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Title	Situating memory(ies) and promoting public pedagogy in Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma
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Publication date	2022-06-01
Original Citation	Broderick, C. (2022) 'Situating memory(ies) and promoting public pedagogy in Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma', Journal of Romance Studies, 22(2), pp. 277-300. doi: 10.3828/jrs.2022.15
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.3828/jrs.2022.15
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Download date	2026-11-03 13:45:51
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/13849

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‘Situating memory(ies) and promoting public pedagogy in *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma*’

Abstract

In recent years, Chile has undergone significant socio-economic and geopolitical changes, following efforts to forge sustainable pathways that challenge the disparity in power and wealth in the country. Long before *Mayo feminista* [Feminist May] in 2018 or the *estallido social* [social upheaval] in 2019—which have led to meaningful shifts in the socio-political landscapes—secondary school students launched the Penguin Revolution in 2006, to protest severe inequalities in the educational system resulting from neoliberal policies implemented during, and subsequent to, Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship (1973-1990). As the first major public protest since the return to democracy in 1990, the students’ demonstrations critiqued the root cause of these economic differences, the dictatorship, and the neoliberal legacy it had left, allowing the wealthy to continue to prosper and those who were socioeconomically disadvantaged to become more marginalised. This article explores the contributions of the hybrid novel *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* (2014) to the memory-building exercise undertaken by the Penguin Revolution, situating it in the wider context of memory activism from the early years of transition to democracy through to Chile today. Furthermore, it examines the novel’s promotion of public pedagogy in the context in which it was produced, aligning it with the goals of the Penguin Revolution. It argues that it is specifically the polyphonic narrative and intermedial storytelling process, which facilitate these important socio-historical contributions by the novel.

Keywords: Penguin Revolution, intermedial storytelling, multidirectional memory, postmemory, public pedagogy

The substantial changes to Chile's socio-political landscape in contemporary times are a result of enduring efforts by citizens and intellectuals to critique the systems in place since the early 1990s, when the country began its return to democracy following 17 years of dictatorship (1973-1990) under Augusto Pinochet. During that period, considerable damage was inflicted on the country's people and the public systems created to serve them. Furthermore, Pinochet's regime developed elaborate mechanisms for erasing events from public memory, even staging violent actions by 'subversives' to prove the need for forceful intervention. This, coupled with the pacted transition to democracy, which began in 1990, did little to promote true socio-political change. The 1980 constitution underpinned by neoliberal policies and introduced during the dictatorship also remains in place to this day. While Pinochet stepped down as leader of the country, he was head of the army until 1998. It is against this backdrop that the struggles for memory and societal change in the last 31 years have been located.

This article situates the novel, *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* (2014) [*South of the Alameda: A Diary of an Occupation*], written by Lola Larra and illustrated by Vicente Reinamontes, within these efforts to construct memories and effect change through education. This hybrid novel is set during the 2006 *Revolución Pingüina*, or Penguin Revolution[1]—named as such because of the black and white uniforms worn by the secondary school student protestors who marched on the streets and occupied their schools to protest unequal access to education in Chile. It provides opportunities to explore this first major public demonstration since the return to democracy and its wider relevance to contextualising memory activism and public pedagogy through a new lens. I argue here that in this accessible and seemingly uncomplicated text, Larra and Reinamontes present a nuanced exploration of the student protests in 2006 from the perspective of the protestors, situating them within the wider national and transnational contexts from which the protests emerged. My discussion focuses on the

polyphonic narrative and intermedial nature of the novel to explore its potential to effect change and advocate for multiple memories.

