

The Third Party: Power, Disappearances, Performances

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In spite of the comedy, all this is true, mistress; for they are pretending to pretend.
Marivaux, Les acteurs de bonne foi (The actors of good faith).

The scene takes place in O'Higgins Park, in Santiago, Chile, on 1 October 1995. Some women have just taken their place on the stage and the enthusiastic audience is applauding, the women have started singing accompanied by a guitar, but they cannot be heard, for the audience is still applauding. One of the women gets up. Like the others, she is wearing a white blouse and a long black skirt, she is old and her hair is grey. She moves to the front of the stage, chooses her place and stops, her eyes search the horizon but do not wander aimlessly, her eyes are fixed somewhere between the here and the hereafter. When she finds what she is looking for, she raises her right hand to wave a white handkerchief, and the dance begins. The audience, suddenly attentive, watches. And what do they see? Not the woman alone on the stage, but the empty space which she traces. The empty space disturbs us, as Chilean spectators, because the *cueca*, the national folklore dance, is danced by two people, or it is not danced at all. The invisible other is invoked by this woman's every gesture and we do not smile when faced with the absence of her man because we have a premonition that she is not pretending, we have a premonition that she can see him. The image of women dancing alone has become one of the symbols of the struggle of the families of the disappeared under the dictatorship of General Pinochet. The families are commemorating, on 1 October 1995, the twentieth anniversary of their organization into an association in 1975. The term "the disappeared" has progressively become accepted to indicate the victims of a novel, coercive practice in Chile, since the *coup d'état* on 11 September 1973. The forced disappearance of people differs from political assassination, as Amnesty International never ceases to indicate in the various reports which it commissions on them.¹ In the Chilean case, this speciality is in part due to the security system which has taken on the responsibility of destroying all organized opposition to the military dictatorship: the DINA, the intelligence service created by the military junta, which is only answerable for its actions to the junta. More fundamentally, the special character of disappearance is due to the invisibility of the victim's body and to the doubt that this invisibility arouses within the victim's family circle: the disappeared is not identified as dead because his death is never certified, on the other hand his sudden and unexplained absence indicates that he is a person in danger and that this danger extends to all those who notice his absence.

The view held by the other. The taken of the other. Making people disappear has become a coercive technique and assumes the intervention of a "third party" brought in to establish

that individuals disappear even when reason tells us that, dead or alive, they must be somewhere. It is to this particular point that I want to draw the reader's attention, and consider briefly in what manner the families of the disappeared have succeeded in making visible a crime deliberately devoid of traces.²

Making people disappear: a discreet procedure destined to be seen

Since 1973, DINA agents have been engaged in arresting and assassinating the main leaders of political parties making up the Government of Popular Unity (1970–1973).³ Held in secret detention centres, these individuals were tortured, ordered to give information about their comrades, and finally assassinated. Their bodies were not given back to their families, but buried secretly without their death being notified in any way and without any authority acknowledging the arrests of these individuals. There were 1,198 of them in Chile. They disappeared between 1973 and 1977. It was during these years, and only during these years, that the DINA operated: they routinely resorted to the forced disappearance of people in a strategy which aimed at the elimination of all opposition to the military government.⁴

To say that an individual has disappeared is to say that he is no longer seen by his family circle. However, arrests were obviously made in front of a witness. If this is so, why make someone disappear? One reason is that the absence of a body makes judicial proceedings impossible; since there is no body to be seen, no crime can be proved. Making political prisoners who have already been assassinated disappear allows the perpetrators of the crimes to protect themselves from all judicial sanctions. Another reason is that the disappearance casts doubt on the contribution of any potential observer. At home, the disappeared is someone who is absent and whose return is awaited. It is of little consequence that time passes and that the testimonies of former prisoners make the families think that their loved ones have probably been assassinated.⁵ As long as this death is not confirmed by the appearance of a body, the loved one is still paid every attention. He is not a dead man to whom one has said goodbye, but a beloved presence who is invoked every day:

My mother left his bedroom as it had been when they took him away, his clothes, his notebooks, his books, and on his bed there is a sort of altar on which she puts flowers, whilst waiting for him to return.⁶

