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Voices at the Margins of Victimhood: Jorge Díaz's *Náufragos de la memoria*

Abstract

After decades of political and ideological persecution, the process of Chilean national reconciliation requires the careful examination of a problematic dialectic: on the one hand, forgiving and forgetting, on the other, bringing the guilty to justice. However, decades after Chile's transition from dictatorship to democracy, the boundaries between forgiveness and condemnation remain porous. This is partially due to the fact that some of the survivors have not been able to express their personal injuries. In the eyes of the famous Chilean playwright Jorge Díaz – whose last collection of plays *Náufragos de la memoria* [*Castaways of Memory*] (2007) is the subject of this article – this social dynamic of silence imposed on the defeated converts society into one more link in the chain of guilt. This article seeks to shed light on the diverse intimate experiences of victimhood as represented theatrically in Díaz's pieces, from the perspective of survivors who are dwelling at the periphery of post-dictatorship society. Following Ana Longoni's proposal of the marginalization of this particular group through their classification as "traitors", I will argue that through the dynamic employment of silences, irony, and of physical space(s), these plays blur the categories of victim and perpetrator. This breaking of rigid classifications reveals Díaz's main criticism about his country's controversial attitude and debatable strategies of reconciliation, and opens up the possibility of a dialogue about traumatic memory – including those most intimately touched by this memory.

Keywords: post-dictatorship, Chile, trauma, memory, theatre, Jorge Díaz, victim, perpetrator

Post-dictatorship theatrical productions in Latin America's Southern Cone – among them those written by the illustrious Chilean playwright Jorge Díaz – may help address several important questions and issues regarding this region's transitional political period. By uncovering the transformation and reconciliation processes that emerge from society's entrance into a new era of democracy, these texts provide a "significant commentary on major social or political problems" (Foster 2004: 38). Among such persistent issues is the complicated notion of defining victimhood, particularly as it relates to survivors of authoritarian regimes. This article seeks to address

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this topic by analysing the characters in Jorge Díaz's last three plays, published in a collection titled *Náufragos de la memoria* [*Castaways of Memory*][1] (2007). The protagonists of these plays survived and were directly affected by Pinochet's regime[2] in their own right, yet none of them fit a socially accepted definition of an innocent victim. In other words, these plays dramatize the experience of a particular group of people who cannot be categorized as victims nor as perpetrators, but rather inhabit a sort of 'grey area' at the margins of society merely due to the fact that they survived the dictatorship.

In the epilogue of his renowned play *Death and the Maiden* (1992), the Chilean writer and critic Ariel Dorfman voiced his expectations for the Rettig Commission[3] and praised its important role in the reconciliation process of post-dictatorship Chile. Writing at a time of transition between dictatorship and democracy, he predicted that the Commission would provide the means by which society was to gain a more consolidated picture of the atrocities that occurred under the Pinochet regime, which in turn would result in wider public recognition of the fact that these things truly happened. Accordingly, the findings of the Rettig Commission would lay the groundwork for unanimous reconciliation. However, the Commission's reach was rather limited: "[President] Aylwin was steering a prudent but valiant course between those who wanted past terror totally buried and those who wanted it totally revealed" (Dorfman 1992: 72). As a result, no one was brought to trial and – as the commission only dealt with the cases of those who were murdered by the regime – none of the many survivors got the chance to address their own painful experience in a public venue.

Jorge Díaz – without a doubt the most prominent Chilean playwright of the last century – and his theatrical work profoundly engage in social criticism, and often reveal an intrinsic human quality in the characters portrayed on stage. According to Díaz, there exists a prevailing social dynamic of silence imposed on the defeated – the survivors directly affected by the dictatorship – that converts society into one more link in the chain of guilt. He addresses this issue in the three plays he wrote immediately before his

[1] All translations from Spanish are mine.

[2] Augusto Pinochet's tenure as President of Chile – often referred to as a dictatorial reign – spanned from 1973 until 1990. He lost a national plebiscite in October 1988, yet remained in office until free elections were held in March 1990.

[3] The *Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación* (National Commission For Truth and Reconciliation, also called The Rettig Commission) operated from May 1990 to February 1991, and "was mandated to document human rights abuses resulting in death or disappearance during the years of military rule, from September 11, 1973 to March 11, 1990. Significantly, torture and other abuses that did not result in death were outside the scope of the commission's mandate" ("Truth Commission: Chile 90").

death,[4] in a collection entitled *Náufragos de la memoria*, which has not received extensive critical attention since its publication in 2007.[5] These pieces seek to represent different types of people affected by the Pinochet dictatorship, exposing their shared language of trauma, memory, and their experience of political change. The protagonists of these plays do not, however, represent a straightforward and socially accepted image of 'victims', one that includes only those who were passively abducted, tortured, and possibly disappeared by the authorities. Rather, the characters in Díaz's play occupy an ambiguous place between victimhood and perpetration. In the first play, entitled *Los pájaros en la tormenta* [*Birds in the Storm*], the protagonist is a man who, while reliving his experience in the torture chambers, cannot remember whether he was the torturer or the tortured. In *La mano inocente* [*The Innocent Hand*], the play's main character, who was forced to collaborate in his own father's murder during the Pinochet dictatorship, wishes to wash away his guilt by confronting one of the individuals who forced him to commit such a heinous crime, and thus redeem his own existence. In the third play, titled *Exit,* two former theatre students meet again after returning from exile, and are unable to (re)construct their lives and their sense of being. As Díaz himself observes, many of his characters move about with a sense of ambiguity about their identity, marked by an inner fear to face who they really are. The same dread that consumes their experience creates the conflict that makes theatre possible, and which is represented on stage (Díaz 1996: 23).

In this article, then, I will seek to shed light on the varied intimate experiences of victimhood as they are represented theatrically in Díaz's pieces, from the perspective of these survivors dwelling at the periphery of post-dictatorship society. The analysis will follow Ana Longoni's proposal in *Traiciones* (2007), where she suggests that the individuals who survived detainment during the dictatorship are – upon reentering society – necessarily viewed with suspicion, and often marked as traitors. This is based on the assumption that in order to survive torture and punishment, they had no choice but to collaborate with their oppressors in some form. Because of such assumed betrayal, these survivors are rejected from the community and automatically marginalized. I will discuss how through the dynam-

[4] *Los Pájaros en la tormenta,* the first play of the collection, was adapted and directed by Pablo Krögh and his company El Lunar. It was first performed during the 2007 Festival Santiago a Mil, shortly before Jorge Díaz's death. Within the next year, Krögh and his company also performed the other two plays of the collection, *La mano inocente* and *Exit* (see Robles Poveda 2015: 438).