The polyphonic narrative facilitates complex constructions of memory and postmemory in national and transnational contexts. Moreover, it serves a pedagogical function for the receptive reader. The novel's hybrid structure and narrative are created through extracts from a hand-written diary of the protest interspersed with sections of graphic novel narration. The diary is that of Nicolás, an unlikely "Penguin", while the graphic novel narration is from the perspective of Luisa Garretón, a former teacher at Nicolás' school, who lives nearby, witnessing the occupation first-hand. The novel, through its incorporation of two media forms, contributes to an intermedial experience. I employ Irina Rajewsky's (2006: 51-52) use of the term intermediality as a process that unites traditionally disparate forms of media. In this understanding of intermediality, Rajewsky emphasises that these medial forms 'are each present in their own materiality and contribute to the constitution and signification of the entire product in their own specific way' (2006: 51-52). The narration of the intermedial work maps onto the hybrid forms explored here, creating a polyphony of perspectives and voices that are visually distinguished from one another. The diary facilitates the protagonist's narrative, providing most of the content and development of the plot. The graphic novel sections are a vehicle for Luisa Garretón's narrative, allowing a level of fluidity and movement between the generations.

Beyond the heterogeneous nature of the novel itself, the creators have established an online presence to aid their didactic endeavour, raising awareness of how their own work highlights the values promoted through the Penguin Revolution. This furthers the intermedial experience for the reader. On their website, they have gathered critical articles written about the novel, interviews conducted with them following its publication, the first chapter of the novel translated into English, a book trailer (available in Spanish and English), a fanzine—

which is the notebook of one of the secondary characters in the novel, Pablo Mellado—, and photographs of the school visits they undertook to promote the launch of the book. All this information is available without charge and helps to extend their story world beyond the novel, furthering its potential to educate the public, nationally and internationally. While it is not within the purview of this article to engage with all these elements in detail, I will reference them in my discussion of the pedagogical function of this novel.

In previous critical works on this novel, Catalina Donoso (2019) compares it together with other graphic novels and documentaries, which focus on political memory from childhood, and Dámaso Rabanal Gatica (2020) proposes a reading of the masculinities constructed through the student protests. Neither article provides a close reading of the text. This is the first academic article dedicated to this endeavour, demonstrating how the novel deepens our understanding of both recent Chilean history and, more broadly, memory's travel across generations and geographies. After contextualising the publication of this novel within the socio-historical period that it depicts and particularly how this relates to memory activism ongoing in contemporary Chile, I will deal with the constructions of memories in the novel, with a particular emphasis on multidirectional memory and postmemory, and then explore the potential for public pedagogy in the novel itself. In my discussion of these key contributions of the novel, my analysis highlights the importance of the polyphonic narrative and intermedial nature of the text to this endeavour. In my conclusions, I situate these discussions within contemporary Chile, where one could argue that more advances have been made in the struggle for memory and social justice in the last two years than what was previously witnessed since the return to democracy.

From the early 1990s, a dominant focus in Memory Studies in Chile was the competing efforts to remember and to actively forget the events of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. During that period, Pinochet constructed what Steve J. Stern (2014) refers to as the 'muro del

olvido' ['wall of forgetting']. This is apparent in the narrative that justifies the military dictatorship as necessary to saving the country from a worse fate—a communist dictatorship—and discredits accounts that detailed human rights abuses, murders, disappearances. We cannot read the impact of the dictatorship separately from the introduction of neoliberal policies, since they are inextricably linked in the Chilean experience. Idelber Avelar's work helps us connect the simultaneous rise of this wall of forgetting and the strengthening of neoliberal policies, arguing that growing commodification in neoliberal societies negates memory since old commodities must be replaced by new ones, so that the market can live in a perpetual present (1999: 2). From this perspective, memory does not fit in 1990s neoliberal Chile. Through the pacted transition, Pinochet negotiated his own way out of power. He remained head of the Army until 1998, whereupon he took up his seat as Senator for life, until his arrest later that year in England. A considerable portion of Chileans (44%) still supported Pinochet in the return to democracy, and this coupled with the continued presence of Pinochet and his followers in strategic positions in public life meant the national space for memory and remembering was contested.