Close family members of the victim are not the only ones to notice their absence. The government, assisted by intelligence agents, organized "leaks" which allowed everyone to imagine the fate of the disappeared: bodies appeared on the public highway, but above all "matters" came to light with the complicity of the national and foreign press. The most spectacular was the publication of lists said to be of "the 119". In July 1975, two magazines, one Argentinian, the other Brazilian, published reports that 119 Chilean citizens, all militants of the parties of the left, basically of MIR, had killed each other as a result of a vendetta when they were organizing the overthrow of the military government.⁷ All these individuals had been arrested. Witnesses could confirm this. In many cases, their

families had taken legal steps to denounce their arbitrary arrests. At the same time, the body of Lumi Videla, an MIR leader, appeared in the garden of the Italian Embassy, and the Chilean press called it a "crime of passion". Thus the whole of the Chilean population was alerted: something was going on, something shameful and, therefore, a matter for concern. This was a warning heard within the different circles of acquaintanceship of individuals who had been made invisible, and little by little it reached all those who knew about a disappearance.

The intervention of a third party in a coercive practice has already been commented on. On quite another level, it is present in the thinking of Michel Foucault, in particular when he analyses torture, a procedure by which the ruling powers portray their right of reply to any and all transgressions of the law:

Torture which could have been known about but whose occurrence was kept secret would not have had any sense. An example was needed not just to create an awareness that the slightest offence was at great risk of being punished; but to cause an effect of terror through the spectacle of power being vented on the guilty person . . . It is necessary for people not just to know about it, but to see it with their own eyes. Because it is necessary for them to be afraid; and also because they have to be witnesses, the guarantors of punishment, and because they have to take part in it up to a certain point.⁸

What does making someone disappear consist of? Does disappearance come from torture? Can it be both a discreet procedure for removing bodies and a procedure which is designed to make an example and intimidate a certain population by the power of a graphically portrayed spectacle? We have to go back to the criteria suggested by Foucault:

Torture is based on a whole quantitative art of suffering. But there is more: this performance is regulated. Torture determines the kind of bodily attack, the quality, intensity, and length of suffering in proportion to the gravity of the crime, the personality of the criminal, and the rank of its victims . . . In addition, torture is part of a ritual. It is an element in the liturgy of punishment, which meets two demands. It must, as far as the victim is concerned, be memorable: it is designed, either by the scar it leaves on the body, or by the bravura with which it is accompanied, to make the victim despicable; torture, even if it is used to "purge" crime, is not reconciliatory; it traces around or, even better on, the body of the condemned man signs which cannot be effaced; the memory of men will, in any case, keep a duly noted recollection of the display, the stocks, the torture, and the suffering.⁹

"Making people disappear" is not strictly part of the sentence. Under the dictatorship there were military tribunals, trials, convictions, punishments, and executions regulated by government decrees.¹⁰ This scenario does not concern prisoners who have disappeared. One could speculate and maintain that it was, nevertheless, as people who were guilty that they were actually arrested, tortured, assassinated, and finally concealed. But the logic of the punishment is not essential, even though the military junta has unceasingly repeated and spread the idea that these individuals really were guilty of something and that, first and foremost, they were guilty of being who they were: people identified by the military as militants from the various political parties on the left or in contact with them, members or sympathisers of the Government of Popular Unity. The alleged crime does

not need to be proved here, the torture sessions are not seeking confessions to be used as proof, and execution is not considered as a punishment except in cases where potential acts could be punished in advance. It is important to emphasize that the men and women who disappeared were seen as political activists. It was their political career which allowed the DINA agents to identify them and designate them as possible targets: they had been active politically in the past, they could be again.

Concealing political prisoners allowed them to be used as bait in the very short term. This clearly appears in some testimonies.¹¹ In Chile, in the jargon used by former prisoners, this procedure was known as *poroteo*. It was a specific method of denunciation: the prisoner who had been arrested and was being kept in secret was forced to accompany intelligence agents while they drove around a district where X was “suspected” of living; the prisoner was supposed to recognize him and point him out to the agents. This procedure presupposed numerous previous denunciations: someone had given a name, someone had indicated a district, and another had to confirm this information by going to that place. The secret detention centre functioned as a laboratory in which the solidarity between militants was put to the test.