[5] One of the rare examples of scholarship on these plays is their inclusion in the doctoral dissertation written by María Magdalena Robles Poveda at the University of Salamanca (2015).

ic employment of silences, of irony, and of physical space(s), Díaz's plays blur the categories of victim and perpetrator, giving way to the possibility of a more inclusive perception of and dialogue about such traumatic memory, one that is not restricted by a traditionally rigid binary categorization.

In the case of Chile, this is particularly significant if we consider the negative reactions to the most recent version of the Valech Report, reopened in 2011.[6] The report sparked intense criticism – as evidenced by local news reports – because of the inclusion of individuals such as Luz Arce and Miguel Estay, who were deemed to be victims-turned-collaborators by society at large ("Información"; "AFDD demanda" 2011). Two of the protagonists of Díaz's plays – the nameless "He" in *Los pájaros en la tormenta*, and "Frog" in *La mano inocente* – closely portray precisely this dilemma, and their personal experience of exclusion from society because of such an 'in between' position.[7]

Dominick LaCapra's work certainly adds to such a discussion about categorizing victims, perpetrators, and roles in between. Focusing on Nazi Germany, the scholar points out that in defining victims and perpetrators, it is necessary to avoid simplifications as well as generalizations, as they are an impediment to any useful investigation and analysis (LaCapra 2014: 114-40). Of particular interest here is LaCapra's insistence on the fact that, besides the Jews – who made up the greatest and therefore most obvious group of targets – there were various other communities of people who can be considered to be the victims and sufferers of Nazi ideology and violence.

[6] The Valech Report (issued in 2005) officially known as the *Informe Valech de la Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura* [National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report] was the product of the commission which initially opened from 2003 to 2004. The report seeks to address survivors of the dictatorship and grants those who are deemed victims financial support and health care (Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos; "Commission of Inquiry: Chile 03"). It was not received without criticism directed at the exclusion of many victims who were detained and tortured outside of the official detention centres, at the austere and symbolic nature of the reparations it offered, and the clause that would keep the data that was collected secret for fifty years (see Portales 2015).

[7] It is imperative to mention that, as Steve Stern ably demonstrates, it is already inherently difficult to explain the experiences of those who can be considered victims in the socially accepted sense, in other words, those who did not switch sides. However, when perpetrator and victim get blurred together, analysis is even more challenging. In a forum on Luz Arce's experience that was held in Santiago in 2008, and included Mrs Arce herself, it came to light how "problematic the term 'collaboration' can be. The discussants – one of whom suffered the loss of her husband because of Luz Arce – differ greatly in their treatment of Arce, and come to no agreement about how to determine where the line can be drawn between victim and active participant" (Weeks 2013: 143). For a detailed account of the controversy about Luz Arce, see Lazzara 2011.

It is unclear whether the Nazi behaviour with which these communities were confronted, and the effects that Nazi policy had on them, were similar or different from that directed at the Jews. These processes of victimization and their underlying ideology, as LaCapra argues, require a more informed study before any simplistic and universal conclusions can be drawn (128-9). While his research specifically concentrates on events and groups of individuals during World War II, his findings may be applied to a larger variety of war-like scenarios where collective trauma was induced on a great part of the general population, as was the case in Chile.

Where, then, lies the connection between the representation of trauma on stage, and unresolved trauma within society, or the public sphere? Prior to entering into a detailed analysis of Díaz's plays, let me consider the key role that theatre plays with reference to representations of trauma. In her insightful work *Trauma and Recovery,* Judith Herman asserts that, for an individual who has experienced terror, one of the most important steps towards recovery is to reconstruct and recount the trauma story in a safe setting, allowing for the transformation of a repetitious, frightening, static threat into a normal memory (1997: 175). This process creates testimony, the telling of truth, which several specialists describe as a "ritual of healing" (181). As a privileged space for the expression of social ills, art may then present an environment that could function as a substitute for direct and individual testimony, a place for acknowledging and expressing the shared languages of trauma and memory.

To follow this train of thought, I once more turn to LaCapra, as he evokes the term "post-traumatic narrative":

> Writing trauma would be one of those telling aftereffects in what I termed traumatic and post-traumatic writing . . . It involves processes of acting out, working over, and to some extent working through in analyzing and 'giving voice' to the past – processes of coming to terms with traumatic 'experience,' limit events, and their symptomatic effects that achieve articulation in different combination and hybridized forms. (2014: 186)

Building upon this notion, Ana Patricia Rodríguez has remarked that "such narratives replay and perform collective experiences of post-traumatic stress disorders deeply embedded in the cultural and affective psyche of a people who have endured persecution, violence, genocide" (2009: 104). The function that theatre may then assume in relation to trauma and post-traumatic recovery work lies precisely in its ability to replay and perform the unresolved material, and hence to serve as a vehicle through which to articulate it in the public sphere. Jorge Díaz himself says that "society needs theatre to free nightmares, to ease the pressure of the cauldron of repression, to pick up the shards of a broken mirror and piece togeth-

er an image and see itself for the first time".[8] Performance, then, creates a privileged space for the acknowledgement and understanding of trauma and for the formation of collective memory, precisely through its function as a mirror and as a safe area for re-living the traumatic moment (Taylor 1997: 123). Let me now move on to discussing the three plays included in *Náufragos de la memoria* in detail, as a case in point of the representation of Chilean trauma and its contradictions on stage.

1. *Los pájaros en la tormenta*: Silence

All three plays included in *Náufragos de la memoria* are one act plays with two characters. All of the protagonists, each in their own particular way, represent a group of victims that have been unable to find a way to reenter society as fully participating members; rather, they are dwelling at the periphery of communal existence.

The first play, titled *Los pájaros en la tormenta,* is a conversation – or rather a monologue – between He (Él), a character that is struggling to find his own identity, and the Mute Woman (La Muda). The stage directions are limited to a few instructions about the emotional state of the protagonist. He recounts memories of his maternal grandmother and her house, of the only room she actually occupies within that house, the rest of the house consisting of a long hallway with innumerable closed chambers. From behind these closed doors, music is emanating; music that – regardless of how inordinately loudly it is played – does not drown out the screams of pain and horror, nor the howling or the blood. At the end of the performance, He asks the Mute Woman who was torturing whom. He claims that if he himself were the victim, he would surely have scars. He finally asks the woman to tell him whether such scars have marked his body, but his question goes unanswered. The actual essence of the experience – did He torture or was He tortured – which holds the key to the trauma itself, is muted; it remains unspoken. The spectator, as I will demonstrate, has to read 'between the lines', and understand what is being expressed through voids and silences.[9]

[8] "La sociedad necesita el teatro para liberar pesadillas, para aflojar la presión de la caldera de represiones, para recoger los pedazos de un espejo roto y armar una imagen y verse por primera vez", qtd in Rojo 2004: 63.

