collective narratives. The main exercise of this workshop is called the “memory container.” The participants were asked to imagine a big memory trunk that contained all the memories of our collective past. Once participants were able to visualize the container, they were guided to open it up and to search for memories, objects, letters, music, or people that are part of our individual and collective memory that live in that container. Then they were asked to choose from those memories one image that represented their past. When they identified that image they were asked to use their senses to describe the characteristics of that memory until they had a clear image. Then participants were slowly brought back out of the visualization to the room and we began to debrief the experience by sharing that image with the group. Following that, they were given some guidelines to write a narrative of that image. When the stories were finished the participants were asked to locate the story chronologically and then stand on the timeline, from where they read the story.

The “memory container” exercise had the power to bring up memories that have a particular meaning for some of them. In other cases, the memories represented a form of “confrontation with their past” or an “epiphany”. By writing a short narrative about the recalled memory and talking about it they were able to identify and explore specific issues, people, or moments in their lives that were significant in understanding their present lives.

All of their memories came from childhood and represented a specific time either before or after the traumatic event that changed their lives. Therefore the memories are divided into
"happy and normal" or "sad and painful", which also reflects the ambivalence they feel about that particular period in their lives. There are four elements that have the power to evoke these memories: family members, objects, places and sensations, or a combination of these elements. In other words by remembering these specific elements there is an emotional process that unchains associated memories and emotions. I decided to present the narratives of the co-investigators as a way to introduce them to the reader and also to show the variety of experiences among them, as well as the similarities. These narratives are organized by themes: objects of memory, places of memory and family memories.

**Objects of Memory**

**Alexandra**

I'm going to read it. I situated myself in 1978 and I was 2 years old approximately and when I opened the trunk, I found this cassette, I always remember it, because it's purple, completely purple, it is not common. I have never seen another cassette like this, that's why it has always caught my attention. The content is the voices of my father and my mother telling stories and singing children's songs, specifically there is a song that goes like this, I am not going to sing it, I am going to read it:

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Little paper ship my faithful friend
take me sailing through the spacious sea
I want to know my friends from here and there
and to all of them take my own friendship
down with war! Up with peace!!
cause children want to laugh and to sing
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When my nephew Nicolás was 8 days old I sang this song to him and he fell asleep. My brother used it for many years as a lullaby. This cassette was recorded by my parents to give it to
us before they came to Chile with the ‘return plan’ of the MIR. When my older brother and I were left to the care of my maternal grandmother. It was a little piece of them that I listened to so many times during my childhood and their absences. I don’t know where the cassette is, surely someone in my family has it. But what I know is that when I have a daughter “little paper ship” will be the first song that I will sing to her. Thank you.

The exercise takes Alexandra to remember a particular object that symbolizes the relationship with her parents when they were exiled in France and perhaps some unresolved feelings associated to that time. The importance of this object relates to the fact that it was recorded by her parents as a memory object left for their children to remember them when they were away. This can be interpreted as an act of resistance to oblivion that shows also a high level of consciousness, while demonstrating the love they had for their children. This takes place in the context of their return to Chile as part of a political action of the MIR, which required the militants who were outside of the country to re-group in Chile and organize the armed resistance. This cassette became the only emotional connection with her parents while they were separated. We can see the profound meaning of this object, “a little piece of them” that she had during her childhood to remember her parents during their absences.

It is interesting to see how Alexandra chooses the song “little paper ship” to share with the group. The lyrics talk about friendship among children, but more than that, it reminds adults that children want peace instead of war. Interestingly enough the song continues to be transmitted in the family to the new generations. This cassette is one of the few objects that Alexandra has of her mother Lucia, who was killed in Chile in 1984 together with Sergio, Daniela’s father, when Alexandra was 6 years old.
Daniela

I’m going to read it also. I took a magazine from the trunk, but not just any magazine, it was “Interview”. I don’t know what year it was from, it must be from 1985. I see the bloodied image of Lucia, I tried to change the image. I tried to find the image of the cassette that Sergio (her father) recorded for us when we were coming back from Denmark, that later got lost. It was left with a psychiatrist, and we never got it back. But the cassette could not be the object. I returned to the magazines and those horrible images. I didn’t want to think about them much more; I have an image and a sensation that don’t allow much analysis. I think of Ale, would I cause her sadness? Would she think that my choice of object was bad? For some time now I feel closer to my friends, my dear and close friends, that’s why I cried, and I felt sad in the funeral of Kayito’s father. Or when Gabriel (her partner) – so confused, nervous, and absorbed – was chasing the image of his father in Mapocho Station, would they be projections? It’s like I feel reconciled with Sergio, and now I re-live it through others. I am not quite sure, and I feel bad that I didn’t get a more personal object, I mean different.

Daniela’s narrative centers around the memory of a picture, which appeared in a magazine that had an article that described the way in which her father and Alexandra’s mother were killed. The picture shows the bloodied images of Lucia. Daniela attempts to resist the image and searches for the image of a cassette recorded by her father. However, she cannot concentrate on the cassette and goes back to the magazine picture. In this case we see a clear example of the intromission of certain types of memory and the struggle she has with those memories that resist leaving, although she was ready to explore other less painful personal memories. She interprets her resistance to explore that image as a way of protecting Alexandra from being hurt by talking about it afterwards. We see here a clear duty of protecting others as well as herself from these type of memories. At the same time she wonders about the closeness
and sadness she feels when her close friends are in pain. It becomes apparent that she is confused about the appearance of this memory, particularly because she feels she has reconciled herself with Sergio. At a deeper level her experience suggests that the evoked memories confront her with her perception and understanding of the reconciliation with her father, which leaves her in a state of confusion.

Juan Carlos

The object I want to talk about is a Manta Mapuche (a poncho) because culturally it means a lot to me, because from my mom's side I am Mapuche, and we have a Tupan in our family who is a descendant of the Lonco (chief) and this is a Tupan Manta. So I situate myself in 73, before September 11, although this really doesn't have time, but it was the same year, around January that my mom met my dad, I think it was in March, and there he was already wearing this manta, without knowing that my mom is Mapuche. So what happens with this manta, more than culturally is that after 30 years I know about it through a witness who told me that my father was in Londres 38 (a torture centre), and how does he know this? When he didn't even see his face or hear his voice, but he could identify him because of this manta... and one day a man arrives badly injured and this witness was able to see through a space in the blindfold someone handing the manta to the injured man, and that manta was black with thin white lines, which are the lines of the Lonco, and he covers him and says this was sent by Juan Carlos, and that was my father's political name and he was always wearing that manta, so it's too evident, and not everybody wears this manta. So that image has marked me a lot. And I have written a poem about it:

But you are here, silenced, witness of history

witness of praise, of old teachings

symbol of knowledge, of the knowledge of the elders,

you that arranged the beginning
the beginning of life,

one day came back to me,

to my consciousness, after centuries of innocence

but also of resistance,

my mind wondered in the darkness

and from one moment to the next I knew I would find you

screams of horror, of pain in the corridors,

imploring screams,

while the bells rang in the downtown church

and today after 31 years,

we screamed again,

but out of happiness

with happiness and subversion

until victory always,

that beautiful weaving,

so full of meanings, sacred, eternal

full of music, your smell of wool

your smell of fresh wool

in my beloved south,

sacred manta

Lonco manta

the most beautiful of the tupan

embodied, embodied in my consciousness

in your consciousness
in the consciousness of our mother,
our sacred mother,
mother, goddess, mother
you who whisper tenderly to me,
you who turn the breeze in tender loving kisses,
praising the soul
of little men and women,
who are still deserving of being your messengers.

For Juan Carlos, the object that appears in this exercise is the manta Mapuche, which his father was wearing when he was detained. The meaning of this manta is both personal and cultural. At a personal level he connects with his disappeared father through this object, which materializes in the narrative of a witness who was at this torture centre. After that event Juan Carlos began a personal journey to collect information about the last days and actions of his father. There is a clear sense of pride when he tells the story, particularly about the kindness and compassion that his father showed for the injured man. However, the manta appears also as an embodied object that narrates the horrors that his father might have experienced at the torture centre. At a cultural level it brings him closer to his Mapuche roots and the meaning of this sacred object in this culture, which is associated with the wisdom and strength of the mother earth, and the struggle and pain of its people. Juan Carlos was 26 days old when his father was arrested and has been “disappeared” since then.

Vivi

A green dress, with balloon-like sleeves, with dark green thin ribbons, size four or six for a girl five or six years old, a little dress...I don’t know why I feel nostalgia, I can’t believe it...a beautiful little dress, made by a proud mother, soft texture, I can’t, I feel sad...(breaks up in
tears, and continues her narrative sometime after). I’m sorry, I’m a bit like this... I remember, I mean immediately came to my mind the image of a Christ that I wore and I wore for a long time when I came back to Chile, because at that time I was little. My father met my mother in Argentina, when my father’s entire family had moved with my... that is my grandparents, my uncles, everybody, so my father and mother met there and then they came back, my paternal family and my mom, dad and myself remained in Argentina. Their relationship didn’t work out and one day my dad took me and he brought me to Chile, and the only thing I brought was that dress and the only one I had during sometime before my grandma began to make me clothes and other things. And I remember that I came in 1970 and what I saw first was my grandpa who was fixing the garden of the house in Herrera Street, which is here in the old part of town. And there it was my entire paternal family, but now in Chile and that’s where we stayed, I mean I stayed there. And there it began another life, with, with my other family and all what that meant for me after. It was like in that little dress remained a lot of things, my mom, my Argentinean family and a new stage began. And there I began to live and share with my grandparents, more with my grandma. And I see there are a lot of grandparents there, and my grandpa, my aunt, my uncle and all of them.

In Vivi’s case the memory that emerges from the trunk is a little green dress that was the only piece of clothing she had when her father brought her back to Chile. This object takes her back to a very painful period in her life, which meant as she puts it “a definite and profound break in my body, mind and life order.” This little dress symbolizes an intense and unexpected change but also a memory of when her parents were together as a united family. It also means the loss of the country where she was born, her childhood memories, the smells of her country, and her neighborhood and the loss of her Argentinean maternal family. This little dress also unfolds memories of her life in Chile, getting reunited with her Chilean paternal family and the
tragedy she would experience later. In 1976 her paternal grandparents, two aunts, an uncle, her little cousin Beto, and herself were detained by the military. Vivi, her cousin and grandmother, were released a few days after, but her grandfather, two aunts and uncle were taken to a detention centre known as Villa Grimaldi and were later killed by the secret services. This was another big loss in her life when she was nine years old. In this case we see again how one object holds the meaning for a number of events and feelings associated with it. This suggests that memory operates in interconnected networks and that once a particular memory is recalled it has the power to unfold associated events. It was interesting to see that by the end of the workshop Vivi was beginning to connect these extremely emotional events she lived as a little girl in more meaningful ways. In fact she says that for the first time she is able to talk about these aspects of her life in public, which also helped her understand these events as separate and therefore having different emotional value and meaning, as opposed to her previous experience where she felt profound grief about that whole period of her life.

**Places of Memory**

**Tamara**

The memory takes place about the end of the 80s, 87-88, but if I am going to be honest the first memory I took from the trunk is connected to images, but I am looking for memories that are not that painful. But well the first memory I had should be around 1974, where the first thing I see is a Citroneta (an inexpensive French made car), those squared ones like vans. It belongs to my grandfather, so then I am not in Santiago, I am in Talca (a small town close to Santiago) and my aunt, my father’s sister, is driving, and my mom is next to her and I am in my mom’s arms, sleeping. And all of the sudden, I wake up and I look at the back of the car and I see my dad, covered in a blanket, and I began to scream ehh my dad, my dad is there! I was three, almost four. And they told me no, it’s not, he is not your father, it’s your uncle, I don’t
know, but it was a strange situation, a man covered in a blanket. So from there I said, no, not that one, and I searched, when do I connect with him again? Because that was like the last physical image that I have of him and I go back to the Peda (short for the Faculty of Education, University of Chile) and I get there, the year was 87-88 and I am leaving school, and I make the decision to study, I wanted to study Spanish. I had decided that before, and has nothing to do with my father, but I decided to study in the Peda, because my father studied in the Peda and so did my mom and there is where they met, and that’s where this story is constructed and they got married and then I came and all that right? But I had this tremendous need to walk the streets he walked, to look for him in all the available spaces, and I arrived at the Peda and there I truly created the sensations of, like settling, like a welcoming. Besides I followed a different story, a little different from the ones the others have told. I always grew up very removed from, from the fight that meant later the search, right? My mom obviously moved away from all of that, not obviously, but she just withdrew, and the one who continued the search and the fight all these years was my grandmother, and she also kept me away, that is, there was like an environment of a lot of protection which eventually led me to search like a mad woman everywhere. Well, and I arrived at the Peda and I see myself entering the Spanish Department and discovered that the Spanish Department were the old men’s dorms from back then, and my father had lived there, because he was from a region, he came and lived there and well, that was my home and my welcome. For me the Peda is a beautiful park, so that’s why, when I entered and they were about to kick me out the first year, I cried not because I was going to lose my career, I cried because I didn’t want to leave the Peda, that was, that was my place, that was my place.

The narrative of Tamara relates to her need to reconnect with her father. The first image that comes to her mind is a memory of perhaps the last time she saw her father, but that is denied by her mother and the adults around her causing confusion in the past and even in the evocation.
of the image in the present. However, she is determined to reconnect with him and searches for another image. This time she re-experiences the feelings and sensations of being at the Faculty of Education before she began her studies there. This space where her father completed his studies in education provides a connection and union with him; a common space that only the two of them share. Walking and strolling around the spaces that he inhabited before, meant also to find the parts of herself that were lost for a while. In this place she experienced a sense of belonging, connection, peace, and she feels welcomed. The memories and feelings associated with the period when she studied reflect great love, commitment, and passion. However, to take a walk in that space now gives her a sense of sadness and nostalgia since the strong feelings and passion she experienced during that period are no longer there. Ricardo, Tamara’s father disappeared in August 1974 when she was four years old.

**Pablo**

What I imagined when we were lowering the trunk, it came to me a song, that is from... that truly I don’t know if it was, it was like music from Zitarrosa, that was what we listened to when we were kids, with my dad in the house, and really what I remembered was the house, the house where I lived before 1973, that they bought and my father’s family always lived like protected with the whole family there, around the grandmother, the grandmother was there, because the grandfather died, when, I don’t know, but I wasn’t born yet, even my older cousins were not able to meet him. So it is a house that it is in a big piece of land, I went to see it, but I don’t remember, I didn’t have in my memory the color, but it was like, I am not sure if it was baby blue or gray, but I was in this huge house, extremely big, squared or rectangular, they didn’t build it because my aunts bought it already used. And I remember that since I was a kid I would go with my brothers on Sundays, I was like three, well since I was born and until I was two. Then I went there to live with my grandmother, after 1973. I didn’t live with my parents,
my father took me to the house to live with grandma, the house was in Recoleta and the street I don’t know if it was called Urmeneta or something like that. The house was extremely big and I lived part of my childhood there before my father disappeared. I had it in my mind, but the rooms were huge, it was full of grass and there was a vineyard, and there was also a ping-pong table where we would play every Sunday. Well, the memories are in general, the memories of my childhood, but before the coup and before the year my father disappeared. I remember it as a happy period in my life, playing with my cousins, lots of life, and there were lots of people in the house. I remember my aunts and my grandma, and even my first and only dog, whose name was “Luchin”. My memory goes back and I remember my childhood, “a normal childhood”, full of love which represents a united life, because all of us had a gigantic house, I mean we all lived there. After the coup, it’s like everybody began going to different places, after the coup the police took control of the house, so after that the family dispersed, and it was never the same, we just met on Sundays for lunch. And I also remember the Coup, because for the Coup I was in that house, they took me to my grandma’s, because there was state of siege, I was with my mom that day and I remember being locked up, I don’t know, like a month I think, or maybe more, but since I was a kid I don’t remember. For me that’s what it meant, it means like a stage in my childhood without worries, without pain, without anything, that’s what came to my mind.

The memory that appears for Pablo is this huge family house that symbolizes the epitome of the normal, happy life he lived before the coup d'état. In this experience he wanders around the house feeling the amplitude of the spaces, recalling the people and the events when he lived there. More than that, he recalls the sensations and feelings of safety, love, and happiness. Nevertheless, these happy memories are obscured by the profound break produced by the coup, where his life is completely transformed; first the house is taken over by the military, then members of his family had to leave the country and later his father disappeared. This house
becomes the individual symbol of his childhood life experience, a place that contains all the meanings and feelings of that period of his life. It is interesting to note how Pablo stops his narration at the time of the coup d'état, which could be interpreted as a self-regulated measure to protect him from going into more painful memories. José, Pablo’s father, disappeared in 1974, when Pablo was six years old.

**Family Memories**

**Lalo**

Well, I, I when, when we opened the trunk, I felt a smell first, a smell like dry cleaned clothes, like textile, like from the dry cleaners, and all of the sudden this image began to appear, and it was my grandfather, my maternal grandfather, the one I grew up with. It was very typical, always even on Sundays he wore his suit, very well groomed, and that smell when you came close to him, when you, caress him, it was the smell of the suit, impeccable, dried cleaned. This old man was, was very important for me between the ages of 4 and 14, when he died, he died at 65; when I needed him the most, when you are in the period of your adolescence, let’s say 13-14 years old. He was like your buddy, your friend, your best friend, he was like the father let’s say and besides he was, was very beautiful, let’s say so then, now I felt him, I touched him, I touched his reading glasses, always thick glasses, I don’t know from that time, and well that. I remember my childhood, my house, my family, a family in spite of what was happening, in spite of the fact that the whole family was dispersed, in exile, my father disappeared, but there we were happy, we were happy, he, he contributed to my happiness.

The experience of Lalo is full of physical sensations. He feels the smell of the dry cleaned suit of his grandfather. He also manages to touch him, he touches the frame of his eyeglasses, he touches his body, an experience that he describes as “beautiful.” His grandfather symbolizes the safety and balance in his childhood after his father disappeared. The paternal
figure that introduced him to politics and gave him love and a sense of purpose in life. In spite of the sadness produced by this memory, Lalo emphasizes the happiness he experienced in childhood with his grandpa. In this case the exercise takes Lalo to confront the feelings associated to the person who took the role of his father and who also died when he needed him most. Eduardo, Lalos’s father, disappeared in 1974, when Lalo was five years old.

Kayito

I don’t know whether to read it or to tell it, because I am not very good at writing, but I am going to read it and if I miss something I am going to say it. The first thing I saw, and the only thing I saw was, were images and I like it, because all of the sudden, like the description that I got was like an object, and I was like how? But it was the first thing I saw and I accepted it. Then I saw an image that was one of the occasions in which I accompanied my father to paint murals with the Elmo Catalan Brigade, and he was like the designer of the murals. I saw many colors because we were painting murals in some shantytown in the eastside of Santiago. There were brushes, and cans full of color. It must have been between 1988, beginning of 1989. It reminds me of the last things I shared with my father, the good feelings, the friendship, the commitment of the people who participated in those gatherings. It means the union with my father through art, the union in the texture, the colors, the union of what he did and what I do now. I saw the murals with my father, and the image itself doesn’t remind me of any particular geographic place, but rather the general sense because I went with him about three or four times, and there were shantytowns where my father and others painted the hope of a better Chile.

For Kayito the experience is a combination of sensations and images related to being with his father somewhere in Santiago painting murals. What becomes apparent are the feelings and sensations that she recalls associated to the relationship she had with her father through art and through sharing these artistic activities. It seems that her need to connect with him after he died
has also taken her to study art and express herself through this medium. She studied art and currently she is a visual artist and a ceramist. Raul, Kayito’s father, was killed in 1989 when she was eight years old.

The narratives of the participants show some interesting cognitive and sensory characteristics in the process of recalling past memories. Some of them report vivid perceptions and feelings, which include the sensation that they are in a certain place or in front of someone. This experience also involves the activation of sensory perceptions like smells and hearing. This suggests that acts of remembering are an embodied experience that connects people to more personal and intimate spaces. At a cognitive level they describe having the ability of rejecting some memories and choosing others. However, there seem to be some memories that impose themselves on the participants. They all agreed that during the exercise they were quite aware, involved, and in control of the experience. The specific content and quality of the memories recalled seem to reproduce specific aspects of their relationship with their parents or relatives. In most of the experiences, the object, person, or place evoked is related to their childhood and in some cases to what seems like unresolved aspects of their relationships with their parents. It appears that these unresolved feelings are linked to people, situations, and events that were caused as a result of the coup d’État, and not necessarily to the coup itself. In the case of Alexandra and Juan Carlos, the object they recalled connects them personally to their parents through time. Both objects, the cassette and the manta, are material objects that even though they do not have with them in the present, the act of recalling them is charged with meaning and symbolism. In Vivi’s experience the memory of the green little dress takes her to a time when the break up of her parents ends up in the unwanted separation from her mother, family, and the place where she was born and the beginning of a new life in Chile that eventually confronted her with the loss of five members of her Chilean family. The little green dress could represent
aspects of her at the time, particularly the vulnerability, confusion, and sense of loss she experienced. In Daniela’s case her experience opens up to a number of unresolved feelings around his father’s death. There is a sense of resistance when confronted with the image that comes up for her, which also suggests some unresolved feelings, although she thinks she has reconciled with her father. The experience leaves some unanswered questions for her regarding the confusion experimented in this exercise and the sadness she experiences in relation to her friends’ pain.

In the case of Tamara and Kayito there is a clear need and desire to connect with their fathers through common shared physical spaces like the university campus for Tamara, and the streets of Santiago for Kayito. Both of them report feeling a number of physical sensations such as warmth, closeness, and feeling accepted and welcomed in these spaces and in the presence of their fathers. Furthermore, this need to connect, to get to know, and to be close to their fathers leads them to choose the same profession their fathers had. For Pablo, the house represents the essence of his childhood experiences, both the happy normal life prior to the coup, and the desolation experienced after this event. Lalo has a very sensory experience with his grandfather, the paternal figure that represented the most important person in his life after the disappearance of his father. He was the person who gave him love, friendship, and made him happy in spite of the disruption in the family life caused by the coup. The profound sadness and sense of loss becomes evident in him when he remembers his grandpa, which suggests some unresolved grief in the present.

After the memory container exercise, participants where asked to position themselves in a timeline that had different dates drawn on a long piece of paper with the purpose of providing a time reference to their stories. It was from that space that they read their stories. During the second part of the exercise they glued the sheet of paper where they wrote their stories onto the
timeline and they represented their stories by writing, painting, drawing, or simply decorating the timeline. The following section is an analysis of the debriefing section that followed this experience.

The “historical continuum exercise” provided the emotional space for processing the images and memories experienced during the memory container exercise. Initially the participants felt intimidated by the perspective of painting or drawing their stories. However, after a while, all of them participated in the exercise, which was described as a relaxing and enjoyable experience. The historical timeline or continuum shows their individual stories in a graphical way. While most of them chose to represent the same story by drawing distinctive elements, symbols, or feelings, Pablo decided to construct a communal narrative by putting together the objects or elements that best described the individual stories of his peers. He painted Vivi wearing her little green dress, Alexandra’s purple cassette, a chakana, which is a Mapuche symbol of the earth, to honor Juan Carlos’s ancestry, the frame of the eyeglasses of Lalo’s grandfather, a red teardrop to represent Daniela’s sadness, his dog Luchin, and Kayito’s paint brush. At the centre there is a big image of an eye that has thin lines that expand throughout his composition, which seems to reflect his capacity to observe others. The group story is framed by drawings of buildings that enclose it, which represent the urban context in which the individual stories take place. The buildings also provide a sense of protection to the characters involved in this group narrative. It is interesting to see how all of the individual stories connect and intersect each other, proving a sense of community and continuity in time, while at the same time representing the cyclical nature of life represented by a pregnant woman, children, flowers, older people, and death.
The Right to Remember and to Forget

The analysis shows that the timeline exercise produced a strong sense of connection to everybody else’s experience, both when they were working on it and after seeing all the personal stories graphically portrayed in the timeline. This connection is also expressed as a sense of belonging to a larger narrative made up by all of their stories as Tamara explains:

I identified myself with each of the drawings that everybody did, aside from mine, I didn’t have any expectations, I am also very bad at drawing, but, looking at the other drawings made me feel like it’s my own story, beyond concrete facts, but the whole story is connected, the colors, the shape that is taking to express our lives, the themes of childhood are mine, there is nothing that is not mine here (Tamara).

This sense of connection also allows them to identify individual characteristics or elements that are very specific and defining of each one of them such as Juan Carlos’s poetry, or Kayito’s artistic talents. They also identify a sense of “life”, “hope” and “happiness” expressed by the colors, shapes, and by the images of children and flowers used to decorate the timeline.

However, the representation of mostly painful or sad moments moved the analysis to the decisions everybody makes in terms to what to remember and why. In this regard they comment that sometimes they refrain themselves from talking about certain things in order to protect their friends from pain and sadness:

...I hate that people have to remember their fathers in the cruelest periods of their lives, it’s like we have to suffer... I don’t like that people have to remember precisely painful situations and not happy situations, more about life... I would like that everybody could remember fun things, not only how they kidnap their parents, or how it affects them, I feel sad to talk about it... (Pablo).

This statement not only reveals what would seem like tiredness about dwelling on the same topics, but also much deeper feelings about the issue like perhaps an uncovered sense of guilt about hurting his friends, or a form of protecting himself from connecting with his own pain. Strongly linked to the need to remember expressed by some participants is the right to
Some participants experience a sense of social and moral obligation to constantly talk about past issues, particularly those related to the most painful aspects of their personal lives or those related to their parents' executions or torture. They agreed that in general when they meet there is always a tendency to go over the same details about the places where their fathers were detained, or other similar information. This is also compounded by the public discourse of some of the human rights organizations that focus their claims on a political identity of the disappeared and executed people, therefore as "children of..." they feel that sometimes they have to remember their parents to fulfill other people's expectations, as Pablo puts it:

...the only thing I am trying to say is that sometimes one feels like an obligation, it's like an obligation, I mean, it's like you resort to the sad stories of what happened, it's like an obligation... I mean they always talk about the disappeared that were in Londres 38, that were in Villa Grimaldi, and if it's not that discourse, is the one about they were fighters and this and that, but at the end you end up with a feeling that they were not normal, they were not like us (Pablo).

The influence of these public discourses on their personal lives is questioned by most of the participants, first because there is an unspoken expectation that they would share personal traumatic experiences, and second because it affects them directly by producing or exacerbating the fractures in their memories, thus contributing to a dual public/private discourse. As identified by Pablo some of them feel that this political image as fighters and heroes ends up removing them from the more personal or "normal" image or experience they, as their children, have or would like to have of their parents. In this regard they asked themselves who is responsible for vindicating them?

The contradiction they feel about their right to remember or forget certain memories takes us back to the issue of their social responsibility in vindicating their parents. In this regard there seems to be different positions about the issue: some see this responsibility as part of the

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3 Given the importance of this concept in the context of the study it will be explored in more detail in the discussion chapter.
role they have taken, that leads them to an almost mechanical response or tendency to vindicate the history of their parents' generations in almost every situation. Others feel they want to transform remembering into a practice that could also include beautiful moments so as to have some balance in the way they experience their parents. Yet, another group believes that dealing with painful memories is part of a growing process that implies that when certain issues appear, it is better to deal with them so that you can move to another stage. However, the exploration of their role in vindicating their parents opens up another layer of their emotional experience, as Alexandra explains:

...I also feel that deep inside one is also a bit of a prisoner of history, because if you asked me about my childhood memories, I had a great time, I'll say, I lived in France and I had a 5,000 meter yard for myself and my cousins, I mean my grandmother gave us whatever we wanted, I mean my childhood memories are wonderful. But when you process that as a grown up, it's like you are a prisoner of that stuff, I mean I can't take my mom out of my story... (Alexandra).

This passage clearly takes us to a much deeper level of her experience and her relationship with her mother. It shows a personal dislike of the fact that her mother's image is trapped in the public domain. It seems that in a way she would like to take her mother out of history so she could be free as well. She identifies that it was not only her mother who was affected and eventually killed, but that she is also permanently chained to this prison she has identified. This narrative symbolizes what others have also begun to identify as the prison in which they live, which may be interpreted as an extension of the prison their parents where in, implying that their lives have become an extension of their parents imprisonment. This interpretation would also explain their difficulty in grieving their losses in different ways.

The Quality of Memories

Moving into a deeper level of the analysis we find that there are different positions in terms of what they perceive as the quality of their memories. This is expressed in terms of the ability to remember their parents in relation to the time they spent with them. Some of them have
only flashes of memories while others have full memories of living with them. These feelings are expressed in Lalo’s words:

...I mean, most of us here didn’t have the possibility of seeing, of living with their fathers, while Kayito did have that possibility, she remembers her father, Daniela barely remembers her father, she remembers having walked with him and that, and us, I mean Pablo and Juan Carlos didn’t (Lalo).

This passage shows the difference they make in terms of the time spent with their fathers and the quality of their memories. And it is precisely the quality of their individual memories that they try to understand. For some there seems to be a strong relationship between the lengths of time they spend with their fathers and their ability to remember them. However, this is also mediated by personal circumstances and feelings:

...but there is a mark or there is a sensation of abandonment also, that is related with the actions of our parents, and that relates with what really happens to us, I mean there is abandonment, even though it might not be intentional, and all that generates sadness, and it’s unavoidable, I mean I can think of myself as a happy little girl, and remember my childhood, and my grandparents and all what that meant, but it is always related to this nostalgia... (Tamara).

Tamara bring the analysis to another level by identifying that underneath her ability to remember there are emotions connected to the sense of abandonment she feels, and she wonders whether this might be associated to the fact that she only has flashes of memory, which makes it difficult for her to construct full memories of her father. Even though the quality of memories or the lack of memories is an important factor in having an image of their fathers, to hear others talking about their memories can affect them in two different ways. On one hand, it brings them closer to their losses, by reminding them of what they missed or did not have, which further complicates their grieving process. On the other hand, hearing their friends talking about their memories makes them happy as well, because it reminds them of other aspects of their childhoods and makes them want to know their fathers in other ways, like Pablo explains:

...I mean the song you sang (Alexandra) I found it beautiful, a very good memory, I don’t know, I would have liked to have, I don’t know a cassette, I don’t know his voice,
but those are good memories, you know what I mean, or when you realize, when you see your childhood or the childhood of other people, you get to know your parents from another perspective, not only from the sadness, the pain, the sad memory, I think memory also needs to have that space for remembering happy things (Pablo).

What I also identify here is a process of incorporating and homologizing their experiences through the experiences of others, perhaps in an attempt to fill in the gaps left by the lack of personal information about their parents received in their childhood. This can also be understood if we think of these stories as part of a meta narrative made up by their individual stories which is constantly shifting and adjusting as more information and experiences are being fed into this collective narrative.

The Role of Memory

As identified earlier, the need to know their disappeared or killed parent has been present throughout their lives. This desire includes knowing the tragic part of his/her life as well as the normal aspects. In their search they have resorted to different means like contacting the father’s friends, other political militants and classmates from high school. This is the case of Juan Carlos, who was 26 days old when they arrested his father, so he has no memories of him. In his case he opted for getting to know him by constructing an image of his father from other people’s memories and then finding himself in these narratives:

...I contacted his classmates from high school and they invited me for lunch... and when I came into the house, they were very touched because they said that I moved the hands like my father, and other things, that I had the same gestures and expressions, and they began talking that he also wrote poetry, that he liked very much to write poetry, he like very much poetry, then I realized that I began to know my father through other people, and many times I was getting to know him even by looking at myself in the mirror, I mean, beyond the physical things, I don’t know how to explain it, it’s like in a way you carry the genes of your parents, and through that I have been getting to know him, so for me it hasn’t been so tragic, although I do feel sad sometimes (Juan Carlos).

This passage shows how Juan Carlos decided to use memory as a tool to get information to fill those empty spaces about the life of his father by contacting friends, classmates, and other
political militants. He uses this information provided by other people’s memories to reconstruct the body of the absent father from his own body; looking for him in his own features, gestures and movements, furthermore, he also began to live or reproduce aspects of his father’s life though his own actions, which in the case of Juan Carlos is represented by his passion for writing poetry, but also his interest for social issues, theater, and the law. We also see a similar situation in the case of Tamara who studied pedagogy in Spanish like her father, or Kayito, who studied art and become a ceramist following her need to connect with her father through art.

The Workshops as a Place of Belonging

In this second workshop we begin to experience a sense of safety and belonging provided by the group experience, which also shows the ambivalence and invisibility some of them have felt in the past. This is captured in Tamara’s words:

…I have always had a dichotomy of belonging and not belonging... I have always felt outside, because of my experience, my history... and I feel that for the first time I feel part of something, in this construction, without resentment, without questionings or anything. For the first time I feel that there is a part of me that is here, including all of you, that there is a sense of belonging, a welcoming feeling that has been very nice, I have felt comfortable, I thought I was not going to be, when I first came I gave myself the possibility of not coming back, if I didn’t like it, and truly that hasn’t happened (Tamara).

By identifying a sense of belonging in constructing this group experience, she also makes explicit the ambivalence about belonging she has felt in the past due to her personal life story and the invisibility resulting from that dichotomy. This is a common experience among most of them and one of the factors that contributed to the creation of HIJOS. Her words also reflect the beginning of a sense of group cohesion.

Summary of Weaving our History: The Construction of Personal and Collective Memories

This chapter begins by describing the participants’ understanding of memory and resistance. They conceptualize memory as having a dual capacity of bringing up painful
memories that can be transformed by connecting them to their inner strength and existential meanings, by constructing identity and by providing a guide into the future. Resistance is also perceived as strongly connected to memory given that they share the same transformative characteristics that allow people to struggle and survive death, silence, and oblivion as well as everyday life issues. The following exercise, the “memory container”, introduces us to an embodied experience of remembering childhood memories through a guided imagery exercise. These powerful memories set up the context for the exploration of memory in the lives of the co-investigators as well as it introduces each one of them to the reader. Through this embodied experience we are able to identify that the act of remembering is mediated by the appearance of objects, places, people, and sensations that in turn, unchained a series of other memories, feelings, and sensations. This process also shows that while engaged in this exercise they were aware and in control of the experience. Each co-investigator’s memory unveiled some core experiences of their childhood that revealed some major life changes resulting from the coup d’état and the subsequent disappearance or death of parents and relatives. The meaning associated to these memories suggests that there are still some unresolved feelings or conflicts with their parents or other relatives involved. The exercise also identifies some of the participants’ resources and strategies used to connect with their parents in their adult life, while at the same time it uncovers an on-going symbolic relationship with their parents resulting from this need to know them at a more personal level.