Torture was not used exclusively by the intelligence services, but it was, within the secret centres controlled by the DINA, their habitual response. Buildings taken over by the DINA were converted with this practice in mind to provide “well-equipped” torture rooms, collective holding rooms where the prisoners waited, and isolation cells within the centres themselves. Pain could be administered without words, but the questions came at some time or another. The DINA agents had sought to, and had succeeded in, reconstructing a chart of the organization of the targeted political parties. What were necessary were names, pseudonyms, duties, and home addresses. But in spite of all that, torture was not just a one-off transaction. Someone who had talked once would be tortured again to see if he would talk again, and so on; a question that had already been answered could be put to several prisoners, the agents could thus “know” and still torture. Consequently the question “Where is Miguel?” was repeatedly put to a socialist militant who had no particular reason to know the whereabouts of Miguel Enriquez, the Secretary General of MIR.

When the philosopher Pierre Pachet pondered on the nature of torture in the contemporary world, he saw in it:

the new and terrifying face of politics which had become, in some parts of the world and at certain moments, a testing ground for going outside humanity, a laboratory which capitalized on experiments on the inhuman put at the service of prosaic ideals of management, administration, and the smooth running of national affairs . . . The individual who is put to the test by torture, is challenged to “stick to his guns”, to keep to his convictions, his commitments, and, quite simply, his existence; but, beyond that, what is asked of the individual being tortured, in instances of colonial war, civil war, or ideological conflict, is much more significant, if one dare say so. It seems, in effect, that each act of torture aims to bring about the disappearance, and compromise, of the whole of humanity.¹²

What is threatened is the possibility of being an individual, not just amongst others, but with others. Pierre Pachet points this out when he specifies the nature of the “challenge”: to keep, he says, to one’s convictions and commitments. Torture extends its influence over

individuals and over something else. This profoundly compromised “something else” is social relationships.

This aspect has been particularly emphasized in *Le corps interposé* (*The interposed body*),¹³ a commentary which Claude Lefort wrote on the subject of Orwell's *1984*. The main characters, Winston and Julia, share a conviction, a condition of their love and a guarantee of their freedom: when they are alone – when they think they are alone – the lovers reassure each other by saying “they can't get inside you”. “They” are the ones who are in charge of a society living under the permanent surveillance of an invisible Big Brother. When Winston and Julia are arrested and Winston is tortured, he “holds out” as long as he can say to himself “I have not betrayed Julia”. Taken into Room 101 – which reserves for whoever goes in there, what represents for him, and for him alone, the worst torture of all – he only escapes from that torture by shouting “do it to Julia!” In doing this, he places the body of the beloved between himself and the “worst torture of all”. Winston's shout – “do it to Julia!” – interrupts his torture, and also confirms the destruction of their shared conviction – “they can't get inside you” – and his own thought – “I have not betrayed Julia”. But the possibility of ever sharing again is annihilated at the same time as that conviction and that thought.

Torture destroys solidarity: the person who has talked and who is seen by his former comrades as a denunciator, will no longer be a comrade. Though removed from membership of that group, he does not belong to the intelligence agents' group; he can work for them, he can act as one of them, perhaps feel that he is one of them, but he remains a “convert”, a traitor who could betray again and, after all is said and done, a prisoner. Whatever his degree of involvement in the intelligence services, the stigma of denunciation acts as a barrier to that link. The secret DINA detention centres have also functioned as laboratories for testing social cohesion. Torture in the secret detention centres has been one of the methods used.

Disappearance therefore emerged as a technique which, in the long term, allowed the neutralization of the capacity for action by committed individuals in social networks. If you look at the lists of the disappeared, you will find mainly political leaders. But the importance ascribed to a militant was not just dependent on his place in the administration; a militant did not need to be a “high-ranking leader” in order to swell the lists of the disappeared, a well-informed man could become a special target. The destruction of a political grouping is not brought about just by eliminating individuals capable of administration or, if need be, restructuring, but also by generating beliefs, notably the belief that consists in saying to oneself that the best people are dead and that there is no one left who is capable of taking the place of those who are not there. Conversely, some individuals did not have any socially recognized importance within the political parties which were mainly involved. Some were perhaps not even involved in militant activity. It could be said that the disappearance of these people contributed to the creation of the idea that anyone could be a potential victim. In either case, concealment of mortal remains is one of those mechanisms by which power extends its influence over a population much bigger by far than the number of opponents marked out as enemies or suspected of complicity with the enemy. This concealment, like torture, is part of a performance.