[9] Ricardo Piglia's *Respiración Artificial*, published in 1980, one of the first Latin American novels to address the problematic of the latest dictatorships and disappearances of opponents of the system in the Southern Cone, used a similar technique; its essential and most profound meanings were to be found in its silences and in the void that these silences created. For more information, see, for example, Balderston 1988.

The main character of *Los pájaros en la tormenta* is facing a wall of silence as he is searching for the identity he seems to have lost and forgotten, a type of amnesia induced by the trauma he has lived through during the dictatorship. He continuously attempts to articulate this loss hoping to recover some sense of who he is, hoping to encounter a voice to guide him out of the chaos of painful memories constantly haunting him. Nonetheless, he does not know whether the images in his head – of his grandmother's house of horror – are real or if they are the product of his tormented mind, or a mixture of both. In the play, this character is only referred to as "He", indicating a complete lack of identity. About his name he says, "I don't remember mine" ("yo no recuerdo el mío", Díaz 2008: 23).

Why is he not able to remember? He answers this question directly: "I am afraid to remember" ("Tengo miedo de recordar", ibid.). His memories, regardless of whether or not they are imaginary, are haunting him to a point where they are paralyzing his whole being, compromising all of his senses. He is lost in a world that is indifferent to him (represented by his *deaf* grandmother), and at the same time unresponsive to his trauma (represented on stage by his *mute* interlocutor): it is a world of complete silence. This reduces him to an existence lost in darkness, without orientation (he refers to himself as *blind*): "I am like a blind man, waiting for the eyes I ordered through the mail" ("Estoy como un ciego, esperando los ojos que encargué por correo", 29). He is a castaway, unable to find his direction, drifting in unknown waters scattered with pieces of dark memories, clinging to anything that may have the appearance of being familiar, of belonging: "I don't know why I anchor myself to the memory of that grandmother, like a castaway" ("No sé por qué me aferro al recuerdo de esa abuela como un náufrago", 24). This imaginary island of comfort turns out to be an illusion. His grandmother, who represents the part of society that refuses to hear – even as incredible atrocities are being committed in its midst – destroys any hope he may have had to find himself. He remembers how she told him that there is no avail to his state of being, that he will always be a broken individual:

> Eres como un pájaro en la tormenta. Los vientos te arrastran hacia el suelo. Es inútil que trates de remontar el vuelo. Terminarás siempre herido, quebrantado, arrastrado como un pájaro ciego . . . (25)

> [You are like a bird in the storm. The winds drag you to the ground. It is useless to try to take flight. You will always end up wounded, broken, and dragged along like a blind bird . . .]

This, then, represents the vision society has of the protagonist, relegating him to its margins; he is seen as a lost case. As a survivor, he will not be able

to recover from his experiences as a torturer or a tortured being; he is spent, disabled, useless. The place at the periphery of human existence, to which he and other traumatized individuals are assigned, is the madhouse, "el loquero," where therapy consists of the administration of a variety of drugs:

> *(Sarcástico)*
> . . .
> Los hay peores que yo. Viven dentro de cajas de pastillas. Se arrastran de consultorio en consultorio, como un cojo transporta su pierna ortopédica de santo en santo, buscando un milagro imposible. (29)

> [(*Sarcastic)* . . . There are people worse off than I am. They live inside pill boxes. They are dragged from clinic to clinic, much like a cripple transports his prosthetic leg from saint to saint, looking for an impossible miracle.]

The protagonist's sarcastic remark on miracle-seekers clarifies how he has realized that drowning out traumatic experiences and memory through drugs does not work. Medicating the pain solely constitutes a patient's impossible dream of finding comfort by forgetting, and provides society with an easy way out. The protagonist mentions how one of the doctors in this hopeless environment points to the only real solution: "'Speak, speak!', the shrink says to me. 'Words will fix everything'" ("'¡Hable, hable!', me dice el loquero. 'Todo se arreglará con el verbo'", ibid.).

The only key to recovery lies in communication, in the dialogue with someone who may help him recuperate his identity, which is precisely what society is negating him. "You know everything I've forgotten . . . And now it seems that you are torturing me with your silence" ("¡Todo lo que yo he olvidado lo sabes tú! . . . Y ahora parece que tú me estás torturando con tu silencio", 31). "You" in this case is the Mute Woman, who represents a society that is incapable to respond to his repeated cry for help. Any attempt the protagonist makes to break through the wall, to connect with the world outside, fails and consequently leads to an inevitable descent into despair; He is trapped in a state of desolation, of complete loneliness. His monologue is an uncontested collection of racing thoughts, rhetorical questions, snippets of past or imagined conversations, and pleas for help, for someone to talk to him. As in other plays written by Jorge Díaz, we witness an impossibility of communication, which questions the very function of language (Burgos 1986: 133). This showcases the dilemma that is brought before the audience, particularly if we consider that traumatic recovery, in Judith Herman's terms, is based upon *communication*. She stresses that a traumatized person needs helpful interaction with a therapist and, at later stages, with the community in order to recreate the traumatic experience so that it ceases to be a chaotic, constant replay of the traumatizing event.

Where can He find such a forum? Is the play pointing out that the only victims not met with silence are the ones who are already dead?

Another possible interpretation is based on the question of whether He is actually considered a proper victim, someone in need of therapy. The protagonist himself is in doubt: was he at the giving or at the receiving end of the torture administered at what he remembers to be his grandmother's house? The confused and helpless state in which He is represented on stage clearly suggests that his witnessing of and participation in (either as victim, or perpetrator, or both) the systematic human rights abuses that took place under the Pinochet dictatorship affected and traumatized him. This clearly shows that this type of individual needs to communicate his traumatic experiences, needs to engage in a dialogue with the community about what happened. His amnesia and the relegation to the margins of society, one could argue, make him a victim of the circumstances, if he was not already a victim of the atrocities.

Accordingly, Jorge Díaz is giving him a voice through the mere act of putting him on stage, and of letting him speak. The juxtaposition of his monologue with the Mute Woman's silence underscores the absence of an active interlocutor to his expression of trauma. The woman functions as an onstage audience, and may represent the part of society that pretends not to hear the victims' cry for help. She is, however, mute, and therefore cannot speak even if she wished to. In other words, she does not have the means to engage in verbal dialogue.