The second exercise of this workshop, “the historical continuum”, graphically illustrates the construction of a group childhood meta narrative made up of the individual stories that has the power to help them connect with their own childhood experiences, but this time as part of a group experience as adults. These two exercises opened up a deeper space for reflection about the role of memory in their lives, the dichotomy between public and personal memories, and
confronting their feelings about the social responsibility of vindicating their parents. The analysis shows a personal conflict in terms of their right to choose the memories they want to remember. They identified a social pressure to remember and talk about specific events related to the death or disappearance of their parents, which is linked to their role in vindicating them. This pressure to remember is also influenced by the political discourse of the human rights organizations that have created a public image of the disappeared or executed parents as heroes, which helps to separate the participants from the real image or the personal truth about their parents they are looking for. This dichotomy is also lived as a symbolic prison in which they are trapped together with the image of their parents. This suggests that this imprisonment is experienced as an extension of the real experience lived by their parents. Therefore their confronting feelings could be interpreted as an attempt to rescue their parents, while also liberating themselves. Strongly linked to this right to remember is the desire showed by some participants in terms of including in this collective remembering process the memory of happy moments lived with their parents, so as to get them closer to the real human being behind the political image. This also suggests that there are other painful memories that are associated with their parents and that they try to avoid by attempting to exercise their right to remember what is less painful. However, this appears as a difficult task given that most of them do not have many positive real experiences with their parents to remember. This is also further complicated by the presence of some unresolved feelings, such as abandonment, that are linked to the political choices made by their parents. However, they identified some strategies to deal with this dilemma; one of them relates to the integration of others’ childhood memories as part of their collective memory. This strategy also allowed them to get closer to their parents by imagining what they would have been like in their role as parents. This also suggests a process of homologation of individual memories into a collective narrative of childhood. Another
participant developed a personal strategy by using the memories of friends and classmates of the father to construct an image and a memory of him and, based on that information, to look for traces of his father in his own body. The image of looking at themselves in the mirror clearly symbolizes this constant search for the absent father which also leads them to reproduce in their own lives some aspects or characteristics of the parents.

In this workshop we began to see a difference in the participants' willingness to embark on an emotional journey, which suggests that all of them are at different stages in their grieving processes. While women seem more comfortable expressing deeper feelings, most men remain at a more cognitive level. This might also be connected to the fact that the workshops are beginning to emerge as a space of safety and belonging.
CHAPTER 8: CONSTRUCTING THE POLITICAL SELF: THE BODY AS A SPACE OF RESISTANCE

In this chapter I present the analysis of the third workshop “Liberating Our Bodies”. I begin by outlining the objectives and describing the main exercises. I continue with an analysis of the participants’ experience and I finish with a summary of the findings.

Liberating our Bodies

The objective of this session was to set up the context for the exploration of the concept of resistance from an embodied perspective, which included connecting with their own bodies and the bodies of the other participants through a series of games and exercises. The workshop began with some individual, pair, and group exercises and continued with an imagery exercise where they were asked to search for an image that represented resistance for them. This could be taken from their own embodied experience or something they had witnessed or watched on television. Then we moved into the main exercise called ‘the sculptor and clay’. This is a paired exercise where one participant, the sculptor, represents the image of resistance using the clay, which represents the other person’s body. This exercise is meant to be done in silence, therefore the sculptor shows with his/her own body what he/she wants the clay to do, or moves the body of the clay. The sculpture then comes to life and acts out what he/she thinks the image of the sculptor is representing, based on their bodily understanding of it. Then, both clay and sculptor debrief the experience and then switch roles. After this exercise was completed the participants who played the sculpture in the first round were asked to form a line and the rest of the participants analyzed the sculptures, then they switched roles. In the final group exercise all of them were asked to play the statue and to construct a group sculpture to represent collective resistance. After they found their place in this collective piece, they were asked to make a sound associated to the image they were portraying.
The analysis of the material shows a shift in their understanding perception of their concept of resistance from the first workshop. This move is characterized by a better understanding of their embodied awareness, the construction of resistance practices in their lives, the influence of social practices of resistance, the role of resistance in their lives, and the strong connection between memory and resistance. The analysis is centered on their understanding at the individual and collective level.

**Individual Level**

The sculptures they made in pairs with the body of their partners allowed them to look at their own understanding of resistance by reflecting on what they had constructed. The analysis shows that the concept of resistance represents their lives since a very early age, although at that time, it was not understood as resistance, rather it was experienced as a form of emotional containment or protection in some cases; or belonging to a collective in others. In the case of Alexandra for example, she used Juan Carlos’ body to represent an image of a person contained, with the shoulders raised up to the chin, the fists tightly closed, the body rigid, and a fearful look in his face. After reflecting on the sculpture she commented:

...deep inside is an image that I carry all my life, and that I have always questioned, and well everything we have done in the workshops and what we have talked about memory and resistance, it’s beginning to come up little by little, and really it’s my first form of resistance, so it’s difficult, it’s not easy because it brings up other memories (Alexandra).

Juan Carlos commented that by representing this position he felt distressed, overwhelmed, and completely tense even though he was not feeling like that before, he thought that adopting that position led him to feel those emotions. In this experience we identify a physical position of emotional containment that was the first form of resistance she developed as a child to confront her fear and pain. The power of this image also made some of the other participants connect with the same or similar body postures that they developed in childhood as a form of emotional protection or containment. Another interesting experience was the image that
Kayito visualized in the first part of the exercise. It represented a woman standing with her left fist up high in a fighting position. The image that she saw in many paintings and pictures became the icon of solidarity that surrounded her childhood, and that she internalized as belonging and protection. These two examples reflect how the experience of resistance is an embodied construction that developed in childhood: one of them as a form of embodied emotional protection and the other as a result of internalizing a bodily image that was then interpreted as solidarity. The analysis of individual resistance allowed participants to explore their own forms of resistance. This examination demonstrated that most of them developed different forms of emotional resistance throughout their lives. For some, the expression of feelings became a form of resistance to deal with the overwhelming external situation:

What I represented, or tried to represent was something that deep inside, I think everybody has experienced, and that is the desperation and crying that at some point we have all lived, I guess each one in their own isolation, and it is a form of resistance, I think they are forms of protection that we are all using so as to resist a lot of things (David).

Nevertheless, this form of resistance also has an opposite represented by a conscious attempt to control and manage emotions, particularly in public, as a form of protection which is equated to resistance. This strategy is perceived as a technique that one develops with an objective in mind as Alexandra explains:

To exercise some form of control or to want to control in any way an emotion is also protection... because deep inside we have all gone through a process to control pain, sadness, memories, I don’t know, and that is also a technique... so I feel that control is indeed a form of protection (Alexandra).

The development of techniques of emotional resistance has taken others to manage and control their bodily energies through yoga or Tai Chi techniques, which is also a more spiritual and mystical form of understanding and experiencing emotional resistance:

... regarding my sculpture, I think it has nothing to do with any of the things that have been mentioned here, it is neither to punch, nor to endure, it’s more related with a form of
resistance that I have been developing in the last time. It’s not related to childhood, it’s not related to pain, or maybe in some way, but it does have to do with something more mystical, more related with Tai Chi, I mean that capacity to control energy without damaging someone, and also not allowing others to hurt you (Juan Carlos).

Juan Carlos’ narrative illustrates the variety of techniques developed individually to resist. In his case he also explained that he opted for turning into himself by searching the inner energies that he identified as an inner motor. Still others have developed what they defined as ‘life attitudes’ to confront and resist external events. These attitudes involved evaluating current situations based on previous experiences and choosing the alternative that represented the least painful option. They were also related to how they positioned themselves in the present and the value they assigned to their previous life experience. What we see in this analysis is that all of them have developed different techniques or strategies to deal with different unwanted emotions, which is also related to a sense of having control as adults of external factors that they could not control when they were children. This also suggests a shift and adjustment in the way they have been applying these techniques as they grow up and new challenges that appear in their lives.

**Collective Level**

At a collective level the analysis shows that their understanding of the meaning of resistance is divided into three categories: political resistance, physical resistance, and symbolic resistance. This classification derives from their own reflections resulting from the construction of the individual and the group sculptures.

**Political Resistance**

This type of collective resistance was associated with the work of human rights organizations in denouncing the violation of human rights. It is also linked to the work of community-based organizations and clandestine resistance movements during the dictatorship. Participants found that the images that represent this form of resistance appeared immediately in
the visualization exercise, however they found it difficult to represent those images with the
body of their partner because they are more symbolic than anything else, like Beto explains:

I had this, that was the first thing that came to my mind, but truly like without any object,
it didn’t have any meaning, without context or place, I mean, they were these old women
from the Association of Political Executed, that went to stand in front of La Moneda,
wrapped in the national flag, and my grandmother was among them... so how do I
represent that now? (Beto)

This participant clearly identifies the political work of women as a symbol of resistance
since the beginning of the dictatorship given that their public work became the most influencing
form of collective resistance, which also set the standards of what would developed into different
physical forms of memory and resistance.

Physical Resistance

This type of resistance appeared as the most frequent form of opposition in the images as
well as in the sculptures, particularly of the male participants. In this category we find physical
or armed resistance as a way of fighting the military or as a way of protecting the population.
These images came from their own personal experiences as witnesses of situations where people,
often men, opposed armed or physical resistance to the violence of the military. These images
are of men shooting or fist fighting. What is important to note here is that by reflecting on these
images participants connected with an emotional sense of feeling protected and cared for by
anonymous members of the collective. Another strong representation of physical resistance was
the image of Sebastian Acevedo, a father who set fire to his own body in an attempt to demand
to know the whereabouts of his son and daughter who had been detained by the military:

...It came to my mind something that I have never seen, I don’t know it, which is when
Sebastian Acevedo burnt himself, I have never seen it, I know there are pictures... But it
came this image of resistance... it has to do with the fact that it always impressed me
what he was able to do, and suddenly we place that in the context of what we do with our
bodies in order to protect ourselves from danger... and for me this is also a form of
resistance that someone chooses when there is no other possibility to do anything, but
just put their bodies as a protest... I tried to represent that with the sculpture but at the
end the only thing that I represented was just the pain, and besides how do you represent
someone who is burning? So I tried to represent the flame, like the expression, like the pain he felt in that moment when he was burning (Pablo).

This dramatic passage reflects the strong influence of this event in the collective consciousness of people. It also reveals the deep connections between the body and painful forms of martyrdom that are also part of our cultural catholic heritage. This particular event reveals a number of contradictions among the co-investigators in relation to immolation as a form of resistance. On one hand, this act is identified as having a strong meaning on the collective imaginary as the ultimate form of resistance, which is perceived as a legacy to the other generations. But on the other hand it highlights the contradiction of dying in order to save or protect lives, which is in many ways similar to the official discourse of the dictatorship in relation to their martyrs that died protecting the country.

**Symbolic Resistance**

The impact of the act of Sebastian Acevedo is also represented by the actions of the Sebastian Acevedo Anti-torture Movement. This group had organized as a peaceful alternative to denounce torture months before his death and decided to take his name as a symbol of his sacrifice. Their actions were inspired by Gandhi's non-violent movement and involved the presence of many people in public spaces such as torture centers reading public declarations or informing the pedestrians that people were being tortured in those places. Tamara chose to represent this image given the collective symbolism of these actions. Participants also identified other forms of collective resistance that involved objects as a symbol of this concept. This is the case of Daniela:

I imagine an act of resistance, but different, at the end I opted for a bouquet of flowers, it was like something that didn't represent resistance per se, but that was like a projection (Daniela).

In this case we see that resistance can also be symbolized through other objects that are connected to more abstract symbolism. The flower for her is the way to represent life and the
cycles of life that in their circular nature connects to the past present and future, thus incorporating the past generations who are dead, the present, and the future generations. In this sense resistance is conceived as a value or experience that is also transmitted to the children of future generations.

In this session the co-investigators discovered different forms of resistance that began from the emotional resistance developed from childhood to the more physical resistance used in the collective to fight the dictatorship. These two forms are identified as serving different purposes: the emotional aims at providing an inner containment and protection, while the physical one is connected to protecting their bodies or protecting somebody else’s body. This exploration also shows that within the collective there were different forms of resistance – political and armed, physical and symbolical – that were used by different segments of the population, at different times during the dictatorship, but all having the same common objectives to fight and denounce the abuses of human rights. What becomes evident is that all these collective forms created a symbolic structure that serves different purposes. First they provided an emotional sense of feeling protected or cared for by the collective; second they provided a number of strategies that were then replicated by other sectors of society in different parts of the country; and third, they were symbolically integrated as a collective legacy to be transmitted across generations. Furthermore, resistance was conceptualized as a response, whether physical or emotional, to the prevailing violence and is represented as a dichotomy between “to fight or to endure”. In addition, they identified gender differences in the collective forms of resistance. In this regard women are seen as the initiators of a resistance movement through their political actions, the development of handicrafts (arpilleras) workshops, and the creation of spaces for reflection and emotional support, whereas the men are perceived as resisting in more physical ways or involved in the armed struggle.
The exercises themselves provided some other interesting information. The individual sculptures made in pairs illustrated that resistance was a process where one moves from an embodied individual experience in order to become part of a collective. This is evidenced by the initial hesitation to develop, control, and recognize their own body, before moving into using the partner’s body as a symbol of resistance and also by the ambivalent and uncoordinated individual sculptures. However, the individual sculptures acquired real power when they were part of the group structure, particularly after they came to life through movements and noises, which gave us the possibility to appreciate the emotional and physical resistance. The collective sculpture also showed that acts of resistance and protection were reproduced in any context and time. An example of this is that while arranging the sculptures for this exercise the participants protected each other’s bodies from some invisible danger. In addition, there were some clear indications that there were gender differences in the way men and women experienced and represented resistance. Women in general chose images of protection, like inner containment, protecting others, or a flower to symbolize life, while men used images of physical fight or expressions of pain. This workshop experience also demonstrated that we could understand resistance as one long history of individual acts that merged into a collective narrative.

The final part of the debriefing of this workshop brought up some interesting issues. One of them related to the fact that they have felt a need to share these experiences with their friends and acquaintances, however, they have found themselves feeling isolated from other people because of the nature of their life experiences. This was represented in their friends changing the subject, avoiding certain topics, or simply telling them that they did not want to talk about that. This experience was shared by all of the participants who have felt this isolation constantly during their lives. They identified this as a big obstacle in allowing them to discuss these issues openly in society. They interpreted this as an effect of impunity and the lack of concern of the
government in establishing the mechanisms to validate individual experiences within the collective. However, they have begun to live an opposite experience in the workshops provided by what Pablo identify as “ludic ways of exploring memory and resistance”. In this regard Pablo comments that:

I mean one talks about these topics, and in some instance we laugh and I talk about my father, but I had never had a space like this, that is a space, I mean I can talk in front of 5.000 and I don’t get nervous, but sometimes to make a movement, I get really shy, I have always been shy since school, in fact to paint, I never painted, I never painted... But it has to do with the space which is totally different, even though we knew each other, but to play, to do these things that I have never done before... it’s like going back to kindergarten, because it’s like you feel shy at the beginning, but then you relax...(Pablo)

His comments show the beginning of a sense of comfort and safety in the emotional space provided by the workshops. Other co-investigators identified their need to spend more time with each other and to begin planning actions using these new experiences and knowledge. This positive evaluation of the workshops experience reveals the development of a supportive environment where they feel they can express themselves.

**Summary of Constructing the Political Self: The Body as a Space of Resistance**

In this chapter I have presented the analysis of the third workshop “Liberating our bodies”. In this session we used a mixture of imagery exercises and techniques from Theater of the Oppressed to explore the individual and collective embodied experience of resistance. The analysis demonstrates that resistance is a process that develops early in childhood as a form of emotional protection from external events. This understanding of the different meanings of resistance emerged from reconstructing a physical position that brought memories of that time and by remembering images associated to bodily postures that conveyed a sense of solidarity and protection by the collective. These early concepts of understanding individual resistance also seem to change throughout time to deal and manage different external situations. Some of the emotional forms of resistance include: expressing painful feelings such as impotence, rage, or
sadness by crying alone; withdrawing physically and emotionally so as to control feelings; developing more spiritual body techniques such as yoga or Tai Chi; and developing specific protective life attitudes based on previous experiences. At the collective level there are three types of collective resistance: political resistance, represented by the actions of human rights organizations, community-based organizations, and armed movements; physical resistance, expressed by armed or physical actions aimed at protecting people or denouncing abuses; and symbolic resistance, represented by symbols of life and re-birth like flowers. It is evidenced in the analysis that resistance is understood as a response to violence when there are only two options: to fight or to endure. In addition, resistance is conceptualized as a process that begins as an individual response to traumatic external events and then turns into a collective narrative made up of the emotional and embodied experiences of each other. We see in this workshop, as well as in the previous ones, a willingness to participate and learn from the experiences, which is also manifested by the closeness the co-researchers are feeling for each other and the incipient desire to transform these new knowledges into concrete actions. Finally participants began to identify the therapeutic value of the workshops by expressing the trust and emotional safety they feel and how it allows them to express their feelings. Likewise some of them have never had the opportunity to express themselves through artistic expressions, therefore they identified these techniques as an interesting way to open up to remembering and exploring past experiences.
CHAPTER 9: TRANSFORMING THE MEANING OF OUR BODIES BY
EXTERNALIZING MEMORY AND RESISTANCE

FIRST PART

In the following chapters I offer the results of workshops four and five “Memorializing Our Bodies”. In the first part I present the analysis of each co-investigator’s body collage in separate sections. Each section contains pictures of the body collage, a short autobiography written by the co-investigator, and my analysis of the image that was previously validated by the participant. In the second section I offer an interpretation of the process of constructing memory and resistance, a description of the participants’ emotional experience through this process, a general interpretation of the body collages, the therapeutic values of the experience, and a summary of the chapter.

Memorializing Our Bodies

The objective of these workshops was to create a narrative using the concepts of memory and resistance by constructing a human figure using collage techniques. The assumptions guiding these workshops were that: (a) people create new meanings by reconstructing their life stories, (b) by externalizing memories they become part of the social, thus transforming themselves into an object that can be explored and transformed by the participants, and (c) art allows us to get in contact with our feelings within the boundaries of our own created safety.

Prior to these workshops I gave the participants disposable cameras to take pictures of objects, places, or people that represented memory for them. Then I developed the pictures and I had them ready for the participants to use the day of the workshops. I also provided them with a series of materials to construct their collage such as old magazines, paint, brushes, glue, dried flowers, ribbons, confetti, shells, sand, and fabric pieces. The instructions were to construct their
own narrative of memory and resistance. The results of this process are presented in the following pages.
Figure 1  
Tamara’s Body Collage
Tamara’s Story  

Sinister Filiation  

I was a little girl when the coup d’état happened, however I was able to retain in my memory the horror of those years. The military coup meant abrupt changes in my life; to witness home searches, the interruption of the school year, changes in my home, or to be temporarily left to the care of relatives, etc. Those were the first symptoms of a broken reality. My childhood world filled with ghosts, the feelings of rupture, loss, and insecurity inhabited with terror my night dreams.

I grew up knowing the truth, thinking about it with more imagination than memories. Obsessive in the exercise of memory chasing some answers to exorcise the sadness… Daughter, heir of the genocide violence, that order to erase every sign of my father, heir of the non-sense of the loss and the search of the neglected identity.

I had to learn to be silent, to refrain from telling anybody this tremendous secret. As years went by I learned the true meaning of the word ‘desaparecido’ and to accept the sinister filiation ‘daughter of a desparecido’. Social silence and the denial of reality turned into a heavy weight that the dictatorship offered me as a gift, and that I began to accommodate as I could. The need to recognize myself in my snatched father, transformed into urgency, moving through different stages throughout my childhood and adolescence. Socially marked by exclusion and living in a home crossed by tragedy I went looking for the omitted answers. There were periods of denial, sometimes I felt anger, not only about what historically happened, but also about his political option that cost him his life, a cause, that as a girl I could not totally comprehend.

The need to know how he was, what he did, did he look like me as a boy? What did he talk about? have led me to pursue every possible source of information, to scrutinize with anxious eyes the pictures hidden in the drawers, looking for similar features and celebrating with
joy every recurring gesture as the only form to recognize myself and to shout to the world, that through me, his daughter, he continues to be present.

I have slowly begun to reconcile with myself, by constructing from the fragments gathered of my history, a grand collective history. I have found myself by re-signifying the history of my father. I am ready to break the silence that dresses oblivion, in spite of those who believed and continue to believe that by killing, torturing, and disappearing, they could exterminate as well the thoughts and dreams of my father and so many others. Contrary to what the assassins attempted, the seed was planted against death and what is needed for life was fertilized. My father also inherited me his broken dreams, but as sub-commandant Marcos whispers in my ear, he also gave me the signs to join those dispersed fragments and, put together the jigsaw puzzle of the past, open a crack, draw a window and build a door.

In the required exercise of memory I have found my own face. That who is asking that we forget, is asking that we deny our own roots and that we become part of the conjuration of oblivion and a dis-memory of history. We must celebrate memory, not only as a recovery of the past, but also as a celebration of tomorrow. Because memory is not a sterile remembrance, but as it was [declared by ancestral cultures]: “is one of the seven guides that the human heart has to walk its steps. The other six are truth, shame, consequence, honesty, respect for oneself and others, and love”.

Interpretation of Tamara’s Body Collage

The richness of the images and the meaning found in the narrative of this image suggest an intense inner process, and a great commitment to a personal search, which is evidenced by her display of a great number of memories that reveal deep emotions and sensations with the purpose of understanding them and making them public as well. At the same time her process of
recovering and constructing memory is strongly linked to her personal story as her autobiography demonstrates.

The process of recovery of memory experienced by Tamara indicates an emotional search that begins in the present and moves back into the past. This process is marked by the awareness that even though the memories are still present they are experienced in a different way, although with the same intensity and pain as she explains:

"The truth is that to start looking for symbols of resistance and memory in the present meant at least for me, to have to look inside of me what of that it's still there right? And how is that idea still expressed, and it's really very strong, finally after I couldn't find anything, slowly, everything began to hurt me...and all the things that meant that. And now I tell you, with the pictures that we had to take, clearly it is expressed in different ways to what it was experienced before, but it is still present".

This process of putting her memories into the collage, meant at the same time a change in her understanding of memory and resistance as she tells us, "my sense of memory and resistance changed from what it was for my father, or for the fathers of my friends here, when I conceptualize it now. The symbols change obviously, new things appear obviously, things that have to do with what one is now."

By representing in images the concepts of memory and resistance she also had to re-think and to re-establish these concepts. "Let's see I looked, the pictures that I took first try to reflect, I mean, I looked for resistance, and memory now, in the current context, but I still had to use some clichés." Her initial notions of resistance were framed around more general ideas of what it meant, however by exploring these notions they translated into memories, actions, events, or more specific people. "So I started, I didn't know where, I mean every time I thought about a model of resistance, I thought of art, I don't know what, but then it began to open, it was a
number of things. The pictures of the Vergara brothers, the funerals of Rodrigo Rojas\footnote{The Vergara brothers are two young members of the MIR who were killed by the police during a mass protest. Rodrigo Rojas was the son of an exile who was burnt alive by the police while he was visiting Chile after a mass protest.} and some pictures of, well I took those at the last minute, since there are still some reminiscences of what constitute my personal memory and resistance now.”

In this process of expressing memory and resistance she had some discoveries connected to her emotional world and the relationship with her body: “I discovered that memory and resistance also have to do with my current state, or mentality, with my daughters. And then, well, with another friend, with the yoga issue, and well yoga is a form of therapy as well, and it is also a form of resistance, is body, so then we looked for some yoga positions, the ones that you see there, that are, that reflect resistance, they are positions of resistance.” We can see clearly that this new awareness takes her to understand yoga as an embodied form of resistance “…yoga is also, not only exercise, yoga has a philosophical side, that has to do with opening the chakras, to open the heart, and as a form of healing through the energies that flow there, everybody believes what they want to believe, but there is a body thing that has to do with resistance.”

This search for resistance symbols and her relation with her body leads her also to rediscover an image tattooed in her own body: “there is a picture of a torso there, it is a tattoo that I had done, it’s a dragon. And why did I put it?, because the dragon also means to grow from the earth towards spirituality, or towards the light, whichever way you want to look at it.”

As we can see this exploration of memory and resistance helped her to connect with her body through different forms of resistance that are more intimate and strongly related to her healing and spirituality.

Her search to understand resistance takes us to understand that she also links this concept to public figures and to an ideology of resistance during the dictatorship. “Well, I put Pepe
Carrasco up there (in the head). Pepe Carrasco⁵, because for me at least, he was an icon of resistance, he was a guide, truly transcendent for us. But, not only the issues of the violence of his death, but also the fact that he fought, and fought and he stayed until they killed him, the guy knew he was gonna get killed. I placed him in the head because there is a resistance, a strength that for me is transcendental.”

In this process of recovery and construction of memory and resistance Tamara uses this collage to map in her own body the emotions and meanings lived during the dictatorship. That is how she identifies the heart as an important place where the affects reside. “I started from the heart as part of my memory and resistance as a girl and with the pictures of my friends who are in the centre, and then I tried to find the images of the parents different from the ones commonly used... because it was a need as well, and there they are all our parents and the parents of some friends who are not here (workshops) and there are pictures of moms and dads, and there is Luciano, the son of Pepe Carrasco and different actions that we did during the hunger strike, the banners, and pictures, many of the pictures that I have.” It is interesting to see how she incorporates the pictures of the parents of her friends as part of the collective narrative that she is representing, but who are also part of her emotions. However her feelings of impotence and rage are located in the stomach: “…and well going down to the guts, with a more visceral feeling, there is anger. There are pictures of barricades, there are pictures of things from my childhood, that record of Victor Jara⁶ “I place in your open hands” that was in my house, it’s like a symbol, and well everything there has red paint on top, and like everything that was broken, what was covered with blood, and finished down there with some pictures of tortures, with some images of the repression.” What is powerful about the torso of the body collage is that it resembles an

⁵ Pepe Carrasco was a well-known journalist, the director of one of the opposition magazines who fought endlessly against censorship. He was killed by the military. His son Luciano, member of HIJOS, committed suicide in 2003.
⁶ Victor Jara is a famous Chilean composer and singer killed by the military.
injured body, however the legs are covered by flowers a possibility of movement, action, and change as well as a rebirth, which can also be symbolized as a form of resistance.

Within this map of emotions and meanings we find those more ideological or cognitive notions in the head. “Well towards the top I began to construct what is identity, in fact it changes colors and there are lots of things that remain in my head more than in my heart, because everything else is emotion, emotion, it’s guts, it’s anger, it’s a lot of things that are in red, but up on top there are the ideologies that remain. There is a picture of Che, another one of Victor Jara, there is a picture that I like of the armed Christ, that well I am not religious, but there is something that belongs to me in ideological terms. What else, a picture of the Zapatistas that currently make a lot of noise in ideological terms... so it is the ideological construction that I make, and there are flowers, there is a re-birth.” It is interesting to mention that Tamara identifies some of the icons of the generation of her parents, but most of the ideological symbols reflect her own ideological construction, which also suggests that there is an ‘ideological memory’ understood as a transmission of certain political ideals and values that have served as a form of resistance for the new generations.

Another characteristic of this collage that is particularly significant is the use of grass and roots in the feet. These elements clearly symbolize a profound sense of belonging to the land, which is also linked to her connection to the disappeared and those who died, transforming her feet in a tribute, almost like small cemeteries with tombstone that say, “there underneath the earth you are not dead brother, compañero”, or “If I am in your memory I am part of history.” Likewise in the right hand and arm point to the ground and written on the hand it says, “even if the steps touch this place a thousand years, they will not erase the blood of the ones who died here.” These statements undoubtedly reflect not only the symbolic character of the collage, but also her commitment to representing memory through her own body. Besides there is a clear
insinuation to the emotional and symbolic need to bury the bodies of the disappeared, which would indicate her own unfinished grieving process, thus by constructing these mini tombstone she would be symbolically burying her father.

Tamara identifies that this process of construction and re-construction of memory and resistance was marked by physical sensations in both workshops: “today I was more relaxed, maybe this is to do with expressing more from my guts, while last week I felt nauseous, I was a bit sick while we were doing the workshop, but I tried to endure because I knew that it was emotional, so I said to myself breath deeply, I felt like leaving, but that, nothing terrible happened.” As she identifies, she relaxed when she was able to express deeper feelings connected with anger and rage, which would indicate some therapeutic benefits in identifying these connections.

Even though the process of collecting images had started years ago, it acquired a different value during the workshops: “And this recompilation of images has been growing over the years, but it never crossed my head to do something like this, I mean no, until I found myself last week looking for images, and today I did it with absolute concentration and I searched for the images that I liked the most, that had more meaning, and there is a recognition that the visual impacted me and in fact my memory is constructed by images and sounds, but also by more physical things that have to do with the senses, but it hadn’t materialized until today.”

This revelation confirms that the senses are intrinsically involved in the act of reconstructing memory, which is also connected with a number of emotions and feelings.

This body collage is exceptional in that it represents Tamara’s internal and external worlds. The figure is completely full of images and memories, suggesting that her internal world is plagued by the memory of people, anonymous heroes, places, dates, events, losses, sadness, pain, and death, which take over the external space to embody her inner world. By choosing to
represent in her own symbolic body the images of memory and resistance, she transforms this space into the social memory of a historical period and the collective experience of her particular generation. However, her most intimate, and personal family life (mother, husband, other relatives) is somewhat absent within this collective context. It is also interesting that within this collective narrative, so charged with pain, there are also very strong symbols of hope, re-birth, and resistance. It becomes clear from her strong commitment to fight for truth and justice through the act of remembering those who died. In addition her autobiography reveals aspects of her painful struggle since childhood to fight the invisibility that was imposed on her when her father was disappeared. This invisibility takes her to look for him in her own body as well as in the social space where he once lived. These profound feelings of being disappeared as well demonstrate not only the transgenerational transmission of trauma, but also the embodied character of memory and resistance.
Figure 2  
Juan Carlos’ Body Collage
Juan Carlos’s Story

I Was Born in Between Curfews

I was born in between curfews, in the days when the bodies of thousands of citizens sailed in pieces towards the sea in the Mapocho River. 1974, June 29th in Santiago, Chile, a Chile very different from the one we know today. It seems that I was born at night, that would explain my obsession for darkness, the occult, the alchemy of parallel worlds, of dark matter. My mother, nervous, was waiting on the stretcher in the cold San Juan de Dios Hospital in Matucana Avenue.

The next day my father arrived, and as a good actor he improvised his entrance, with the help of a doctor friend who worked in that hospital. A bouquet full of yellow roses (that my mother still remembers today), especially for his loved one (my mother), while he was dressed in a white coat, as if he was her family doctor. My father, he always knew how to manage in the best and worst moments.

After all I am his son, his only son. The perfect combination, synergy between an idealist rebel, the “black sheep” of an ambitious family, and a young woman who wasn’t afraid of life nor the tragic destiny that has taken us to an endless search for more than three decades. “You got involved with a shantytown Indian” said his own mother (my grandmother I supposed). Yes, my mother is Mapuche, not an Indian! Ignorant! And my father, a man who preferred death, before living on his knees and surrounded by “unconscious hypocrites”.

26 of July, 1974, almost a month after I was born in that cold hospital room in between curfews and the endless killings, but compensated by my mother’s love who fed me the sap of knowledge and my beautiful father who had me in his arms, proudly showing me to the world until that fatidic day, where he was snatched from our home for ever.
November 1977, after searching jails, clandestine detention centers, concentration camps, secret clinics of the government secret services and after the famous "legal protection recourses" that were never accepted by the law courts, we ended up traveling to the "Land of Tulips".

What beautiful memories I had of my childhood in that country, my second fatherland. It is there where I met my second and last opportunity of having a father. A wonderful man, full of life, hope, and a fighting spirit. But as we all know, "fairytales" only happen in the books, since it is the "Delphic Oracle" that always has the last word.

February 1989, the world changes, Chile as well (it was supposed to). My "daddy" apparently was the most distressed about "coming back" (he thought of himself as an exile, being a Hollander) to the "country of illusions", my mother and I were not distressed as much; I had a whole life ahead of me in those beautiful lands. And we came back, a bit distrustful, since we had to face that world that had taken away a piece of our souls.

February 12, 1990, as we feared, the dark force of destiny repeated the story once again "No I can't take it anymore! I said to myself. But, I had my blood siblings; they gave me back the desire to live again, and to my mother as well.

Today I think of everything I have lived in these 32 years of torments and happy moments. At some point I wanted to be born again, to start from scratch. And if it had been like that? No, I can't, it wouldn't be me. After all, I think it is the most beautiful life I had lived.

I think of my beautiful parents every single day of my existence and I think how fortunate I was and I am. Yes, I am proud of being the son of two rebel fathers and a mother, who in spite of everything still continues fighting and believing in those dreams of her youth, that for me after thirty years are still current and present in the consciousness of every free woman and man, who is not willing to be a slave of oppression. And because I know that my children would do the same, and they will also feel proud of their history, my history.
Interpretation of Juan Carlos’ Body Collage

As it is expressed in his autobiography Juan Carlos’s life has been marked by many loses, particularly the deaths of his father and later his stepfather. His body collage clearly represents the search for this paternal image through spirituality: “I mainly search for blue, simply because blue represents creativity, spirituality, like healing, and to some extent that blue, that blue body represents my father, it’s like I see him that way, like something celestial, it’s not like he is a God, but something celestial, something spiritual, and at the same time it represents me... I mean to reach that spiritual peace”.

The memory symbols he uses are very well chosen and symbolize very specific aspects of his memory and resistance, such as the colors of the flag of Holland, where he lived when he and his mother went into exile until he was fifteen. There are also some elements of his Mapuche ancestry, such as the Trarilonco in the head, a book about the Mapudungun, the language spoken by the Mapuche people, and a picture of his father wearing a Mapuche manta. This picture is of great significance for him since it is a montage of a drawing that an artist made of the manta to represent how he would have looked like the day he was taken away wearing that manta. The reconstruction of this picture not only shows his need to connect with the physical representation of his father, but also with the last minutes he spent in his home before he was seen for the last time.