To return to Foucault. The criteria which constitute torture reveal two types of expertise: the administration of suffering, calculated, prolonged, and regulated in proportion to the crimes committed, and organization of the ritual by which the body of the condemned

man is branded, stigmatized openly and publicly in front of observers who are themselves marked by images they will not forget. The unities of place and time allow a less than orthodox tragedy to unfold in which the ruling powers take the place of the main character, invisible and triumphant, and in which the action may provoke pity, but certainly provokes terror, and, what is more, lasting terror. Foucault concludes the paragraph: "A whole economy of power is invested in the 'excess' of tortures".¹⁴

Making people disappear presupposes, like torture, some administration of suffering: that of torture which precedes death. Like torture, making people disappear presupposes a performance. But unlike torture, this performance includes an anomaly: the ruling powers are not the only invisible ones, the person tortured is also invisible. Does that necessarily mean that he cannot be not seen? The scene is not played out in front of an audience summoned specially for that purpose. There is thus no unity of place and even less unity of time. However, this "anomaly", the absence of the person tortured, is deliberate, it is organized *because it is seen*.

From the point of view of the third party, disappearance is an invitation to be a helpless spectator of a scene which cannot be seen but which can be imagined. Disappearance is based on a certain number of concealments and revelations organized by intelligence agents, but not just by them: an operation such as the "lists of the 119" presupposes the involvement of numerous national and foreign players, and the involvement of the intelligence services of each country as well as the press. This partial concealment, which applies specifically to the final fate of the victims, makes every observer begin to doubt: if he knows the victim, he cannot know whether they are dead or alive; if he does not know them, he will not be able to escape from the various speeches devised by those in power who contribute to maintaining the "spectre" of those who have disappeared. Thus the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* stated on 16 July 1975: "It was claimed that they had disappeared. The members of MIR who died in Argentina were being sought in Chile."¹⁵ Were the "disappeared" being conjured out of nothing by the opposition to the military junta? Or had they really disappeared, as those who were looking for them claimed? The coexistence of contradictory pronouncements on the fate of some individuals implies that one must be false and, for an observer who is not involved, a certain number of questions: Who is lying? And why?

If torture is a result of the economy of power, as Foucault states, that is actually because it permits, at the same time as the punishment of that particular person, involvement and control of all the others, the observers taking part in a performance as much for them as by them.

Disappearance, because it portrays the all-powerfulness of the military powers, also acts as a mechanism for dissuasion: doubt, fear, and despair are the main impulses. What is being outlined here is what one might call, in the style of Paul Virilio, an "indirect strategy":

Not to be forced into a desperate fight but to develop prolonged despair in the adversary, to inflict on him permanent moral and material suffering which diminish and overwhelm him, this is the indirect strategy that can drive people to desperation without spilling blood. As the saying goes: Fear is the most cruel of assassins, it never kills but prevents you from living.¹⁶

As a direct strategy, disappearance takes as its targets militants from the main parties from the Chilean left: they are arrested, imprisoned in secret detention centres, tortured,

forced to denounce their comrades, then assassinated and their bodies concealed. As an indirect strategy, disappearance allows a whole population to be warned; they will get wind of what happens to those who take part in opposition and will be forced by fear not to set themselves up as the enemy.

The purpose of disappearance is to make all solidarity impossible. It does not, in the strict sense of Foucauldian analysis, come from torture. But it borrows torture's spectacular and exemplary aspect. A void concentrates the mind: each one sees with his own eyes that he does not see, each one is free to imagine the worst, each one fearing the worst is invited not to act in the name of the victims.