To take this analogy a bit further, I contend that the Mute Woman may function at the same time as a mirror to the audience itself. Her lack of reaction and interlocution as He is retelling the bits and pieces of his trauma may help the audience become conscious of its own role in the play: those who watch, just like the Mute Woman on stage, are mute spectators to the character's dilemma. Through this parallel, Díaz demands that the audience self-reflect on the effect of a lack of response to traumatic memory, and that the spectators question whether a merely passive participation in the addressing of post-traumatic memory – such as listening without interaction – can be sufficiently therapeutic to heal. At the end of the play, the members of the audience, confined to their role of passive observers and listeners, may actually experience that without dialogue it is impossible to answer questions about whether the traumatized survivor on stage collaborated, why he would have done so, and how he could escape his memories in order to go on living a normal life. Such a parallel experience as mute spectators may motivate the audience to think about what has gone wrong in Chilean society, about the way that it has not addressed the trauma of survivors, and about the lack of tools to support working through traumatic memory, such as an environment conducive to creating dialogue and interaction necessary for healing.

Finally, after discussing the characters' and the audience's roles, I would like to introduce an additional element: space. Traditionally, Jorge Díaz is known for the way in which he uses space to underline the nature of his characters, and their predicaments. He breaks with the concept of the neutrality of space; he does not treat it as the encasing of the action but rather as an element that announces the conflicts presented on stage and helps fabricate as well as manifest the sense of the drama (Oyarzún 2004: 102). Díaz prefers spaces that are messy and/or abandoned; including closed spaces, rickety houses, and shabby rooms. These spaces function as a reflection of existence in and of itself (Oyarzún 1999: 8). The specific environment or space that surrounds us completes us in what we are; it makes up a crucial part of a person's world, and shapes this world. Dwelling in a space, rather than just being in it spatially, implies that such a space provides a sense of continuity, belonging, community, and 'at-homeness', all forming an essential part of one's being.[10] Díaz's choice of ill-defined, ruined, decrepit, and generally unwelcoming spaces do not invite dwelling in the Heideggerian sense. Rather, these spaces mirror the characters' broken interiority, and their lack of having a familiar place in society. In other words, by means of negating his characters a welcoming space; thus, denying them a dwelling, Díaz successfully stages the way they experience a denial of belonging (Oyarzún 2004: 93).

Náufragos de la memoria falls within the tradition established by its author, and reflects the denial of belonging that society as a whole may inflict upon the different victims portrayed in these plays. *Los pájaros en la tormenta* is full of imaginary spaces that fit the categories mentioned above. One example is the grandmother's house, which represents both the place and the memory that is tormenting and victimizing the protagonist. It is a private residence whose spatial limits are ill-defined, and which is reminiscent of a horror movie in the sense that it evokes the image of a long hallway with a number of doors. From behind these doors emanate the cries and laments of people being tortured. Space, here, becomes a tool used in order to underscore the protagonist's suffering, to make it impossible for him to escape his victimhood, as he is encapsulated, even spatially, by his nightmare. He cannot leave this house, this space of horror, there is no escaping it: the doors lead to torture chambers.

There is also the imaginary space of the polyclinic where he receives injections to cure his amnesia, and where he tells the audience about his confrontations with others who suffer from similar troubles. He recounts an experience when he is leaving after his treatment; where he witnesses a pa-

[10] This notion is based on Heidegger's concept of the dwelling as the fundamental trait of being, elaborated in his essay "Bauen, Wohnen, Denken" (1954).

tient who is masturbating frenetically while standing outside on the patio. His conclusion is that this individual is “another one who is deciphering the mystery of his identity” (“otro que está descifrando el misterio de su identidad”, Díaz 2008: 25). The man engaging in this rather obscene and normally private activity in public is trying to make his internal obsession and torment visible. The use of a public space here emphasizes the difficulty of confronting traumatic experiences and memories in an environment that is not receptive to them. The displacement of an activity generally deemed private (such as masturbation or trauma) into the public space calls attention, and may cause those engaging in this activity to be alienated. The public space then becomes a space of not belonging, a space where the brokenness of social outcasts (the mentally ill, the traumatized, etc.) is underscored and confirmed.

2. *La mano inocente*: Traitors

La mano inocente, the second play in this sequence, consists of a monologue that the character of the Frog “el Rana” – a cocaine addict, former torturer and informant – delivers in front of another man, who is silenced by a hood and has his hands and feet tied to a chair. Frog believes this character to be the Coronel who initially introduced him to the horror of drug addiction and the torture chamber. Stage directions are more frequent than in *Los pájaros en la tormenta,* and help underscore the protagonist’s augmenting inebriation and the general sense of anxiety and restlessness surrounding him. After witnessing the assassination of his father under the Pinochet regime, Frog has become a third-class assistant to the murderers of his progenitor. He looks to the Coronel as a replacement of his lost father, but rather than protecting Frog, the Coronel introduces him to the world of cocaine and uses drugs to maintain control of his subordinate. Frog is denigrated to cleaning the excrements, blood, and vomit of the victims of torture. After the end of the dictatorship, the Coronel rejects him and asks him to disappear, but Frog cannot live without his substitute ‘father’. As a consequence, Frog decides to kidnap him, in order to either obtain his recognition, or – by killing him – finally escape his own dark and hopeless past. At the end of the play, the protagonist crumbles, and the Coronel-‘father’ does not avow the truth, nor is he assassinated, and thereby corrupts any possible resolution of the problem. This lack of closure may be considered analogous to the presence of unresolved trauma in Chilean society following the Pinochet dictatorship.

From the outset, the play creates a negative set of expectations about the protagonist through his name: el Rana. In the Latin American cultur-

al realm, 'rana' or 'sapo' [frog] stands for 'snitch' or for 'traitor', similar to the English term 'rat'. This brands the protagonist as a lowly individual undeserving of respect, as a criminal in terms of social norms, and as an untrustworthy individual. In the end he does what is expected of him: by telling his story he 'snitches' on his former superior, and at the same time on the society that has forced him to dwell at its very margins. Doing so, however, does not relieve him from the burden of his past or from his bad reputation. His categorization as a 'rana' underscores his representation as a coward, and as a weak individual unworthy of deference. He is incapable of successfully functioning on his own; because of his weakness he will predictably cave, as he does at the end of the play when he does not accomplish his revenge, but rather protects the man he thought to have been the Coronel and cries for him not to die. Through this negative connotation of the protagonist's name, the play evokes the same type of reaction from the audience that society has towards individuals like Frog, if we accept Ana Longoni's thesis (2007) that those individuals who survive detainment during the dictatorship are necessarily viewed as traitors upon reentering society, and therefore are rejected by the community. Thus, Díaz's play confronts the spectators with their own judgmental vision about this specific type of survivors of atrocities, while in a parallel fashion showcasing what the audience's participation in the process of such marginalization may look like.