The political militancy of his father is also represented in the use of red and black, the colors of the MIR. There are also pictures that represent the energetic balance in Tai Chi and that he interprets as a form of resistance. These pictures are lined up following the location of the different energy chakras in the body. There is a clear spiritual proposal in his work that also includes spiritual healing, strength, the divine, and the ancestral in the way he conceptualizes

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7 The Mapuche people are one of the First Nations of Chile.
memory and resistance and in the colors he uses. The affects are located in the chest area and in
the heart and are represented by pictures of the father, Darth Vader, and places of memory.
These pictures show a room which is also linked to his father’s last day with him: “That room, I
sleep in that room, that is my bedroom, but that room has a lot of meaning, because in that room
was my father, he was sick when they took him away, he was in bed, and in fact my mom and dad
lived in that room, and they took him from there, and my grandfather also died in that room, so it
has a lot of meaning, so that’s why I put it there, in the middle near the heart”. There is also a
picture of Darth Vader, the character from Star Wars, next to the picture of his father because of
the meaning this character had when he was growing up: “In the 1980’s I was a fan of Star Wars
and when they released part three, I was one of the first to go to the cinema, and there is
something kind of funny, but that at the same time marked me profoundly when I was a kid, and
is that when Lord Vader is about to take off his mask and said I AM YOUR FATHER”. This
experience as a child clearly shows the life-long search for his father that has also been an
integral part of the construction of his identity as well as his inner world. It is not surprising then,
that this scene would connect him with the excitement of meeting his father in a more real way.

Books are particularly important for him, therefore he puts pictures of two of the books
that have influenced him the most in his hands. The books he chooses to express the value of
literature also have strong cultural and political values. “A Man” by Oriana Fallaci narrates the
life of a mystical character of the Greek resistance movement, while “The Language of my
Land” about the Mapuche culture, is the first book he reads in Holland and that connects him
with his cultural roots.

In relation to the physical experience of engaging in this process he comments that, “no I
didn’t have stomach pain, but there are conflictive feelings, I don’t know, because there are
moments that, as you look at the pictures or as you are making the cycles, the drawings, the
colors, it’s like new memories appear, and those memories sometimes are happy, but at the same
time they are contradictory ... so I don’t have a stomach ache, I don’t have a headache, but I
feel a bit light”. We also see that as he reconstructed his memory, he was confronted by different
feelings associated to the specific aspects of the work he was doing, but they also changed as he
moved in the process, thus emphasizing the evolving nature of the remembering process. In this
regard he also comments that as a child it was very difficult to understand the role of memory,
given that he did not have any memories of his father, so in his construction he used what other
people told him and this was confusing while producing emotional blocks when he began to
understand what really happened. He explains: “you begin to see, that when they broke into the
house, and took him away, surrounded...it is a memory that was incorporated here, it’s like a
memory, but not a memory that I experienced, I mean that I wasn’t there at the time, but it was
throughout time that I began to incorporate it, although I was 26 days old and my mom always
tells me that my dad had me in his arms when they took him”.

In this work Juan Carlos uses this collage to represent the fusion of his own identity
materialized in the bodily image of his father through a mixture of symbols of his absent father
and his own representations of this spiritual connection. Therefore, the icons he chose to
represent memory and resistance are strongly related to himself, his father, and the cultural
identity he has developed, which suggest a process of introspection rather than a search for
external or social symbols. Instead he looks for the meaning of his life experiences in the mystic,
and the spiritual realms. From this perspective there is a clear idealization of the father as a
mystical figure, which also connects him with healing through spirituality. It becomes evident
that the narrative that he presents is related to the public image that the participant has
constructed of his father as a mystical, spiritual, and revolutionary symbol. However, the most
personal aspects of his life are absent from this public discourse. It is worthwhile mentioning that
Juan Carlos lived most of his childhood and adolescence in exile, removed in many ways from the political process that took place in Chile during the dictatorship. Therefore it is not surprising that he constructed this identity and ideology out of the few symbols that were available to him in Holland. This process opens up a difficult experience of the exiles for whom memory was constructed, re-constructed, and maintained through the solidarity movements that developed in different countries, which also makes it even more difficult to access any personal information about particular people like the father in the case of Juan Carlos. This suggests a different process of memory and resistance for those children who lived in exile. However, there are also some similarities like the need to respond to inquiries about the fate of his father. Like other participants as a child, he also invented stories about his father’s whereabouts to avoid being questioned and having to give explanations. Strongly linked to this is the constant feeling of uncertainty experienced throughout his life about the explanations provided by the authorities: “It has to be legally proved, let’s say it is not enough that they say that he was thrown to the ocean, because you are always going to be unsure. I have a fantasy that maybe he was clandestine all these years and he didn’t communicate with us because of security reasons, and all of the sudden I find him. And until today, until today I do that, I imagine how it would be to run into him”. This need to know his father through other means leads him to look for him in other places like books, movies, or through other people, but also through the stories of his family members. Juan Carlos’ mother has been very important in this regard. Through her narratives, he has been able to get to know him in many different ways. At the beginning she gave him a more idealized vision of him from a political perspective, but as time went by she began sharing more personal information such as the type of relationship they had, his values, etc. With time he was able to integrate this information, which allowed him to humanize the image of his father. In this process he has also resorted to different strategies: “There is a movie
that marked me a lot recently “motorcycle diaries” about Che, because I remember, eh, because of the things that they have told me... when he (his father) was in high school he joined a theatre group and through art he became more sensible about the social reality around him, about poverty. So when I saw this movie. I saw my dad, and I said there is Che, a medicine student, with a friend, traveling around the world and he began to open his eyes. And I began to feel, I mean I felt even what the character felt, and I saw, through him I saw my father and how my father became more socially aware, and that must have happened to many revolutionaries... so there is something there, I make a combination between what I personally perceive and political memory, and how it is constructed”. As we see in this example he has used the political memory surrounding his father’s life to help him learn or imagine what his father’s experience was in the process of becoming politically conscious and active, thus filling those gaps produced by the lack of personal experience and information. Furthermore, this process of humanizing his father has also meant to rethink his ideological relationship with his father. In that regard he has experienced some changes. For instance, Che Guevara, “well he was there because he was my dad’s idol, because he was my mom’s idol, because you kind of just followed, you were involved in that, but it was like almost unconscious. But what happened to me with the movie changed me, I discovered Che, because before he was part of the family culture, but then I re-discovered him, so he is no longer my parents idol, now I feel him as my own”. In this process he has also “humanized” other political figures or idols of his father by trying to understand them from a more personal lens, which has also allowed him to understand the human values behind these political ideologies. By imagining his father having these values, he is able to see him as part of the revolutionary movement in Angola or any other country, which at the same time has allowed him to understand the international solidarity movements. This connection with the importance of history in understanding social movements makes him assert that we are historical beings and
successors of a historical tradition and as such our responsibility is to transmit it to the new generations. In this regard he comments that the traditional method of teaching history to children in school does not allow them to feel part of history given that children are forced to memorize events and dates. He contrasts this method with the collective participatory method used by Mapuche people to transmit their past: “When you talk about the Mapuche history you narrate it as if it was happening in the moment, with details, so that it has an impact on children, that’s why people know about history because it has been transmitted orally, not though the books, so it’s like a family thing with emotion... In Mapuche culture there isn’t a sense of school, in the sense that there is a teacher who knows more, that is why it is circular, there is always somebody who knows more but it doesn’t mean that is superior, that is why the relationship is always in a circle around the fire, the ceremony, everything is like that. So when you talk about history, everybody there talks and contributes, so it’s like it stays with you”. He connects this cultural way of learning and transmitting history to his experience in HIJOS: “Sometimes we meet, and we remember, each one begins to talk about his father so it keeps memory alive, so history is a history alive, it’s not dead, so when they say eh our Mapuche people, that happened so many centuries ago, because they speak as if they were not living it now, because you perceive it as if you are living it now, besides that, our Mapuche ancestors are alive as well, always, always present, let’s say in the struggles, in the battles they fight alongside the people. So I take this to the context of our parents, they are here with us, in everyday life, when we are with, I don’t know our children, when we went to university, when we were militants, in the fight, whatever it is, here they are, always here, they are here”.

We see than in Juan Carlos’ experience he has resorted to his cultural background to support the construction of an image of his father. In this context we can infer that his father is conceived as part of his ancestry and therefore inhabits his world in the present. This could
explain to some degree his “fantasy” of running into him at any moment, which implies that he
experiences him as alive in some level because his cultural construction needs to be joined to
that presence that also does not allow this image to be destructed. On the other hand he presents
an interesting analysis of the group experience of HIJOS in constructing and maintaining the
memory of their parents through the exchange of personal stories that in turn build a group
narrative of HIJOS.
Figure 3

Alexandra’s Body Collage
Alexandra’s Story

I always knew that Chile would be my final destination. At 15 carrying some love aches and curiosity I met Santiago for the first time. A warm night of 1991. A Chile that had recently recovered democracy was waiting for my definite rupture of my wandering life. A strong land to recover my story.

My parents were MIR militants. They went into exile in Sweden after the coup d’état, together with my brother who had just turned one month old. Three years later I was born in Stockholm with the family decision already made to participate in the Plan Retorno (Return Plan). When I was nine months old I boarded my first plane heading for Cuba where my parents would prepare to return to Chile clandestinely and strongly follow their fight against the dictatorship. Of mutual accord they both decided to leave when I turned two years old. My paternal grandmother, Mutty, took us to Guatemala where she worked for the Organización Internacional del Trabajo, (OIT) International Labour Organization. In 1980 my father was arrested and his picture appeared on the cover of the most important Guatemalan newspaper of national circulation. That together with an incident where a truck with polarized windows intercepted us in the middle of the street catapulted the decision of emigrating again. Our destiny this time was across the Atlantic in Bordeaux, France, where an exiled brother of my father lived for some years.

I had a beautiful childhood. I grew up with my brother and my cousins in he middle of a gigantic French landowner’s house. My grandmother was my life emotional support and protected me as if I was her own daughter. I devoted myself to sports, soccer in particular. I ran all day as if I needed to find a final goal. They told me about Chile and its poverty. I received letters and leather things made by my father from his jail in Santiago.
In December 1982, Papa Noel brought home a present. Late at night, the doorbell of the apartment rang and with round eyes out of impression appeared in front of me, Piti, my mother. It was forbidden to mention that she was staying with me during those holidays. Although I have vague memories of that encounter that lasted a couple of weeks, I know that my mother went to say goodbye to me. The political circumstances made that I stopped seeing her when I was two, then I saw her one more time in Spain when I was about five and I didn't realized then that her body had already been tortured. Finally she would go back to Chile to work for all the children of the world. Lucia Orfilia Vergara Valenzuela was assassinated the 7th of September of 1983 in Fuenteovejuna Street in Santiago of Chile together with two other MIR compañeros. Her body was exhibited naked in front of everybody who was present with 64 bullet holes. Piti only wanted a better world, an imaginary collective where everybody would have the same possibilities. My mother is a Political Executed.

Three days later my father was expelled from Chile and went to meet us. New brothers appeared, a blood one and a soul one. And a new wonderful Cuban family when my father decided to stay in that country in 1987. Exile was not my option. It brought me beautiful life experiences, cultures, and personal development. But it also brought me exile and a story constructed like a jigsaw puzzle, an unfinished story. A stolen identity.

That night that I set foot in Santiago for the first time, I knew that I could only recover fragments of my story, of my assassinated mother, of my tortured father, of a broken Chile. But I gave thanks for being able to grow in this solid land, of kindness and miseries, to tell the world that our parents are present in the memory and in the resistance because thanks to them... I am alive.
Interpretation of Alexandra’s Body Collage

Alexandra’s collage focuses mostly on her memories of childhood and her inner world. The symbol of the mother represented by a big orange and yellow flower with the name Lucia in the centre occupies the central part of the torso, suggesting that Alexandra’s memory as well as her life is strongly influenced by her mother’s presence. Alexandra is also symbolized by a small picture below the flower where she appears as a little girl with her brother and a cousin. The rest of her immediate family – her brother, father, nephew, sister-in-law, and her grandmother – are also represented in a picture place on the heart. On the shoulder there is a picture of her, her brother, and a cousin facing an elephant taken at a zoo in Europe and right across it just below the throat there is picture of the Memorial of the Disappeared. The location of this second picture suggests that this issue might be something difficult to communicate given its strong emotional charge. The head is also covered by a layer of confetti, like in her brother David’s collage. The absence of other symbols might suggest a desire to avoid thinking about more intense issues or the fact that her life is not as strongly marked by the heaviness of traumatic experiences.

From the waist down there is a strong sense of movement and life represented by the ocean, the sand and the shells symbolizing groundings elements, but also the memories of her life in Cuba. Likewise the red color painted on the hands could symbolize action and movement in her life. However, the red hands could also be related to the horror she experienced as a little girl.

There is little influence of external symbols of memory and resistance in the way Alexandra constructed her narrative in the front of the collage. These two elements seem to be given by her childhood history, her family, and the meaning she has given to these concepts. In this sense, Alexandra combines elements of her past and the meaning they have in the present,
incorporating elements of her personal life in exile as well as the ideology of her parents represented by the image of Che Guevara.

Alexandra chose to represent aspects of her person as a teenager and in the present in the back of the collage. In this space she placed pictures of feminist rallies, of the disappeared, thus constructing a narrative about her own beliefs, ideology, and political actions. She also includes pictures that represent her interest, participation, and accomplishments in sports.

Alexandra’s narrative of herself incorporates some aspects of her childhood as well as her present life in a very controlled fashion, suggesting a difference between her personal and public discourse. Like her brother David, Alexandra does not include many symbols that represent the pain and traumatic experiences suffered as children. One of the few images that reflect her emotional world as a little girl is the picture of Juan Carlos representing her embodied sculpture of resistance as a child, constructed during workshop three. In her posture she expresses all the fear, stress and emotional containment she experienced as a little girl.

In general Alexandra’s collage tells a narrative about some personal aspects of her childhood, the influence of her mother as a mythical figure, her family, and her need for action and movement. These elements seem to be strongly connected to her sense of resistance facing life and facing her past.
Figure 4  Pablo’s Body Collage
Pablo’s Story

I was born in Santiago, on April 16, 1968. I am the oldest of three brothers. My mother’s name is Irene Peñailillo Nuñez and my father’s name is José Villagra Austidillo. I am the grandson of diversity – my grandmother’s mother was Mapuche and my paternal-grandfather’s father is of Vasque origin. By misfortune, I do not carry the Mapuche last name of Paillalef, nor the Vasque last name Vizcarra though I love them both.

I had the opportunity to study various courses and finally graduated as an Audio-visual Communicator. In addition, I have a degree in Social Communications and I am finishing my degree in Anthropology.

My parents met at their jobs, in a textile factory. My father was a labour leader and militant in the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). They married the same year that I was born. As militants, in 1969, my parents along with other community members founded Villa Francia, one of the most combative neighbourhoods in the struggle against the dictatorship.

On September 11, I was 5 years-old. To protect me, my father took me to my paternal grandmother’s house – my dear grandmother Maria Mercedes. She lived in the Recoleta community. That is where I lived the coup d’état. I have little memory of the events. The most significant memories are the sounds of the helicopters and planes that often flew in the sky. I also remember being locked-up in the house without being able to play. I remember my aunt Maruja, my father’s sister, asked some young military men to buy her some groceries to be able to eat.

Shortly after, I returned to my parents. I do not have much recollection of those days. Perhaps the most relevant was the curfew, when one had to return home early and during the night we could hear a lot of gunshot.
In 1974, my father left the country, as a request from his party. He was away for close to one month. He returned in June and one month later, on June 15 he was arrested from our home. It is very sad for me to tell the story of his arrest because I witnessed it. DINA agents (DINA was Pinochet’s secret police), came to my house pretending to be my father’s compañeros. My mother and my brothers had gone to pick me up at school. When we arrived, at around 4:30 pm, they were in my house. The agents waited until my father came home from school and took him away. So that we would not see what was happening, my mother had sent us to watch TV at a neighbour’s house, but since I have always been a bit stubborn, I stayed to play with my friends outside. At the moment that they took my father away, I appeared dressed-up as Zorro, with a cape and a wooden sword. My father picked-me up, kissed me and said good-bye. I remember very little and I have reconstructed this story with my mother’s recollection.

From that moment on things were not the same for all of us. We did not go into exile because my mother decided to look for my father day and night. There was a lot of fear. I could not speak about my father and what had happened because I ran the risk of being expelled from school. Sometimes I noticed people whispered about me and my family. Sometimes when we bickered with other children they used to call us “huachos” (orphans). That did not bother us because we knew we had a father and a mother but that did not stop us from striking back. My mother forged a strong will (spirit). Taught us not to cry or pity ourselves. But we could not avoid the suffering of our father’s absence.

The life we had to live, was sad not only was father disappeared but also his friends such as the Peraltas - childhood friends of my father’s family. They were uncle Claudio Silva Peralta and his father - uncle Fernando Silva. In 1985, Rafael Vergara, one of my childhood friends was also assassinated. I did not know her, but one of my mother’s cousin, Ana Luisa Peñailillo, a MIR’s prominent militant also died during the dictatorship. This is how our lives revolved
around absence and death. In fact, my best friends are also sons of disappeared or executed for political reasons.

Despite all this, I cannot say that my life has been determined by sadness and bitterness. With hardships and successes, I have wanted to live fully. I have a nine-year old son. He is named after his grandfather – José Villagra and we are very happy. My brothers have sons and both of them have their grandfather’s name – Pablo José and Felipe José. Also, one of our cousin’s children remembered my father with Josefina and Samuel José. In this way, not only is memory perpetuated but also our blood. Even if they disappeared him physically, the image of my father will continue to be part of our lives. Nahuel

**Interpretation of Pablo’s Body Collage**

This collage is one that clearly represents the disappeared body of Pablo’s father through a series of images and symbols located in the front and the back of the image. In the front Pablo places the picture of his father in the centre of the heart area occupying most of the space surrounded by pictures that represent his political ideology, such as Salvador Allende, Miguel Henriquez founder of the MIR, Victor Jara, a popular cultural icon, and a Mapuche woman representative of the first nations. The meaning of this images are explained by Pablo: “I brought a lot of symbols, for example I placed Che because they are important for me, they marked a whole learning period. I put Allende because he is like contemporary of my father. My dad liked Allende very much, I place the other things because they had to do with childhood”.

Like in the case of other participants we can see that the ideological leaders of the parents have influenced their political development, although they make clear that they belong to their fathers’ generation. Pablo represents the identity of the father by placing three names on the head. They represent different aspects of his life: Gabito was his nickname as a kid, Nelson his political name, and Jose his real name. Names are clearly a strong symbol for Pablo since he
covers the front of the figure with them. “And the other names if you see are all names of people who are alive and people who are dead all of them mixed, and they are mixed with the names of my family, with the children of my friends, with the parents of some of the people who are here, and everybody with their children and my family and they are all mixed. And it is precisely because memory and resistance for me are not separable; I mean they are not separated by past or the present”. The names on the body physically represents the many people who have been connected to Pablo throughout the process of searching for his father, thus mapping a web of relationships and people that have been affected not only by this disappearance but also many others. This representation of memory through names is also part of a family tradition to perpetuate the memory of his father since, all of his brothers and cousins have named their children Jose for boys and Josefina for girls. In his case he named his son Jose so he would have the exact same name as his grandfather. In this regard he explains that everything you do is connected to memory and resistance: “I mean my friends, whoever you talk to about certain thinks you are always constructing memory or resistance, with the mere fact of existing or to be a friend of yours and to share certain ideas you are constructing memory”. In this example he equates memory and resistance to life and the relationships that allow the perpetuation of life like children: “They are all the ones who have children are placed there because I believe they are transcendental in one’s life, without getting them involved in this issue, I said it, children are by the mere fact of existing they are like “live memory”.

Another interesting symbolic representation is how he uses the body’s hand. He places a rectangular piece of burlap on each hand and pictures of his family; there are pictures of Pablo, his mother and other women of the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared, son, and a picture of Londres 38, a detention and torture center where his father might been. “I put the pictures in the hands, because every time we go do something we take our mom or dad in here
Through this action we see how he personalizes this image by giving him the role of the father who would take the family for a stroll, however the picture of the detention centre reminds us of the family life that was broken with his detention. This clearly represents one of Pablo’s desires to humanize the image and the memory of the parents transforming them into regular parents rather than, or aside from, their role as militants. He also humanizes this body collage by blindfolding it: “I don’t know why I blindfolded him. I think, I imagine that is how he must have been with the others, while he was in jail, because he must have been with the blindfold on his eyes. I think that it’s like one, I mean one has the capacity of seeing, is not blind, one who was born with the capacity of seeing, to blindfold someone must be one of the biggest deprivations of freedom I think, because you can, I mean you can accept torture, you can accept fifty thousand things, but the fact that, that you cannot see, to be in darkness...it’s like. To me is very tragic, that’s why I closed his eyes with a blindfold, so he couldn’t see the barbarity you are all doing here (people laugh)”. In this passage Pablo expresses his most inner fears about the fate of his father and what that means for him, but also what it could have meant for the father. By representing a blindfolded body he materializes this unspoken truth that many people avoid accepting or talking about. The darkness he represents through the blindfold is quite representative of the isolation and invisibility many of them feel. Pablo’s courage of representing and speaking about what his father must have suffered in jail, suggests that he has gone through a process of mourning and acceptance of his death and opens up a space for this type of discussion. In fact this is perhaps one of the few times this issue is mentioned in the workshops. However, this is not an issue that other participants feel ready or willing to talk about, which is evidenced by the way people changed the subject after he spoke. This passage also reveals how humor is used to divert emotional situations, like at the end when he connects his emotional
experience to a funny comment about protecting his father from seeing what others were doing. This is a very common emotional strategy used by Pablo and others throughout the workshops and that might also explain his fear of hurting his friends through talking or evoking painful memories. The use of humor also reflects the internal dynamics developed by the group in terms of dealing with emotional information.

In the back of the collage Pablo uses pictures of Villa Francia, his neighborhood, the murals painted to remember people who disappeared in that place, the street and the house where his father lived to symbolize how he remembers his father in the present: "I had a good time, like when I was a kid, like painting now, like art is very subjective and I believe that at some point they reflect what you have hidden in the unconscious and that. And now I wanted like to give it life, because the other side was overloaded with symbols and signs (...) I didn't have an idea in my head, it was like flowing, I thought of putting these pictures, really they are like pictures of how I would remember him today with practical things: where my father lived, what they did in Plaza de la Constitución with the 119, all of the sudden I realized that I had to give it more color because the other side was too charged with meaning, and I like it, it's like you entertain yourself and you look at it, it's like the therapeutic value of grabbing a brush and drawing a line without being a good artist, but it's the same you relax, like you get into it, I had a good time". In the process of embodying his father through this body collage, we see a tension or a need to represent the meaning of his disappearance, the impact of the search for him in the lives of many people, the physical deprivations experienced by the father as well as the strategies used by the family to preserve his memory through the transmission of names. In contrast, the back of the collage represents how he experiences this process in the present, which is perceived as more accepting of what happened.
In this collage we see an interesting construction of an embodied narrative of his father's life. By transforming the figure into his father's body he not only materializes the disappeared body, but also personalizes his interpretation of the father's experience. In this process of humanizing the public image of the disappeared father he dares to express how he feels about the suffering of his father, but also trying to understand how it might have been for the father. Likewise, by symbolizing the act of his father taking them out with pictures hanging from his hands he fuses his desire of enjoining a father with what he perceives his father would have done. In addition, he also uses his father's body to represent through names the bodies of many other disappeared people, especially the parents of his friends, thus making visible the life and pain of many other people.
Figure 5

Vivi’s Body Collage
Vivi’s Story

I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on June 18, 1966. I am the daughter of Betty Magallan and Guillermo Gallardo. They met and got married while my paternal family was in Argentina, because they had migrated from Chile during the Government of Gonzalez Videla. I spent my first two or three years between both families, because they lived in the same neighbourhood. I was the first grandchild of the Gallardo’s.

My beloved paternal grandmother Ofelia Moreno missed very much her sisters and nephews in Chile, so they began preparing the return. But my father stayed behind because he was married. He began a nomadic life between Buenos Aires and Mendoza and Santiago of Chile with my mother. Apparently she missed Argentina and they went back to Mendoza.

My parents did not get along very well, and my father took advantage of some economic help provided by my aunt Catalina Gallardo in one of her trips to Argentina and one day he asked me to tell my mother that I would go to the movies with him. We went to the bus terminal where he asked me if I wanted to see my grandmother Ofelia in Chile. Of course I said yes, I must have been four years old at the time. And we began our trip to Santiago; I had on my green summer dress (I think it was January) and my Topo Gigio, my favorite doll.

We arrived on a Sunday in January to my Grandparents’ house on Herrera 461 (today is a parking lot). My grandfather Alberto Gallardo was watering the garden and received us with a big and friendly smile, but surprised because he didn’t understand what was going on.

My grandmother immediately turned into my second mother. My father, although I adored him, counted a lot on his mother and his sisters, my aunts Catalina Gallardo and Isabel Gallardo.

I remember I slept next to my grandparents’ bed. I also remember that I began to use a pacifier again, since I didn’t have a mother that was as good as it could get. I don’t complain, I
received a lot of affection and love from my family, but the memory of my mother began to slowly disappear. I held on to my aunts, my grandparents, and my funny and playful uncle Roberto Gallardo, who would take me for a ride in his motorcycle. My mother came to get me in two or three opportunities and the last time began a legal procedure against my father. But he got several witnesses to testify against her, poor mother, he even prepared me to speak against her.

I remember I had to be with her every Wednesday in the Courthouse and she would go out of her way trying to get my love, my attention, but I would cry and I didn’t want to be with her. Nevertheless I know I loved her, like any daughter loves her mother, but that was changing.

In November 1975, Tuesday November 18, we were at home; my grandfather, my father and myself and they rang the doorbell. It was the civil police (Policía de Investigaciones) with their typical aggressive manners against everybody, with machine guns and asking for my uncle Roberto.

That was the beginning of a fatidic chapter in our united and large family. My grandmother was at my school attending a meeting of my class. The police told us to come with them to get her. They put us in a car and took us to the Police Headquarters. Behind us there was another car with my aunts Catalina, with my little cousin Beto, who was six month old, my aunt Mónica, the wife of my uncle Roberto, who was three months pregnant and my aunt Isabel.

That night they interrogated all of us, even me. I remember my aunts in the hallway crying, with an expression of terror on their faces. While we were waiting in an office, my aunt Catalina with her little son in her arms gave him to my grandmother, while she told her to take care of him if something happened to her. After that night we didn’t see my aunts Mónica or Catalina ever again, and they took us to the basement, to the jail cells; my dad, my grandmother, my aunt Isabel and Beto.
In the morning they released us, saying that my grandfather and my aunts had been taken to the DINA (National Directorate). Since November 19th we began moving to different houses, schools. There were other home searches. My father got married and I had two half-sisters. When I was 17 I went to Sweden and my grandmother and my uncle Beto remained in Chile. There I studied Child Education, I lived as I could and I came back. My father died, I fell in love, I became a mother and I studied theater acting, and later the Master's in theatre pedagogy.

I have always been followed by the fear, the memories, the insecurity, but those who remained in the family have supported and loved each other very much.

**Interpretation of Vivi’s Body Collage**

Vivi’s collage is essentially a representation of her emotional world in relation to her traumatic family losses. In the front part of the body she constructed a narrative about the memories of the five members of her family that were killed. At the centre of this narrative is the image of her grandmother sitting in front of the door of what was the family house before the coup d’état. Right next to this image there is a picture portraying all her dead relatives. Around the grandmother, who also represents a strong mother figure in Vivi’s life, are located all her aunts and uncles and her grandfather. Each one of them is represented in pictures that also show Vivi, stressing the relationship she had with them. These pictures are also marked by five little stones representing each one of them. There is also a picture that shows three flags of the countries where she has lived: Argentina, Sweden, and Chile. The death, horror, and pain are represented by marks of red paint splashed throughout the torso and by a piece of fluffy red fabric that extends from the picture of all her dead relatives all the way down to the foot.

The head is separated from the torso by a line of flowers. The head is covered by a burlap sort of hat that covers some red marks. From the forehead hangs a net that contains a flower. From the eyes there is a line of little stones that goes down to the neck. All these symbols speak
of her representation of pain, death, prison, and wounded bodies. The upper part of the torso and the head are a clear representation of a family memorial with symbols that mark spaces of death, but also a tribute to the memory of her family.

In contrast, the lower part of the body is marked by symbols of life. There are pictures of Vivi that show her pregnant and then playing with her daughter, symbolizing a personal triumph over death. In the feet she constructed little wheels that could be interpreted as her desire to move in life, but that also represent her separation from her maternal family when she left Argentina and her exile in Sweden. Strongly related to life and action are the suns she chose to place on the hand, although one of them is caged by a net. The legs are joined by significant political and cultural icons. In the front there is a big picture of Victor Jara, while in the back there is a picture of Salvador Allende, suggesting that her political ideology and that of her family have been a strong support in her life.

In the back of the collage she presents her life in the present, making a clear distinction from what her family life was in her childhood. There are different issues that emerge in this narrative. One of them is her interest in different artistic forms, particularly theatre. Her daughter also appears as an important presence in her desire to construct a memory of the future. The background is painted in green that in Vivi’s opinion represents “hope, nature, and an opening to new experiences in life.”

In Vivi’s collage there is an evident embodied narrative of memory and resistance represented by the story of her family and by her engagement in life as a form of resistance. There is also a sense of future represented by her daughter and her own involvement in the arts through theater, painting, music, and poetry, marking a sense of balance that seems to compensate for her childhood experience.
Figure 6

David's Body Collage
David's Story

I was born on August 9th, 1973, a month before the coup d'état, the result of the love between two MIR militants, Lucia Vergara Valenzuela and Jose Benado Medvinsky. As a consequence of the dictatorship my mother with myself got asylum in the embassy of Sweden. We went to live in that country six months after. My father would join us a year later.

My sister was born in Sweden; we have lived together the many roads of this long journey of searching for truth and justice, going through pain and happiness. When I was five my sister and I went to live with my grandmother in Guatemala; the country were she was exiled after suffering multiple tortures and being detained in Villa Grimaldi for several months. In the meantime my parents went back to Chile, feeling even stronger about their convictions to fight against the dictatorship imposed by Pinochet.

My father was detained in Chile in 1980 and made disappeared during close to two months to reappear again in the public jail, thanks to the pressure of many people around the world and several human rights organizations. He was in a deplorable health state after suffering multiple tortures.

During that time the repressive organisms of that time conducted a meticulous search operation to locate my sister and myself, probably to pressure my father even more under torture. This process achieved its peak when we had to leave the house running through the streets of Guatemala with my grandmother, when they tried to kidnap us. I was six and my sister three.

A few months later we were in France. The year 1983 was crowned by happiness and pain. In September my father left for France as an exile, where we reunited. That same month, my mother was assassinated in a fake confrontation. Her pictures, bullet-riddled and naked on the street went around the world. I only managed to recover one of them alive.
Since 1991 I am in Chile trying to reconstruct my story, and the story of my parents looking unsuccessfully for truth and justice in the courts. My mother’s case has been stayed several times.

In this long walk I have built my future, with two beautiful children and a family that has been the pillar during the moments of pain. Nicolás, the oldest, always asked me about his grandmother, not too long ago I told him that they had killed her because she had different ideas and fought for a better world. First, his silence and then he told me and you don’t cry?

**Interpretation of David’s Body Collage**

There are many elements in his collage that evoke the presence of David’s mother through female symbols. There are two big green and yellow hands that move up from the thighs all the way to the stomach leaving a small opening in the genital area. This sort of matrix seems to be a tribute to life as well as a grounding symbol of his personal story, linking his sister and son, some of the few people present in his narrative. It seems interesting that in his story his father, his wife, and other members of his family are not present.

There is a strong sense of emotional closeness in this image. It seems that the pain produced by his family story is guarded or controlled. What predominates is what appears as public discourse or narrative that is also measured and controlled and not allowing the expression of feelings, while at the same time producing divisions in the image. These fragmentations can be clearly appreciated in the way the human figure is divided in three parts or sectors marked by a broken line of small stones. One of them divides the torso from the stomach and legs, which can be interpreted as a separation from more visceral feelings. The other line divides the torso from the head at the neck. This division could also be interpreted as a separation from the feelings located in the torso and the thoughts and ideas in the head. Likewise

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8 His daughter Maya was born after the body collage was made.
the location of the stones around the neck suggests the impossibility or lack of desire of communicating feelings. It seems interesting that the head does not have symbols except for a layer of confetti.

David’s narrative about memory and resistance is represented mostly by childhood memories and particularly by the idealized image of his mothers and some small traces of his life in exile, like the picture of a Chilean child passport for foreigners that attest of his exile identity. There are also pictures of places that might be related to his life abroad.

In the centre of the body there is an image of a female sleepy moon surrounded by little stars. One of these stars represents himself, while the other represents his sister, which suggests his communion with these two women in his life, but also the mystical meaning of his mother. Right next to them there is a photo of Che Guevara, symbolizing the mother’s ideology, passion, and political commitment. There are also two red and black lines on the ankles representing his mother’s political militancy in the MIR. In the heart area there is a picture of his son surrounded by little stones as if he was protected or in a secluded place.

In this collage there are very few symbols of death or destruction. The exceptions are the pictures of policemen placed on both feet surrounded by red paint. The position on these pictures on the feet could symbolize his desire to kick or step on those elements that represent destruction and death. Similarly, in the right hand there are some flowers that are tied by a cord, which could be interpreted as a symbol of torture or imprisonment. There is also a picture of the memorial of the disappeared place around the shoulder area, which could be interpreted as the political weight he carries with him. Some wrinkled paper on the knees could also represent this apparent tiredness. The symbols of resistance are not very clear in this image, however the strong female symbols like the matrix as well as the picture of his son could be interpreted as symbols of life, therefore assuming that his mother and close family have been a strong inspiration to resist.
Figure 7

Daniela's Body Collage
Daniela’s Story

I am the daughter of two militants of the MIR. In 1974, after the coup d'état, I left with my parents and my older sister for Denmark to begin our life as exiles. I was a year old when I had to leave my motherland. I feel lucky that I had the opportunity to enjoy having a relationship with my parents and especially my father, of whom I have very clear memories. I also have good memories of my life in Denmark although during that period my parents separated. Although that was a difficult experience it also allowed me to get to know my father as a regular human being. I also had the chance to have two moms and two dads since my parents got involved in other relationships after and we all had a very good relationship. Denmark was a peaceful country where I learned many things, especially about respect for each other. I lived there until 1981 when I returned with my mother and sister to live in Chile. My father returned separately as part of the “Plan Retorno” of the MIR to fight the dictatorship. In September of 1983 my father was assassinated with two other members of the MIR in an armed confrontation in a house located on Fuenteovejuna Street in Santiago.