Together with Avelar, Michael Lazzara (2006), Steve J. Stern (2014), Tomás Moulian (2002) and Elizabeth Jelin (2003) have explored this phenomenon, deconstructing that wall of oblivion and attempting to reconstruct the complexities of Chilean history in the second half of the 20th century. There was generally a tension between what was remembered, and by whom, as well as what was forgotten, personally or publicly. Recent mobilisations, from the May 2018 feminist protests to the October 2019 social upheaval that was met with brutal repression from the State, are a culmination of this struggle between remembering and forgetting in over 30 years since the return to democracy. It is with this in mind that the slogan of the 2019 social upheaval that was sparked by an increase of 30 Chilean pesos to public transport became, 'It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years' (Maciel 2019). These were 30 years when

Chile was supposedly operating under a democratic government, but was still ruled by the neoliberal policies and constitution introduced during the dictatorship. The measurable changes being implemented now in 2021, with a democratically elected citizens' assembly charged with producing a new constitution that better reflects a more plural, egalitarian contemporary Chile, are only possible because of the sustained efforts to highlight the lasting systematic injustices from the dictatorship over these 30 years.

When we meet Nicolás and his fellow protestors in *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma*, they have joined the first major protest in Chile since the return to democracy, the Penguin Revolution of 2006. Its positioning and relevance cannot be understated, when we consider it was the start of a fourteen-year struggle to effect measurable changes to a socio-economically and politically polarised Chile. The protests saw hundreds of thousands of student protestors take to the streets in their black and white school uniforms to highlight their concerns over the unjust educational system, arguing that education was a right, not a privilege (Hernández Santibañez 2018: 837). Led by secondary school students who had been born during the transition to democracy, this movement in its protests against the unjust society in which they lived, was less inhibited by the fear of retribution than protests led by those who lived through the dictatorship. Contributing to contemporary debates on memory, this highly organized, critically engaged movement united to criticize the educational system, particularly its direct connections to the dictatorship, since the final law that Pinochet implemented a day before the democratically elected government assumed power was the LOCE (Organic Constitutional Law on Education). So aware were this group of the fear some members of older generations felt in relation to public protests that they claimed in their protests, 'Somos la generación que perdió el miedo' (Palacios-Valladares 2016: 602-603) ['We are the generation that lost its fear']. By recognizing this, the Penguins situated their revolt within a more deeply rooted struggle, suggesting that Chile had not yet escaped from under the shadow of the

dictatorship and the way of life it had established for the Chilean people. It is in this context, then, and with that recognition of historical continuity and connections that Larra and Reinamontes situate their work.

Situating memories in the novel

In this section, my analysis centres on the constructions of memory in the novel and the ways in which this contributes to the wider debates detailed in the previous section. In its depiction of the Penguin protests, a primary effect of the intermedial storytelling and polyphonic narrative in Larra's and Reinamonte's work is the space it creates for a variety of memories—generational, geographical, and familial—to develop and coexist. To aid my analysis of this memory work, I consider Michael Rotherberg's concept of multidirectional memory, and Marianne Hirsch's postmemory. Multidirectional memory illustrates the layers of memory construction facilitated through the intermediality of the text and the narrative structure, demonstrating that these memories do not need to operate in competition with one another, but may even benefit from being considered together with other memories. Postmemory helps unpack the complex relationship the protagonist has with his own family's contradictory history with protest and support of the regime during the dictatorship.

In his work, Rothberg proposes a new approach to understanding memory, arguing against reading memory as a competitive space where there are limited resources. Instead, he says that we can consider the public space as a 'malleable discursive space in which groups […] come into being through their dialogical interactions with others; both the subjects and the spaces of the public are open to continual reconstruction' (2009: 5). Rothberg identifies the co-existence of multiple memories as an opportunity to share and learn from different experiences in what is essentially a dialectic process. In this way, engaging with other pasts may permit, rather than block, insight into and engagement with other contexts. The memories explored in

the hybrid novel are transgenerational and transnational in form. Rothberg's work is useful here to visualise the 'malleable discursive space' that is created through the pivoting between different histories and geographies.