Particularly interesting in this context is that in *La mano inocente,* Jorge Díaz also revisits the dialectic of victim and perpetrator, although in a different light from what happened in *Los pájaros en la tormenta.* Frog, the protagonist, could be categorized as both. He is first of all a victim, as he has witnessed his father's assassination after having been tortured at the hands of the Pinochet regime. Later on, in order to survive, he is threatened to keep silent and forced to collaborate with the assassins, turning into a torturer himself. The Coronel, who is responsible for the Frog's father's death, gives the protagonist the following 'options':

> Tienes dieciocho años pendejo, si quieres que no te dejemos hueso sano, vai y contaí el cuento de tu viejo. Pero si quieres prosperar, tener buen billete y fornicarte a las mejores minas, te vienes con nosotros. Necesitamos un informante. (Díaz 2008: 36)
>
> [You are eighteen years old, jackass, if you want us to leave you without a single bone intact, go and tell the story of your old man. But if you want to prosper, walk around with a little money in your pocket, fuck the best chicks, you'll come with us. We need an informant.]

Finding himself fatherless and without many alternatives for survival, Frog makes a choice that will mark him socially and psychologically for a long time. He becomes an informant and torture assistant to the Coronel. Although in the case of Frog there is no question that he had turned into a collaborator, what is important to this analysis is Longoni's notion that it is sufficient to be *perceived* as a traitor for society to marginalize a person immediately (2007: 30-1). As was the case with the real-life survivor-turned-collaborator Luz Arce (see note 7 above) – the protagonist of a highly controversial debate in post-Pinochet Chile – society in general has no tolerance for people who, in their eyes, betrayed their fellow citizens, no matter what the reason may have been. For Luz Arce, as for the main character in Jorge Díaz's play, initially the best chance for survival was to actively participate in the system.[11] In the case of perpetrator-victims, as shown in *La mano inocente*, the larger community denies that these individuals were victims, and rejects them outright on the basis of their transgressions. They are hence doubly relegated to the periphery of society: first of all, naturally, in their role as perpetrators of crimes, and secondly through the disavowal of their victimhood. No forgiving option is ever taken into consideration.

In *La mano inocente*, the protagonist attempts to free himself from the perpetrator-victim role in order to recover the ability to live a normal life within society. As Miguel Ángel Giella points out, victimizers define themselves ontologically through their connection to the victims, thus their existence is tied to that of the subject of their own crime. Lorenzo and Ignacio, the protagonists of the Argentinian playwright Griselda Gambaro's play *Los siameses* [*The Siamese Twins*], published in 1967, exemplify this interdependent relationship and the necessity of the perpetrator to destroy the victim in order to liberate him/herself (1994: 137). This same dynamic is one of the undercurrents of *La mano inocente*. The Coronel, now hooded and handcuffed on stage, had initially subjugated the Frog by killing his father, and later transformed him into a third-class perpetrator who would take care of the dirty work, literally and metaphorically speaking, as he has to clean the excrements, blood, and vomit of the victims of torture. At the same time, the exploitation and humiliation he experiences during this work make Frog a victim, yet his identity as a perpetrator, even as one subjected by force to commit atrocities, prevent post-Pinochet society from seeing him as such.

At the time of the transition to democracy, the Coronel no longer has any use for his victim. In order to be able to go on living a normal life, the Coronel has to shed the role of being a perpetrator of crimes commit-

[11] For a detailed testimony of her story, see Arce 2004 (Luz Arce's *El Infierno*, originally published in 1993 by Planeta in Santiago, Chile).

ted during the dictatorship. Consequentially, he attempts to get rid of Frog, who is clearly aware of the Coronel's intentions:

> y me apuntó con la pistola y me dijo: ¡Desaparece de mi vista, hocicón! Yo no te conozco. Tú que sabes hacer desaparecer a las personas, ahora desaparece tú. ¡Hazte humo! . . . Comprendí que mi Coronel me quería sacar de en medio, es decir, aplastar como una cucaracha. (Díaz 2008: 37-8)
>
> [And you pointed your gun at me and told me: disappear from my sight, blabbermouth! I don't know you. Since you know so well how to make people disappear, make yourself disappear. Turn yourself into smoke! . . . I understood that the Coronel wanted to get me out of the way, that is, smash me like a cockroach.]

On stage, Frog reverses the former roles and turns into the victimizer of the Coronel, who now holds the position of the victim. This gives Frog the chance to destroy the element that marks him as a perpetrator: the Coronel. On the one hand, the Coronel was the one who forced Frog to participate in the torture of others, and on the other hand, the Coronel is now also the victim that allows Frog to literally abuse his own position of control over someone else's life. If Frog does not get rid of this victim – if he falters as he does at the end of the play – he will not be able to shed the identity of a victimizer, which is precisely what is preventing him from living a normal life, as he is seen as a perpetrator by society. Frog does not act in the same manner as those who willingly participated in the system, torturing and abusing human rights on a daily basis. At the time of transition to democracy, these types of perpetrators successfully disconnected themselves from their victims, and went on living untouched thanks to the impunity granted to them. Sarcastically, Frog states various examples of such turncoats and their ability to effortlessly rejoin society after end of he dictatorship:

> Luego del maldito plebiscito que ganaron con trampa (44)
>
> se convirtieron los especialistas…¿le gusta que lo llame así?… en jefes de seguridad del Palacio de Gobierno, encargados municipales de seguridad o agregados militares en embajadas.
> . . .
> *Nos reconciliamos*, de manera que hay peguita para todo el mundo
> . . .
> De la Villa Grimaldi a guardaespaldas del Alcalde, asesor en la lucha antiterrorista y socio de dos empresas de seguridad. (37, my emphasis)
>
> [After the damned plebiscite which they won with tricks . . . the specialists…do you like it that I call you that?… turned into chiefs of security of the

> Governor's Palace, commissioners of security or secondary soldiers in embassies. . . . *We were reconciled* so that everyone could have a piece of the pie . . . From Villa Grimaldi to the mayor's bodyguard, advisor in the anti-terrorist fight and associate of two security firms.][12]

Frog's preceding quote employs sharp irony and sarcasm, for example through interjections such as asking the hooded Coronel a rhetorical question: "do you like it that I call you that?" and also through the creation of direct connections between torture centres such as the Villa Grimaldi and post-dictatorship government offices. This element of irony is repeatedly employed throughout *La mano inocente*. As in *Los pájaros en la tormenta*, where the stage directions instruct the protagonist to be "sarcastic" in his description of medicated trauma victims, the text employs irony to let Frog express his disapproval. In *La mano inocente*, as we have seen in the quote above, this criticism is directed at the amnesty[13] given to high profile perpetrators, and their seamless reintegration into society, while many victims awaited in vain for justice to be done. In the prologue to the 2008 edition of Díaz's plays, Carla Jara Drago argues that for the protagonist, irony voices "his personal disgust in the face of this game of double appearance; a type of ideological and political transvestism . . . is observed in the irony, by the implicit tragedy".[14] The inherent irony in Frog's own tragedy of being incapable to reintegrate into society, she adds, lies in the fact that, differently from other perpetrators, he is incapable of forgetting, overcoming, and moving on from his trauma and his position as a dual victim and victimizer.