Denunciation of the families of the disappeared by the interposed body

The efforts of the families carry traces of the crime with which they are confronted. Those close to them have been imprisoned in secret detention centres and the violence they are suffering is sometimes revealed, but does not actually take place in front of witnesses. It is therefore necessary to make visible not just the individuals who have disappeared, but also the hidden violence. Posters saying "Where are they?" are well-known; they carry a photograph of each of the disappeared and this single phrase which has two meanings in Spanish. In effect, the subject of *donde están* can be third person plural and thus synonymous with "they", i.e. those individuals who have disappeared, or second person plural and thus mean "Where are you?", implying "you who watch us go by". Those who are absent can be made visible relatively easily thanks to the photographs. But how do you make hidden violence visible? By a realistic performance in which each relative exposes his own body to the violence of the forces of order. By a performance played out in the street in which each passer-by will be summoned to be a witness of this performance put on for him but, this time, directed against the ruling powers, their lies and their denials. There is one instance in which this is particularly revealing. The practice of chaining in the streets of Santiago.

The expression "chaining" must be taken literally: they bring chains, put them round their bodies and attach themselves to the railings on the public highway. The women stand firm, they make it/themselves visible. This is a two-pronged attack on the systems established by the military power who would on the other hand have liked people to keep moving because there was nothing to see. The former Congress building is the place most often chosen. Situated in the centre of the town, this imposing edifice has a huge garden surrounded by railings. Hernán Vidal, the Chilean anthropologist, has written a study on the efforts of the AFDD, from which I quote several extracts relating to a chaining. This particular one took place on Wednesday 18 April 1979:

This Wednesday, fifty-nine people, three of them men, came from various parts of Santiago, to chain themselves up at precisely eleven o'clock along the west side of the Senate building on the *rue Bandera*, between the *rue Compañía* to the south and the *rue Catedral* to the north. The location was chosen for symbolic, strategic, and practical reasons: by tradition, some of the most important demonstrations in Chile's political life have taken place in the centre of Santiago . . . Large crowds of people work, take their leisure, or go shopping in the centre of the town where

the shops, cinemas, restaurants, and municipal and state buildings are concentrated . . . The Coordinating Committee of the Association had also chosen the railings of the Senate for the symbolic character of the building at a time of crisis for Chilean democracy, as a challenge to the judicial system which cooperates with the repression, and because of the large crowds of people who could furnish a mass audience for this spectacle, as well as the ease with which the daily routine of the town could be affected, and the accessibility of the location for journalists who had been tipped off a few minutes before the protest began.¹⁷

Hernán Vidal uses the term "spectacle". Throughout his study he insists on the fact that the demonstration is a performance. People chain themselves to the railings, speeches are made to inform the passers-by of the reasons for the protesters' presence in this place; these speeches are necessary so that the passers-by can associate what is happening there with the words which are flying about: disappeared, disappearance. However, what is essential, what is precisely "what is going on there" is not a simple utterance of events, but a reproduction of all the hidden events so that they can be seen. The chaining compels the forces of order, the police officers, to intervene, to use physical violence *publicly*. This is how the relatives of the disappeared replay the hidden scene of which their nearest and dearest have been the victims within the secret detention centres. The hidden violence is revealed here because the relatives, in full knowledge, expose their own bodies on the public highway: "The relative arrives on the scene of the demonstration to confront imminent repression with the vulnerability of their own bodies, a metaphor for the fate which they imagine to be that of their loved one."¹⁸ Invariably, police officers intervene, break their chains, beat and arrest the families of the disappeared. It only lasts for a few minutes, but the passers-by will have seen it.

The logic of coercion, like the logic of resistance shown here, is dependent on the rallying of a third party. In the first case, the aim is immobilization through fear. In the second case, it is eliciting support for a denunciation which is true for some and only for some. In both cases, messages pass between them without forming a story. Making people disappear, and denunciation of this practice presuppose on the other hand forming images, and that relies not so much on the ability of the observers to see but to imagine what they cannot see: what is happening in the secret detention centres, worse still, the execution of prisoners who have disappeared, and worst of all, the prolonged and unexplained absence of a loved one. A practice like that of chaining is designed to produce action, that of the police officers who are responsible for keeping order and also that of the passers-by who are alarmed by the intervention of the police. That is not the case with the *cueca sola*, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, nor is it the case with some demonstrations which take place these days as pilgrimages to the cemetery in order to finish up where the bodies which have been found have been buried.