The two principal narratives of the hybrid novel provide generational perspectives on the discussion of student protests in Chile. Luisa's graphic narrative is presented in predominantly blue and red hues, with white, grey and black sometimes incorporated. The blue, white and red colours remind the reader of the Chilean flag, ensuring the specificity of this local experience is not lost. The pages of Nicolás' diary are blue, as are the scenes depicted in Luisa's narrative that focus on the present-day occupation. When her narrative is centred in her own apartment or her own memories, red dominates. When the past memories collide with the present-day events of the Penguin Revolution observed by Luisa, so too do the primary colours, with vivid red and blue scenes depicted in the graphic novel section. This stark visualisation facilitates the reader's interpretation of the narratives developed throughout. The colour scheme allows us to identify the graphic construction of memories being explored and the spaces in which these memories interact and coincide, not competing with one another, rather complementing and co-constructing the wider narrative of Larra's and Reinamonte's work. Carolina González Alvarado (2016), in her exploration of this hybrid novel, claims that the novel 'explores the relation between the visible and the invisible, the said and the unsaid. […T]he images and the words do not reproduce a literal scene, space, or situation. It produces a visible form that signifies itself'. Nicolás can only recount his experience of the occupation from his perspective. We know from his early diary entries that he initially joined the occupation to impress a French classmate, Paula, who he likes (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 30). There is no ideological or political motive beyond that. While he gains political consciousness as the text progresses and grows to truly believe in the Penguins' cause, this takes time. Luisa's graphic narrative too is confined to her own perspective on the events. The

visible and invisible within the narrative then, highlighted by González Alvarado, refers to this impossibility of knowing everything in the situation when presented with first-person narratives, while also indicating that the combination of these two narratives facilitates the co-construction of memories and parallel visibilisation of the student protests occurring in Santiago in 2006 and those that occurred in 1985, which resulted in detentions and disappearances of some of the student protestors.[2]

This localised negotiation of memories in a fluid narrative space, which, on the one hand, narrates Nicolás' personal, political and civic awakening, and on the other purposefully identifies parallels between Chile in the 1980s and mid-2000s, provides opportunities to highlight previously implicit relationships between individual and collective experiences for the students and the readers. Nicolás' awareness increases as his diary progresses and the reader learns that although he has not chosen to engage politically prior to this occupation, his parents certainly did during the dictatorship, in a period when, we could argue, much more was at stake. On deciding, with some hesitation, to join the protest, he informs the reader:

> Yo había escuchado de manifestaciones y tomas y, la verdad, pensaba que era otra cosa. Aunque no lo cuento nunca, a mediados de los ochenta, cuando yo aún no había nacido, mis papás andaban todo el día en protestas y barricadas. (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 30-32)
>
> [I had heard about demonstrations and occupations, and honestly, I thought they were something entirely different. Even though I never tell anyone, in the mid-80s, before I was born, my parents spent their days at protests and on the barricades.]

He recounts their actions as you would expect someone who is only vaguely interested in the antics of his parents when they were a similar age to him. He notes their stories of protests and occupations usually ended in police brutality against protestors, arrests and worse. Here postmemory, which Hirsch explains as 'the relationship of the second generation to the experiences of the first—their curiosity and desire as well as their ambivalences about wanting to own their parent's knowledge' (2001: 12) could apply.

Different to the context of the Holocaust in which Hirsch is writing, Nicolás' experience in Chile in 2006 is simultaneously creating memory and postmemory. Memory, because he is conveying his contemporary experiences, and postmemory as his ambivalent and almost reluctant memories of his parents' stories become implanted in his own thoughts and experiences in the present, creating a palimpsest, intertwining, and complicating his perspective. Through their protagonist, Larra's and Reinamontes' work bears witness to the trauma of previous generations who lived through the dictatorship, in a process that Hirsch argues is only possible to work through by those who were not there to receive its immediate effects but rather had received its effects 'belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation' (2001: 12). While Nicolás is initially an unwilling, seemingly indifferent witness to his parents' traumatic experience, his position becomes increasingly hesitant as his participation in the contemporary protests shifts from impressing Paula to having genuine concern for the socio-political cause that brought them all together.