While Frog is venting his rage and frustration in a tirade apparently directed towards his victim, it becomes obvious that his general social cri-

[12] This is a reference to the plebiscite of October 5, 1988, which essentially ousted Pinochet as the leader of the country. Please see "The Chilean Plebiscite: A First Step to Redemocratization" for a detailed description of the process and its results. Villa Grimaldi, situated in the outskirts of Santiago de Chile, is the most famous among the numerous detention centres used during the Pinochet years. Those who worked there were notorious for brutally holding and torturing their prisoners, in some cases to death. The play alludes to this place, which immediately invokes images of torture and lack of humanity, and connects it to its former employees-turned-respectable civilians in order to point out a clear contradiction: the true perpetrators of brutal crimes during the dictatorship could easily shed their guilt and reenter society during the redemocratization process, while a perpetrator-victim like Frog is forced to remain at its margins.

[13] "The Amnesty Decree Law, passed in 1978, excludes all individuals who committed human rights violations between 11 September 1973 and 10 March 1978 from criminal responsibility". See Amnesty International (2013) for more detail.

[14] "evidencia su asco personal frente al juego de la doble apariencia, una suerte de travestismo ideológico y politico . . . se observa la ironía, por la tragedia implícita" (Jara Drago 2008: 10).

tique is intended for the larger audience, particularly for those who have tried to whitewash the dictatorship's major crimes: "There were cherries from the democratic pie for everyone, except for me, the useable idiot who did the dirty work" ("Hubo guindas de la torta democrática para todos, menos para mí, el tonto útil que hacía el trabajo sucio", Díaz 2008: 37).

At the same time, the ironic tone conveys some of the bitterness that the protagonist feels about his personal situation and the situation in general, a bitterness that allows him to express his frustration yet appear comical:

> Busca trabajo, me dijeron los hijos de perra. Brillante idea. Mañana colocaré en el diario un aviso destacado: "Se ofrece soplón de tercera a torturadores de primera. Estoy usado, pero soy reciclable". (47)

> [Get a job, those sons of bitches told me. Brilliant idea. Tomorrow I'll publish a distinguished ad in the paper saying: "Third-class stoolie for first-class torturers available. I'm used, but recyclable".]

In Jorge Díaz' earlier plays, pain and helplessness were hidden behind what, on the surface, appeared to be funny. Humour, as the author himself suggests, supposes the acknowledgement of pain and helplessness (Díaz 1996: 23). In *La mano inocente*, humour is definitely bitter, conveyed by a sharp sarcastic tone that reveals the character's agony and vulnerability. The double victimization that Frog experiences – once under the dictatorship and then again in a re-democratized Chile – is underscored by the droll yet pitiful image we have of him as a poor and lost soul, stuck in a situation without avail.

This desperate image of Frog is further underscored through the use of space in this play. The surroundings are completely in ruins; there are constant references to drops falling into a chamber pot, hinting at a broken roof. The protagonist himself starts out by making an allusion to an old house in Valparaíso that is about to be torn down, and that serves as the setting for the plot. This decrepit house represents what is left of Frog, a broken and useless individual, dwelling at the margins. Just as the house is nothing but a worn-out shell ready for disposal, an unusable structure, Frog – as we have seen in the quotes above — is a pathetic shadow of a person, and the space in which he operates reflects this sense of a lost existence, of his broken interior. It is certainly not a space for a person to dwell – in the Heideggerian sense – as it does not foster a sense of belonging or familiarity.

Several references in the play are made to spaces that are associated with the horrors committed under the dictatorship that Frog had to witness during his tenure as an 'associate' to the perpetrators of the abuse of political prisoners. This includes the Palacio del Gobierno, from where the tor-

ture was mandated, and the Villa Grimaldi, one of the most infamous detention centres during the Pinochet era. These allusions call attention to the protagonist's dark and horrifying past existence, one that continues to dominate his life in the present. There are no references at all to any pleasant spaces, to a possible place of retreat, or of hope. Everything is dark, sinister, and haunted by the terrors of the Frog's experience, he has no possible escape. Díaz uses space – as in the previous play – to underscore the entrapment of the protagonist in his situation, in his past, and in his status as a victim of the exploitation of those violently prolonging the persistence of the dictatorship regime.

Not only does the play point to the pain and sad existence that the protagonist and – by extension – others like him face, but also reveals the potential danger that lies in not giving voice and attention to this type of victims: will they try to do their own justice? Herman points out that many victims, especially before they have successfully recovered from their traumatic experiences, live with a fantasy of revenge against their tormentor.

> The revenge fantasy is often a mirror image of the traumatic memory, in which the roles of perpetrator and victim are reversed . . . Though the traumatized person imagines that revenge will bring relief, repetitive revenge fantasies actually increase her torment, [and] exacerbate the victim's feeling of horror and degrade her image of herself. (1997: 189)

La mano inocente, then, could be qualified as a showcase revenge fantasy, which makes Frog feel that he will finally escape his trauma by confronting his nemesis, yet leads him to completely fall apart in the end. It becomes clear that revenge does not work as a therapy. Yet, as the real therapy is denied, it may, in the eyes of the victim, be the only option to obtain justice. In the play, this notion is repeatedly articulated by the idea that the Coronel's own son, born from a prisoner whom he raped, will settle accounts with him:

> ¿Y sabe quién le va cortar los huevos y se los va a hacer comer uno a uno? ¡Su ahijado, el Luchito! Yo mismo le conté que usted había violado a su madre. (Díaz 2008: 45)

> [Do you know who is going to cut your balls and make you eat them one by one? Your protégé, Luchito! I myself told him that you raped his mother.]

Should this be the only means through which victims may address their trauma and break the silence that surrounds it, there is a great risk that the unresolved violence of the past will continue to cause violence in the present and into the future. Consequently, as Herman foregrounds, overcom-

ing the revenge fantasy, which she aptly defines as "helpless fury" (1997: 189), is part of the recovery process. And in order to be successful, this process needs to be one based on communication and (re)integration into the community.