It has been difficult to accept my father’s death, however, over the years I think I have learned to accept his political decision to fight for justice and the social wellbeing of many people. As an adult I have begun to reconcile with myself and with him. Although I always feel the need to have him, this desire became evident recently when I was pregnant and when my daughter was born. At that time I would have loved him to be around to share with me this important event in my life. However I know that his memory lives in me and will always be part of my life.

Interpretation of Daniela’s Body Collage

The images in Daniela’s collage are mostly located in the torso, thighs, and arms. In general in this collage there are very few symbols that represent her father or her personal life.
One of the few symbols of her father is his name, Sergio Peña Presente, placed at the center of the image, which suggests the importance of the father in her life. There is also the leather cover of an old radio that belonged to him that she placed on the right hand. This is the only object that she has of him. It is interesting that other members of her family are absent in this narrative, like her mother and sister. Instead there are a few pictures of her friends and her partner located in the heart area and the upper left arm.

It is also interesting that the legs and the head of the image are empty, perhaps suggesting that her interpretation of memory and resistance processes is more contained. In that regard, she constructed a narrative where there are a variety of images and symbols that represent children, as well as poems and children’s stories like a section of the “Little Prince” handwritten and placed near the heart area. All these symbols are placed around her father’s name, which suggests that they might be related to her childhood and the emotions experienced then. They also speak of the symbolic world she has constructed in relation to that period of her life.

Her narrative seems to have a strong ethnic component. There is a clear interest in including other ethnic backgrounds as represented by pictures of women of indigenous cultures. This is perhaps related to her profession as an anthropologist and her social and political work with women. Likewise there are several pictures that portray women and children, which implies a strong connection with feminine symbolism and motherhood. There are also few male symbols, perhaps the strongest one is the image of Pinochet surrounded by a sentence that reads, “No street will ever have your name”, which symbolizes her anger against him. However this is the only clear political symbol given that in her collage there are very few images that represent her parents’ political militancy or any other form of ideology. The other exception is perhaps a picture of Pablo Milanez and Silvio Rodriguez, two well-known Cuban artists that became an icon of resistance during the dictatorship.
In general, this collage evokes a nostalgic feeling and gives the impression of being incomplete. This feeling of incompleteness may be related to a number of reasons, but it certainly speaks of her personal inner process in relation to her experience and understanding of memory and resistance. However, it would appear that her memory is constructed around childhood issues and feelings, while her resistance seems to be given by her strong connection with women and children and particularly issues around motherhood.
Figure 8  Beto’s Body Collage
Beto's Story

From an early age, I got used to people calling me Beto even though my name is Alberto, in honour of my grandfather. I like my name very much. I feel that my nickname has given me a particular distinctiveness, a sense of self-identity that can bring me closer and sometimes makes me take distance from my dear origin. For someone who does not know me this may sound like absolutely ridiculous, but I will try to explain the distinction, which marks the difference between the person I was yesterday and the person I am today and the person that is proposing the way that I want to be tomorrow.

My parents' names were Catalina and Rolando. I say were because they were assassinated by the military dictatorship in Chile during the 70s. My parents, my uncle Roberto (one of my loving sons has his name) and my aunt Monica belonged to the Christian Workers' Young League (JOC). Later, they joined groups called Christians for Socialism and during the last part of their lives they joined the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). They struggled against the dictatorship from the day it was established. From that moment, they lost their lives. My grandfather also lost his life. How do they transform from being Christian fighters to be social fighters and later revolutionaries I am not sure, it represents a doubt that I still have and that I hope to clear soon. This is also related to answering the question about who I want to be tomorrow.

If you notice, until now I have not said one word about me. This issue has been the basis of my life – to introduce myself with my ancestors, putting myself second. This has several reasons (according to what I have discovered throughout time and after a long reflection). The first reason is that until recently I have seen the story of the assassination of my family as another victim of the dictatorship, not whining and complaining, but honest; it hurts me not having the possibility of knowing them and shared experiences with them or having felt their
love and protection (not because I didn’t have that, but because it should have been them). I have also discovered that they have guided a lot of what I have and have not done. Since I was little I liked the motto “is not time to cry, is time to fight” and although the plebiscite comes when I am thirteen; community work, social participation, political commitment are elements that I almost didn’t choose, they placed themselves in front of me and I just got involved. This is one of the moments (today), when I don’t know if I feel sad or happiness, because as I already said I feel I have not chosen the things in my life. Although I deeply thank that fact that things have been like that. I feel a nice contradiction. During this time that extends over 15-20 years life goes on very fast between school, activities in my neighbourhood, the freedom of political prisoners, the soccer games, the long-lasting and fleeting love relationships, and the protest rallies. But I don’t have a strong commitment with justice and human rights (like my dear grandmother, who I grew up with had for over 25 years. I think that is precisely the reason why I didn’t participate. I saw “my dear old women” from my grandmother’s Agrupación so hurt, always setting their hopes on justice, that time after time failed them. I didn’t want that, and my way to make a tribute (very common among people of my generation) was to follow the road that they had walked before (as I believed at the time). Then I entered university (one of the first in my family) and I went to study in the south, and as my grandma says “I graduate first as a father than anything else”. But my experience in Temuco not only left a human being, but also helped me expand my horizons by meeting people of different backgrounds from what I had met until then. I also joined a theater group (La Gotera, [The Leak] was its name) that allowed me to explore a different aspect of myself, which has also influenced the human being that I want to become. After a while I come back to Santiago and I managed to find a group of loving people who have experienced similar life family losses. With them I have learned many things, but I think that the most

9 The Association of Relatives of Politically Executed
important lesson is that I finished to understand how this society has made us invisible. Us and all of the people who have being here fighting stubbornly for social transformations and vindications and against the dictatorship. Among them we find first our dead, whom are mostly remembered in terms of the atrocities lived and not in terms of their legacy. The survivors received leftovers and they are not even allowed to know the name of the torturers. However, our mothers, grandmothers, wives, sisters, aunts who have never stopped fighting for the executed, disappeared, the political prisoners the exiles, the exonerated, the tortured; the idealist youth, students and peasants, the workers, that is all the ones who lived and fought the dictatorship where left without recognition or compensation. The only ones who are happy are those who compromised their ideals with the assassins, their impunity and their political model in exchange for their stability in the political circles.

I have been a dad again, of another cherubim, who is only two and has already asked me “dad, and where is your mom? and where is your dad? And taking advantage of the death of the tyrant, we told him that Pinochet had killed his two grandfathers and his grandmother (given that they have also taken away a part of my partner’s life: her father).

In sum, until some time ago I was in a nebulous space resulting from the invisibility that I have mentioned, which I am trying to clear by making evident what I see through a video camera, so as to keep everything there as a perennial legacy helping me therefore in constructing the human being I want to be. That is to say, first I want to capture through the lens and then project in a screen what I consider this reality to be. In that sense I don’t abandon either my story nor my beliefs. I only continue my life from myself, with the strong wish that one day someone will say “I like the work of that man, is it true that he grew up without his parents?"
Interpretation of Beto’s Body Collage

In Beto’s body collage we can observe that memory and resistance take a central role. Both elements are present through a number of symbols that represent his life from childhood to the present and into the future. In this context childhood appears as a special time in his life. The symbols he uses to represent this period of his life are kite paper and marbles, which are placed throughout the image but particularly around the heart area. These elements represent the games, the happiness, and the love he experienced, although the pain of the loss of his parents and relatives is always present. *I look at my childhood because this experience (the workshops) took me to that space and there is a mixture of things, the activities that I attended with my grandmother and I would be playing, and immediately I remembered Saturdays visiting my paternal grandparents, and everybody would be there...and there were entire afternoons, Saturdays and even Sundays sometimes, amazing just playing, being loved and they would give me money to buy candies. I would spend the whole day playing marbles on the street or gliding a kite. And that was a high percentage of my childhood, because in spite of the absence of my parents there was love and happiness, there was happiness, I mean the happiness of a kid. I had good memories of that time, good memories.*

On the other hand the kite also represents his desire to leave, to escape from the earth, both in childhood and in the present …*the issue of the kites, because I would leave, and every time I could, I would buy more thread, and more thread, because I wanted the kite to leave the earth, not to see it again if possible and sometimes I would see myself there, I mean gone, out of the earth with a little tiny piece of thread holding me down to the earth and I would feel this freedom, this huge freedom and I think that is why I put a piece of kite paper in the collage, in my rational part, because I want to take it out, I want it to be gone, I want it to fly away and I need an opening, to be more disconnected from the earthy matters and today as well. This brief*
narrative also tell us about his need to disconnect from his personal story and pain just like he did during his childhood, suggesting that this need has been a constant desire in his personal life.

It becomes apparent that justice has been the focus of his life given that the word *Justice* is placed at the centre of the heart area surrounded by the pictures of his parents with him, his partner, his grandmother wrapped in the Chilean flag while she is being detained after protesting in front of La Moneda Presidential Palace. Right in the heart there is a picture of him and his two sons. This small narrative is also surrounded by marbles and kite parents implying that this search for justice dates to his childhood. The figure has very few external memory symbols, since most of the images centered on his experience, and his inner world represented mostly by his affections towards his family. The five family members that were killed and particularly his parents appear as a strong grounding element that not only anchors him but also guides him through life. There is one particular picture of his parents next to him in his baby carriage taken just before they were killed, where they appeared happily touching and playing with him and just below that picture, the sentence “*Nothing will defeat life*”, this motto is present throughout his collage. Strongly connected to this idea of life, as a way to fight death is the picture of his son in his baby carriage holding a placard that says “*I demand justice for my grandparents*”. This picture is placed on the head next to a piece of kite paper and another sentence that reads, “*Not a day goes by without you being present*” referring to the strong connection he has with the memory of his parents. This picture also symbolizes the role of memory as a legacy to the new generation in terms of continuing fighting for justice.

Although the absent family seems to have grounded his life in many ways, their killings are also a source of pain. This would explain the picture of the five members placed on the throat, implying that something is there to be communicated. As Beto expressed during the workshops, he experienced some degree of physical discomfort when he was beginning to work
on the image that he attributed to the pain of having to express some old feelings by opening
doors and looking at the past from.

The political militancy of his parents and the rest of his family is represented through the
red and black band of the MIR flag painted on the wrist next to a picture of a man holding the
flag of the Popular Unity. However, in spite of the presence of these symbols, a level of
ideological disconnection from the political option of his parents can be observed. The reference
to the MIR is an homage to the ideals and dreams that guided the political commitment of his
parents, rather than a symbol of his own political beliefs.

There is a strong indication of the symbolic role of women in the resistance movements.
They are represented by the picture of members of the Association of Relatives of the
Disappeared Detainees and by the picture of his grandmother. There is also a piece of burlap
hanging from the right hand side of the body collage symbolizing the dedication of these women
by collectively participating in fighting the dictatorship, their hope, and commitment. Beto
makes a special mention of these women, who he sees as the embodiment of the resistance of the
people: *For me resistance is represented first the resistance of our closer people, in this case for
instance my grandmother, and well then the group of friends, but mostly the resistance of the
women who were left alone and who began contributing to resistance from many different areas;
from the public denounce to organizing themselves. I put the arpillera tied with the raffia
because my grandmother was able to generate women’s groups where there were also spaces
like this.*

The meaning of memory and resistance in the present is symbolized by his partner and
his children. There is a strong appreciation for life suggested by a picture of his partner when she
was pregnant. This commitment for life in the future is also indicated through the sentence “we
are still in debt” placed on the back of the image next to a picture of workers and a child.
Lalo’s Story

I am the only son of two MIR militants. I had a very happy life until my father was arrested and disappeared in 1975. After that my life changed completely. My mom and the rest of my family began searching for him. We went to live with my grandparents and I never saw my father again. However, I had a happy childhood with my family. My grandfather became the father I lost, my closest friend, and my political mentor. With him I learned about life and politics and his influence is always with me. Unfortunately I lost him when I was a teenager, at the time when I needed him the most to teach me things. The second biggest loss in my life. But life changes and now I have a beautiful daughter that is the centre of my world.

I have a good life and many things to thank life for; one of them is my family, the influence of my father and grandfather, and the friends I have. Memory and resistance have been an important part of my life and who I am and I am committed to continue fighting for life and justice and for a better world for my daughter.

Interpretation of Lalo’s Body Collage

In Lalo’s collage there is a strong relationship between memory, resistance, and spaces of memory. There is also a mixture of cognitive and emotional elements that emphasize the presence of memory and resistance through affects linked to the past and the present.

The image shows a variety of personal symbols that also reflect a more controlled expression of feelings and affects. There is a central narrative located in the torso area that represents his family story. There are a number of pictures in the centre of the torso that show different places where he and his family have lived. Memory seems to be represented by physical spaces that include the inside and outside of his house, streets, and the front of buildings, which shows the special meaning that these spaces hold for him.
A central figure in this narrative is his daughter who is located in the heart area, symbolizing the importance in his life. Through the pictures we also get to know other members of his family like his mother and grandmother who are presented inside these spaces. Another important person in his life is his grandfather who is located in the throat area. The picture is located on top of red painting, perhaps symbolizing the pain he still feels about his death. There is a picture of some workers placed next to him that provide a background about his grandfather’s political ideology, which was also a great influence in Lalo’s forming years. His grandfather also represents a strong paternal figure and mentor after Lalo’s father was disappeared.

There is only one picture of the father in the head, which suggests that he is part of a more cognitive type of memory. The picture portrays Lalo and a group of friends standing next to a human size image of his father that was part of the Commemoration of Operación Colombo. The militancy of his father in the MIR is evident in the collage through pictures that show the flag, but also through the black and red brushing that covers the image. Even though Lalo makes explicit allusions to his father’s militancy, his own political militancy is not that clear. It would seem that the references to the MIR are intended to provide a background about his father’s social and political life.

Although the sense of death is not initially very explicit, there are some strong symbols that suggest the presence of torture and death. One of them is the black string attached to the hands that crosses the body from behind, which symbolizes the way in which prisoners are kept. In the right-hand side, this black string is also tying a red flower that is the symbol of the disappeared. There is also a picture of Londres 38 – the torture centre where his father was disappeared.

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10 “Operación Colombo” was a police operation where 119 young political militants were kidnapped, disappeared, and killed by the military in 1975. The official version of the government at the time was that they had killed themselves due to political discrepancies inside their political parties.
detained – placed in the heart area, right below the picture of his daughter, which symbolizes not only the place where his father was seen for the last time, but also the physical space that has produced much grief to his entire family. It is interesting to see how these two pictures are so close together, which suggests the familiarity Lalo experiences about death and torture.

It is interesting to note that in this collage there are no symbols of Lalo's childhood or adolescence. His memories seem to be focused more on his present life and particularly on the people that represent a form of emotional support like his friends, mother, and daughter. Another interesting characteristic of this image is the absence of pictures or symbols in the back as well as in the legs and arms, implying that most of his embodied activity seems to be centered in the stomach and heart area, thus suggesting a form of containment in the way his emotions are located.

Memory and resistance in this collage are mostly represented by current affects and symbols that provide a glimpse of his life, but that do not allow getting to know many private aspects of his life, particularly his inner feelings. This perspective suggests that there might be a personal and a private discourse in his life.
Figure 10  Kayito's Body Collage
Kayito’s Story

I am Carolina. I was born in March 1977. I always liked to make things with my hands, to create. I had a happy but fearful childhood, I knew that horrible things were happening and that my parents were tirelessly working against the military dictatorship.

In July 1989, my father Raúl Valdés was assassinated when he was painting phrases against the dictatorship. I grew up feeling a loneliness that inundated me. I felt abandoned by my father and because he was never recognized among those people assassinated for political reasons. The road was long, to accept the sacrifice of his life to save ours. To understand and not to resent his decision was hard. That is why I believe it is extremely important the act of remembering him and all those people who followed the same path. To contribute from our experiences and from my art, is the essence of remembering him and resisting the memories of my loss.

Interpretation of Kayito’s Body Collage

Kayito’s collage shows a great number of symbols that represent her inner emotional world. This emotional world is represented by a number of pictures that speak of her affects, her personal story throughout her past, present, and future. They show her family, friends, partner, and son occupying most of the body collage.

The front part of the collage is a narrative that centres on the past, presenting the father as the main character. There are pictures of him in different stages of his life as well as pictures of the murals he painted. The father is portrayed as an artist, committed to the social and political struggle against the dictatorship as it is observed in a small handout that says, “Raúl painted hope”. It becomes apparent that her father was an extremely important figure in Kayito’s life. His artistic work has been an inspiration for the development of Kayito’s own artistic talents as well as source of strength and a grounding element that has helped her survive losing him. In addition art is the legacy inherited from her father and the element that allows her to materialize
memory and resistance as she explains: *Art has to do with a form of resisting, and my resistance as well as the future generations my children, cousins and is also related to the work that I have been doing in recent years in relation to recovering memory from an artistic space, and I feel that it is finally bearing some fruits.*

Memory and resistance for her are elements that come from the past and transcends the present and is projected towards the future. Kayito represents this notion of memory and resistance through what she calls “gestures of memory”, which are *the bodily signs and gestures that construct memory towards the future*. She represents these gestures of memory through a series of pictures that show her son’s mouth and nose, also implying a genetic transmission of these gestures of memory. The connection she makes between the memory of the past represented by her father and the future represented by her son can be appreciated in the symbols she uses in the hands of the figure. In the right hand there is a picture of her when she was pregnant, and pictures of an ecography of her son Oscar surrounded by flowers, while on the left hand there is picture that shows her as a little girl in the arms of her father. In these constructions we can also observe a sense of legacy and transmission of memory through her. As she also explains resistance is what connects the memory of the past and the future through her. However, this symbolic transmission of memory and resistance is also related to her traumatic experiences and how a sense of unfinished justice is being transmitted to her son. There is a picture of her son in his baby carriage holding a placard that reads, “For my grandparents, I demand Justice”. She explains that a form of resistance in the present is *by constructing a memory of the future* through their children.

Strongly connected to her notion of memory of the past is the traumatic experiences lived and the pain of losing her father. The narrative she constructs in the front is crossed by symbols of death and destruction like a ceramic figure that represents Villa Grimaldi Torture Centre,
which is located in the centre of the heart area. Around this ceramic piece there are a number of pictures of herself as a little girl, her family, and her father suggesting the effects of the dictatorship on the family and particularly the effects of the killing of her father in her life. Likewise, in the head of the image there is a picture of the Presidential Palace in flames during the bombing of September 11, 1973, and below that, a picture that shows the public work of HIJOS in a demonstration against the dictatorship. Both pictures speak of the impact of the coup d’état on her and on the lives of other members of her generation.

The political resistance to repression is also an element represented in this narrative construction. This is represented by her emotional relationship to family, friends, and particularly to members of HIJOS and through the political actions where Kayito participates. An example of this is the pictures of the Commemoration of Operación Colombo where 119 young militants mostly for the MIR were disappeared in 1975 and the images of the political actions of HIJOS. There are also slogans and sentences that reflect this sense of collective resistance such as: “never give up or move away from the road, never say I can’t take it anymore and I’ll stop here”, or “until the last criminal pays”, and “we don’t forget”. All of them suggest the political meaning of resistance as well as her political commitment to fight against oblivion and injustice.

The back part of the image is again covered by pictures that show her in the present, connected to her family and artistic life. There is a clear sense of future represented by the pictures of her son and family and also by her commitment to recovering and preserving the memory of what happened.

Kayito’s collage clearly shows the impact of the dictatorship and the assassination of her father in her life, particularly how her childhood was transformed by these events. Her construction of memory and resistance is strongly linked to the repression of the State, but also
the political implications of the lack of justice. Although the symbols she chose to represent her traumatic past and the presence of death and pain in her life are very self-explanatory, there is also a strong sense of resistance and an relentless commitment to life and justice represented by her son, her family and friends, and her artistic work. In addition memory and resistance allow her to connect these two concepts as a process that extends from the past and towards the future, revealing at the same time a strong sense of hope in the future.
CHAPTER 9: TRANSFORMING THE MEANING OF OUR BODIES BY EXTERNALIZING MEMORY AND RESISTANCE

SECOND PART

In this section I provide a summary of the co-investigator’s sections as well as an analysis of the debriefing sections of these workshops. I begin by providing a description of the process of constructing memory and resistance as well as the characterization of these concepts based on the participants’ experience from the beginning of the workshops. Then I provide a summary of the main features and characteristics of the individual human collages. I continue with a description of the participants’ emotional process of constructing the collage. After that I present an analysis of the role of resistance in the processes of creating identity, gendered forms of resistance as well as art as a form of resistance. Following this I provide a general interpretation of the process of constructing the human collage. Then I offer a synthesis of the therapeutic value of the experience of these two workshops and I finish with a summary of the chapter.

The Process of Constructing Memory and Resistance

The process of memory and resistance began by exploring the initial conceptualization of these notions that was provided by the participants in the introductory workshop and that was further explored in the workshops Unveiling Our Memories and “Liberating Our Bodies” and continued by externalizing memory and resistance through the construction of an embodied narrative in workshops four and five Memorializing Our Bodies. The analysis of the findings of these two workshops reveals that the co-investigators have begun to integrate these concepts by making them part of the same process. The results demonstrate that memory is experienced as a physical, sensory, emotional and cognitive process that begins at a sensory level with the evocation of images, sounds, smells, and textures and in some cases physical discomfort. It
continues with a cognitive selection of the memories to be explored. This search and selection process implies an individual inner examination, which brings up a number of emotions, many of them painful because it requires re-opening of old wounds that are full of meanings. Reflecting about these memories from the present gives an emotional distance that allows them to shift the initial meaning by reconstructing new ones in the recent context. By taking pictures of people, objects or places of memory participants were able to understand that the meaning of those memories in the present is different although it might have the same intensity as it did in the past. This initial awareness was accompanied by a sense of confusion that produced emotional blocks, which is experienced by forgetting names, lyrics of songs or getting lost in the creative process. Thus reconstructing memory is viewed as a fluid experience where people are in constant emotional movement by creating and re-creating past experiences and their corresponding meanings. And it is precisely in this process where resistance appeared as a complement of memory. Some participants identified that in the process of searching for objects of memory they had to emotionally reconnect with memories, people, and places in time that represented resistance. By reflecting on past memories they became aware that in their current lives there are people, objects and activities that contribute to their emotional resistance such as their children, work, yoga. This new awareness for them suggests that resistance is not only a process that took place in the past, but that it can be identified in the present. Therefore, the process of constructing and re-constructing memory in the present is strongly linked to resistance given that, as Vivi, one of the participants identified, "the conscious or unconscious resistance strategies that one chooses depend on the types of memory one has". This statement implies that memory has an important role in the emotional resistance people make of traumatic events, which also suggests that memory and resistance change as people and social and political contexts change. Furthermore how we resist in the present will have an impact on how we
construct memory for the future. In relation to the elaboration of the collage they recognized that the process of representing memory and resistance is based on a search for images and objects and the construction of an artistic piece, which involves an aesthetic appreciation of how these objects embody a given narrative. This creative process is also inspired by watching others build their stories. In this regard they noticed that observing the individual narratives of others helped them open their hearts and connect themselves to their individual and collective memories. Furthermore, the experiences of others helped them making meaning of their own experiences, while at the same time provided them a safe space by reminding them that they are part of the same collective historical experience.

**Characteristics of Memory and Resistance**

In this process of constructing memory and resistance the participants identified some specific characteristics of memory. They conceived memory and resistance as inseparable and enmeshed throughout time. Thus they are not chronological since both of them are part of the past, the present and the future. Consequently the process of constructing memory and resistance is viewed as circular because it starts in the present with the search for certain objects, moves to the past looking for meaning, and comes back to the present where new meaning is created and extends into the future through their actions. The analysis identifies different types of memory: recent or in the present, old memories, and memories of the future. Recent memories are those that are easily accessible in the present like places or buildings. Old memories relate to a more distant past and they are associated with their parents or the experiences they lived. Future memories are those they can leave as a legacy to the other generations like pictures, values, and experiences. They also make a distinction in relation to the personal memories linked to their childhood and political memories, which relate to their participation in the collective. These types of memories are the ones that repeat among them, creating a sense of collective belonging.
Memory is also visualized as having textures and folds, as well as pieces and parts, that together form individual and group narratives. Memory is also conceptualized as a physical experience built out of images, sounds and other senses that contribute to remembering specific episodes. It is also perceived as something abstract and subjective kept in the subconscious that needs to be brought to life through the use of imagination given that it is made out of a myriad of symbols as well as everyday objects like the house where the father lived or the street where he walked.

The Embodiment of Memory and Resistance: The Human Collages

The individual analysis of the participants’ collages shows a number of bodily images and symbols used to express the embodied presence of memory and resistance in the narratives. Among these symbols there are images of people’s faces as well as hands, mouths, and eyes. Names of people are also frequently used, particularly the names of their parents or relatives, which are placed in the heart area. The head is usually symbolized as a cognitive space where thoughts and ideas reside, and therefore where most of them place symbols like political leaders, meaningful people or political events. However there is one person who opted for leaving the head empty, as well as two participants who placed confetti on the head. Most participants use symbols of death, particularly those related to imprisonment or torture. Perhaps one of the strongest examples is a blindfold covering the eyes of a figure representing the way in which the participant imagines his father died. Likewise a participant placed a piece of black cord that extends from one hand through the back to the other hand where he places a red flower, which is the symbol of the disappeared. Another strong symbol is the picture of a dragon that one of the participants had tattooed on her body as a symbol of growth, brightness and spirituality. The location of images in different parts of the body also suggests a strong emotional connection to specific feelings and sensations. The head images are mostly related to ideas, thoughts, political identity, or the pictures of people who represented intellectual leaders, which can be interpreted
as a form of cognitive memory and resistance. The throat and neck is often represented as being blocked or divided from the rest of the body by little stones, flowers or pictures, which literally seems to reflect a block to communicate or express certain feelings. The heart and chest area is in most cases covered by images of their loved ones, family; friends; their children, but also by images of happiness joy, love; in general positive feelings of both individual and collective experiences. In contrast, the stomach is often represented by painful images of violence conveying more visceral feelings like anger, fear, impotence, death and emotional and physical pain. The back in most cases is represented by symbols of personal resistance in the present such as memories or objects that are more related to emotional support and future dreams. The hands often have ties around them with flowers. Some of them placed their children on their hands. These images offer two different interpretations. The flowers and the children can be seen as giving or offering something, suggesting a willingness to give and to receive. A second interpretation connects the ties in their hands to the image of prisoners with hands tied. The legs and the feet are, in most cases, represented as rooted to the land but also as connected to the death that lies beneath the soil. The red color is often painted on the chest, the back or the hands, graphically representing blood, injured bodies or death. As identified by the participants, there is a ritualistic element in them since by placing them in different positions the collective meaning changes, opening up spaces for new interpretations and meanings.

**Objects and Places of Memory**

The findings of these two workshops show an interesting use of objects and places of memory. As was previously identified in the second workshop, there is a strong connection between memory and objects and places. Likewise we see that in the construction of these embodied narratives the participants choose specific objects to represent aspects of their relationship to their absent parents or to the past in general. One of the participants brought a
couple of toys and a cloth brush and he placed them in front of the collage as an installation. One of the toys has been in his family for a long time becoming a symbol that is passed from generation to generation, the other one is a toy he gave to his son as a gift and the cloth brush is the only object he has that belonged to his father. Another participant constructed his image using marbles and kite paper to represent the happy moments of his childhood. In both cases we see how they reconstruct aspects of the broken relationship with their parents. Places on the other hand, also appear as important elements in the construction of their personal narratives. We see for instance pictures of places that have special significance for them such as the Faculty of Education for Tamara, the bedroom where his father was detained in the case of Juan Carlos, Londres 38, the torture centre where many of their fathers were detained, or the houses where their fathers lived.

The Emotional Process of Constructing Memory and Resistance

The process of reflecting and analyzing their collages brought important information about their physical experience as well as the meaning of the symbols used. Most of them reported that during the initial stage of constructing the collage they experienced feelings of insecurity or apprehension that in most cases was characterized by a sense of heaviness, tiredness, sleepiness, stomach butterflies, cold, nausea, and some of them felt initially paralyzed by some unknown burden. However, all of them identified these sensations as a form of embodied resistance to change, therefore when they were able to identify these feelings and overcome the resistance they began to experience a sense of lightness that some of them experienced as liberating and healing. These physical responses to the process were also significant in helping them understand the embodied meaning of this process. Most of them realized that the processes of memory and resistance have been part of their understanding of life but it is only now that they can grasp a bigger understanding of it. In this regard some of them
speak of beginning to have an awareness of the life energy that flows through them as the biggest form of resistance, which is consistent with their initial perception where they identified having children, a family and being happy as a form of resisting oblivion through life. Likewise they recognize the body’s capacity to resist the process of remembering painful events as a form of protection against unwanted feelings of impotence, rage or sadness. They also report having been able to transform some of these feelings once they were able to identify how they are connected to specific memories. Overall they agreed that they are all full of images of memory and resistance, but that they needed to process them so as to liberate themselves from an unnecessary burden.

In the collective process of analyzing the figures the co-investigators clearly identified childhood as the place where memories come from and therefore where memories inhabit. However they also recognized that the process of looking at the pain experienced in the past from the present opens emotional doors that have the potential of being healing. Nevertheless this process makes evident the fact that there is a dichotomy in their childhood memories given their perception of life at the time, therefore the memories are either good (happiness, security) or bad (horror, death). These experiences are also strongly linked to their concern about how they would bring up their children in terms of which memories to pass on to them without producing a traumatizing effect. In that regard they consider vital to encourage the friendship among their children who they consider as “live memory”. They also identified the importance of keeping a balance in terms of the kind of image they want to present to their children about their grandparents. From their own experience they know that the image of the heroes who died fighting for the country needs to be balanced with the human side as well. This concern reflects their need to have ‘an informed truth’, made up out of the political and human aspects of their parents’ lives to be transmitted to their children. Therefore, they continue talking about and
remembering their parents among friends or relatives in order to resist the imposed social
oblivion promoted by impunity and the absence of an official social validation to recognize the
importance of their parents' lives and struggles. Finally, they have become vigilant about
keeping traces of their memory in the present by transmitting the names of the disappeared father
to their children or by collecting objects, and pictures so as to leave them for their children as
part of their legacy.

**Memory and Resistance as Identity**

Identity is another element that is strongly associated to memory and resistance in their
analysis. The political identity of the participants is undoubtedly marked by the dictatorship as
the main political referent they had to live as opposed to the political context experienced prior
to the coup d'état that their parents lived. Therefore what we see is a "generational ideological
memory", which means that they remember the symbols of the ideological identity of their
parents as part of a collective memory and resistance process. Some of them feel rather distant
from the MIR or other political options of that time, while others still feel politically connected
to the MIR in the present. They recognize that their fathers' symbols like Salvador Allende, Che
Guevara, Miguel Henríquez (founder of the MIR), as well as the red and black, the colors of the
MIR and some of the political language and declarations were part of their ideological training
and political education and served as a form of resistance during the dictatorship. However, they
have their own icons like Luciano Carrasco, a friend and member of HIJOS, who committed
suicide and became their main public symbol. Likewise, they feel closer to the people who
fought or died during the dictatorship and that have become part of their individual and
collective memory. Some chose specific cultural symbols of resistance like the Mapuche
trarilinco, a headpiece used by the elders of the community. And others decided to include in
their narratives the flags of the countries where they were exiled as a symbol of the resistance they endured in those countries.

**Art as a Form of Resistance**

The analysis of the images created allowed them to discover the symbolic value of engaging in creative artistic expressions. From this perspective they noticed that the “daring act” of using art (images, text, and movement) was a form of resistance to oblivion. Likewise, they identified resistance in the bright lively colors they used such as red, yellow, orange, green, and blue. The music we listened to throughout the workshops was also identified as an inspiring form of living resistance in the present. This analysis led them to recognize that over the years they were using other forms of art like literature, photography and also collecting images as a form of resistance and memory.

**Gendered Forms of Resistance**

The issue of specific gendered forms of resistance appears again in the analysis. Both male and female co-investigators agreed that one of the greatest forms of resistance is for women to bear children. Therefore, to have children, to raise and educate them is conceived as a form of resistance for the future. Furthermore they recognize the tremendous value of other women in the past, who were the first ones to organize themselves around associations to search for their relatives and to denounce to the world the injustices. Their work also concentrated on creating the spaces for reflection and political analysis that led them to understand that they could also fight the dictatorship by using their own hands in creating *arpilleras*, embroidered tapestries, representing the images of the violence they were living and that constitute the first forms of memory and resistance. Their work also provided some guidelines for other community-based groups that began to get together to create spaces for self-reflection and support that eventually turned into substantial solidarity movements.
Interpretation of the Body Collages

As we have seen in the pictures of these human collages, they narrate a story of memory and resistance from an individual perspective that is also anchored to the collective experience of a generation of people who grew up during the dictatorship. By reading their biographies and listening to the group discussions we can begin to understand the symbolisms and meanings created on the figures. Each one represents a story of pain and hope that began a long time ago and that still evokes strong memories and feelings.

An interesting aspect of this creative process was to observe the relationship each one developed with the wooden figure: some of them put them on the floor and lean forward to begin the process of constructing a relationship with the figure. To watch them from the distance resembled the interaction between somebody who is on the ground and someone who is trying to help or console him/her. Others worked on the figure standing straight, but in that process they touched them, embraced them, held on to them, as they would do with a real person. Through this initial step of getting acquainted they began a new relationship with their parents and with themselves. In the past this relationship was represented, by using a photograph on their heart in public demonstrations; in the workshop, this symbol of love is also placed in the heart area of the wooden figure. Likewise in their heads they placed political images such as leaders, the bombing of La Moneda the Presidential Palace, their parents, and their own children that represent the transcendence of that which the coup d'état attempted to destroy. Others included symbols like a blindfold or a jailed flower to show the human cost involved. Furthermore, a blindfold disorients, confuses, silences, makes people vulnerable representing not only the essence of the suffering of political prisoners, but also how these feelings became part of a collective experience of oppression that is manifested in them by a sense of disconnection and invisibility in the world. There are clear visual images of injured bodies, open wounds or physical and
emotional pain expressed by red marks on the torso, arms and hands. An example of this is the way Vivi represents the killing of five members of her family by putting a picture of them in the heart and from that point extending a red band of fluffy material that covers the right side of the body all the way down to the feet. The torso where she constructs a mini narrative of her family tragedy is splashed with red paint. Likewise, others use cords tying the hands of the figure, literally symbolizing the experience of prisoners as well as the inability of the relatives to take action given the repression and the impunity at the time when they were arrested. But it also represents the participants’ own feelings about having their hands tied in the present. By observing the images we can perceive a hierarchical structure in the way the symbols are placed; thus the head is a representation of an ideological position that guides the social actions, the torso is where the affect resides, while the legs and feet have two apparent symbolisms. On one hand we see images that reject and fight the effects of repression by literally stepping on police, torturers, and traitors. For others, it represents grounding into the earth implying a sense of rebirth, but also the ritual of burying those who died.