Furthering the process of memory and postmemory formation, Nicolás informs the reader that while his parents, particularly his mother, were keen to participate in these protests and challenge the 'pacos' ['cops'], his maternal grandfather did what he could to stop them, for fear 'una desgracia' (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 31) ['a tragedy'] would befall them. This same grandfather had contact with an official in the *Carabineros* [Chilean police], who were controlled by and served the demands of Augusto Pinochet. His use of vague lexicon surrounding what could happen should Nicolás' mother continue her protests is symptomatic of the repressive period in which they operated, when communication was highly nuanced and regulated to ensure no outward criticism of the regime could be perceived.[3] Through Nicolás' narrative, Larra and Reinamontes ignite the embers of postmemory work, seeking to 'unearth the layers of forgetting […] [to] expose and foreclose' (2014: 20) the trauma of the dictatorship through the parallel narratives they purposefully craft between the protests of 1985 and those

of 2006. These layers of forgetting and exposure are even further complicated when we consider the three generations of Nicolás' family together.

An ideological divide is evident in the narrative between Nicolás' mother and maternal grandfather, though he does not seem to have fallen on either extremity. Yet, his mother has still sent him to a private school, whose ethos is at odds with her own political persuasions, and which has benefitted greatly from the educational policies implemented by the dictatorship to the detriment of other schools, something which Nicolás is now protesting. Different to his mother and grandfather, Nicolás does not seem to subscribe to any particular ideology at this point of the narrative, making this web of familial experiences all the more intricate. No foreclosure, as Hirsch describes it, occurs with the inconsistency of this family, living through and beyond the dictatorship. By keeping this part of the discussion to two brief paragraphs, Larra and Reinamontes miss out on an opportunity to further explore the nature of intergenerational familial memory formation during and following this traumatic period, which illustrates the experience of many Chileans during this period. Nicolás, a less-than-critical narrator, knows enough to mention these differences in his diary, but does not question them further. He simply states that these events are not something his mother chooses to discuss in detail (2014: 31).

He is also reluctant to discuss his family's history from a personal perspective given the shadow that it has cast on his relationship with his mother since childhood. She has never been impressed by his talent as a goalkeeper for soccer, but once she learns that he is participating in the occupation, she cannot hide her pride in him fighting for what he believes is right, which irks Nicolás. Frustrated, he claims 'He parado más tiros al arco que ningún arquero de la liga interescolar. He logrado detener siete penaltis en partidos del campeonato […] Pero era la primera vez que mi mamá me decía que estaba orgullosa de mí' (2014: 37) ['I've stopped more shots at goal than any other goalkeeper in the school league. I have saved

seven penalties in championship games […] But this was the first time that my mother told me she was proud of me']. Nicolás suspects she is reliving her youth vicariously through this experience, which has provided a common ground upon which they can strengthen their relationship, since she has never shown interest in his other activities. His recounting of their experiences in the occupation reverses the perceived chronological nature of passing memory down from one generation to the next. Nicolás' generation in 2006 has provided a new lens for his mother to revisit her memories from 1985 and in doing so has increased the complexity of memory constructed.

A more detailed discussion connecting the contemporary protests to those of 1985 develops through the protagonist's interaction with his classmate, Pablo 'El Gordo' Mellado, and the graphic narrative of Luisa Garretón. Because of the complicated relationship Nicolás has to his mother's participation in the 1980s protest and the resulting impact for him, he is hesitant to open up to Mellado when he approaches him having discovered a book produced by Universidad de Chile with photos and testimonies of student protestors from that period (2014: 94). He does not understand why Mellado wants to involve him in this discussion. Mellado insists: 'Porque puedes ser el enlace entre el pasado y el presente de las movilizaciones de este colegio' (97) ['Because you could be the connection between the past and present of protests in this school']. Their school, situated South of the Alameda Avenue, is not known for student protests or for disrupting the status quo. As a private school, benefitting from the neoliberal policies, most students have chosen not to participate in previous protests. Instead, Nicolás and his fellow Penguins identify the more "emblematic" revolutionary schools such as "El Nacional" or "El Aplicación" who are renowned for such activism. Despite the proximity of his own school to these schools, he states, 'Nosotros siempre hemos sabido de ellos, pero ellos no tenían ni idea de que existíamos. Hasta ahora, porque somos de los pocos colegios privados que se han sumado a las protestas y tomas que hay en todo Chile' (32) ['We have

always known about them, but they had no idea we even existed. Until now, because we are one of the few private schools that have joined the protests and occupations in Chile']. This suggests that their school has been excluded from public memories of protest until now, something Nicolás and his fellow Penguins rectify with their participation. In doing so, they break socio-economic rank, fighting for a cause greater than themselves and for the benefit of others, dispelling the neoliberal mentality of the individual being prioritised over the collective.