3. *Exit:* Gaining a Voice through Death

The final play of the collection, entitled *Exit,* relies on a more traditional dialogic form, and includes abundant stage directions. Its protagonists, César and Diego, have returned from exile only to find themselves at the margins of society, in a situation without avail. Finding no other means to sustain themselves, they turn to shoplifting in supermarkets. Diego, doubly exiled because he has left his children and their mother behind in Germany, is attempting to make a documentary centred on the refusal of the Chilean people to recognize themselves, what they are, and what their nation has become. Soon he realizes that he himself has taken part in that masquerade, and has betrayed his own identity. As a result, he commits suicide in front of the camera. César functions as a mirror image of what Diego has become, a 'transvestite' who tries to profit from the transition to democracy and who, in the end, only finds himself excluded from society's advancement. With a final touch of irony, he steals all the credits to his friend's documentary by appropriating his work.

Diego represents the third type of survivor Díaz deals with in this collection, and also the one whose predicament the playwright may personally have felt closest to, as Díaz himself was exiled in Spain during the Pinochet era. It is through this character, then, that the most direct critique of Chilean society is articulated. Diego was forced to leave the country during his days as a theatre student, because of his participation in staging a politically oriented stage production using scenes by the Marxist writer Bertolt Brecht. Upon his return, he is disillusioned about the country Chile has become after the end of the dictatorship. Instead of coming to terms with its past, things are simply covered up; there is a pretense that everything is fine and resolved, when, in reality, not much has been done in terms of reconciliation work. As Diego's roommate César puts it in the play, "it's better to draw a dense veil over the past. It is better to forget than to remember" ("Es mejor echar un tupido velo sobre el pasado. Olvidarse es mejor que recordar", Díaz 2008: 71). Significantly enough, César is a transvestite who conceals his real identity and his 'flaws' with a lot of make-up. This character embodies a society that focuses on appearances, on glamour, on outward perfection, sporting a stunning but false beauty that covers up and suppresses internal trauma and with it traumatic memory, and thus negates

the possibility of a dialogue, which would prove essential to start off a healing process. Diego realizes this and decides to dedicate himself to the project of making a documentary about his companion César, and in extension about a society that is caught up in constant denial and masquerades.

Not only does César embody a past that wants to be forgotten, but also some of the current traits of a society that leads individuals like Diego, who have suffered for an attempted but unsuccessful change, into disillusion. César, for example, has fathered a number of children whom he does not take care of, although he brags about his virility, unfaithfulness, and irresponsibility, and suggests to Diego that these are the qualities that one needs to have in order to be successful:

> César ¿Sabes? Los hombres fieles como tú, son los que terminan solos. Los irresponsables como yo nunca acabamos en un asilo, aunque la gente cree lo contrario.
> Tú fuiste siempre demasiado fiel a las mujeres, a tus ideas políticas . . .
> (Díaz 2008: 68-9)

> [César You know what? Loyal men like you are the ones who end up alone. The irresponsible ones like me never end up in an institution, though people think the opposite. / You were always way too faithful to women, and to your political ideas . . .]

Diego is loyal and politically committed. Loyalty, according to the way society is represented in these plays, will not be rewarded by a community that outwardly pretends to embrace morals and truthfulness, yet is actually satisfied as long as it preserves a façade that showcases such values. César's statement above is attuned with Frog's ironic observation about torturers from Villa Grimaldi becoming civil security agents after the transition to democracy. In a broader sense, César's criticism is another allusion to the way in which many of those who supported the totalitarian regime and participated in the system have been, after its demise, seamlessly reintegrated into the democratic apparatus, without any public display of their crimes or any attempt to bring them to justice.

César is also extremely materialistic; he seems incapable of real affection, and seeks to use any situation to his advantage. When he talks about getting married to his new agent, an older woman, it quickly becomes clear that the motive of their union is money: "In one week, I can get more out of her than I can out of you in ten years" ("En una semana puedo sacarle a ella más que a ti en diez añós", 64).

Even when he recounts romantic relationships from his youth, there is no sign of passion. César never shows love nor human affection, as all that

matters to him is material wealth. For Diego, who in his youth held ideals greatly differing from César's, the world seems to have become more and more unbearable. He wants to escape, he threatens to leave the apartment he shares with César (his world), but he does not have anywhere to turn.

The space of César's apartment is described by explicit stage directions at the outset of *Exit*, alluding to the modesty and disorder that surround the life of the two protagonists: "*A modest room. A table, two chairs and a sleep sofa. A television. In a corner there are boxes and video equipment. Great disorder*" ("*Una habitación modesta. Una mesa, dos sillas y un sofá-cama. Un televisor. En un rincón hay cajas y aparatos de video. Gran desorden*", 55). From the beginning, a sense of their existence at the bottom of the social strata is established, and throughout the play it becomes clear that Diego is only staying in this already hopeless environment thanks to his companion César's generosity, meaning that in reality, he does not have any place to live, to exist.

Space is also a symbol of the lack of substance that occupies so much of the protagonists' internal reality. When Diego is preparing a cup of tea and asks César for the sugar, the latter responds by saying that the sugar is in the same place where they always keep it, only to add that it could be anywhere. It is finally revealed that there is no sugar, that any place is really no place, that everywhere means nowhere. The characters' existence is unfulfilled, it is – like the apartment they inhabit – just a messy space without anything substantially meaningful in it, cluttered by useless objects but lacking the basic necessities for survival. Space, then, reflects the wretched internal world of victims such as Diego, who have left their substance behind and are desperately trying to fill the void caused by their traumatic experience, without being able to do so in their current situation.

The function of the suggested and real space on stage, then, is to reflect society's denial to acknowledge survivors, like those portrayed in the plays, as victims, as beings affected by the country's recent history. As they have not been able to properly address their trauma and the memory of it, the protagonists move about in a space that does not offer them a place to dwell, a place of comfort, of continuity, of belonging, a space in which they can properly exist. Rather, the space in which they operate reflects their existence at the margins of post-dictatorial society, or in other words, their quasi non-existence within society.

In *Exit*, the anxiety and desperation that go hand in hand with such marginalization culminate in the most tragic denouement. The dialogue between the two characters concludes when Diego, in the end, cannot bear the masquerade, the silence, or the inability to change anything, especially when he realizes that he himself has become part of an entity that he despises. There is no escape as he cannot live within, nor at the margins, of a self-delusional community that is constantly lying to itself, that does not

allow for the past to be worked through, that does not provide any space for survivors like himself or like those portrayed in the previous two plays. Filming his own suicide (which he commits by overdosing on pills), Diego desperately attempts to make himself heard, as this appears to be the only way for him to break the silence. In the country's dealings with the past, specifically with the victims of the dictatorship, death was the only way to obtain the right to testimony, as is demonstrated by the proceedings of the Rettig Commission.[15] It is emblematic, then, that Diego vindicates his victimhood and voices his criticism through an act of public death. Paradoxically, it is only through silence and death, through the destruction of his own ability to speak, that he sees the possibility of being heard, the possibility to share his traumatic memory. In the end, however, even this is denied to him. César – who longs to promote himself – takes away Diego's declaration expressed in his final statement by stealing the documentary and claiming it as his own. Thus, by appropriating his friend's story and experience, César denies Diego his final act of voice.