In their creative process they began working on the front of the body by using pictures, images and names that tells the story of the absent parent or relative and the social and political context of their tragedy. In these images there is a clear presence of the MIR ideology represented by the red and black stripes of its flag. They continue working on the back, narrating their silent and invisible story of how they carry on this process in the present, representing their children, professional expectations and their hopes for the future. In doing this, they blended these two stories into one embodied narrative thus materializing in the present a relationship that was abruptly interrupted in their childhood. The absence of personal objects of memory of their parents has led them to bring to life symbolic devices like the father’s Mapuche manta in Juan Carlos’s case to strengthen this nonexistent relationship. Similarly, Pablo’s explicit longing for
having a relationship with his father is represented by a piece of burlap with pictures of the family of the disappeared man that symbolizes the act of a father taking his family for a walk, thus humanizing the figure by giving it the role of a father. In these two examples we observe an attempt to reposition the body of the disappeared father into their lives by using symbolic devices to reconstruct the father’s personal identity.

There are a number of pictures in all of them that show places of memory such as the Memorial of the Disappeared in the general cemetery, detention centres like Londres 38, or Villa Grimaldi, or the houses where the parents lived. It became a common practice during the dictatorship that people would create remembrance places on the streets, empty tombs in the cemetery, or outside the national stadium or other torture centers to commemorate the death of the disappeared given the lack of a body and information about where they died, or where they are, which highlights the emotional and cultural need of performing death rituals. Consistent with these cultural practices these pictures reflect a ritualization process on the body by turning it into a personal memorial of their own memories. Pablo’s use of the names of significant dead or alive people in his life spread all over the front of the body constructing a web of people is a good example of the ways some of them ritualized the body as a form of transmitting the memory of those people in the future. In the same way Tamara places along the back of the body many small pictures of people, including her father and the parents and relatives of his friends and other people who died fighting the dictatorship. This construction reflects the ritualistic nature of memory as well as suggest a sense of support that these people had given her over the years.

At the emotional level we observe an apparent emotional containment in the balance of hopeful, life affirming symbols contrasting the horrific expressions of death. This symbolic construction is consistent with their collective public discourse where they claim to struggle
against the morbid trauma oriented testimonies, by opting for hopeful life narratives instead.

Consequently, this discourse is perceived in the way some of them placed meaningful objects like a ceramic piece of a torture centre in the heart area surrounded by pictures of a family and in the arm a small narrative of the participant as a little girl at her birthday party decorated with confetti. The contrasting meaning of these images, the destruction of life, and the celebration of life, reveals the presence of horror to the extent that is experienced as something normal in everyday life. This revelation not only shows the degree of emotional turmoil experienced as a child, but also identifies a level of dissociation, which is still present in her life. In some cases the presence of deep feelings produced by the personal losses of their fathers as well as anxiety produced by fear also materialize in “horror vacui”, a concept derived from art criticism that explains the saturation of a given space with images as a way to represent the artist’s fear of empty spaces. At an emotional level this concept translates into the fear of exploring and transforming the feelings causing that emptiness, which in this case could be associated to their sense of invisibility. This notion is expressed in many of the participants’ work, which is visually full of images that have the appearance of a balanced narrative but that also suggest a big scab that does not fully allow the witness to see the extent of the injury. Finally, the variety of embodied narratives expressed in the collages suggests different levels of emotional readiness to present their story through this medium at this point in their lives.

**Therapeutic Value of the Experience**

At a therapeutic level the effectiveness of this exercise becomes evident in terms of allowing the participants to externalize unresolved feelings and issues through the representation of memory and resistance. Having the possibility of choosing objects or images gives them the possibility of reconstructing specific aspects of their personal stories. In most cases they opted to explore their emotional relationship to their parents and relatives by symbolically materializing
in the collage aspects of this broken relationship. In other cases they materialize the body of the absent father; yet in others they focus more on their personal experience in the present, which visually demonstrates the therapeutic needs of the participants, and reveals the diagnostic possibilities of this exercise. Likewise it demonstrates the self-regulated process that unfolds, since having the possibility of exploring and experimenting with the images they want to put their control over the emotional meaning until they find what suits their emotional state in the present. Consequently the description of the emotional and cognitive process of recalling memories, particularly the physical experiences and the emotional responses to this process provide important information for trauma counselors who use embodied techniques. Furthermore the construction of seemingly separated small narratives allow the opportunity of mapping the overall impact of their traumatic experiences throughout time. Likewise the absence of certain images or characters in these narratives also reveals important information about their personal processes. In addition the option of painting or drawing without the pressure of doing a good job was identified as a relaxing and fun way of exploring their past, which was described as a “magical and liberating” experience.

**Summary of Transforming the Meaning of Our Bodies by Externalizing Memory and Resistance**

In this chapter I have presented a summary of the individual analysis of each of the participants’ body collage as well as the findings from the debriefing sessions of each of these workshops. I began the section with a summary of the process of constructing memory and resistance identifying as well as the main constitutive characteristics of these concepts. The analysis reveals the strong relation between memory and resistance, which are conceived as enmeshed in a process that extends throughout time. They also acknowledge the cyclical nature of this process and the possibilities of reframing past experiences by constructing new meaning,
which is also connected to the intertwined relationship between memory and resistance. By focusing on resistance in their narratives they were able to recognize the presence of different forms of emotional resistance in the present. The analysis of the findings of the individual images reveal a strong visual presence of body images as well as clear references to specific feelings in the location where they place certain objects on the body. For instance the head is clearly connected with cognitive processes while the heart represents love and affection. The images also represent the collective story of a generation of young people who lived the dictatorship searching for their parents or demanding justice. The group analysis demonstrates a substantial change in their perception and understanding of memory and resistance. This analysis identifies the perceptual, physical emotional and cognitive characteristics of the process of remembering or recalling specific memories. Significant objects and places appear again in these visual narratives to indicate the connection with their parents as well as the symbolic individual and collective meaning of some objects and places. The emotional dichotomy of their childhood experiences and their concern about transmitting traumatic experiences to their children was identified as a main concern in their lives. In this regard participants identified from their own childhood experiences the need to find a balance in the type of information they want to pass on to their children regarding their disappeared or executed grandparents. Furthermore, they also realized that the “political image” of their heroic parents is not enough, particularly when the human part has disappeared as well. Thus they begin to identify a need to have an ‘informed truth’ to leave as a legacy to their children. Strongly linked to this concern is their reflection about the importance of having a political identity that in their case served as a form of resistance. In this regard there is a clear transmission of an “ideological memory” symbolized by the political option of their parents. However, they recognize their own political identity is connected to the resistance and political movements during the dictatorship. As is evidenced by
the analysis of the participants, the experience had some therapeutic benefits by allowing them to externalize, reflect and transform the meaning of specific events of memories in their lives. It also allowed them to materialize the body as well as the relationships that were destroyed by their family tragedies. This creative experience also helped them recognize art not only as a form of expressing feelings but also as a form of resistance. Finally, they are able to identify specific gender differences in the way males and females deal with memory and resistance as well as the influence of the first women who organized themselves to fight the dictatorship through political activism, self-support groups and by embroidering the memory of the dictatorship.
CHAPTER 10: CLOSING THE CIRCLE: EVALUATING OUR EXPERIENCES

In this chapter I present the analysis of the last workshop “Moving Into Action”. Then I describe the evaluation of the workshops made by the co-investigators. I continue with the therapeutic benefits identified in this process as well as the methodological recommendation for future workshops and the suggestions for the artistic material produced. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Moving into Action

The objectives of this last workshop were to: (a) integrate the embodied understanding of exploring memory and resistance, (b) to acknowledge and honor the individual and group experience in the workshops, (c) to evaluate the research process, and (d) to get the co-investigators’ opinions about replicating the workshops with other groups. This workshop was divided into two sections. The first part included a closing activity and in the second, a group debriefing about the exercise and then an evaluation of the methodological and practical value of these workshops. Finally, we discussed different strategies for presenting the artistic material produced.

The final section of the workshop included an individual and a group activity. It consisted of constructing a flower to symbolize the individual and collective memory of the experience of participating in this series of workshops. First each participant constructed a body sculpture representing a feeling related to the group experience. The facilitators took a Polaroid picture of each one of the single sculptures. After that the participants formed a group sculpture representing their embodied feelings and a group picture was taken. Following that, each participant individually constructed a narrative of their experience by gluing their pictures onto a large paper petal and decorating it with poems, drawings or paintings. Next all the co-investigators sat on the floor around a large circle that represented the centre of the flower that
had the group picture in the middle. What followed was a version of the musical chairs game. 
The participants were asked to draw or paint on the center of the flower until the music stopped, 
and moved to the next seat and continued what the other person was doing, or start something 
new. The game ended when all of the participants were back to their original seats. To finish the 
exercise each person glued his or her petal onto the centre of the flower. This big flower 
graphically represented the collective experience at the center of the flower and the individual 
experience in each petal.

**Final Reflections on Memory and Resistance**

The flower exercise represented a good opportunity to reflect on the overall learning 
experience throughout the workshops, while at the same time providing a closure to this process. 
The sculptures they constructed represent feelings or sensations such as comfort, complicity, 
happiness, love, reflection and support. Alexandra for instance expressed a sense of expansion 
through love by opening her arms on the picture and writing in the petal, “*all my love is here, 
and it is adhered to the rocks, the sea, the mountains. Memory and resistance are represented by 
the unconditional affects expressed by those who care for others*”. On the petal there are also 
drawings of a ship, a palm tree, a plane, trees and drawings of children holding hands who are placed around the petal. In this image she incorporates elements of her experience of exile in different places, the constant trips as well as the presence of children who are important for her. She also identifies the emotional nature and affection associated to memory and resistance. Pablo offers a good example of the meaning of memory and resistance expressed in this exercise. In his body sculpture he adopts a genuflection posture where his arms are extended to the front showing the palms of his hands and he looks forward showing a semi-smile. The petal symbolizes a leaf decorated with bright colorful purple and gold lines decorated with gold pearls. In between these lines he places words and phases like, “*shake your soul, set the dreams on fire,*
remember, resist, love their names, their beautiful names”. There is an attitude of veneration of his ancestors in the way he places himself in relation to others, which is complemented by the imperative tone he uses to transmit his message, which compels the listener to adopt a moral behavior in relation to memory. In this message he calls for some sort of action by “shaking your soul”, which is understood as a need to clean and regenerate oneself. Likewise, he proposes to ignite one’s dreams by working towards what one wants in life. This message also addresses the respect due by the new generations to their ancestors by remembering their names. Another example of the significance of this experience is embodied by Tamara’s work. In her petal she represents a flowering tree with colorful little flowers. In the centre of the tree she placed the picture of the sculpture she chose, which shows her in a yoga posture that symbolizes resistance. At the bottom of the tree she wrote, “to travel all the roads with the heart”. Her work clearly expresses a sense of life, and re-birth given by the tree and a simple but powerful message about putting one’s heart in everything you do in life.

The group picture shows the participants’ embraced to each other in a group hug. The center part of the flower in painted in bright colors with a number of words such as hope, freedom, justice, resistance, memory, love, and phrases such as “no to amnesia”, “we are the children of the ones who fought”, “and we possess something, that nobody will ever take away: our friendship and love”, “I love you, I wait for you, I feel you”, “even though you are not here”, “I will never forget you”; the day is approaching”, “come with all your love”, that my open hand waits for you”, “your, mine, ours”. These sentences were written by different people but follow the same initial idea, complementing what the other person said.

Consistent with what was identified in the introductory workshop, the flower exercise is a graphic representation of the participants’ desire to resist the effects of trauma from life, that is, with love, hope, affection and friendship. Therefore it is interesting to see how most of the
participants used bright colors as well as symbols of flowers, children, trees, and hands to express their experiences of the workshops. Consequently it is not surprising that there is an absolute absence of symbols that represent death, hatred, or revenge. We find this notion of “fighting from life” consistently throughout the construction of their group narrative which is also related to a certain element of emotional containment expressed throughout the workshops and that is also represented in the body collages. This suggests that in their option for life they are also fighting the sense of death, disappearance and invisibility, which has been a constant feeling in their lives. They are also following the example of their parents who chose to fight for life from an armed position; the difference is that this time they are doing it from love and affection. Furthermore, by adopting this position they are also rejecting the victim-like trauma driven political discourse of other human rights organizations.

In the reflection about this exercise they recognize that to complete what others were doing in the centre of the flower made the process easier, particularly for those who still felt a bit apprehensive about their artistic skills. At a different level they realized that by reconstructing memory we are part of collective process where we are always continuing the work that others have began and at the same time we leave a legacy for others to continue. This awareness of finding their own memories in the experiences of others is also expressed by Tamara:

I mean we are so full of images of memory, of resistance and many other things, together with the dearth we have and everything we have seen here during these days, it's really clear and it's collective, like what Ale describes makes sense to me, also the collage that Lalo made, I mean everything that we have put here (flower). And I think the experience of art is that, it has been a catharsis to be able to tell, and the images and the phrases there are and the words that have meaning to us... and of course all the memories and everything are absolutely connected with our childhood (Tamara).

This experience also shows that there is a strong connection between their childhood experiences and their difficulty in talking about that period in their lives as identified by Pablo:
I think we all have problems about the time when we were kids. I think that what affected me the most was the absence of my father, and I think that after one drags those absences from that time. And when you are a growing up it’s like it’s hard to talk about it (Pablo).

They all agreed that they have difficulty in expressing their experiences and feelings about childhood, particularly with people who are not familiar with the issues, but even among themselves. In fact they mentioned that there were many things they did not know about each other until now, even though they have known each other for quite sometime. They realized that one of the reasons might also be the fact that when they get together they usually talk about their parents:

Because everything is related to them, but here we have talked more about ourselves. But what also happens to me it’s like everybody else’s issues complement or are part of me, and also I feel very comfortable because all of you are like my brothers and sisters (Kayito).

Kayito also acknowledged that in this collective process of constructing memory she can see parts of the experiences of others that complement and help her make sense of her own experience. Furthermore, this possibility of expressing herself is also given by the affection the co-investigators have for each other. As Kayito identifies, this is one of the opportunities they have had to truly talk about themselves, which suggests that in this process of vindicating their parents, their own experiences and feelings have been somewhat absent. Working with memory and resistance also made them realize that the conversation or discussions about memory that take place at protests, marches or political activities are quite different from what they experienced in the workshops. This led them to identify that memory is usually a political concept that is removed from the personal experience of those involved, like Pablo explains:

...this (the workshops) is nothing to do with it, it’s very far from the political pamphlet, and I am kind of used to memory and justice, and you are always like with the pamphlet, and that turned into an empty idea, that has no meaning or content, it’s like the disappeared are like they didn’t exist, something that has no flesh, that has no soul that’s why I think that for the outside people, the people who are into human rights, left-wing people even, the disappeared are just like a placard, a picture, like a song (Pablo).
What Pablo identifies here is a shift in his perception of what memory was before the workshops. As he explains, memory was a political concept associated to justice that was mostly discussed at political events, but that with time has begun to lose its meaning by turning into empty ideas. Furthermore he identifies a sort of stagnation in the way people involved in human rights deal with the issue of memory. Pablo’s perceptions point to the absence of collective discussions about memory, as well as new alternatives to transmit memory to the new generations. He believes that for human rights organizations the meaning of the disappeared has changed by transforming the disappeared person into an icon, a picture with no flesh or soul. This view is shared by others and reflects their concern that the disappeared are being used or turned into an object, or an icon of memory, for political reasons and forgetting the real person behind the photograph or the song. This process makes them feel that their parents are being disappeared again in the public discourse of the human rights organizations. What they identified here is an ideologized approach of the issue that reflects the way in which memory was politicized during the dictatorship to denounce human rights abuses and that continues to be used in the same way.

Evaluation of the Workshops

One of the first issues identified by the co-investigators is the motivation to participate in the workshops. This enthusiasm was mostly given by their sense of belonging to a group and their emotional need to see each other and share time together. This experience has re-affirmed the trust and affection they have for each other, which has been built over the years based on their common experiences. Furthermore the fact that they know each other’s experiences was also an important factor that helped them opened up to this individual and collective exploration process. In this regard the supportive workshop setting provided a more real and personal environment.
The individual and group experience of constructing meaning was greatly facilitated by the artistic techniques employed since they all felt integrated and involved in the creative process. They identified that observing the work of others inspired them to work on their own, in some cases they even copied or adapted some ideas from others. The group reflection also allowed them to identify common themes in their lives such as hope, injustice, and different forms of resistance which strengthened a sense of belonging to a collective of peers:

It is a different experience because it has to do with what happens to each one of us around this issue, and I am not sure if we always talk about it but it is present at any moment ... and by looking at everything, we see the same themes repeating among us, the injustice, love, hope (Beto).

The process of working with artistic techniques created some apprehensions at the beginning since most of them did not have previous experiences; therefore initially they found themselves trapped in a self-imposed discourse of “I don’t know how to paint, I don’t know how to draw” that eventually began to change as they experienced different forms of catharsis by expressing their feelings through images, sentences, movements, and memories. Likewise the artistic process allowed them to express their inner feelings about their parents and themselves. All of the participants were able to immerse themselves with their own fears, anxieties and insecurities, particularly those related to feeling silly or ridiculous. There were no judgments, there was no one way or right way to engage in the activities.

**Therapeutic Value of the Workshops**

The analysis of the findings suggests that the artistic workshops offered a space for the exploration of personal issues in a safe and friendly environment. This was provided to a great extent by the fact that they trusted and knew each other; by the need they had to spend time together, and by the trust in the facilitators and the group process. These factors seem to have contributed to create a therapeutic environment. It is important to mention that in general the participants have resisted therapy and particularly testimony-like approaches to avoid pain,
therefore this experience represents a form of personal discovery that changes their previous conceptions of psychotherapy. In addition the topic and the artistic techniques employed facilitated their participation and involvement in the process. The analysis suggests that for most of the participants the workshops represented a different way of understanding memory and resistance by constructing their own embodied version of these concepts. Furthermore, they identify the healing and liberating potential of using artistic expressions:

To approach the subject from this perspective, because art is very subjective, it’s a vision of the person who does it, I think that to express oneself from that perspective, from the game, from the ludic activity is different... it’s like I don’t know if more natural, not more innocent, it’s like a more pure way to approach memory and to express it (Pablo).

This is magical and it is positive to work like this, with this therapeutic dimension, because at least in my case I am a daycare worker, so I am also in an environment where I have to do things with my hands, but it’s different because I am not working with myself, with my inner feelings like this, or with my memory like this, so it was ‘liberating’, because you are generally in places where you have to block yourself, so here is a liberating way, because you don’t have to show it to anybody (Vivi).

In addition, by talking and sharing their experiences they were able to begin a process of understanding their own experiences and to resolve past issues in the context of constructing collective memory:

As you grow old you begin to reconcile with your own past. It’s like I know that I am not good at painting, but I realized that I like to paint. It’s like I enjoy myself. I think I am going to get into painting. I think that you begin to resolve certain things, that when you share them with others it becomes part of the collective memory (Pablo).

Likewise the process of deconstructing the concepts of memory and resistance in the context of this exploration also allowed them to separate the political aspects associated with these concepts therefore expanding their meaning of them. By reflecting on these issues they were able to recognize the political construction of memory in the public discourse of human rights organizations and how this approach further dehumanizes the image of the disappeared by keeping them as an icon of memory. This reflection is strongly related to what has been
identified earlier in terms of their need to humanize the image of their parents by separating the political identity from the human being.

Another important therapeutic element identified is the group influence in motivating them to participate. This group experience also helped them to get to know each other in a different way, not only as a militant or the son of... or the daughter of... They appreciate listening to each other’s experience to understand where they were coming from and to connect with their own experiences. Most of them had never been to therapy so this experience represented a good first encounter. Overall they identified that the process helped humanize the victims at a more personal and intimate level, while at the same time allowed them to de-ideologize their traumas, the political understanding of memory, and more than anything allowed them to begin a process of reconciliation with themselves.

**Recommendations for Therapeutic Interventions**

All of the participants agreed that the workshops are a good therapeutic intervention. Therefore the format should be adapted so the participants can have more sessions (12-15) to allow the gradual processing of emotional material as it comes up in each session. In addition the use of each artistic technique should also be divided into more sessions (two to three) so that participants can have more time to prepare as well as time to relax during the sessions. Great emphasis was given to using therapeutic interventions at the end of each session, so that participants can fully understand and integrate the memories that emerge through the use of artistic expressions. It was also identified that there should be parallel or subsequent individual sessions to work through specific material that is not discussed in the group sessions, which would also allow them to have a closer support network.

In regards to the population that could benefit from these types of group interventions, they identified that they should focus on specific segments that share common characteristics
such as former political prisoners, families of people who were tortured, mothers of disappeared prisoners, etc., because of the shared experiences they have in common. Likewise they suggested developing specific techniques to create trust and safety, particularly with groups where they might not know each other. Family therapy is another area they identified where a version of these workshops could be useful, given the silence and the lack of communication that still exists in many families about how these events have affected them individually. Furthermore, all of them acknowledge a great need in society to speak about individual traumas. They have observed that in many political meetings people begin to talk about personal issues such as how they were tortured or the destruction of their lives produced by exile. Finally they concur that workshops, like the ones we had, are a great opportunity to introduce people to a healing process through the exploration of memory and resistance that can eventually lead them to individual, group or family therapy.

**Suggestions for the Artistic Material Produced**

The final part of this workshop was devoted to exploring some means to use and show the material produced. One of the alternatives discussed was to present an exhibition of the body collages at the University Academy of Christian Humanism and at different schools in order to begin presenting their experiences and educating others about the subject. Even though the group accepted this idea, there were some participants that seemed uncomfortable with exposing themselves to the general public. They agreed to begin exploring the possibility to do a preliminary presentation for their closest friends and families so that they could evaluate the response from people before opening it to the general public. Another idea discussed was to produce a video of the experience, which would incorporate their individual stories in the context of the workshops. Finally, the co-facilitators offered to conduct a training workshop on participatory methodologies that the participants could use in their group or professional work.
Summary of Closing the Circle: Evaluating our Experiences

In this chapter I have presented the analysis of the last workshop “Moving Into Action”. The results reflect a transformation in the level of awareness about memory and resistance compared to the beginning of the process. The participants identified a number of issues that reveal the new meanings they have made. They clearly identify the collective nature of memory by discovering elements of their own childhood in the narratives of others, which not only complements their sense of collective identity but also helps them making sense of their individual experiences. They also recognize the fact that they often talk about their parents leaving their own experiences and feelings aside, which also contributes to their sense of invisibility. Likewise they express a difference in the way they understand memory in the context of the public discourses promoted by the human rights organizations. Their treatment of the issues is perceived as inflexible and somewhat meaningless given that it has not changed since the time of the dictatorship. Furthermore, they realize that focusing exclusively on the political aspects of memory dehumanizes their parents’ lives; thus they continue to be disappeared from the public scenes. Regarding the therapeutic value of the workshops they recognize that the use of artistic techniques made the process of exploring their childhood experiences healing and liberating. Furthermore, observing and reflecting on each other’s experiences allowed them to connect with their own emotions, which made them realize that the meaning they assign to their own experiences comes to some extent from the collective construction of memory and resistance. This process was also facilitated by the therapeutic environment provided by the fact that they know and care for each other and they trusted the process and the facilitators. The evaluation of the workshops indicated that there is a therapeutic value in exploring these themes in a safe group environment. Moreover, the participants indicated that the workshops could be adapted to become a group therapeutic intervention by
modifying the format, which includes extending the number of sessions, and devoting at least two hours exclusively for processing the emotional material that comes up in each workshop. They also identified that the current format of the workshops can serve as an introductory step to help people experience the healing value of group therapy. They also suggested that this type of intervention should target specific segments of the population who share similar experiences. Finally, we identified some possible strategies to show the artistic material produced as well as future training possibilities for the participants.
CHAPTER 11: SOME TIME AFTER: VALIDATION PROCESS

In this chapter I present an analysis of the findings gathered through the individual validation meetings, and the group validation sessions. They represent the third and fourth level respectively of the data collection process that concludes the study. The objectives of both the individual and the group validation meetings were to confirm the accuracy of my analysis of the data gathered in the workshops and to reflect about the participants' personal experience of the research process. The group validation meetings took place after the individual validation sessions and included a final presentation of the interpretation of the material and a discussion to get their feedback and recommendations about the overall research process. Initially I had conceived of one group meeting, unfortunately a number of people cancelled just before the meeting; therefore I decided to conduct the session with the four people who attended. However, I scheduled other meetings for those who could not participate, and I sent my power point presentation to the people who are living out of town for their feedback. This unforeseen situation proved to be of great benefit for the overall research process given that there were a variety of issues and new findings that came out in both meetings that might have not emerged in one session. Therefore I present the analysis separately. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section I present the findings of the individual validation meetings and I finish with the initial interpretation from these meetings and the workshop findings that were presented at the group validation meetings. Second I present the findings of the first group validation meetings and I conclude with a summary of the findings. Third, I offer the results of the second group validation meetings and I finish with a synthesis of this final meeting.

Individual Validation Meetings

It is important to mention that even though the individual validation meetings were scheduled to be conducted between the two co-facilitators and each participant alone, there were
three instances in which the co-investigators requested to attend together with some friends in a small group or with a relative. Therefore after confirming that it was fine to have a dual or group meetings we conducted a session with Beto and Kayito, one with Alexandra and David, and one with Tamara, Pablo, and Lalo. I believe this reflects a cultural characteristic of doing things collectively as well as the internal dynamics of the members of HIJOS. These meetings were conducted about eight months after the workshops ended. The analysis and interpretation of the material gathered in these meetings as well as the workshops was presented to the participants in the group validation meeting for their corroboration and further reflections.

**Reflections About the Body**

One of the main issues for participants during the individual validation meetings were their reflections about the use of the body as a form of resistance after their participation in the workshops. In this regard they began to wonder what it takes for people to show a lack of concern or love for their own body by engaging in very self-destructive practices. They reflected about their own participation in meetings or activities during the dictatorship, at a time when to carry the picture of their relatives was dangerous and many times they were beaten up by the police or arrested. Nevertheless they continued to engage in actions like that, knowing the risk involved. Now they realize that they were not that conscious at that time, because they just felt it was something they had to do as part of a collective response to the ongoing repression. Even in relation to the hunger strike, Pablo remembers that deep inside he was not very convinced that he wanted to do it, however someone had to do it and he agreed. This uncertainty about his participation turned into fear when people began to worry that he could die and, at some point, he feared for his life. Now he wonders why he did it. Likewise, in relation to the immolation of Sebastian Acevedo to save his children, they mention that they can understand the symbolism and the legacy of resistance left to a whole generation, however, they question whether his death
was worthwhile. These reflections have also led them to withdraw from public demonstrations or activities in the last period because they do not feel the same urgency as they did in the past.

Pablo explains his experience in the following passage:

I mean maybe you don’t put your life at risk, but to chain yourself? I have gone through all the stupidities you can think of, whatever stupidity they told me I would be there, chained to La Moneda, they would beat me up to a pulp, I mean I even go to the Greenpeace marches, everything, I am the militant of all the lost causes, but all of the sudden this year, last year, even after the workshops, it’s like I don’t feel like being the militant of the lost causes anymore. It’s like no more (Pablo).

Other participants mentioned that they could not deal with somebody else’s pain anymore therefore they stopped participating in these marches so as to concentrate on their own issues related to their traumas. Moreover, a co-investigator who was scheduled to meet some friends for the September 11th protest declined at the last minute because he became concerned about something happening to him and leaving his son fatherless. These examples show a profound change in their awareness about using their bodies to protest, but also about the reasons that motivated these actions in the past. Their present awareness also reflects a concern for their children indicating that at some level they do not want to repeat the political options and decisions of their parents that ended up in them being killed or disappeared. This constant questioning about the reasons for engaging in those actions reflects a deeper level of awareness that was beginning to emerge.

Their analysis of the use of the body as a form of resistance leads them to connect this issue to the personal conflicts they still have about their parents. Some of them admit feeling angry with them because of their political options that led them to abandon their families and eventually to their death. They commented that the complaints about their fathers’ options are often expressed in the intimacy of their conversations, but rarely in public. This contradiction suggests the existence of a public and a private discourse about how they really feel about their parents and how and when they express that. They wonder if this enormous sacrifice was
worthwhile particularly in the context of a current society, which is the opposite of what their parents dreamed of. Besides, they begin to question their own role in explaining to the new generations what their parents were fighting for in the current political context, particularly after a political defeat. They understand these reflections as part of the reasons why they have retreated from public demonstrations in the last period. Furthermore, these profound changes about the way they perceive their political work in the present had led them to question themselves in terms of “How long do we need to vindicate our parents?” This is one of the core elements that emerged for a number of participants and that reflects a profound questioning of their own life in the present and what they want to do with their lives in the future.

The confusion experienced as part of this process leads them also to wonder about what would happen if they discover that their parents were ‘collaborators’ of the police secret services. When confronted with this possibility they realize that their whole world would collapse, particularly because they grew up with certain values related to the political work of their parents, but more than that because they vindicated their parents as a fighter, not as a father. They reflect about the possibility that under the effects of torture they might have talked and what that would mean for them. However, they have constructed a narrative about their parents where they were able to resist torture and died without talking, which is the essence of the identity they have created for themselves; the children of martyrs. This dilemma leads them to identify two different positions. One of them relates to the fact that part of the burden they feel is precisely that they have to carry a lot of meanings and issues that are not theirs, but that come with the social responsibility that they have undertaken. The other posture identifies that the parents made their own decisions in terms of speaking or not, and therefore they as children should realized that they cannot take the responsibility for what their parents did, even if they were indeed collaborators. This doubt cast upon their parents seems to shake not only the image
they have constructed around them but also their own political work of vindicating them, as Pablo explains:

Some of us have constructed a life based on this. So like suddenly, of course the moment comes when you realize that you have also left aside, you haven’t built anything, and you have constructed everything around this sort of “obligation” of vindicating. So you begin to realize, like I am the clear example among them, I don’t have a house, I don’t have anything, and until a couple of months I didn’t have any intention to have anything material, to build anything, like my son is the only preoccupation I have. And all of the sudden I began to realize that my life, I have been constructing based on this, and I believe that it is not good because I have left aside my life (Pablo).

The analysis reflects a profound change in the meaning they assigned to these practices of memory and resistance prior to participating in the workshops, which have led them to question their own lives as adults, and particularly their role as children of disappeared fathers or executed parents. What becomes clear in these narratives is that the social responsibility passed on to them to vindicate their parents had a personal cost that in some cases meant a self-exclusion by neglecting their own needs. These feelings are also compounded by the fragility of the political image they have constructed about their parents, which to some extent does not admit contradictions or ambivalences, because that would leave them without a purpose and meaning. The fragility of this construction also reflects the vulnerable presence of their parents in their lives, which is conditioned by following a certain profile.

A somewhat different position is the one taken by Juan Carlos in regards to his disappeared father. In his case he has constructed an image of his father by selecting elements from the people who knew him, but also from his own personal search in trying to understand what his father was like through resources like movies, poetry, literature and by humanizing his father’s political heroes. Furthermore, his Mapuche origin provides him the cultural framework to view him as one of his ancestor, who in their worldview, are always present, in everyday life as well as in the political struggles. From this conception the image of his father becomes more mythical and therefore less likely to be questioned or destructed by political contradictions.
Yet a different position is presented by Daniela’s construction of her executed father. In her case she went into exile with her mother, father and sister to Denmark. During that period she had a chance to get to know and enjoy her father until she was nine years old. She described her childhood as happy even though her parents separated when she was young. After the separation she began to see her father in a different way, she stopped seeing him as an idealized hero, but rather as a normal human being who made mistakes just like everybody else. This experience made her accept his political option of an armed struggle and at some point she took some emotional distance as well. She also believes that growing up in a different country, in a society that is more accepting, also helped her process her experience in a different way.

However, her recent first pregnancy re-opened certain issues with her father, because she would have liked him to meet her daughter, but more than that she longed for her father’s protection at the time. Daniela’s experience represents a different approach to dealing with her father’s death, which is largely given by the contexts in which she lived and the time she spent with her father.

Beto’s experience also provides a different approach that also complements the group experience. In his case the workshops confronted him with a need to close a number of personal issues that he was dealing with at the time. Unlike other members of HIJOS who have a more complete story of their parents, but they do not know where they are or how they died, he instead knows how his parents died and where they are, but he is missing their experience as militants. The workshops meant that a door opened for him in terms of understanding his life from a different perspective as he explains:

There is a total, complete coherence that relates to the personal process I am dealing with right now of producing a documentary about my father, so for me it has complete meaning, but not only what it has to do with making the documentary, but also how I deal with history from what I am interested in today which is audiovisuals. This is a process that I hadn’t seen, I hadn’t realized until now (Beto).
In his case he needs to construct aspects of his parents’ lives that are still a mystery, but he chooses to combine his interest for producing audiovisual material with re-constructing the memory of his parents from his own experience and needs. Likewise Kayito discovers in the workshops that her father was also a ceramist at some point in his life, therefore she found a new connection between herself and her father through their mutual interest for pottery.

**Reflections About Memory and Resistance**

The individual validation meetings revealed some new personal information that was not evident during the workshops such as the role memory and resistance play in exile. For Alexandra and David their experience of exile in different countries represented a form of resistance. This was given by the fact that they were ideologically connected to Chile through their relatives, friends and the Chilean communities in exile, thus resisting the separation imposed by exile. However, the fact that they were away and therefore did not live the political processes inside the country was meant to be emotionally disconnected, as Alexandra explains:

So then there is a feeling of not belonging for a long time and to reconstruct your memory from a long time after the rest, it’s not the same for me, for example, when I talk to Pablo or Lalo, the people who stayed here, because my reconstructing of memory begins from the collective, from the social reconstruction way after (Alexandra).