When Mellado tries to encourage his fellow protestors to take pride in the part they are playing in the history of protest in the school, one of the students scoffs saying, '¿De qué hablas, Mellado? Este siempre fue un colegio apolítico. Con una Dirección que no se quería meter en problemas' (185) ['What are you talking about, Mellado? This has always been an apolitical school. With a management team that did not want to get involved in any problems']. This is certainly the experience of many of the students, both at school and in their families, with Nicolás' narrative even criticizing his closest friend's family, convinced they would never have heard stories of protests or occupations since he comes from a family of 'momios' (63) [mummies], a term used in Chile to describe those of right-wing conservative ideologies. Mellado assures his classmates that the school certainly has a history, just that nobody wants to remember it (184). It is this official desire to forget and the active efforts to remember through the occupation and Mellado's classes on the histories of the preceding student protests that are most noteworthy.

Through Mellado's lessons and Nicolás sharing stories he heard from his parents, combined with the graphic narrative of Luisa's perspective, we learn of the history of protest that precedes the actions the Penguins are undertaking in 2006. In Luisa's narration (180-181), we see images of Mellado pontificating about previous student demonstrations that occurred in Chile and beyond, which have influenced the 2006 Penguin Revolution. In Nicolás' narrative, Mellado writes the names of three former students of their school on the board in one

of his daily lessons: two young men, and a young woman, Nicolás' mother. He informs his audience that these three students participated in the student protests in the mid-1980s, 'alentados por una profesora que trabajaba aquí en esos años, una mujer que nuestros directores han querido olvidar' (186) ['encouraged by a teacher who worked here in those years, a woman who our school management has tried to forget']. This teacher is Luisa Garretón, the narrator of the graphic novel section. Of the three protestors, one of them, Rodrigo, was detained and disappeared during a police raid on one of the occupations they were participating in.

Prior to us becoming party to Luisa's own memories of this period, Mellado urges Nicolás to share what he knows of these events. This invokes what Hirsch describes as 'affiliative postmemory' (36), which is the 'intragenerational horizontal identification that makes [a] child's position more broadly available to other contemporaries' (36). Through sharing his limited experience of his parents' trauma and the impact it had on them, he is producing this postmemory beyond familial ties to his wider generation. Timidly, Nicolás informs his fellow Penguins that he cannot shed much light on the disappearance of Rodrigo, since it is a story that his parents told him and his sister in fragments over the years, but never in an ordered manner. He shares what he knows and admits that he wishes he had been more curious and asked more questions (187). The lessons that Mellado imparts and his emphasis on the role of these three former students serve to counteract any conscious or unconscious forgetting within their school. As long as they continue to discuss these individuals and their activism, they will not be forgotten and the risks they took will not be in vain.

Some of the multiple layers of memory constructed here, sometimes coinciding, other times contradicting one another, are beyond the parameters of postmemory. Rather, Rothberg's promotion of multidirectional memory as being 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private' (2009: 3) is helpful to consider the efforts by Larra and Reinamontes to create spaces for remembering and learning from the