The *cueca sola* is devoid of all pretension; the women sing and play the guitar while others dance. The intensity of the message is inherent in the contrast between the cheerfulness of the music, which is characteristic of this Chilean dance, and the anomaly of the absence of their partners.¹⁹ Here there is no need of explanation or orders, because the *cueca* is an active part of a culture shared by all Chilean observers, whatever their personal histories and political convictions. The image remains, it is striking, it is destined to remain as a silent proof of the unacceptable. This image no longer refers to the political

prisoner who has disappeared, but to the life which has disappeared, and to the man who has disappeared in the physical sense of the word "man".

Bodies of prisoners who had disappeared have been found since the beginning of the 1990s. A memorial was set up in 1995 which allowed the families to gather and pay homage to the memory of their relatives and to use part of the public cemetery in Santiago to bury their dead. Some demonstrations leave from the centre of the town and end in front of the memorial. Along the way the families show their placards with "Where are they?", and also cardboard silhouettes without faces whose outlines suggest the presence of those who are absent. The choice of streets also reveals the families' wish to make visible what only an observer without these memories would be unable to see. Examples are numerous, but I shall choose only one: 80 *rue Morandé*. This place no longer exists. *Rue Morandé* runs along the side of the Presidential Palace. At No. 80 there was a door, through which the military took out the last occupants of the Palace, on Tuesday 11 September 1973. We know that the building had been shelled. Later, during reconstruction, the door was not repaired, but blocked up. There is no longer a door at No. 80. Most people who went through that door on 11 September 1973 are now listed as having disappeared. But the families still go down that street, they do not go past but stop, and the majority of those who see them know what they see in place of the window that is there now.

Chaining was peculiar to a period in which the families could still hope that the disappearances would stop and that some of the disappeared would come back to life. It is too late for that. The *cueca sola* and the demonstrations of today have, of course, an aspect of protest. For the families need to know what has happened to each of those who have disappeared and to judge those who are responsible. But over and above these demands for truth and justice, it is the families who point out the gaps in memory, the lacunae in a history yet to be written, and the will of the military to erase all traces of this specific crime – disappearance – and of all their crimes.

There is no lesson to be drawn from this brief presentation. One can only state that the intervention of a third party is of more help to coercive practices than to resistance, and that fear spreads more easily than the temerity of these women inhabited by another. A comment is necessary here because Chile is once again "in the news". The recent indictment of General Pinochet by Judge Guzman is not evidence of a mass rallying to the cause of the families of the victims which include the families of the disappeared, but of the efforts made by a few individuals within the politico-legal framework marked by pressures,²⁰ efforts which have been partially crowned with success. The outcome of this trial is still to come. But it will not allow any of the families to know what has happened to their loved ones: not only does the law in Chile obstruct enquiries into the disappeared and the passing of sentences, but nearly thirty years have passed and time is against the families. Even if bodies are recovered, the task of identifying them is complicated by deterioration which will have rendered them unrecognizable. We, the Chilean people, will remember for a long time the images of this unwritten history, because we know that it is all true, that these men have not disappeared, that they lie sleeping beneath the same earth on which we walk and on which the women dance.