Alexandra and David recognize that they experienced a conflict in adolescence related to their need to come back to Chile not necessarily to live, but to “know” what happened to their executed mother. Therefore the first thing they did when they came back was to begin a search for information about where she was, who knew her, so they could begin to reconstruct their family memory. Strongly connected with their need to recover aspects of their past is the embodied nature of memory that Alexandra identifies when she came back to Chile:

Besides, you feel, it’s something very strange because you feel in your skin, inside of you, that your history is here, I was born outside, I had never come back until I was 15, so during all the stages of my life I felt I was from different places, and I adapted very well, I had friends and whatever you want, but there is a thing that you begin to discover when you get here, even though you might not like certain things of this country, but
nevertheless my history is here... and it will always be part of, until I die, of my memory of the history, of the senses, of everything (Alexandra).

In this process of reconstructing their family memory they identify their political belonging as a factor that helped them obtain the personal information they needed about their mother. After six months of being in Chile they met a member of HIJOS who invited them to the meetings and it was with them that they started to feel a sense of belonging:

And it was there that we met a group of sons and daughters and we began getting involved, and we began to feel we were part of something, something that was our own, not necessarily the history of the parents, the memory or the struggle, instead it was something ours, so then you start asking the others, and we read and then we asked our dad, and he would say yes and he is a son of a friend and that (David).

Their narrative shows the difficulties experienced by sons and daughters who grew up in exile, in constructing a personal memory of their family. It reflects the inner conflicts related to a sense of belonging experienced as teenagers and their profound desire to know about their mother. Unlike those who remained in the country they faced the lack of a collective memory to give meaning to their experience. Therefore, they were faced with a process of reconstructing their individual and collective memory when they came back to the country. Even though their experience might be somewhat different we still perceive their strong need to fill in the gaps in their memory produced by lack of information, objects and places of memory as well as the geographical distance resulting from exile. Similar experiences and feelings are shared by Juan Carlos who grew up in Holland, and Daniela who grew up in Denmark. Vivi on the other hand also went into exile to Switzerland with her father and his new family when she was a teenager, however she did not lose her parents and she also had a relationship with her family before they were killed, therefore her process of constructing memories is different.

For most participants there was a new sense of awareness by identifying that memory and resistance are strongly connected. Resistance is now perceived as a complement of memory that
allowed them in the past to go through life, but without being completely conscious of the role of resistance in surviving. In this regard Kayito explains:

> In my case, I never, I had just began to work with the issue of resistance the year before, because for me resistance was like a thing, a big word, a word that comes upon you, like a big thing and so heavy, and because of that, you, you don’t take into account the small gestures, little, they are also resistance, I mean all those small gestures that you don’t give them the dignity they have (Kayito).

By identifying resistance in small gestures and actions they begin to reframe its meaning, while at the same time it allowed them to understand their actions in a different light. In this regard resistance is also understood as connected with avoiding certain things and precisely these workshops have helped them identify some aspects of their lives that have not been resolved yet.

The transmission of memory is also another issue addressed by the co-investigators, particularly those who have small children and who know that at some point they will have to explain to them what happened to their grandparents, like in the case of David:

> I had to explain to Nicolás who just turned six years old in January, I explained two months ago why he didn’t have a grandmother, do you realize? So then I was kind of avoiding it until I talked to my wife and I told her I am going to tell him the truth, so then, well he sees history in a different way obviously, but he knows that here there were good people who fought for everybody and the bad people killed his grandmother. So then he is going to feel in some way I don’t know if the damage that, we could have felt, but that they took something from him (David).

This confusion about what and how to tell their children is also strongly connected to the fear of transmitting their own traumas to their children. This urgency in resolving this conflict makes them further question the role of memory in their lives. From their own experience they understand that the political image of the parents they grew up with might not be a stable construction. This is compounded by the little personal information they have about their parents. Therefore, they feel the need to reconstruct this image based on what I call “an informed truth”. This informed truth would be a balanced combination of the political image of the grandparents together with the personal aspects that made them a regular human being.
addition, as it was identified in the workshops, most of them never really talked to anyone about what they felt growing up in relation to the disappearance and death of their parents. It is now that they begin to identify that they still have a need to talk about these feelings. They realized then that by talking to their children with an informed truth they might not repeat the mistakes their parents made by either creating a political figure or by denying them information.

**Therapeutic Benefits of the Workshops**

Most of the participants report some changes in their awareness about their personal life resulting from the research process. These changes reflect a new meaning of memory and resistance and the role they have taken in their lives. The research process also made them connect with their feelings by identifying their unfulfilled needs, particularly those related to their childhood. During this period four of them approached me for referral for counseling. This dynamic clearly reflects the circular nature of the process that moves from the collective to the individual and back to the collective. This interpretation is consistent with their experience after the hunger strike where all of them isolated themselves and disconnected from the group. A similar situation occurred after the workshops, which would indicate the need to process the experience individually, before going back to the group.

The workshops as well as the validation meetings were a good opportunity to identify the trans-generational effects of trauma in this group of people. In the case of the sons and daughters of the disappeared we can observe the impact of their traumatic experience in the impossibility to have a normal grieving process, given mostly by the absence of a body and therefore a funeral ritual:

It’s difficult even more so if they tell you that they threw your dad to the sea or to a volcano (Pablo).

Personally, I don’t know how we could have a mourning process, I mean really, if they ever give me a box with bones, I don’t know if that could help me resolve the grieving issues, I mean the closure. I feel strange about that (Tamara).
These two narratives reflect the difficulty experienced by children of the disappeared in completing a mourning process. This impossibility is further compounded by the prevalent impunity exercised from the State, which has slowly removed the issue of human rights from the public discourse. This situation is identified by the participants as one of the reasons they feel compelled to continue working to know the truth of what happened to their parents. This pending grieving process is also reflected in the words of Pablo who suggests that, “maybe if we had a funeral we would be able to cry, because that is the social instance where people cry”. This statement reflects that to some extent that they are still waiting for a funeral to express their feeling in order to move on with their lives, but also the importance of the funeral rituals to close a grieving process. However, the absence of the remains of their fathers together with their social responsibility to keep fighting to find them seems to make this process difficult. This tension between finding closure and proceeding with the fight continues to be at odds.

In relationship to the techniques used in the workshops the participants suggest using some of the exercises such as the memory trunk, and others visualization techniques with different groups to motivate people to explore the meaning of memory and resistance. Likewise they recommend developing a manual with the information obtained to train facilitators to conduct similar workshops. Another positive evaluation of the workshops is that they did not have to offer a testimony as part of the research process. When they compare these two forms of data collection they identify that the testimony method might take them to victimize themselves, while the workshops allowed them to construct and reflect about their lives based on the exploration of memory and resistance practices.

Initial Interpretation of Findings

The following interpretation illustrates the main elements identified in the individual narratives and that together form a group narrative that describes the different stages experienced
by the participants from childhood until now. This interpretation was presented to the co-
investigators in the final group meetings. The analysis of the six workshops and the individual
validation meetings identify the coup d'état as the first traumatic experience that profoundly
changed the lives of all the co-investigators. Some of the consequences of this social process
included the disappearance and killing of their parents, and in some cases relatives, as well as
exile for half of the participants. The political, economic, and emotional uncertainty of the
surviving parent and relatives, the climate of fear and silence and the exile, contributed to a lack
of information not only about the whereabouts of their parents, but also about how they were as
human beings, thus creating 'memory gaps' in their experience. This need to know them
personally launched them into an individual search for a 'personal truth' of who they were. In
this process they resorted to their own memory, and other people's memories to construct an
identity of the absent parent. As they grew older they began to participate in social and political
activities so as to gather information about the political work of their parents, but also to
vindicate their political image. The social responsibility takes them to use their bodies to
symbolize the absent bodies of their parents through protests, hunger strikes, or chaining
themselves to buildings. Through this process they construct 'a political image' of their parents,
which was also mediated by the political discourse of the human rights organizations. At a
personal level this process of searching for their parents in some cases, or for information about
them, confronts them with unresolved personal issues with the dead or the disappeared person,
which are strongly linked to the concept of family and to the essence of the interpersonal
relationships. In order to deal with these conflicts some of them construct public and private
discourses about their parents. Their search is also confined within a collective composed by
human rights organizations that are demanding truth and justice therefore they also began
searching for a 'political truth'. However, they identify that the memory practices and the public
political discourse of these organizations has become stagnated, therefore trapping the image of
t heir parents in a rigid political discourse that dehumanizes and further disappears them. The
exploration of memory and resistance practices through these workshops highlights these
personal conflicts and political debates. This process leads them to question themselves about
their responsibility in exposing their bodies, about how much longer they need to vindicate their
parents for, about the possibility that their parents collaborated, and the responsibility of the
political parties in protecting their parents from torture and death. These inner conflicts are
expressed by a decline in their interest for participating in public activities, and a renewed
interest in understanding and dealing with their own personal issues. These elements suggest that
the search for a political truth is losing importance, given that it does not fully satisfy their need
for a personal truth. These changes in their motivations are also influenced by their need to leave
an ‘informed truth’ as a legacy to their children that is consistent with their own experience and
how they feel in the present. These personal contradictions also reflect their need to begin
distancing from their parents’ image by coming to terms with their own grieving processes.
Finally the findings suggest that this exploration process confronted most participants with a
need to address the personal costs of this search and the need to answer the following questions:
What have I done with my life? When does the vindication process end and my life begin?
Consequently, there seems to be a need to close some life circles in order to open new ones.

First Group Validation Meetings

In this section I present the findings of the group validation meetings that took place a
couple of months after the individual meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to present the
interpretations of the research process to the co-investigators for their validation and feedback.

In this first section I offer the analysis of the first meeting that was attended by Vivi,
Alexandra, Kayito, and Beto. The analysis is based on the group responses and comments on the
interpretation I presented. In regards to the process of searching for different types of truths throughout their lifetimes and the personal conflicts identified with this search, Beto offers his own experience that coincides with this interpretation:

...from the moment I commit myself to the workshops until today I am not the same one, I am a different person, I have evolved a lot... what makes a lot of sense to me is how it has removed the history, the entire history to the extent that how one reconstruct oneself, you go back to the past that is not the same one anymore, I mean in terms of the facts is the same, but the reading that you begin to do is different, that even the visions, the constructions lead to a profound questioning that produces a crisis, that I think it was always there but you deny, and that happened sometime after the workshops that was also linked to other things. I think it was the time to happen anyways. But those two questions you have there what have I done? How long do I continue with this? And then well what do I want to do? And it's like to cut that umbilical cord; it makes a lot of sense to me, a lot of sense. And makes me commit myself with a new strength to the processes that will always be connected to them, I mean my life is not always related to an assassinated family, but it's like today that is different, very different from what you want to continue doing, I mean you take some distance, I am the... the son of... No I am Beto I do all these things and besides I am a relative of... So then it's a different perspective, is another, it doesn't feel like a burden anymore, a bit like a push, it's what happens to me, there is a change, but powerful (Beto).

This narrative reflects the personal process experienced by the participant throughout the workshops and afterwards, which also accounts for the existence of personal conflicts that were made visible through the exploration of memory and resistance. As he identifies, the workshops allowed him to develop new readings and therefore new meanings of the same events. In this process he begins to question where he is in the present and what he wants to do with his life. This suggests the beginning of a new personal identity that is based on a process of differentiation from his parents, the social responsibility linked to them and the assumption of his own independent identity. This passage also reveals the therapeutic value of the workshops as a process of personal discovery.

Strongly related to the therapeutic value of the workshops is the participation of people they knew and trusted from HIJOS. Their commitment and interests in participating were given by the need to share time and go through this process together. In this regard they identify the
possibility of recognizing themselves in the experience of others, because they feel part of each other’s memory. This is complemented by the emotional protection they feel from the presence of others that allows them to open and close processes together. Likewise, they express that this emotional openness is also provided by the values left by their parents like the unconditional loyalty to friends that their parents reflected in their political work, but that in their case is reflected in their everyday personal relationships. They make a clear distinction between the type of relationship they have among them and the rest of their “normal” friends. They recognize that they have gone through a number of processes together that includes discussions about feeling “victimized”, which helped them to sort out their individual feelings about victimization.

Likewise they assert that the workshops helped them identify that the concept of vindication has been changing for them over time. What has changed for instance is that they no longer go to marches with the pictures and the placards of their parents like they used to do in the past. Therefore their own public discourse has been changing from a more violent, combative and angry approach to a more personal, and interpersonal one, which is represented by what they created in the body collages. They perceive an emotional transformation from the anger experienced in the past to a more personal reflective position in the present, which is expressed in their desire to vindicate their parents by being more consistent with the examples they left them. For some participants the new meaning about the role of vindication in their lives came from an understanding that this validation process is not an individual or personal problem, but rather a collective issue, like in Beto’s experience:

This understanding that the vindication process is not like something individual, not like the problem resides in me, it’s not like I have the problem, I mean of course it is manifested in me, but there is a collective, a lot of other people, other children of, other relatives that experience a similar thing, and that is definitely crossed by the sociopolitical and historical context, that has nothing to do with me, *I mean I am not guilty of this stuff, I am not* (italics added) (Beto).
This segment shows how Beto was able to externalize the issue of his social responsibility in validating his parents’ lives and by doing so he discovered that he is no longer guilty of something he did not do. This epiphany is shared by others who also identify that if the process is collective therefore the healing needs to be collective as well as individual. From this perspective they examine the experience of the older generation made up by their surviving parents, grandparents, the women of the human rights associations and they identify that in fact they are very stuck to an old victim-like public discourse, because they have had a “double pain”; first the impossibility of dealing with their own pain, and second the responsibility of helping those who came after. In addition, they view this generation as profoundly damaged by what they call “political pain”, that is, torture, death, disappearances and a political defeat that the members of HIJOS do not have. By reflecting on the issues affecting their parent’s generation they also identify that their inability of dealing with their traumas, by attending therapy or simply talking about their feelings or physical pain, is connected to the social context in which the trauma occurred, as in the case of Alexandra’s father:

My father is lost in his inner process, I mean he is going to die with that, with those things inside, because they lost, and he tells me that, I mean that affected him profoundly, and the other day we were talking about the new political context that is coming, what might come ahead, you know, these new social processes and trying to give himself an impulse or connect, but you realize that it is from a collective political process, not from an individual process in personal terms, so he is not able to tell you ‘this happened to me, this hurts me’, you see, that is physical and mental, and very, very complicated (Alexandra).

Alexandra’s narrative about her father provides us with some important information about how the collective political context of her father’s generation has impeded them from connecting their collective political loses to their individual experiences in order to begin a healing process. They connect this view and approach to their own experiences in the last fifteen years of their lives represented by the slogan they had, “It’s not time to cry, it’s time to fight”, which led them to block and resist their feelings in the same way. Furthermore, they identify a
generational difference in the way they are dealing with these issues and what their surviving parents did. In this regard they see that in their parents' generation there are two options: one is to participate in the organization of human rights, attend the meetings and remain stuck to a still version of political memory, and the other is to withdraw from the world as a form of negating their feelings. In contrast they have been able to bring out different issues and processes in their conversations and discussions inside HIJOS and more recently in the workshops. These strategies have helped them develop a much healthier attitude.

They concur that the vindication of their parents is also related to the type of legacy they want to leave to their children because what they want for themselves and for their children is to be able to look at the history of this country from a more personal and intimate perspective. Therefore to give themselves permission to admit and show their pain during the workshops is perceived as the beginning of a transformation that aims at preparing a world for themselves and their children, like Alexandra explains: "There is an issue of saying I want to live, and they are going to be here, they are part of my history". This process will take different forms and will leave unfinished issues but it will change the political and institutionalized notion of memory, thus "everything will become smaller, because the inner world is much freer of all of that" (Alexandra). They also identify this process as a need to finish with the idealization of the parents that all of them have done at some point and that some members continue to do in the present.

Consistent with my interpretation, the issue of transmitting the history to their children appears as a concern and something they do not feel ready to take up yet. All of them wondered what is the best answer to those questions, but based on their personal experience they opted for the truth although they do not want them to grow up full of hatred and anger like they did. They recognize that part of their personal process points towards writing a new type of history with
their children, where they can transmit the positive aspects of their experiences without their traumas, without obligations and impositions, and without anger. Nevertheless they still fear repeating unconsciously the same patterns they received from their mothers or fathers like the silence about what happened, the lack of communication, and the inability to express their feelings.

Vivi’s experience provides a different view of how people deal with the loss of their relatives. In her case she decided to participate in the study because she has always been interested in the therapeutic aspect of art and she has been curious to investigate why people seem to reject whatever is considered therapeutic, or what she identifies as a fear of exposing their life experiences. In contrast she has always looked for experiences that could be healing. She identifies her personal experience as somewhat different from the rest of the group because she spent time with her aunts, uncles and grandfather before they were killed so she did not idealize them in the same way, because she had personal and family memories, therefore she does not need to search for them in the way others do. In addition, they were close relatives but not her parents therefore she sees a different intensity in the kind of loss experienced. She explains her feelings by expressing that she has always been inundated by a profound sadness related to the fact that five members of her family were killed:

I was very pessimistic, I had this like big sadness and anger, I can’t say that it was only about that, because I was also coming out of another very traumatic process, so all that made me wish not to have kids, I had the opposite feelings, I didn’t want to have children so that it would end in me, let’s say the black, the rage, the sadness, Do you understand? No, no, no I didn’t want kids for many reasons, but one of them was that, but happily now, with my daughter and with this process and other therapeutic processes have made me turn around and feel more complete, and now I agree about leaving a legacy, but after turning around (Vivi).

Vivi’s narrative confirms some of the findings since in her case she had the chance to get to know her relatives and therefore she has a personal experience and memories of them that makes the grieving process different because she does not need to search for that personal
information to complete an image of them. In addition, her initial desire of not having children identifies a different way of dealing with losing her family; in this case she opted for stopping the traumatic legacy produced by the trauma. Nevertheless, she was able to change that view and she is now the proud mother of an eight-year old girl.

**Summary of the First Group Validation Meeting**

This first group validation meeting revealed some interesting findings regarding the way in which participants had integrated the workshop experience into their personal lives. We observe that the understanding of memory and resistance from a personal and embodied perspective allowed them to construct new meanings particularly related to the role these two concepts have played in their lives. From this new conception they view resistance as a part of memory that is also found in everyday life, actions, and gestures, that were fundamental in their emotional and physical survival. Memory on the other hand is constructed as an important element involved in their social responsibility of vindicating their parents. Therefore by externalizing the vindicating role of memory they have begun to identify the need to differentiate themselves from their parents in order to construct their own life. Part of this process of separation or “cutting the umbilical cord” is related to transforming their identity as ‘children of’ to a more independent view of themselves. Likewise, changing the concept of vindication means to de-idealize their parents as mythical heroes by transforming them into regular human beings. Therefore the memories associated to them need to be transformed, which would explain their criticisms about the stagnated discourse on memory promoted by some of the human rights organization, in particularly the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees. The findings suggest a generational difference in terms of the effects of psychosocial trauma in the co-investigators and their parents’ generation. In the older generation there are significantly more traumatic events such as torture, disappearance, exile, and a political defeat, as well as an
even stronger social responsibility. In addition it is identified that their collective worldview might be associated to their inability to connect with their personal feelings and support networks. The participants’ generation, on the other hand, identify themselves as having less stressful and traumatic events in their lives, although they recognize the transmission of trauma to the children as an ongoing concern. By analyzing the difference in the way their parents handled the effects of trauma and social responsibilities, the participants have been able to detect the elements that have contributed to unhealthy relationships, such as silence and lack of communication and the inability to express feelings. In contrast, they perceive that they have a much healthier approach because they have been consistently discussing their personal issues among their peers. In this regard their belonging to HIJOS appears as an extremely important political, social, and emotional network that has contributed over the year to provide the emotional support and containment that they were not receiving anywhere else. The structure and therapeutic value of their participation in this group can be compared with the self-help groups although the objectives and strategies might be different. The findings also demonstrate the therapeutic value of creating a safe context to reconstruct the embodied experiences of memory and resistance through the use of creative techniques. By using their bodies and their hands to re-construct and construct their notions of memory and resistance they were able to materialize their history, emotions, relationships and conflicts with their past. The reflection about the experience and the time that mediated throughout the process allowed them to externalize their conflicts, needs and possible solutions, thus setting in motion a liberating healing process.

**Second Group Validation Meeting**

The second group validation meeting took place a couple of weeks after and was attended by Tamara, Pablo, and Lalo. In this session one of the first issues addressed was related to the
question posed by another participant in relation to the responsibility of the political parties in protecting their members from death and disappearances. In this regard there are two opposing visions: Pablo on one hand, believes that accepting that statement means to take away the responsibility of the military in the death and disappearance of political militants; Tamara on the other hand agrees that the political parties had some responsibility particularly because in 1974 when their parents disappeared the leaders of the MIR knew what was happening, therefore they did have a responsibility in protecting their members. This discussion leads to an analysis of the responsibility of their own fathers in making the political decisions they did. All of them agreed that their parents made informed decisions at the time. In their discussion they identify some of the mistakes made by the leadership of the party as well as the brutal way in which they were exterminated by the secret services of the dictatorship. In their estimate the MIR is the political party with the most number of militants dead or disappeared. Currently it has no political influence because they do not exist as a political party anymore. Another factor they identify among the political characteristic of the party is the fact they were committed to the armed struggle, which implies an intention of resisting the military, therefore the moral and ethical values and training of their militants were different from other political parties. At a personal level they recognize that these values are part of a strong loyalty for the party and its members, which was an element that eventually played against them, since it was used by the secret police to capture most of its members. Like the participants in the other group, they also recognize the damaging effects of the political defeat and the destruction of their life project in the surviving militants, whom they view as “orphans” like themselves. This sense of abandonment has also been politically imposed on them by the Concertación. Among the reparation laws implemented by the government there was one that qualified all the workers and leaders of political parties who lost their jobs during the dictatorship as “political exonerated” in order to receive a
government pension for life. However, the members of the MIR did not qualify for this pension because it was not a “legal party” at the time. The meaning of this political action for these members of HIJOS is expressed by Pablo:

"So I think these guys tried to make them invisible in society, I mean they did not exist, did not exist socially, they are still not existing today socially or legally, therefore by denying them the category of political exonerated, they continue to make them invisible, that is they didn’t exist, therefore if they don’t exist legally, if they don’t exist socially, if they don’t exist politically, they are not going to exist as humans, they are nothing, they are nothing" (italics are mine to reflect the emphasis in his voice) (Pablo).

This passage reveals some deeply felt issues among HIJOS, particularly the fact that by the State making their fathers invisible, they feel invisible. What we see here is how the emotional cost of the disappearance process of their fathers by the dictatorship continues to be experienced as invisibility by the political practices of the democratic governments of the “Concertación”, which highlights the effects of impunity on this group of people. This political invisibility is also connected to the fact that the responsibility of vindicating their parents has fallen onto the relatives and the few close friends, or close political groups, including some former militants or ex-friends of their parents. They recognize that their way of doing political work is influenced by their need to become visible in a society that has made them invisible for being sons and daughters of MIR militants. An example of that is the reaction people have when they mentioned they are sons of MIR members:

"Until today when you talk about the MIR, many people associate them as terrorists or the armed struggle, but they immediately associate it with the armed struggle, and if you analyze the history of the MIR, the least they had was an armed struggle... so as a son of a Mirista you internalize something (Pablo).

This internalized sense of invisibility has been also complemented by the discrimination they have experienced in the Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees for being children of MIR militants, perhaps as they state, due to the fact that the association is controlled by the communist party."
A good example of their efforts to fight this collective sense of invisibility is the experience of the hunger strike. The strike was a resource they used to get out of the invisibility they feel the government was imposing on them as a result of the proposed immunity to the military. In that sense all their efforts were concentrated on doing good public relations work to make them visible through this political action. Their efforts proved efficient since the media covered extensively the hunger strike at the time. Even to name the strike Luciano Carrasco was vindicating him by making him visible in society, because they believe that his suicide was the result of the profound sadness and chronic depression he developed after the brutal killing of his father Pepe Carrasco, a well-known journalist and social leader. The experience following the strike was also revealing of this sense of invisibility:

I think about the strike again, and I feel that what happened there was very important and everything, but then we all left in a hurry, we weren’t able to deal with it because we went back to being invisible again (Tamara).

Their evaluation of the hunger strike shows that they were not ready to offer political leadership to the many social groups and organizations that supported them and that were demanding a sense of direction in the political actions following the strike. Their inability to respond to these demands was due in part to the sense of invisibility identified by Tamara, but also due to the fact that they are a group of friends who organized a political action and not necessarily a political organization prepared to deal with leading a social movement, as it was anticipated at the time.

Strongly related to the invisibility they experience is the connection they make with the trauma and physical illnesses. They theorize that the two cases of cancer among them might be related to the trauma and the invisibility they experience. At the individual level this sense of being invisible has been a constant feeling among them:

In personal terms, this issue of being invisible for society is like it got stuck to me, so it’s hard for me to go out and commit myself with actions related to public memory, I mean I
participate in a few things, but like wanting to be anonymous, to be unnoticed, I have that, very deep inside of me, maybe that’s why I got sick, because I didn’t express it, I have expressed very little of the rage, the rage I have (Tamara).

I don’t have any problems assuming myself as a son of, but in university... no, in the neighborhood maybe, because in my neighborhood they know me, but maybe in other places I am not interested in someone saying hey, this is a son of a ‘detained disappeared’, what I mean is that you are invisible precisely because you are the son of these other people who are invisible (Pablo).

These two testimonies highlight the essence of how the social invisibility affecting their parents has been transmitted to their children. The effects of this invisibility have been internalized to the extent that it expands over their social relationships, their self-image and identity and perhaps their health. However, in their analysis they explain that this experience might not be the same for all members of HIJOS, given that some of them are sons and daughters of emblematic leaders of the MIR and other political parties. In these cases they experience the opposite, which is an unwanted visibility resulting from the public image constructed around their parents.

In regards to the experience of constructing memory they recognize the changes in the process as they grow older because they have more elements and information to use in reconstructing the father’s image. In contrast when they were children they had to imagine them, so in that context fantasy and imagination were necessary tools to use. Pablo identifies in the reconstruction process memory serves a symbolic and practical function:

But that reconstruction is like, is more symbolic and it is practical as well, for instance when I was a kid it was more practical that symbolical, I mean you needed to have a dad because all the other kids had a dad, and because in father’s day, and because you just needed to have a dad, then after you make it a reconstruction more real that it is also more practical and more structured (Pablo).

In this never-ending process of re-constructing memory they recognize that they have become “collectors of memory” given that they are constantly looking for information in every context. Therefore they have learnt that in order to get personal information they contact
relatives and friends. For political information they contact former militants; in these cases they carry a picture for identification because all of the MIR militants had political names, which makes it difficult to identify them by their real name.

In relation to the unresolved conflicts with the absent father identified in my interpretation, they reflect again on the political option taken by their parents and how these have affected them as children and now as adults by producing conflicting feelings. In this regard there seem to be two contradictory positions. Lalo and Pablo express that they agree completely with their political choice because they did not have another option, but to die fighting for the wellbeing of their families and their country. Lalo further justifies this position by saying that he has never questioned his decision and by adding that:

Personally I am really happy with the option he took, because of what it has meant for me, and I always say it, to have met Pablo, to have met Tamara, those relationships I had never had, let’s say, most likely... I mean, but when you construct your life, I don’t know I wouldn’t change it for anything, I mean my daughter, I mean, if it hadn’t been for my father, my daughter wouldn’t exist and I love her (Lalo).

Tamara on the other hand, does not feel the same way because she would prefer to have her father alive, however she feels ambivalent about this issue:

I feel that my feelings about my father have been very fluctuating... there are moments that I am very angry at him, and I can’t help it, I mean, I think it’s more honest to accept it like that, but it is not about his political option per se, because it was his life, and he was in that for a long time, and I respect that, but I would have also liked that the number one option had been my mom or it had been me as a life option, I would have loved it, and I say it from the selfishness, from the need, from the absence of a paternal image (Tamara).

Like Lalo, Pablo does not question his father’s decision either:

I have never questioned my father, I mean I don’t have a memory of having questioned him, to have said he should have opted for me when I was a kid because you don’t have a political memory, you don’t know what’s wrong, and what’s right. Later on I understood, and because I also realized that, I have met his compañeros who are deeply damaged, many are drunks and they only want to die... and I wouldn’t have liked my dad drunk, hitting my mom, because not that, that is to be dead, so I have always thought that he did what he had to do (Pablo).
These three narratives offer an interesting entry point into the complexities of accepting their fathers' decision to choose a political struggle over a family life. Lalo's perspective reflects what seems like an acceptance derived from an appreciation of what he has in life, including his daughter, whose mother is also a daughter of a disappeared. Tamara offers a more emotional narrative where we can appreciate her struggle for coming to terms with the dichotomy represented by rationally accepting her father's decision and her own emotional need to know that she was important for her father. Pablo constructs a narrative of acceptance based on the probability that if his father was alive he could be in emotional pain and therefore an alcoholic. These three approaches reflect different ways of dealing with a complex issue from rational and emotional positions, but that nevertheless show a very structured political discourse about the issue. These two different visions identified by the participants lead them to reflect about the fact that there might be a gender difference in the way men and women deal with the issue, given that it seems to be that women in the group are more likely to express their anger and frustration with their fathers for abandoning them. From Tamara's experience this is a phase in the relationship with the absent father that comes after you have stopped idealizing him as a hero. Men on the other hand oppose themselves to the notion that they have idealized their fathers' political image over the years. Pablo offers a good example of what seems as a personal struggle to keep an image that would sustain itself over the years. One of the concerns he has been consistently expressing throughout the workshops is whether his father 'spoke' in torture:

I try to understand my father in the context of torture, I mean I think my love and affection for him will not change if he spoke or not, the guy is my father and will always love him, and if he spoke because they tortured him and they threatened him with his son, I don't know, but I know, I try, I try to believe that the full human being, is the one who acted in that way (Pablo).

His inner struggle seems to be related to searching for a proof of the integrity of his father. He not only wants to believe that his father did not provide names while in torture, but
also that if he did, it was because he was protecting him and his family. Like in Tamara’s case, he needs to understand his father’s decision, but also he needs to know that as a son, he was important to the father. In this struggle he also seems to hold on to those characteristics that make his father a special person:

He was one of those guys who would come home with no shoes, because he would give them away... he even gave away an apartment, the apartment that we had he gave it to a person who needed it more, I think they had a little kid, so with dictatorship or without dictatorship he was going to end up bad, even in this society in any society he was going on the wrong track... So the conflict I had with my father is precisely that, and it’s not that I have idealized him, he was like that, and you sometimes are so selfish with your little things, and sometime you compare yourself, and you say there is something wrong here. I have a conflict with my dad because he did things that I don’t do, and I don’t even think about them (Pablo).

This passage shows different layers of his inner struggle. Pablo describes his father as an extremely generous person unfit to live in any society given his human characteristics, therefore leaving an example difficult to replicate and that represents the essence of his conflict “to know that he is not like his father”. Furthermore, when he is confronted by Tamara who says that the exact same narrative was transmitted to her about her father, he reacts by saying, “I am not idealizing him, he was in fact like that”. We see here the fragility of an image that has been built mostly from a political perspective, but that also needs to be sustained from a human perspective, which would explain his fearless defense. In addition the stories that portray the father as an exceptional generous human being have also trapped Pablo into a position where there is no way to compete or become close to what his father was. Pablo’s inner conflict is not uncommon and reflects the experience of other members of the group. Moreover the image of the brave militant who gave everything for the good of the people are also part of the mystical image that surrounds MIR militants, which is also reflected in the shared vision of the participants of their parents’ generation as “something special”, more generous, more human, and having had an enormous solidarity. These personal conflicts with their parents are often re-
experienced at the time of their own birthdays or their father’s birthdays. Most of them suffered a major crisis when they realize that they turned the same age their parents were when they were taken away. Concerning the notion that their political work was part of a collective process of searching for truth and justice they explain that they do not necessarily have the same notion of justice as other people who support human rights issues or even people in the group. They admit that they have never had many expectations about getting justice for their parents because they did not believe in the legal system during the dictatorship or the current legal system that is perceived as “bourgeois justice to protect the rich”. For them the only valid justice process for their parents is represented by the construction of society like their fathers died for:

...is that truly at some given moment there was a society like the one our parents wanted, because you would also share that process, but there are other children of disappeared who don’t even share the same political ideology as their parents, and for them it is much stronger this concept of justice where the guys go to jail and they feel validated (Pablo).

In this passage we find a strong influence of the political ideology of their parents represented by their own desire to find justice in the materialization of the society their parents fought for. It is interesting to see how in their struggle to become visible they continue to be absent from a society whose government is desperately fighting to embrace a political and economic ideology that is far removed from what their parents dreamed for the country.

**Summary of the Second Group Validation Meeting**

The results of this second group validation meeting expand on the previous findings by adding a number of different issues that provide a broader structure to the previous interpretations. The analysis begins by illustrating the strong relationship among the political militancy of the fathers of the participants, their political choices in continuing a fight against the dictatorship, and the conflicting feelings of the children in the present. This decision is experienced in two different ways: the men in the group accept this political choice as the only
alternative left given the historical context and their political values; the woman while accepting the political implications, expresses a more emotional reaction by identifying that she needed to know that she was the number one option for her father. This issue identifies a much deeper conflict that is related to the idealized image some of them have created of their fathers to justify not opting for their families. This image is strongly supported by the political virtues identified in the MIR militants that separate them from other political parties by virtue of their loyalty, and their commitment to an armed struggle. It is also constructed by the personal characteristics of their fathers they have collected from family narratives. However the conflict with their absent fathers arises when they have to confront the fact that, while they were being tortured, their fathers may have given information that resulted in the death or disappearance of other people. This moral issue shakes the very foundation of their image, which has been constructed on the basis that they were exemplary militants. Therefore, their search also aims at finding those elements that will confirm that they did not, or even if they did, that it was to protect them from being tortured as well, which was a common practice at the time. This position reflects a strong need to assign the father the dignity he deserves as a human being and that was deprived of by the act of disappearance and torture. To counteract this emotional ambivalence they continue constructing an image that also highlights the human virtues of the militant because they still need to sustain this political truth that gives them a sense of identity and protects them from the emptiness of their physical and emotional absence. However, this idealized image has the effect of trapping them in a situation where they cannot compare themselves with their parents or fulfill their own personal expectations, which would explain the difficulties a number of them have had in completing university studies or in having stable emotional relationships. Furthermore, this rational versus emotional way of handling this issue also opens up an avenue for further exploring gendered differences in dealing with the disappearance of fathers. In addition, by
embracing the political ideology of their parents they have developed a notion of justice that implies the transformation of the current society into the socialist vision their parents wanted, which is consistent with their parents’ social and political worldview, but that further traps them in a difficult situation to resolve.