4. Conclusion

Dori Laub, in her article "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle", states that "the condition of possibility for so-called re-democratization was the erasure and forgetting of the experience of the victims" (1995: 63). This same phenomenon could be seen as being one of the underlying currents of the three plays discussed in this article, as one of the main issues that the protagonists struggle against. Is their experience to be forgotten and silenced forever? Why are they represented as being so eager to share their story? As we have pointed out, many, especially those individuals who were directly implicated with the regime, were perfectly capable of burying the past and starting afresh (as, for example, those collaborators that Frog mentions and who, as he claims, now lead perfectly ordinary lives). This is not the case with the protagonists in Diaz's plays. These characters seem to be stuck, trapped in the past, which makes them unable to cope with the present. Almost a century ago, Sigmund Freud said that the way to cure patients from trauma is to make them understand that their feelings are a repetition of something that happened earlier on in their lives, and is not associated with the present situation, so that "we oblige [. . . them] to transform a repetition into a memory" (qtd in Avelar 1999: 269). This transformation is exactly what Díaz's protagonists cannot achieve.

[15] As I have explained above (see note 3 above), the Rettig Commission only dealt with those victims who were murdered, and not with survivors. Death, in that sense, was the only way to have one's case brought before the public eye.

According to Idelber Avelar, the cause for an individual's entrapment in a traumatized state – a type of purgatory without escape – is the impossibility of mourning what has been lost. In the case of Díaz's plays, all of the protagonists share a common object of loss: their innocence, and their connection to, and place within their homeland. Freud describes the act of mourning precisely as a process in which the subject is able to separate him/herself from the loss, meaning that the traumatizing experience may have a profound impact upon him or her, yet in the end it becomes comprehensible as the loss of something outside of the self. Not being able to go through this process often leaves a traumatized person in a melancholic state, meaning that the experience engulfs the mourner to the point that the very separation between the subject and the object of loss disappears (232). In other words, if a person cannot separate him or herself from the traumatic occurrence, he or she will also be incapable of going through the process of distancing him or herself from the traumatic event and let it become part of the past. Rather, that person may continuously feel as if he or she was living in the past, or may continue to dwell in a situation where that past becomes a constant companion in the present. The result is a state of suspension between past and present and it may be said that all four characters in Díaz's plays find themselves affected by such melancholy.

As we have seen, what is presented in Díaz's plays, is a personal, intimate experience of the melancholic aftereffects of trauma that calls for a space in which to be addressed and resolved. The effect this may have or have had on the greater community is not to be underestimated, because when personal experiences are lost and suppressed, and with them the memory they would have created, it also affects the collective memory. These two kinds of memory are not opposites, but rather have a symbiotic relationship. An experience shared by many is, naturally, made up of many individual impressions of the event at stake, which usually have in common a certain kind of underlying emotion or reaction related to the shared occurrence. Without these personal connections to the experience, it is difficult for anyone in the community to relate to or be involved in social remembrance. Individual memories are finally what sustain the collective one, so their creation is of utmost importance. Jorge Díaz's work in trying to bring to light individual fictionalized traumas, and in showing the importance of mourning and recovery, contribute to the process of building such a collective consciousness. The stage is, first of all, a social outlet needed for the healing process (as Herman argues), and, secondly, provides a number of individual experiences that could serve as a starting point for the creation of a collective memory. More recently, directors such as Lola Arias have written and directed plays such as *El año en que nací* [*The Year I*

was Born];[16] a piece that deals with (authentic) personal traumas and identities of the generation that grew up under Pinochet's dictatorship. It "allowed the audience to have access to the intimate details of the performer's and their parents' lives, some of them victims and some of them perpetrators" (Contreras López 2015: 290). While we should avoid thinking of theatre as a *universal* response to traumatic experiences – as these require culturally and generationally specific modes of mourning – plays such as *El año en que nací* illustrate that theatre can serve to create a sense of a collective identity and work as an act of memory and healing (ibid).

The types of trauma addressed in Díaz's plays do not necessarily correspond with the kind of tragedy of a disappeared, tortured or murdered individual or loved one that generally comes to mind when thinking about the dictatorships in the Southern Cone. The characters portrayed in these dramas do not neatly fit such an established category of victim. Especially in the case of He and of Frog, the boundaries are blurred: the first one does not remember whether he tortured, was tortured, or witnessed torturing, and the second, in his position as a victim, was forced to collaborate with the torturers. How do these characters define themselves? Once one is classified as a victim, does one always remain a victim? Does it depend on whether one is a victim or victimizer first? Can society come to terms with the idea of the coexistence of those two characteristics in one single person? The plays do not offer answers to these intriguing questions, but rather implicitly force the audience to face up to and evaluate their own stance *vis-à-vis* these issues.

As I have shown in this analysis, *Náufragos de la memoria* reveal that the reconciliation process in Chilean society during the first decade of the new millennium continued to be very much incomplete, even twenty years after the end of the dictatorial era. Through theatre, "[which] simplifies, makes visible/invisible, concentrates, issues and communicates while it organizes and situates spectators" (Taylor 1997: 227), the audience – as a representative of society – is confronted with some of these matters, as they become articulated and part of public conversation.[17] Through the employment of silences, spaces, and the (re)definition of victimhood, Jorge Díaz strives to

[16] This play grew out of a workshop at the 2011 *Santiago a Mil International Festival.* It was first performed a year later at the same festival, and has received overwhelmingly positive reviews nationally and internationally. *El año en que nací* uses bio-drama to reconstruct the youth of the parents of eleven performers born during the dictatorship, crossing the boundaries between truth and fiction, between two generations, and between private and the country's history. See *Fundación Santiago a Mil* and Contreras López 2015 for more details.

[17] The most recent ruling regarding the Valech Records ensures that the testimonies given by the victims remain secret for at least fifty years, preventing them from becoming public and known (Castillo 2016).

give voice to some of the living survivors of the Pinochet era, particularly to those who do not fit in with the socially accepted definition of an innocent victim. Many of them, finding themselves left without the means to resolve their trauma, may still be dwelling at the margins of a society that continues to struggle to overcome a traumatic memory, a condition "full of prosthesis, with a layer of make-up covering the scars" ("llen[os] de prostesis, con una capa de maquillaje para tapar las cicatrices", Díaz 2008: 77).

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