different perspectives. Following Mellado's and Nicolás' discussion of the three students, and particularly the disappearance of Rodrigo, upon which neither can shed much light, we learn from Luisa's narrative that this was something that had a profound impact on her professional and personal life. Thus, the reader draws on multiple perspectives, some of which are originally formed by private memories, but are made public through the cross-referencing. In pages 190-191, the graphics of Luisa's narrative depict a notebook with three documents attached to it. One has Rodrigo's full name at the top, followed by a list of places. All 8 locations have a line through them, indicating that Luisa tried to find Rodrigo or information on him at these places to no avail. On the same page, we have the black and white image of Rodrigo in the typical poster created during the dictatorship for those who had been disappeared. Under his image, in large letters '¿Dónde están?' ['Where are they?'] is written followed by Rodrigo's full name and the last date he was seen (1985). On the opposite page, a loose piece of paper is slotted into the notebook, a letter addressed to Luisa on March 1986 from the school management requesting her immediate resignation due to unexplained absences throughout the year. Reading between the lines it seems that Luisa, tormented by the fact that Rodrigo went missing following her encouragement to participate in the protests, puts her job in jeopardy exhausting all avenues to locate him, or discover his fate. By ridding the school of Luisa's presence, management can return to abiding by the status quo. This is a silencing of the past, of Luisa's memories and of those who protested during the dictatorship. It is also an attack on the freedom of education, when a student who protests for exactly that is disappeared as punishment.

Travelling memories and public pedagogies

In this section, I explore the ways in which *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* combines its memory activism with a pedagogical function to raise awareness in the wider public, just as we saw in 2006 in the students' activism. In addition to highlighting examples in the hybrid

novel, I draw on the extended story world created through the website and its contents to aid this discussion. First, I briefly consider the Penguin Revolution as a space to educate and learn, before focusing on Larra's and Reinamontes' contributions. Michael P. O'Malley and Sarah W. Nelson (2013) promote the view of the Penguins as public pedagogues. They claim that as a social movement, seeking to effect structural change, they created opportunities for learning in public (2013: 41). They draw on work by Burdick and Sadlin (2010) to inform their understanding of a critical public pedagogy as 'a counterhegemonic practice, a "terrain of contestation" and cultural resistance' (cited in O'Malley and Nelson 2013: 43). The Penguin Revolution created these spaces of contestation that resisted the hegemonic neoliberal tendencies in Chilean society. Jo Williams (2015) has also analysed the Chilean student movements as a form of public pedagogy, considering Henry A. Giroux's formulations on this concept. Williams' work analyses the protests from the 1980s, 2006 and the 2011 'Chilean Winter' protests by university students.[4] She argues that in their challenging of the neoliberal system and the injustice it promulgates, the Chilean students educated the public. They highlighted the state's responsibility to provide a functioning education system for all, contrary to the expectations promoted by a neoliberal system.

In the novel, one of the leading protestors who comes to visit Nicolás and his fellow protestors insists that the education system was one more tool being used by the government at the time to reproduce social inequalities (2014: 33). Williams affirms that the Chilean student movement is an example of 'challenging and inspiring counter-practice and a reclaiming of pedagogy as political and public' (2015: 498), through occupying school buildings, organising conferences, public lectures and other creative actions of protest. She further claims that the Penguins' protest 'paved the way for a national discussion around the role the education system plays in reproducing Chile's social and economic inequality' (2015: 501). Today, we can appreciate the significance of such tenacity, when we consider that the conversation started by

the Penguins in 2006 gathered momentum and created spaces for other subjugated groups to voice their concerns. In 2021, Chile is awaiting a new constitution that will no longer be underpinned by the values of the authoritarian regime. The national discussions to which Williams refers took many forms: political, economic, social, historical and cultural too. Larra's and Reinamonte's work contributes to these discussions and participates as a cultural form of public pedagogy.

From its use of clear, simple language to its attractive graphics and glossary of Chilean terms, the hybrid novel, draws in a diverse audience. Published by Ediciones Ekaré Sur, which specialises in children's and young adults' literature, above all, this work seeks to deliver a historical and political lesson to the young readers it attracts. Furthermore, Larra insists that she wanted to pay tribute to the achievement of the Penguins through this work.

> Me parece que lo que hicieron fue asombroso: gracias a esos jóvenes de 13 y 14 años todo un país entendió que las cosas no estaban bien, que había que cambiar profundamente la educación en Chile y que el bien común era algo de lo que no podíamos prescindir. (cited in Rueda 2017: 74)
>
> [I think what they did is amazing. Thanks to those 13- and 14-year-olds a whole country came to understand that things were not right, that there was a need for a profound change in education in Chile and that we could not dispense with the common good.]