Also connected to the political militancy of their fathers are the public policies implemented by the current government that have made them invisible by denying the surviving militants reparation measures such as the pension for political exonerated people. This policy synthesizes the invisibility of their parents in society, which they internalize as their own for being children of MIR militants. Furthermore their sense of invisibility is compounded by the discrimination and rejection they experience for the same reason. Therefore, to fight against this invisibility has been at the centre of their political work, which focuses on becoming known and accepted in the public scene. An example of this is the hunger strike that was a reaction to the political invisibility that would result from giving immunity to the military. Furthermore, they identify an emotional and physical connection between the illnesses of their members and this on-going sense of invisibility.

From the experience of the participants in the process of exploring memory and resistance practices through the workshops we can infer that memory is a continuous process that changes throughout the lifetime, such that there are symbolic and practical functions associated to memory depending on the needs and the resources available at any given time. In this regard the participants perceive themselves as “collectors of memory” who have developed sophisticated techniques to search for that information that would get them closer to the truth that will eventually liberate them from the invisibility that victimizes them.
CHAPTER 12: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this exploratory study I examine how members of HIJOS use their bodies as a site of memory and resistance, the meaning they assigned to these practices and the therapeutic value of using artistic oriented workshops for exploring these practices. In this chapter I discuss my findings and their implications for theory development, research, and clinical practice. I include the limitations of the study and I finish with the conclusions. I begin by situating the discussion around three main areas that relate to the questions guiding the study: the construction of memory and resistance practices, the body as a meaning-making organism, and the therapeutic value of artistic oriented workshops.

The Construction of Memory and Resistance Practices

The findings indicate that the participants' involvement in memory and resistance practices has been a direct consequence of the disappearance and death of their parents, who were persecuted by the military dictatorship for their political militancy after the coup d'état. Most of the parents were militants of the MIR; only in one case was the assassinated father a member of the Socialist party. These events profoundly changed the family life of the participants; some of them went into exile to different countries in Europe, while others remained in Chile engaged in the search for the disappeared fathers or demanding justice. The experience of the co-investigations indicated that their participation in memory and resistance practices began at an early age. This process was influenced by the surviving parent and relatives, who while searching for the parents and demanding justice began constructing a narrative around the absent parent by portraying them as an exemplary militant, with exceptional human qualities. This image eventually turned the parent into a hero, who in most cases, was idealized by the participants. In another case the family opted for denying the participant information about the father thus leaving her in a state of confusion and uncertainty that
extended for a long time until she decided to start her own search to find out who her father was. Those participants who went into exile experienced a similar situation, however it is important to mention that in three of those cases the parents were killed when they returned to the country, therefore the death took place while the participants were still in exile with the surviving parent or relatives. In these cases the process of engaging in practices of memory and resistance began when they returned to Chile in their adolescence. Therefore for all of the participants their involvement in memory and resistance practices is strongly linked to the absence of personal memories of their parents, the need for constructing these memories, the influence of their families and the image created by the dictatorship that portrayed MIR militants as “terrorists and subversive elements” that contributed to dehumanizing them. In addition, there is a collective perception or need among different groups of surviving militants to generate mythical heroes that has increased over the years.

The results suggest that the construction of memory takes places at different levels. At the individual level it is motivated by their own search for personal information in order to fill in the ‘memory gaps’ produced by the lack of information about what happened to the parents, and who they were as human beings. This process is also mediated by the memories and stories of friends and relatives that they incorporated as their own, making it difficult to identify which are their own memories and which ones are a composite of somebody else’s experiences. As they grow older they internalized the social responsibility of vindicating the image of their parents. This duty led them to engage in political and social activities that also helped them in constructing a ‘political image’ of their parents. This profound need of finding traces of their parents to be able to identify with them have turned them into “collectors of memory” as they define themselves. As they become adults and begin to form their own families and have children the need to construct a balanced image of their parents in order to transmit an ‘informed
truth’ to their children became paramount, leading them to reframe old notions of memory that are no longer sustainable. Consistent with these findings Beristain (2003) asserts that for the new generations, the value of the memory of their relatives and the violent acts of the past are of great importance. The sons and daughters of parents who were killed or disappeared need to understand their own situation as part of a larger social process so as to avoid stigmatization and to reaffirm their own identity. In addition, the social processes of constructing memories and identity within the context of their families and human rights organizations could be described as a “community of memory” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, p. 22). These communities are created by the memory itself, that is to say they are developed by people “to feel a sense of bonding with others solely because of a shared experience” (p. 47). Furthermore, Irwin-Zarecka asserts that the meaning given to a particular event, rather than the event itself, is what defines communities of memory. Communities of memories also enable people’s memories of victimization to serve as the focus of communal unity. These narratives of victimization help define and shape the boundaries of these communities. Self-definition as a victim clearly marks the boundaries between the “us” and “them”. To construct a sense of community, these groups inevitably need the presence of the Other (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994).

During the workshops the participants engaged in artistic activities and reflection that led them to a process of deconstructing and reframing the concepts of memory and resistance from the present and assigning them new meanings. In this regard Jelin (2002) proposes that acts of remembering assume that there is a past experience that is activated in the present, through a conscious desire or through pain, which is often guided by a need to communicate it. In this process the events remembered acquired a symbolic and emotional charge that allows giving the experience meaning in the present (Jelin, 2002). Similarly, the physical and sensory experiences reported by the participants during this process demonstrates the embodied nature of memory by
highlighting the cognitive as well as physical and sensorial components of memory as described by Rothschild (2000), Serematakis (1994), and van der Kolk & McFarlane (1996).

Tzvetan Todorov (2000) proposes an analysis of memory based on two concepts: literal memory and exemplary memory. Literal memory allows us to keep the traumatic event in its literal form. This static vision gives the possibility to establish causes and effects, explain the consequences of the traumatic event on the individual and the social group, and uncover the perpetrators and take them to trial. Literal memory also allows maintaining a sense of continuity between who we were in the past and who we are in the present as well as the past and present of a community or group. In this regard the participants identified that the traditional ways of dealing with memory as a form of resistance, and to denounce human rights abuses during the dictatorship, are no longer appropriate. They recognized the stagnated vision of memory that is still promoted by some organizations that has kept the image of the ‘disappeared militant’ trapped in the past, transforming them into disembodied icons that do not resemble the image of the regular human being the participants need to construct for the future.

For Todorov (2000) exemplary memory on the other hand, is potentially liberating, given that it allows us to process the lessons of the past from the present and project them into the future. This does not mean to deny or forget a traumatic event since it can be used as a more general category for understanding new situations in different contexts. This type of memory needs a grieving process that can help neutralize the pain caused by the memory, which in turn will allow the memory to be used as an analogy, a generalization in order to draw a lesson that gives us the possibility to separate the traumatic memory from our “self” in order to be able to understand the “other” (Todorov, 2000, p. 32). The results of the study indicate that the experience of the workshops offered a possibility to begin a process of moving from a literal memory to an exemplary memory by externalizing the conflicts and issues associated with their
relationships with their parents, by expressing their embodied feelings and emotions produced by the political repression in a safe and supportive environment. In addition throughout the research the participant were able to transform their initial conceptions about memory and resistance by incorporating new elements that allowed them to experience a more liberating understanding of memory and resistance. Finally, it is important to mention that there were no significant class or gender differences in the way participants constructed their notion of memory and resistance. However all of them identified the role of women, particularly the “mothers of the disappeared” as an important symbol of memory and resistance. However, it would appear that impunity is the main issue uniting all their experiences throughout the construction of their narratives.

The Role of Memory and Resistance

Throughout the research participants identified both memory and resistance as part of an intertwined process that has served emotional, ideological, and symbolic functions throughout their lives. This process extends over time and changes according to specific historical, social, political and personal factors. Resistance is perceived as a complement of memory given that remembering is an act of resistance. Resistance is also defined as an emotional, physical, symbolic, and political response to the State repression. Likewise memory has also served many social, symbolic, and political functions over the years. In this regard through the experience of one of the participants it is possible to begin identifying the specific ways in which members of the Mapuche people construct their own symbolic universes by connecting memory and resistance as part of their cultural traditions and meaning-making systems in relation to life and death.

Strongly related to the notion of memory is the right to remember and forget as identified by the participants. They expressed that in the context of human rights organizations they are often faced with what they identified as an “obligation” of remembering traumatic experiences
through public testimonies in political gatherings. This “obligation” to remember has been identified in the literature (Jelin, 2002; Ricoeur, 2004; Todorov, 2000) to explain the individual and social duties the survivors face when confronted with the responsibility of providing personal accounts about traumatic events. In that regard Todorov (2000) asserts that to recover the past is indispensable; however that does not mean that it should control the present.

However, the right to remember and forget can be understood in different ways. On one hand it represents the need that some people experience to put time in between the traumatic event and the present like in the case of Jorge Sémprun, a Holocaust survivor, who waited 20 years to write about his experiences in “Writing or Life”. In this book he explains how after liberation by forgetting about the past saved his life (Jelin, 2002). On the other hand Primo Levi, a Holocaust survivor as well, represents an opposite view. He published his first book in 1947, “If This Is A Man”, two years after being liberated from Auschwitz. In his case writing about his experiences saved him from madness (Levi, 2005). The need or obligation to remember identified by the participants can also be related to impunity and imposed social oblivion. According to Pantoja (2006) when oblivion is imposed, is not real oblivion; it becomes an omission, and a social repression of memory. To repair social trauma requires first the public acknowledgment and then a creative elaboration through different meanings that translate in social productions new forms of citizenship and community participation; in that case we can choose to forget (Pantoja, 2006).

Transmission of Trauma

As it was identified in the literature (Birkmann, 2006; Castillo, Del Rio, Castañeda, & Lefebvre, 1995; Madariaga, 2005; Minoletti, 2002) there are many concurrent factors that have influenced the transmission of trauma in Chile throughout the military dictatorship and currently through the prevailing impunity. According to Kordon and Edelman (2002) trauma is always accompanied by a loss: the loss of internal or external objects. These can be a significant person,
a part of the body, objects, life projects, times or imaginary objects such as illusions or abstract objects such as ideals. In the case of the participants they have experienced profound losses of significant members of their families like their mother, father and other relatives and therefore the possibility of having a family life. Most of them also experienced the loss of their country, relationships, language, culture and values resulting from exile.

As expressed by the participants the way in which their parents or relatives handled their own traumatic loss is strongly connected to their traumatic issues such as torture, displacement, economic and emotional instability, the political defeat and the overwhelming fear and personal insecurity produced by the ongoing social and political repression. These factors led the parents to adopt a variety of emotional strategies to cope with the many concurrent issues they were facing. Among the behaviors identified in their parents, the participants describe: the inability to connect with their own feelings and communicate emotions, a profound sense of loss and defeat, a sense of guilt, and a permanent feeling of frustration linked to their unresolved loss and the prevailing impunity, thus affecting their coping and parental skills. This information suggests that the participants own process of dealing with the loss might be influenced by their parents’ or relatives’ emotional state at the time. The participants’ awareness about these issues is reflected in their concern about transmitting these patterns to their children and perpetuating the effects of the injustices suffered. These findings are consistent with studies about children of military personnel lost in action in the Vietnam War, that identify the role and the information provided by the mothers to their children about the fate of their fathers as important factors in the behaviors and coping skills developed by the children as adults (Hunter-King, 1998). From a family systems perspective the transmission of trauma can be understood by identifying what happened to one generation and how it can affect the older or younger generations, although the specific behaviors may take different forms throughout time. One of the forms that this
transmission may take is a family legacy passed down to the new generation, even to those born after the trauma (Danieli, 1998).

A study conducted by Bastias, Mery, Rodríguez, and Soto (2001) with survivors of political repression in Chile indicate that the social and political context has a great impact on the transgenerational construction and re-construction of the family dynamics involved in the traumatic process. In this regard the children and adult children of families affected by repression continue to be confronted by a series of family mandates, expectations and legacies that directly influence the construction and fulfillment of their own life projects (Bastias, Mery, Rodríguez, & Soto, 2001). In the case of the participants we observe that the family mandates relate to the continuation of the search for the remains of the parents and to achieve justice and social validation. This mandate is also derived from the example of the political and social work of their absent parents. The co-investigators expressed that they have inherited the values and ideals that guide to some degree their social relationships, their political work and their hopes for a better social future for the country. As identified by Scapusio (2006), the transmission of trauma also includes the transmission of the values, dreams and ideals that were part of the symbolic universe of the parents. Similarly, Berger and Luckmann (2006) state that individual and collective dreams and ideals are part of the symbolic universes that people construct to make meaning of reality. When societies confront abrupt changes in the social order altering the symbolic universes the natural response after the initial chaos is for people to reconstruct them by attempting to reestablish the previous symbolic universes. The process of transmission of a symbolic universe from one generation to the next poses some intrinsic problem. One of them is the difficulty in explaining the meaning of them, “precisely because the symbolic universes cannot be experimented as such in everyday life, given their transcendent nature” (Berger & Luckmann, 2006, p. 134).
In the case of the participants they have been invested with the familiar and social responsibility of validating the political image of their parents in the context of their fight for changing the social conditions of the country. In this process the participants confront the challenge of having to vindicate not only their memory and their image but also the symbolic universe of their parents; their ideals, dreams and collective utopias through the use of historical memory, testimonies and their bodies. In this process they have encountered different obstacles. First, the image of these heroes makes it very difficult for them to rise to the high standards left by the parents who died fighting for a better world for them and everybody else. Second, the lifelong process of vindicating their parents, who they do not really know, has meant that in some cases they have left aside their own lives, families and professions. Third, the current social, political and economic context of the country, the indifference of the new generations, and the lack of social support makes it almost impossible to explain the context and the values that guided their parents in their political actions. The findings revealed that in some cases, this social legacy is or has been one of the factors preventing them from building their own lives. During the study the participants began to ask themselves, When does the vindication process end? and When does my life begin? These questions reflect a level of confusion about how to handle this social responsibility. These questions also expose their emotional desire to have a sense of closure about the death of their parents, and the justice and the social validation they need in order to continue with their lives.

**The Body as Meaning-making Organism**

Berger and Luckmann (2006) propose that all symbolic universes are socially constructed throughout history, therefore changes are materialized by the concrete actions of human beings. Consequently reality is defined by the individual and group embodied actions. Consistent with these notions, the results indicated that memory and resistance practices developed as an
embodied family and social response against the destruction of the body of those supporting the government of Salvador Allende first, and those opposing the dictatorship later.

A first analysis identifies the participants' embodied actions as a need to recover the symbolic social contexts where the punishment of the parents took place. In this regard their actions usually took place in public spaces such as in front of La Moneda Presidential Palace, and Villa Grimaldi or Londres 38, two of the torture centres where their parents were detained and tortured. Therefore by using their bodies as a symbol they repositioned the disappeared and wounded bodies of their parents, thus attempting to restore the collective symbolic universe that was altered by the killing and disappearance of people. A further analysis identifies that these practices were also an embodied response to their own sense of invisibility resulting from the lack of validation of their own existence as children of executed and disappeared prisoners.

These practices were also embedded in larger social responses that had similar objectives: to reintegrate the bodies of those people killed, tortured, disappeared or exiled into the social body of the country; to denounce and stop these repressive practices; and to involve those sectors of society that remain indifferent or inactive into an embodied force to resist the repression of the dictatorship. An example of the power of the collective actions of the "social body" is provided by the actions of El Movimiento contra la Tortura Sebastian Acevedo described in Chapter Two. Vidal (2002) argues that the actions of this group were an inviting ceremony composed of symbolic gestures, where the members of this group expose themselves (their bodies) to the pain of the political repression in order to show their compatriots the need to recuperate the "continuity of the solidarity between the individual and the collective, by challenging and winning over the fear that fragmented the collective identity, the need for freedom and the dignity of people" (p. 223). In his analysis Vidal (2002) asserts that by exposing their bodies to the violence of the police, they were consciously experimenting with the pain, not
as just meaningless pain, but as a form of suffering that aims at restoring the social milieu by creating awareness leading to social transformation and change. Thus, by exposing their bodies, the participants started a social dynamic that used the physical sacrifice to trigger the “moral insensibility of the passive spectators” (p. 226). The symbolic impact of the actions of this group is clearly articulated in the artistic pieces (sculptures) and discussions of the participants.

However, the traumatic implications of the death, torture, disappearance, and exile of many people, the impunity, the imposed oblivion, and the lack of social validation still pose a real dilemma for the emotional, social, and political recovery of a society profoundly wounded. The symbolic need of recovering the bodies of the disappeared and the skepticism about this happening are represented by the words of De la Parra:

> What can you expect from a people who do not recognize their dead? The cemetery is the real foundation of a village. A city is founded over its ruins, over its dead. The family is the memory of the ancestors. History is the voice of the dead, where are our dead? (2002, p. 190).

As identified by Thomas (1993), the individual grieving process needs the materialization of death through the acknowledgement, details, and certification in order for the family and mourners to assign meaning to the loss. People need the body or the remains to verify and materialize the death in order to be able to proceed with the death ritual needed to continue with life (1993). At the social level Capponi (1999) identifies that the way in which societies grieve the loss of what has been destroyed, abandoned, or killed determines in significant ways the cultural and political development of a society. In his view, “If the grieving process does not take place appropriately their effects remain latent and are transmitted to all the institutions” and therefore to the rest of society (Capponi, 1999, p. 8). In the case of Chile the knowledge of what happened to the people killed, tortured, or disappeared needs to have a social validation of all sectors of society. The fact that certain issues are kept within the close circles of those affected, while the rest of society ignores or denies them perturbs the social grieving process.
Consequently the process of social reconciliation can only be achieved after there has been a social grieving process that is successfully completed and understood as the consequence of the grieving process, not as a replacement of it (Capponi, 1999). A study about the social representations of national reconciliation among young people whose parents voted YES and NO in the plebiscite that ended the Pinochet regime (Juricic & Reyes, 1999) found that for the young people whose parents were direct victims of violations of human rights one of the main requisites for reconciliation is the truth about the events that happened during the dictatorship and the use of historical memory as a means of acknowledging and sharing the events of the past. On the other hand young people whose parents supported the coup d'état and children of the military believe that oblivion and the pass of time are the only requisites for reconciliation. The only concession they make is the need to know the whereabouts of the disappeared, ignoring issues about social validation or justice for the victims (Juricic & Reyes, 1999). The results of this study show how distant these two groups are from having a common definition about national reconciliation as well as the requisites for achieving it. It also represents a small sample of how divided Chilean society is in relation to these issues.

The Transmission of Invisibility

The symbolic embodied power of the destruction of the individual and social body is clearly represented throughout the workshops and expressed during the validation meetings. In particular the narratives constructed by the participants through the body collages materialized not only the relationship that was broken by the death or disappearance of their parents but also the destruction of the social body. The symbols used by the participants graphically show that at a certain level there is an embodied experience of trauma. Elements like the blindfold, the hands tied, the red paint on the bodies or the pictures of people who were killed strongly speaks of the presence of torture and death in the participants’ lives, in their own bodies and in their symbolic
universes. These symbols and images are intertwined with flower and images of their children, other important people in their lives and small narratives about their childhoods. These narratives constructed on the body collages represent how the ‘sinister’ is still present in their lives. Freud (1919) describes the sinister as “that sort of frightening element coming from some time in the past, that affects the known and familiar things producing at the same time anxious feelings” (p. 2). Therefore the sinister transforms familiar things and surrounding into something frightening until they become familiar thus making people lose the boundaries between reality and fantasy (Freud, 1919). In the case of the collage we can see this familiarity with death in the way the participants place a picture of their children next to a torture centre, or a picture of a childhood birthday party on top a red arm. This familiarity with death is also expressed in symbols that represent a memorial by placing names of people dead and alive throughout the body or a representation of a tombstone with an epitaph placed on the feet of the image.

Furthermore, the disappearance and subsequent political invisibility experienced by their parents for being members of the MIR has also been internalized as a factor leading to their own social invisibility. By killing or making their parents disappear the military attempted to deny their existence. Therefore they, their descendents, inherited this invisibility. This sense of social invisibility is strongly expressed throughout their creative representations, their reflections and particularly in the group validation meetings. A clear manifestation of these feelings is the fact that most of the participants represented their own lives, dreams and hopes in the back of the body collage as if they were less important. As expressed by the participants this sense of invisibility is strongly connected to the planned operation to destroy and dismember the MIR during the dictatorship and the impunity and lack of interest of the current government in validating the image of the militants of the MIR or making them part of reparation measures. In addition, they feel discriminated by human rights organization for being children of Miristas. In
general they experience a lack of validation and social recognition as adult children of disappeared and executed parents, as citizens, and social and political actors. This invisibility has also affected their emotional, social and relational lives to the point of feeling excluded from political or social organizations and activities, leading them to hide the fact that they are children of Miristas, or isolating themselves. This is probably one of the reasons why they have developed their own place of belonging in HIJOS. As identified by one of the participants they are concerned that this invisibility is also affecting their own health and might have further implications in their lives.

At the individual level we observe that some of the participants, particularly those children of the disappeared, have confronted throughout their lives the invisibility in their own bodies. This invisibility is manifested in their constant search by “looking at themselves in the mirror” seeking for gestures, movements, features, a physical resemblance, and traces of their parents in their own bodies. They search in the few pictures they have and in the narratives of relatives and friends who knew their parents; they search for anything that can assure them that they are the sons and daughters of their parents. These findings further confirm the embodied transmission of invisibility but also the effects of the State politics of forced disappearances on the population. As identified by Del Solar and Piper (1995), Madariaga (2005), and Pantoja (2006), impunity makes the trauma chronic by freezing internal grieving processes and the possibility of personal and social continuity, which at the same time produces a sense of invisibility (Pantoja, 2006).

Finally the absence of the bodies of their parents is strongly connected to their impossibility of completing the death rituals needed to close the natural cycles of life and death. However, in the case of some of the children of the disappeared they are not certain whether finding the remains would provide the emotional closure they need to continue with their lives,
because they would still need justice and their own social validation as well as their parents’.

These findings are consistent with the notion of “Grief in Impunity” developed by Pizarro and Witebroodt (2002) in relation to the impossibility of concluding a grieving process by the mothers of the disappeared, who like the participants, still wait for the remains of their children, justice, and social acknowledgement.

**Belonging to HIJOS**

The participation of the co-investigators in HIJOS is identified by all of them as a great form of support that has affected their lives in positive and meaningful ways. This group has become a space of belonging where they feel heard and loved. The affection they feel for each other and the need to spend time together was the main motivation to participate in the study. Over the years their work together has not only been political through different actions but it has also provided them emotional support and containment. They identified that in their conversations and discussions they have been able to talk about issues like victimization, justice, memory and others that have contributed to their reflection and elaboration of these topics. One of the strongest nexus among them seems to be the sense of invisibility they all share as children of disappeared and executed parents. The dehumanizing experience lived by their parents has affected their own sense of self, feeling that their lives are an extension of the disappearance and invisibility experienced by their parents both physically and symbolically. This sense of invisibility is compounded by the isolation they have felt in relation to the work of other human rights organizations. They feel that their experience has not been welcomed or understood in some cases. These common elements seem to be at the core of their collective identity. These experiences had a profound effect on the participants’ emotional development as adolescents and still affects their lives in varying degrees of vulnerability. The relationship and common experiences they share have allowed them to know each other’s stories and personal struggles to
the extent of recognizing each other's experiences in everybody else's stories, therefore they not only share collective memories but they are part of each other's memories. In their relationship as members of a group they promote a vision and action that demonstrates a somewhat homogenized conception and analysis of their commonly shared invisibility. This homogeneous perception is evidenced by the fact that they do not make distinctions among themselves in relation to the death of their parents like other human rights organization. Their shared experiences have allowed them to create strong bonds that also include a shared protection, particularly of those members they feel are more vulnerable, leading to having a horizontal group dynamic. They perceive themselves as a family where they also share their problems and pains thus transforming individual pains into collective sufferings. The social and political activities they organize are a materialization of their identity as a group that also reinforces their bonds and commitments. In their public discourse they reject the idea of feeling victimized, rather they face their situation from a life-affirming position that also rejects death.

Throughout the workshop the participants constantly talked about their hope in the future and about the strong solidarity that has guided their relationship within the group as well as their social and political participation in other contexts. Hope and solidarity emerge as a form of resistance they experience as children from their surrounding social and political environment. Chilean scholar Hernán Vidal (2002) argues that in Chile the extreme repression and terror exercised by the State led people to develop myths to ensure stability, permanence and continuity of their social actions. These myths must be accepted through imagination, given the absence of real bases, which implies that people have to give themselves to hope. This act of faith, and trust turns into hope. This hope is the recognition that there is an uncertainty about a change in the state of affairs although it is possible and probable that change can materialize (p. 124). This hope in the possibility of change demands a constant reframing of values like loyalty.
in the collective dreams and utopias as well as in the groups that are working towards change. In this context “love emerges as a pact of hope and is experienced as an spiritual tension in constant movement towards an absolute value in which people look for the total, definite and absolute union” (Vidal, 2002, p. 125). This conceptualization of solidarity and hope would also explain the actions of the women, mothers and wives of the disappeared that emerged in the social scene demanding to find their children and husbands and determined to fight with their lives for justice and peace. In addition, the solidarity and hope had a strong precedent in the collective values guiding the social and political work of the left wing political parties of the 1970s. All of these factors are strongly present in the narratives of the participants highlighting the intrinsic value of collective forms of reconstructing symbolic universes through shared values and feelings.

Finally, from a therapeutic perspective we observe that the group commitment, the emotional support and the positive evaluation that the participants make of their involvement in HIJOS resemble the work and therapeutic benefits of self-help groups or support groups that even though have different objectives, in this case have similar outcomes like the support and emotional containment they experience when they get together.

The Therapeutic Value of Artistic Workshops

As evidenced by the findings, the workshops became an extension of the place of belonging the participants had developed around HIJOS. The trust and affection they have for each other was instrumental in their active engagement in the research process. The initial conversations and discussions about memory and resistance proved useful in preparing them for a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of these notions by actively engaging in an embodied exploration. Berger and Luckmann (2006) propose that human existence is a constant process of externalization. Therefore by externalizing themselves individuals are able to construct the world they inhabit and project their own meanings onto reality. Likewise White
and Epston (1990) have developed a therapeutic approach that focuses on externalizing those social constructs that are internalized by people as their own, therefore by objectifying them they are able to identify what is oppressing them. In the study this process of materializing their past allowed them to represent graphically and physically their inner personal, family and social conflicts as well as their feelings and emotions. In this sense the human collages represent the externalization of their unresolved feelings, unfulfilled needs, and desires. In these processes they were also able to materialize resistance and its function in the past and present as an element of emotional and physical survival and strength.

The individual stories portrayed in the human collages in particular, allow us to identify the idealization of the image of their parents; the materialization of their personal conflicts represented by the unfinished relationship to their parents; the extent of the horror and death in their lives as well as their hopes and dreams for the future. Therefore by externalizing their conflicts especially those related to their parents some of them began a process of questioning their social responsibility and how the long-term process of vindicating their parents has stopped them from constructing their own lives. Others were able to begin “cutting the umbilical cord” by engaging in a process of differentiating themselves from the political identity of the parents and reassessing the role of their social responsibility in vindicating their parents. This experience clearly shows how the participants need to close some cycles in order to begin a new period in their lives. In these workshops participants were able to approach the issues of memory and resistance from a ludic and less confrontational perspective by choosing the memories as well as the themes they wanted to explore, thus demonstrating the self-regulatory processes that people engaged in when confronted with traumatic memories, which highlights the therapeutic possibilities of this kind of intervention. This is complemented by the symbolic possibilities provided by artistic expressions to externalizing feelings and conflicts through the construction
of individual stories and their integration to a collective narrative by reconstructing the life continuum that was altered by the traumatic events in their lives. In this sense engaging in artistic expressions gives individual trauma a voice while at the same time placing the experience within a social context that allows normalizing the traumatic experiences. By analyzing the workshop experiences, it is possible to infer that artistic expressions are a form of materialization and interpretation of their experience that emerges as a result of their own needs, interests, fantasies, and desires as individuals. In this sense many of the art theories concur in that through artistic expressions we can access the most subjective and original characteristics of human beings (Cornejo & Brik Levy, 2003).

As identified in Chapter Three, Baum (2000) and Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert (2000) propose the notion of “pedagogy of remembrance” that is conceived as a hopeful practice of critical learning about traumatic events of the past with the purpose of engaging people to face traumatic events from their own experience as witness rather than incorporating the traumatic experiences of others. They argue that all practices of remembrance are “inherently pedagogical because they are implicated in the formation and regulation of meanings, feelings, perceptions, identifications and the imaginative projection of human limits” (2002, p. 2). Therefore, historical remembrance is conceived as a communicative act that repositions what one is learning, not only about what happened to other people at/in a different space/time but also what one is learning of and within the disturbances and disruptions inherent in comprehending these events (2002, p. 3). The hopeful possibilities of these kinds of practices reside in the fact that hope is enacted in and through these practices as a moralizing pedagogy; that is the evocation of memories and images about the past sets the background for the hope that the future will be a different place in which the past must never be repeated again (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert, 2000).
The study shows that by engaging participants in workshops to explore practices of memory and resistance they became involved in learning about the past, the present, about people's experiences and their embodied responses to them. In this regard it was a psycho-educational experience as well, where all of them learned while at the same time began a process of individual and collective healing. The hope experienced by the participants through the process was linked to the possibility of healing themselves through what we called 'acts of active hope', that is, their involvement in actions leading to change oppressive structures within themselves and in their social and political activities.

Implications for Theory

This exploratory study offers a number of possibilities for the development of theory about the meaning and role of memory and resistance in the context of psychosocial trauma, the meaning of embodied individual and collective responses to psychosocial trauma, the traumatogenic power of impunity in maintaining trauma through the transmission of invisibility, and the therapeutic value of using artistic expressions as group therapeutic interventions among others.

The individual and social construction of trauma as an embodied experience certainly challenges traditional notions of posttraumatic stress disorder as a construct to explain the effects of sociopolitical trauma and impunity. The present study identifies the symbolic meaning of trauma in the body, its consequences as well as invisibility as a form of transmission that has very specific characteristics in the affected group. This conception of invisibility as an embodied consequence of repression and impunity expands previous notions of transmission of trauma, while at the same time places trauma in a historical continuum that extends to the present. Therefore, it becomes difficult to speak of a “post” traumatic stress disorder, given that traumatic events continue to happen “in the present”. While addressing the need to revise previous notions
of trauma, the results also provide information for the construction or redefinition of theories and models that could be applied to countries currently in conflict like Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, and Colombia. These results also provide theoretical foundations for the development of theories and models to deal with displaced refugee populations living in refugee-host countries such as Canada. Finally, the multidisciplinary and cross-cultural approach used in this study emphasizes the need to incorporate ideas and theories developed in the context of other disciplines and social-political cultural and historical contexts in order to expand the knowledge of social issues like psychosocial trauma. The study also stresses the importance of linking research and theories developed in contexts where psychosocial trauma is currently happening so as to have access to an embodied understanding and knowledge to account for the consequences of trauma throughout time, how this is reflected in the theory as well as the changing nature and the social and historical character of psychosocial phenomena.

Implications for Research

Hans-George Gadamer (1991) posits that one of the fundamental hermeneutic rules is “to understand the whole from the individual and the individual from the whole” (1991, p. 360), which underlies the circular nature of the interpretation process. Consistent with this notion the results of this study highlight the benefits of using a participatory and process-oriented methodology in the design and analysis processes. The analysis of the individual and group narratives allowed a process of interpretation of the individual and group meaning-making mechanisms that operate in the development of social practices. The participatory nature of the methodology that included a process of reflection-action-reflection demonstrates the depth and complexity of the results that emerged throughout the duration of the study. This process-oriented methodology also allows the researcher to follow the individual and group emotional and reflective processes in order to assess any therapeutic changes. Likewise it allows
participants to be the protagonists of their own healing process by establishing their own personal rhythm and dynamics.

The purpose of this study was to initiate an exploration about the meaning of social practices of memory and resistance in the context of political repression through the implementation of artistic oriented workshops. The results open many doors in terms of the need to further examine a number of related issues and areas. The body as a meaning-making organism and therefore the incarnation of social meanings and traumas needs to be further studied to understand the link of individual and collective memories stored in the body to the development of specific illnesses. In this particular study it was possible to identify the transmission of trauma to the children of disappeared and executed parents as evidenced by the symbolic representations they made in the body collages. A similar body-centred approach using art could be useful to study the impact of physical aggression on the body of the direct victims in cases of torture, rape, or family violence.

Even though the findings of the present study report that in general most of the members of HIJOS seem to have a similar “collective” approach to dealing with the disappearance, death and militancy of their parents, it was suggested by the participants that there might be some significant differences in the way they individually confront their loss. Therefore, studying the way in which women and men deal with their traumatic experiences could also shed some light in relation to specific gender differences.

Strongly connected to the issue of how the participants deal with the political militancy and choices made by their parents, it would seem appropriate to explore if adult children of disappeared and executed parents from the Communist party share a similar sense of invisibility. Likewise exploring the experience of children of socialists' militants might bring important information regarding how the parents’ militancy, political options and involvement in the
current "Socialist Government" have helped or hindered their emotional processes of dealing with traumatic events.

In addition, the study identifies the importance of exploring specific cultural differences within Chilean society. In particular it would seem relevant to investigate the concrete experience of Mapuche people in relation to the trauma, impunity and the massive repression they experienced in their communities. Furthermore, their cultural embodied understanding and symbolic representation of trauma, impunity, memory and resistance would provide important information for expanding the literature on these issues as well as for developing specific culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions and social programs.

Although impunity has been widely identified as a factor involved in the transmission of trauma, the present study identifies invisibility as a particular form of transmission and retraumatization resulting from the lack of social validation, the absence of the disappeared bodies of the parents and the current government’s reparation measures, thus implying that impunity has a wider scope of effects on the general population. Consequently, more specific research should be conducted to address the specific impact of impunity on other populations.

Even though the participants identified that the way their surviving parent handled the killing and disappearance of their spouse might have an effect on the transmission of certain patterns to them, it would seem appropriate to further explore the family dynamics resulting from these traumatic events from the experience of the children.