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Notes

1. *Les disparus. Rapport sur une nouvelle technique de répression (The disappeared. Report on a new technique of repression)*, Éditions francophones d'Amnesty International, Paris: Seuil, 1981; "*Disparitions" et assassinats politiques dans les années 80–90. L'inacceptable ("Disappearances" and political assassinations during the 1980s and 1990s. The unacceptable)*, Éditions francophones d'Amnesty International, Paris: Seuil, 1993; *Les Disparitions*, Paris: Babel, 1994. See also "*Disparitions", Cultures & Conflits ("Disappearances", Cultures & Conflicts)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, N° 13–14, Spring–Summer 1994.
2. The text printed here continues an analysis developed within the framework of a thesis in sociology presented in the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences), under the direction of Marie-Claire Lavabre, "Où sont-ils? La permanence des disparus dans le champ politique chilien. Enjeux mémoriels, enjeux de pouvoir (1973–2000)" ("Where are they? The continued existence of the disappeared in Chilean politics. Issues of remembering, issues of power (1973–2000)", May 2001.
3. The government coalition which won the election on 4 September 1970 was made up of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Radical Party, and MAPU, the Movement for Popular Action. The coercive practices of the military were aimed first of all at the militants in the various parties but also the militants of MIR, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left. The latter were the preferred targets of the DINA: since they advocated armed struggle, they were considered to be particularly dangerous.
4. For disappearances in Chile and the involvement of DINA agents see: E. Padilla, *La memoria y el olvido. Detenidos desaparecidos en Chile*, Santiago: Ediciones Origenes, 1995. For disappearances in Argentina see: P. Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición*, Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1998.
5. Numerous testimonies have been published by former prisoners telling, amongst other things, of their meetings with prisoners who have been reported as disappeared. See in particular: León Gomez, *Tras las huellas de los desaparecidos*, Santiago: Ediciones Caleuche, 1990; Marcia Merino, *Mi Verdad. "Más allá del horror"*, Santiago: ATGSA, 1993.
6. This testimony is quoted in a report by the CNVR, the National Truth and Reconciliation Committee, appointed by Patricio Aylwin, the President of the Republic (1990–1994), to carry out an investigation into crimes committed during the dictatorship. *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación*, Santiago: Edición especial de la Nación, 1991, p. 176.
7. For information on the lists of the 119 see: Paz Rojas (ed.), *La gran mentira*, Santiago: CODEPU, 1994.
8. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir (Discipline and Punish)*, Paris: NRF Gallimard, 1991, p. 61.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
10. On this topic, see Book I of the *Code de la Justice Militaire (Code of Military Justice)*, in particular the section devoted to military tribunals in time of war. For a summary of the legislation and other practices of military tribunals, see the report by the CNVR, *op. cit.*, p. 18 and following. The report records, region by region, the various sentences delivered by the aforementioned tribunals.
11. See Merino, *op. cit.*
12. Pierre Pachet, "La pensée de la torture" ("The rationale of torture"), *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 1993.
13. Claude Lefort, "Le corps interposé: 1984, de George Orwell" ("The interposed body: George Orwell's 1984"), in *Écrire à l'épreuve du politique (Writing put to the test by politics)*, Paris, Presse Pocket 1984.
14. Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 39
15. Rojas, *op. cit.*, p. 19
16. P. Virilio, *Vitesse et Politique (Speed and Politics)*, Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1977, p. 47.
17. H. Vidal, *Dar la vida por la vida, La agrupación chilena de familiares de detenidos desaparecidos (ensayo de antropología simbólica)*, Minnesota: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 1982, p. 127.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
19. The introduction of a "cheerful" element in a denunciation which is concerned with tragic events is not the exclusive property of the families of the disappeared. In the case of the *cueca sola*, it is extremely subtle. But in other cases, humour has been a method of denunciation, and even of resistance, in its own right, notably in camps where prisoners have sometimes organized theatrical productions. The testimonies of former political prisoners cite a series of "scenes" which they act out amongst themselves, including tragic events.

More recently, the disappeared have become the subject of a denunciation which is not overtly declared to be "political". In 1990, street theatre was very much inspired by current affairs, marked at the time by the discovery of mass graves in the north of the country. The actors warned the audience: "Do not dig your garden, you run the risk of finding one of the disappeared!" And that made people burst out laughing. On another level, the smiles of mothers of some of the disappeared is striking. The laughter and the smiles are not necessarily cheerful . . . It is a good subject, firmly rooted in Chilean and perhaps Latin American culture. Raul González Tunón, the Argentinian poet, wrote: "Perhaps sadness is nothing but a subtle modality of cheerfulness." And why not vice versa? Humour and tragedy, practical jokes and denunciation, these are the subjects which this text brings out, but which cannot be developed here.

20. These pressures are, amongst others, the amnesty law passed in 1978, forbidding indictment for crimes committed between 1973 and 1977, but also the Constitution of 1980, still in force, which allows the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces to nominate nine "life" senators. Until now, this distortion of the system of representation has favoured the sectors of the right who are in the majority in the Senate; it jeopardizes/compromises any attempt to reform the legislation put in place by the military.