In addition, the present study expands the theory informing the practices of cross-cultural therapists and researchers working with victims of institutionalized violence and refugees from war-torn countries. Similar studies can be conducted to explore the embodied impact of exile and displacement in populations seeking political asylum from a variety of disciplinary approaches.
Implications for Clinical Practice

This investigation addresses the importance of focusing on the body as a meaning-generating organism capable of producing and transmitting meaning. From this perspective the study shows that traumatic experiences can be symbolically identified in the body by externalizing traumatic events in people’s lives through artistic expressions. It also acknowledges that the transmission of trauma and retraumatization process are also linked to embodied processes such as invisibility. The therapeutic value of this approach resides in approaching trauma from an individual and social embodied perspective that expands previous notions of trauma as a neurological phenomenon that affect cognitive, behavioral, emotional or social functioning as separate entities. In addition, the artistic-oriented methodology used in this study informs the literature dealing with somatic processes related to trauma by identifying the potential effectiveness of developing a therapeutic model that allows clients to develop trust in the therapeutic process by moving them from a political to a personal understanding of memory and traumatic processes.

By combining the notions of memory and resistance the participants were able to focus on their own inner and social resources rather than deficiencies, which resulted in the active involvement of the participants in exploring these issues in their lives. This approach suggests that therapeutic interventions need to be developed and used according to the specific contexts, issues and symbolic processes affecting different groups within a traumatized society.

The results of the study indicate that there is a great therapeutic potential in developing workshops using similar artistic techniques to work with trauma survivors. The series of artistic workshops used in the research illustrate that each workshop technique (narrative, Theatre of the Oppressed, collage making, photography) contributed in itself to specific aspects of the overall exploration process of memory and resistance practices. However, each one can be used
separately to address the same or similar issues in a group setting. Likewise, the individual experience of reflecting about memory and resistance and constructing artistic pieces also indicates that this type of intervention can be used as an individual or family therapeutic intervention.

As suggested by the participants these artistic workshops could be used to introduce people to a process of exploration of memory and resistance as a form of introducing them to group therapy. In addition they suggested that as a group therapy each workshop technique should be explored in more than one session so as to allow more time for debriefing and actual therapeutic work. Finally, they also suggested working with specific groups of trauma survivors who share similar experiences, preferably who know each other to avoid trust issues.

These artistic techniques used in the workshops provide mental health professionals with some tools for assessing the emotional state of the client and the traumatic life story without questioning or inviting testimonies like other approaches. As identified by the co-investigators this form of “therapy” is less intrusive and relaxed than “the testimony method”, which was commonly used in therapy during the dictatorship as an intervention as well as a method to gather legal information. In addition, these techniques also allow a self-regulatory process where people can establish their own pace by identifying the issues they are ready to deal with. This finding suggests the need to actualize and develop socially appropriate interventions to accommodate the needs of clients particularly those reluctant to engage in traditional talk psychotherapy.

The specific holes in their memories identified by the participants as a result of lack of specific information about their parents lead to the assumption that similar holes might be present in the narratives of the grandchildren, particularly the children of the participants. Using a similar artistic approach it would be interesting to explore these gaps of memory by
encouraging both the parents and their children to explore together their family memories in the context of their losses. These approaches have the potential of changing the transmission of trauma by bridging generational memory gaps and motivating reflection.

As it has already been identified the exploration of memory and resistance as pedagogy of remembrance presents many possibilities for the development of educational workshops and material geared to introducing young generations to learning about the past in school or community settings. In this regard the field of popular education offers many approaches for developing written or workshop material. Similarly, pedagogy of remembrance opens many possibilities for the development of psycho-educational approaches to dealing with psychosocial trauma particularly for those people or groups who are resistant to engage in psychotherapy.

Finally, this study stresses the need to reevaluate the notions of trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder, and transmission of trauma in light of the social, cultural and political contexts in which psychosocial traumas related to human rights abuses take place. Furthermore, it highlights the need to incorporate specific courses on trauma theories, assessment and interventions in the training curricula of counselors and psychologists.

**Limitations of the Study**

The interpretive nature of this study represents in itself a limitation in terms of the many other possibilities of drawing meaning from the richness of the data provided by the co-investigators in the many interactions and encounters we had. It also reflects the limitations of my own ability to be reflective and critical enough to challenge my own interpretations in more meaningful or comprehensive ways. While the integration of a blend of epistemologies can be an advantage in conceptualizing the study, it can also be a limitation in terms of the impossibility to focus on each one fully. Similarly, the intrinsic participatory nature of the process makes it
difficult to account for all the individual and group dynamics that are constantly generating new issues and findings.

Another limitation for this kind of study is the scarcity of specific literature in the context of adult children of the disappeared and executed in Chile. Even though the Chilean and Latin American mental health teams have abundant clinical experience working with adult children of the disappeared and executed, a lot of this information has not been systematized and published due to lack of resources. Similarly, research about these types of issues are not commonly funded in Chile therefore the limited information available comes from student theses.

Additional limitations include the limited number of participants, the specific topic, and the particular characteristics of the community studied that only allows to provide a glimpse into the phenomena investigated, but do not allow to draw conclusion or extend the findings to other communities or collective embodied response to similar events under similar circumstances. Language issues were another limitation given that the bulk of the work was conducted in Spanish and later rewritten in English. I believe that by translating the narratives from the original language the text fails to represent the richness of the emotional language spoken by the co-investigators. Finally, I think that even though I originally conceived this study as a small version of a participatory study to be conducted by one person, the amount of work that it required extended the completion of the project, which may be a limitation of this kind of research method.

Conclusions

The present study has drawn attention to the need of focusing on the embodied social practices developed by members of HIJOS as a response to the destruction of the individual and social body through political repression. By exploring these practices it was possible to identify the individual and social strategies people used to confront the destruction of their symbolic
world. Within this context memory and resistance were used in practical and symbolic ways to confront this destruction. From their embodied experience the participants were able to offer a clear conceptualization of these notions that evolved throughout their engagement in the research process. The individual and collective meaning of these practices of memory and resistance provide invaluable information to understand the different ways in which trauma is transmitted to people and particularly the role of impunity in transmission and retraumatization processes.

Through the research process participants were able to deconstruct and reconstruct the concepts of memory and resistance in order to understand the meaning of these concepts and their role in their lives. In doing so they were able to recognize different discourses about memory and resistance and compare them to their own experiences and needs. They identified personal conflicts, unspoken fears and particularly issues around their unresolved relationship with their parents. The workshop experience provided the opportunity of developing “acts of active hope” by emotionally engaging participants in reflective remembrance practices through the creation of individual and collective artistic pieces that connected them with their hopeful need to reconcile with their own experience and reclaiming their place in history.

The body collages are an embodied testimony of the experiences of 10 men and women who represent a generation that was directly affected by the repression of the dictatorship against their families and themselves. They portray not only their personal story, but also the story of many others who fought the dictatorship and who remain absent from history.

The use of artistic embodied expressions as a methodological tool proved to be an appropriate approach to investigate embodied social practices, while at the same time it provided important therapeutic information about the healing value of these workshops. Likewise, the use of a participatory and process-oriented methodology allowed me to take the analysis process to increasing levels of complexity that resulted in more elaborated information.
The findings of this study provide pertinent information for further theoretical elaboration of these issues as well as the development of therapeutic, pedagogical and psycho-educational material and interventions. In addition the study presents a number of questions and challenges to the field of counseling psychology and traumatology regarding the complexities of dealing with populations affected by past personal and social traumas that are constantly exposed to recurrent retraumatizing episodes produced by impunity. It also provides new information to the literature pertaining transmission of psychosocial trauma. Finally, it addresses the importance of contextualizing trauma and its effects from a holistic perspective.

**Epilogue**

This study represents a long-held debt I had with my country in terms of doing meaningful work for all of us who have experienced the effects of psychosocial trauma. At the end of this process I would like to acknowledge the pain I have experienced writing about death, torture, fear, impunity and *los desaparecidos* and the effects this pain has on all of us. Throughout this text I have censored my words and some painful information that I thought would be disturbing for the reader. In doing so I recognize this self-imposed censorship as one of the effects of repression in the sense that we often avoid talking about pain to prevent others from experiencing their own. I have also attempted to infuse hope in order to balance the information, but also because I strongly believe that it is possible to repair to some extent the damage through hopeful, loving work. I strongly feel that a part of me is beginning to feel liberated as my body feels lighter after giving birth to this testimony of pain and love. I truly hope this work can help many survivors in their personal journeys towards healing, justice and peace and those loving people involved in guiding and supporting them.
I would also like to mention that almost two years after the beginning of this process the participants are fully engaged in the flux of life. Some of them finished their studies, a few have begun new educational endeavors, some of them have engaged in psychotherapy, while others are looking for new options in life, and three baby-girls have been born (two of them are the daughters of male participants, and one is the daughter of a female participant). Life goes on, as we continue to believe and hope that protecting life is one of the strongest values to hold when we confront death.
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Estimado participante potencial,

Mi nombre es Adriana Espinoza y estoy investigando las prácticas de resistencia y memoria usadas por miembros de HIJOS. Estas prácticas incluyen huelgas de hambre, protestas, encadenarse a edificios públicos, el uso de un foto de sus padres desaparecidos en su pecho, memoriales públicos, etc. Estoy interesada en entender cómo se han desarrollado estas prácticas, y en cómo miembros de HIJOS usan sus cuerpos para resistir y recordar, y el significado que ellos le asignan a estas prácticas.

Los interesados participarán en cinco talleres artísticos que incluyen escritura narrativa, collage, fotografía, y técnicas teatrales del teatro del oprimido. También estoy interesada en explorar si estos talleres son terapéuticos para los participantes. Este estudio es parte de mi trabajo de doctorado en consejería psicológica en la Universidad de la Columbia Británica en Vancouver, Canadá. Y va a terminar siendo una investigación que estará albergada en la biblioteca de mi Universidad y a disposición del público. Como chilena creo que este estudio nos puede dar importante información acerca de los procesos que desarrolla la gente para resistir y denunciar la violencia institucionalizada, para luchar contra la injusticia y para recordar a las víctimas de la dictadura militar.

Ando buscando miembros del grupo HIJOS (hombres y mujeres) cuyos padres fueron asesinados o desaparecidos por los militares y quienes han participado en prácticas de resistencia y memoria. Durante los talleres los participantes podrán explorar estas prácticas a través de ejercicios teatrales, el uso de collage y fotografía y escritura. Los talleres durarán tres horas cada uno aproximadamente. A los participantes se les pedirá que compartan sus experiencias en estas prácticas así como en los talleres. Se espera que los participantes en estos talleres estén emocionalmente preparados para la experiencia. El psicólogo Jorge Pantoja y yo facilitaremos los talleres.

Habrá tres entrevistas individuales. La entrevista inicial es una reunión corta (media hora) entre la investigadora y el/la participante para establecer contacto, discutir el propósito de la investigación y para revisar las expectativas de ambas partes. En la segunda entrevista que se llevará a cabo una vez terminados los talleres, el/la participante podrá compartir su experiencia de participar en los talleres. Después de esto, la investigadora escribirá un resumen de la entrevista. En la tercera entrevista la investigadora compartirá con el/la participante su interpretación del significado de estas prácticas de resistencia y memoria y el valor terapéutico de los talleres artísticos. La primera entrevista durará aproximadamente media hora, mientras que la segunda y tercera entrevistas se estima que duren una hora. Habrá un grupo focal final para que los participantes compartan sus experiencias en los talleres y para chequear la interpretación preliminar de la investigadora. Se estima que el tiempo de participación total sea de 20 horas a lo largo de un período de seis meses. Las entrevistas y las discusiones grupales durante los talleres serán grabadas y luego transcritas. Para asegurar la confidencialidad y el anonimato se usará un seudónimo para identificar a los participantes y la información se
Entendiendo las respuestas al trauma político: Las prácticas de resistencia y memoria de HIJOS, un grupo de jóvenes hijos de detenidos-desaparecidos y ejecutados políticos en Chile

Investigación de Tesis Doctoral

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Antecedentes de la Investigación.

La presente investigación se centra en la exploración de las prácticas de resistencia y memorialización del cuerpo que se desarrollaron durante la dictadura como una forma de desafío y respuesta al discurso de destrucción del cuerpo social utilizado por la dictadura para aniquilar, aterrorizar y paralizar a sus oponentes. Estas prácticas de resistencia incluyen por ejemplo, las huelgas de hambre, los encadenamientos a edificios públicos, o los sit-ins, por mencionar algunas.

Las prácticas de memorialización del cuerpo por otra parte, fueron aquellas en que el cuerpo de los participantes se transformó en un lugar de ejecución (performance) de la memoria como forma de denuncia política y duelo. Estas prácticas incluyen el uso de las fotos de los parientes detenidos-desaparecidos, las que son utilizadas por sus familiares, prendidas a sus cuerpos, o, es también una práctica de memorialización la representación de la ausencia de los desaparecidos simbolizada en la cueca sola.

A pesar que han pasado quince años del fin del gobierno militar estas prácticas aún son llevadas a cabo como formas de denuncia política por miembros de la sociedad civil y en particular por HIJOS, un grupo formado por hijos/hijas de detenidos-desaparecidos y ejecutados políticos.

Objetivos de la investigación
Mi interés en esta investigación es estudiar como estas prácticas de resistencia y memorialización del cuerpo individual y social se desarrollaron y cómo se han mantenido a través del tiempo. A nivel emocional me interesa saber si estas prácticas han tenido un efecto de sanación o reparación entre quienes aún las practican. Y por último el descubrir cuál es el significado de estas prácticas a nivel individual y colectivo.

El objetivo de mi tesis doctoral es investigar como el cuerpo individual y social se convirtieron en un lugar de resistencia y performance de la memoria colectiva. En este estudio exploraré las siguientes preguntas: (1) ¿Cómo los hijos/hijas de los detenidos-desaparecidos y ejecutados políticos usan sus cuerpos como un lugar de resistencia y performance de la memoria colectiva? (2) ¿Qué significado individual y colectivo le asignan a estas prácticas?; y (3) ¿Cuál es el valor terapéutico de explorar estas prácticas a través de una serie de talleres artísticos?

Los objetivos específicos de este estudio son los siguientes (a) aumentar el conocimiento y la comprensión de la experiencia de aquellos que participan en estas prácticas de resistencia y memoria; (b) investigar el significado personal y colectivo de estas prácticas; (c) determinar el nivel de sanación de aquellos que aún participan en ellas; (d) implementar un innovativo método de talleres para estimar el valor terapéutico de usar expresiones artísticas como una forma de exploración de la sanación colectiva; (e) empoderar a los participantes al explorar y validar sus experiencias en estas prácticas de resistencia y memoria; (f) explorar los efectos transgeneracionales del trauma socio-político; (g) involucrar a estos jóvenes y a la comunidad en discusiones públicas acerca del valor de la memoria como una forma de entender y transformar experiencias traumáticas pasadas (h) identificar las diferencias de género en la forma en que estos jóvenes entienden y le dan significado a los procesos de democratización y sanación.

Diseño de la Investigación

Para poder responder a las preguntas de esta investigación he diseñado cuatro talleres de expresión artística que incluyen; trabajo de memoria, teatro del oprimido, el uso de fotografía y collage. Cada uno de los talleres ha sido diseñado para explorar desde la expresión corporal el trabajo de memoria en las dos áreas temáticas de este estudio; la resistencia y la performance de la memoria. Mi interés es lograr a través de un trabajo reflexivo con los participantes la creación de “narrativas del cuerpo”. Habrá también un taller introductorio que tiene como objetivo el crear un espacio seguro a través de una serie de ejercicios destinados a desarrollar la confianza entre los participantes, en los facilitadores y en el proceso grupal.
Los participantes serán ocho jóvenes hombres y mujeres cuyos padres hayan sido desaparecidos o ejecutados por miembros de las fuerzas represivas de la dictadura. Los talleres se llevarán a cabo los días viernes en cinco fines de semanas consecutivos y tendrán una duración aproximada de entre tres a cuatro horas cada uno. Estos talleres serán co-facilitados por el Sr. Jorge Pantoja, el que por su experiencia en el ámbito de derechos humanos y salud mental es conocido en el Departamento de Consejería Psicológica de mi universidad.

Metodología de la Investigación

Para esta investigación he diseñado una metodología que he denominado de acción liberadora. Esta metodología toma las premisas básicas de la pedagogía del oprimido desarrollada por Paulo Freire; de la psicología de la liberación desarrollada por Ignacio Martín-Baró; de la investigación de acción participativa desarrollada por Orlando Fals-Borda; y del teatro del oprimido desarrollado por Augusto Boal. Lo que tienen en común estos cuatro enfoques, es la producción de conocimiento colectivo a través del trabajo reflexivo y de concientización que buscan desenterrar formas de conocimiento popular que inspiran a la acción colectiva. Por lo tanto, el proceso de investigación se transforma en una actividad dialéctica donde las experiencias y las ideas, tanto de los participantes como de la investigadora enriquecen las experiencias y el entendimiento del fenómeno que está siendo investigado. Estoy convencida de que los traumas socio-políticos que hemos vivido han deshumanizado hasta cierto punto nuestra experiencia y conocimiento de las relaciones humanas, por lo tanto creo que la exploración, reflexión, y re-estructuración de estas experiencias tienen un potencial de liberación y sanación. En este caso se espera que a través de estos talleres de expresión artística los participantes logren generar un conocimiento acerca del origen y significado de estas prácticas de resistencia y de performance de la memoria, lo que puede ayudarlos a procesar sus experiencias traumáticas, y por lo tanto encaminarlos hacia una sanación. Se espera también que las técnicas artísticas aprendidas y los artefactos de memoria creados en estos talleres inspiren a los participantes a la producción de videos, obras de teatro, o exposiciones, lo que también puede tener efectos terapéuticos. Por último, la recopilación de información se llevará a cabo a través del material generado en los cuatro talleres artísticos, y a través de entrevistas individuales y grupales.
Análisis de la Información

Para el análisis de la información recopilada tanto en los talleres como en las entrevistas individuales y grupales utilizaré un método narrativo. Este método desarrollado por Arvay (1998) propone un análisis del material investigativo a través de cuatro lecturas que se enfocan hacia distintos aspectos de la información. La primera lectura se centra en todos aquellos elementos que reflejan la experiencia de encarnación de las prácticas de resistencia, es decir, imágenes, sensaciones, recuerdos en las que se expresan las narrativas del cuerpo. La segunda, se enfoca en aquellos elementos o experiencias que describen sus historias o entendimiento del uso del cuerpo como lugar de performance de la memoria. La tercera lectura explora el significado individual y colectivo que los participantes le asignan a estas prácticas de resistencia y performance de la memoria. Este análisis incluye también una lectura de las diferencias de género. La última lectura analiza aquella información que se refiere a las experiencias de los participantes en los cuatro talleres.

Como parte de la metodología participativa de esta investigación, el análisis de la información obtenida en los cuatro talleres será presentado a los participantes en una reunión grupal para que aporten sus opiniones, con el objeto de lograr un consenso sobre este análisis. De igual forma, las entrevistas individuales serán escritas en forma de una narrativa sobre la interacción entre la investigadora y el/la participante la que será entregada a las personas para su revisión y aprobación. Después de esta etapa, la investigadora hará un análisis previo usando las cuatro lecturas antes mencionadas y presentará el documento por última vez al participante para sus comentarios finales. Por último, la investigadora escribirá un documento haciendo una síntesis del análisis obtenido en todo el trabajo investigativo, el que será presentado al grupo para su aprobación final. Además, y con el objeto de asegurar la coherencia histórica, cultural y política en el análisis obtenido la investigadora presentará este material a un grupo de profesionales integrado por un psicólogo, un antropólogo, un médico, un sociólogo, un economista y un historiador.

Aspectos Éticos de la Investigación

Como parte del proceso de aprobación de investigaciones con seres humanos de la Universidad de British Columbia, los posibles participantes deben ser debidamente informados del riesgo potencial de re-traumatización que puedan experimentar por ser parte de una investigación de esta naturaleza. Por tal motivo y como parte del proceso de reclutamiento de
participantes, la investigadora y el Sr. Pantoja se reunirán con cada uno de ellos/ellas en forma individual para informarle de estos riesgos y para determinar su estado emocional. Una vez que se haya establecido su participación en la investigación los jóvenes deberán recibir y firmar un contrato de participación para integrarse a la investigación, el que debe establecer claramente los deberes y responsabilidades de la investigadora, así como los derechos del participante. Por ejemplo, los participantes tienen el derecho a retirarse de la investigación en cualquier momento del proceso si así lo estiman conveniente. La investigadora por su parte debe responsabilizarse en todo momento por el bienestar tanto físico como emocional de los participantes, lo que incluye entre otras cosas el proveer asistencia psicológica por parte de profesionales especializados si el/la participante así lo requiera. Finalmente y como parte de la metodología participativa de este estudio, la investigadora deberá establecer en forma verbal y por escrito, un contrato que establezca cómo y quiénes utilizarán la información obtenida en esta investigación, así como el material artístico producido.
Appendix C: Consent Form (English)

Consent Form to Videotape, Use of the Research Material and Family Names or Nicknames

Consent

I ____________________________ have agreed to participate in the study Understanding Responses to Political Trauma: The Embodied Practices of Resistance and Memory of HIJOS, a Group of Children of the Disappeared in Chile.

As part of this research study I freely consent to let Adriana Elizabeth Espinoza Soto the following:

a) to videotape the workshops and interviews
b) to use the graphic material produced (pictures, video clips)
c) to use my real name or my nickname and the name of family members

These materials will be used for academic and educational purposes only.

_____________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant        Date

_____________________________  _______________________
Signature of Witness           Date
Appendix C: Consent Form (Spanish)

Consent Form to Videotape, Use of the Research Material and Family Names or Nicknames

Consentimiento

Yo, _________________________________________, he consentido en participar en la investigación Entendiendo las Respuestas al Trauma Político: Las Prácticas de Resistencia y Memoria de HIJOS, un Grupo de Jóvenes Hijos de Detenidos-Desaparecidos en Chile

Como parte de esta investigación yo **consiento voluntariamente** a permitir a Adriana Elizabeth Espinoza Soto lo siguiente:

a) filmar los talleres y las entrevistas
b) usar el material gráfico producido
c) usar mi nombre real o my apodo y el nombre de miembros de mi familia

Este material será utilizado para fines académicos y educacionales solamente.

______________________________  ______________________________
Firma del/de la Participante      Fecha

______________________________  ______________________________
Firma del/de la Testigo          Fecha
Appendix D: Introductory Interview Protocol (English)

I. General questions:

1. What attracted you to participate in this study?
2. What would you like to learn or experience in these workshops?
3. Have you ever participated in something similar? How was that experience?
4. How do you see incorporating this experience to your personal/professional life?

II. Questions related to their participation in HIJOS

1. Tell me about your experience participating in HIJOS
2. How long have you been participating in this organization?
3. What do you like about participating in HIJOS?
4. Tell me about your experiences participating in activities that involve the use of the body such as hanger strikes, protests, etc?
5. What does it mean for you to participate in these practices?
6. How have they help you?
7. Tell me about the work you do related to collective memories such as visits to the Memorial, velatones, etc.
8. What have these experiences meant?
9. Would you feel comfortable talking or remembering your experiences in these practices?

III. Questions related to their participation in the workshops

During the workshops we are going to remember and talk about the political context that took you as individuals and group to participate in these practices as a form of denounce and resistance, therefore:

1. It is possible that during the workshops some painful or memories might come up as part of the artistic process and group discussion. How do you feel you might react?
2. In the past when similar situations happened, what was your reaction?
3. If this happen in the context of the group, would you feel comfortable being emotionally vulnerable in front of the rest of the participants?

4. Do you have anybody to talk about these issues in moments like this?

5. What are some the things, activities that help you overcome moments like this?

6. Do you have some self-help activities that help you in moments like this?

7. How would you like that Jorge and I would help you if this happens?

8. Would you be willing to consider being referred for counseling if it was the case?

IV. Questions about the detention, disappearance and death of the parents

Although the detention, killing or disappearance of you parents is not the focus of this research, it is very likely that the topic might be discussed in the workshops as a result of the group process.

1. How do you feel about talking or remembering the disappearance or death of your parent or relatives?

2. Would you feel comfortable talking about these issues in front of the members of HIJOS?

3. How do you deal with the feelings and emotions that talking and remembering your parent brings up for you?

4. Do you have someone to talk about what it feels to have your parent disappeared? If yes who?

5. How old were you when this event happened in your life?

6. What meaning do you make of this event in your life?

7. How has the detention and disappearance and death of your parent affected your life?

8. What have been the effects on your family?

9. Please name three of the most important effects that have impacted you and your family?

10. How has the disappearance/death of your parent affected your relationship with your friends, community and the rest of society?

11. How has your emotional and physical health been affected as a result of the disappearance of your parents?
Appendix D: Introductory Interview Protocol (Spanish)

I. Preguntas Generales

1. ¿Qué te atrajo a querer participar en este estudio?

2. ¿Qué te gustaría aprender o experimentar en estos talleres?

3. ¿Has participado alguna vez en algo similar? Cómo fue esa experiencia?

4. ¿Cómo crees que podrías incorporar esta experiencia en tu vida personal/profesional?

II. Preguntas relacionadas con participación en HIJOS

1. Cuéntame un poco de tu experiencia participando en HIJOS

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas participando en esta organización?

3. ¿Qué te gusta de participar en HIJOS

4. Cuéntanos de tus experiencias participando en actividades que involucran el uso del cuerpo como huelgas de hambre, protestas, toma de edificios etc?

5. ¿Qué ha significado tu experiencia en estas prácticas?

6. ¿En qué forma te han ayudado?

7. Cuéntame un poco del trabajo en memoria colectiva que Uds. realizan, como memoriales, velatones etc.

8. ¿Qué ha significado tu experiencia en estas prácticas?

9. ¿Crees que te sentirás cómodo/a hablando o recordando tus experiencias en estas prácticas?

III. Preguntas relacionadas con la participación en los talleres

Durante el desarrollo de estos talleres vamos a recordar y conversar sobre el contexto político que los llevo a Uds. como grupo e individualmente a participar en estas prácticas como una forma de denuncia y resistencia, por lo tanto:

1. Es probable que durante los talleres salgan temas o recuerdos dolorosos como parte del proceso artístico y de discusión grupal. ¿Cómo crees que reaccionarías si esto pasara?

2. En el pasado cuando se han dado situaciones similares, cuál ha sido tu reacción.
3. Si esto ocurriera seria en el contexto del grupo. Te sentirías cómoda/o de estar emocionalmente vulnerable en frente al resto de los participantes

4. ¿Tienes alguien con quien conversar de tus sentimientos en momentos como esos?

5. ¿Cuáles son aquellas cosas, actividades que te ayudan a sobreponerte en momentos de dolor?

6. ¿Tienes algunas actividades de auto ayuda para manejarte en estos casos?

7. ¿Cómo te gustaría que Jorge y yo te ayudáramos en esos momentos?

8. ¿Estarías dispuesto/a a considerar la posibilidad de ser derivado a psicoterapia de ser necesario?

IV. Detención y desaparición de los padres

A pesar de que la detención y desaparición de tu padre o madre no es el foco de esta investigación es muy probable que el tema sea discutido en los talleres como resultado del proceso grupal.

1. ¿Cómo te sientes hablando o recordando la desaparición de tu padre/madre o familiar?

2. ¿Te sentirías cómodo/a hablando de este tema en frente a los miembros de HIJOS si saliera el tema?

3. ¿Cómo manejas los sentimientos y emociones que te produce el hablar o recordar a tus padres?

4. ¿Tienes a alguien con quien hablar de lo que siente tener a tus padre/madre desaparecido/a?

5. ¿Qué edad tenías cuando esto ocurrió?

6. ¿Qué significado le das a este evento en tu vida?

7. ¿Cómo te ha afectado tu vida la detención y desaparición de tu padre/madre

8. ¿Cuáles han sido los efectos que tu has notado en tu familia?

9. Si pudieras nombrar tres de los efectos mas importantes que este evento ha tenido en tu vida y la de tu familia. Cuáles serían?

10. Cómo ha afectado la desaparición de tu padre/madre en tu relación con tus amigos, comunidad y el resto de la sociedad?

11. Cómo ha sido afectada tu salud emocional y física como resultado de la desaparición de tu padre/madre
escribirá un resumen de la entrevista. Habrá una tercera entrevista para chequear la validez de los resultados de la investigadora. La primera entrevista durará aproximadamente media hora, mientras que la segunda y tercera entrevistas se estima que duren una hora.

Habrá un grupo focal y cinco talleres. El primer taller de introducción está diseñado para crear un espacio seguro a través de una serie de ejercicios destinados a desarrollar confianza entre los participantes, en los facilitadores y en el proceso grupal. En el segundo taller se usará la escritura como forma de exploración; el tercero usará técnicas del teatro del oprimido; el cuarto fotografía y collage; y el quinto será una mezcla de teatro del oprimido, pintura y escritura. Cada taller durará aproximadamente 3 horas. Las primeras dos horas estarán dedicadas a la exploración de cada forma artística. La última hora estará dedicada a reflexionar sobre el taller. El último grupo focal está diseñado para que los participantes compartan sus experiencias en los talleres en un ambiente grupal y para que los participantes puedan chequear la interpretación que la investigadora ha hecho de la experiencia grupal. Se estima que esta sesión grupal durará aproximadamente dos horas y media. Se estima que el tiempo de participación total sea de 20 horas.

Uso de la información reunida en este estudio

Es posible que la información obtenida en este estudio sea analizada en una fecha futura usando un formato distinto, pero dentro del contexto de este estudio.

El material artístico producido durante los talleres es de propiedad de los participantes. La investigadora usará el material artístico producido por los participantes en los talleres para analizarlo, y luego será devuelto a los participantes una vez que el análisis haya finalizado y haya sido aprobado por el comité supervisor de la tesis.

Beneficios o riesgos potenciales

No se anticipan riesgos ni beneficios directamente relacionados con esta investigación. Sin embargo, se puede dar el caso que algunos individuos experimenten reacciones desagradables como resultado de la discusión acerca del contexto político en que se desarrollaron estas prácticas. Las entrevistas y los talleres se llevarán a cabo en las salas de la Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Condell 343, Santiago. También habrá información disponible acerca de los efectos psicológicos del trauma político y se podrá derivar a aquellos participantes que lo necesiten a servicios de consejería psicológica gratuitos. Por otra parte, el proceso de compartir estas experiencias emocionales puede ayudar a que la gente aumente la conciencia de sí misma y la auto-reflexión lo que puede tener un efecto positivo. Esta consecuencia potencial puede ser considerada como un beneficio.

Confidencialidad

La información recolectada en este estudio será mantenida en estricta confidencialidad. Una vez firmado el contrato de participación, a cada persona se le asignará un seudónimo, y cualquier nombre de lugar o fecha dentro de las historias individuales o grupales serán cambiados para proteger a los participantes. Los participante no serán identificados por el uso de nombres o iniciales. Toda la información reunida será guardada en un armario con llave, y los archivos de la computadora que contengan información sobre el estudio sólo serán accesibles a través de un código secreto. El número telefónico de la investigadora es un buzón de voz confidencial, también con un código secreto. Sin embargo, solo podemos ofrecer una
Firma del/de la Testigo

Fecha

Gracias por su interés en participar en este estudio.
Appendix F: Workshop Photographs

Workshop N° 1
Workshop N° 2
Workshop N° 5
Workshop Nº 6
Appendix G: Interview Protocol (English)

Interview Protocol for Individual Validation Meeting

I. This area focuses on the participants’ reflective understanding and their experience of using their bodies as a site of resistance and memory. These questions are meant to be a prompt to initiate a dialogue about this topic.

1) What was your embodied experience of participating in the workshops?

2) What did you notice while you were part of the imagery exercise, the memory container, in workshop two?

3) What did you experience while constructing the sculptures in workshop three?

4) What did you feel while representing your understanding of memory and resistance in workshops three and four?

5) How did you interpret what was happening for you at the time?

II. This area explores the meaning of these practices in the lives of the participants

1) What is the meaning you assign to these practices of memory and resistance in your life?

III. This area centers on the overall experience of participating in the research process

1) What was your overall experience of participating in these workshops?

2) What do you think of the methodology?

3) What did you like about the workshops? Why?

4) What would you change in the design or implementation of the workshops?

5) Do you have any other ideas on how would you improve them?

IV. This area focuses on their overall opinions and feedback about the process

1) Would you recommend these workshops for other members of HIJOS?

2) What other groups do you see benefiting from these workshops?

3) Would they be appropriate for people who experience direct trauma (torture)
4) Was the schedule suitable to your needs?

V. In this last section I provide a preliminary interpretation of the findings collected from the workshops and I also offer an interpretation of their body collage.
Appendix G: Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Interview Protocol for Individual Validation Meeting

I. Esta área se centra en la reflexión de los participantes y sus experiencias en usar el cuerpo como un lugar de resistencia y memoria. Estas preguntas sólo intentan ser una guía para iniciar el diálogo acerca de este tema.

1) ¿Cuál fue tu experiencia corporal al participar en los talleres?

2) ¿Qué te llamó la atención al ser parte del ejercicio de imaginación el contenedor de la memoria en el taller uno?

3) ¿Qué experimentaste mientras construías las esculturas en el taller dos?

4) ¿Qué sentiste mientras representabas tu experiencia sobre memoria y resistencia en los talleres tres y cuatro?

5) ¿Cómo interpretas lo que te estaba pasando en esos momentos?

II. En esta área se explora el significado de estas prácticas en la vida de los participantes

1) ¿Qué significado le das a estas prácticas de memoria y resistencia en tu vida?

III. Esta área se centra en la experiencia global de participar en esta investigación

1) ¿Cuál fue tu experiencia global de participar en esta investigación

2) ¿Qué piensas del diseño metodológico?

3) ¿Qué te gustó de los talleres? ¿Por qué?

4) ¿Qué cambiarías en el diseño o implementación de los talleres?

5) ¿Tienes otras ideas de cómo mejorar estos talleres?

IV. Esta área explora sus opiniones y sugerencias acerca del proceso en general

1) ¿Recomendarías estos talleres a otros miembros de HIJOS?

2) ¿A qué otros grupos crees que beneficiaría?
3) ¿Crées que serían apropiados para grupos de personas que experimentaron directamente el trauma (tortura)?

4) ¿Te pareció que el horario satisfacía tus necesidades?

V. En esta sección se proporciona una interpretación preliminar de los hallazgos recolectados en los talleres, y una interpretación de los collages.