Through their polyphonic narrative, the creators place the Penguin Revolution on par with the student protests during the dictatorship in Chile, and the twentieth-century protests that achieved global recognition for the way in which they challenged hegemonic discourses of passivity and individuality. In an interview with Fundación Cuatrogatos—a not-for-profit organisation that promotes culture and education for children and young adults, and which awarded a prize to this novel in 2015—Larra explains that this interest in the common good and the need to move away from the individual was fundamental for their text. '[E]sa toma de conciencia, ese paso, esa transformación de lo individual a lo comunitario, de lo privado a lo

público, es lo que le sucede a Nicolás en la novela' (Fundación Cuatrogatos 2015) ['That realisation, that step, that transformation from the individual to the community, from the private to the public, that is what happens with Nicolás in the novel']. Just like the Penguins before them, Larra's and Reinamontes' work steers away from the neoliberal-inspired idea of personal gain in the education system, towards one that challenges individualistic tendencies and fights for the common good. Indeed, it is that spirit, caring for the collective and moving away from the benefits for the individual that drives activism and public pedagogy in Chile even today.

Reinamontes' involvement in this project is not casual. He participated in the Penguin Revolution in 2006, marching on the streets and occupying his school. Of great importance to Reinamontes is dispelling the myths that surround protests and occupations such as the notion that they are unruly and disorganised. The daily activities of the occupation as narrated in Nicolás' diary provide the reader with an insight into the planning, organisation and determination with which their occupation operates. They have "bedrooms", a "kitchen", an "infirmary", a "beauty salon" (2014: 17-19). Each student has been designated a role during the occupation so that all needs of the group are met. The members of the Student Centre are in contact with the students of other occupations and those organising the marches to know when and how to mobilise. The daily working of these occupations and what life was like for the students participating—their fears, hopes, activities—has not appeared in previous critical work on the movement. Larra's and Reinamontes' work adds this facet to the discussion. The movement, in their eyes, drew attention to important aspects of Chilean society that had gone unnoticed or unchallenged. Reinamontes argues that it 'ha contribuido a cuestionar la manera en que miramos a las instituciones, la educación, el lucro, la televisión, lo que conversamos en una sobremesa, etc. Y eso ya es un legado que debemos continuar' (cited in Arevana 2014) ['has contributed to questioning the ways in which we consider our institutions, education, profit, television, and what we discuss at the dinner table, etc. That is a legacy in itself that we

need to continue']. Their intermedial work is one of the ways in which Larra and Reinamontes aid that conversation, carrying out their civic and social duty using their talents and knowledge.

The visual and physical construction of the intermedial work is purposeful in its presentation and pedagogical in tone. Within the hybrid novel, the blue, white and red of the Chilean flag dominates, specifically in Luisa's graphic narration, indicating the cultural specificity as well as the universal themes dealt with in the text. The colour cues serve to indicate to the reader which generation they are focusing on and how the experience of 2006 relates to those experiences during the dictatorship, when the colours appear together. Indeed, Mellado's passionate speech to the Penguins related through Nicolás' narrative indicates they have much more in common than many would choose to believe.

> Los estudiantes secundarios […] exigían a mediados de los ochenta prácticamente lo mismo que nosotros ahora, veinte años después: democratización de la educación, becas alimenticias, rebaja del pasaje escolar, inscripción gratuita en la prueba de aptitud para ingresar a la Universidad, acceso igualitario de la Educación Superior. También exigían el esclarecimiento de los asesinatos y desapariciones de estudiantes de Enseñanza Media. Es en lo único en que, afortunadamente, no coincidimos hoy en día. En lo demás, seguimos igual. ¡Igual que hace veinte años, en plena dictadura! (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 183)
>
> [Secondary school students […] were demanding in the 80s practically the same that we are now, 20 years later: democratisation of education, food stamps, reduced cost on travel passes for students, free registration for the aptitude test to enter university, equal access to Higher Education. They also demanded clarification on the deaths and disappearances of secondary school students. This is the only issue which we, fortunately, do not share today. Everything else is the same. The same as it was, 20 years ago, in the middle of the dictatorship!]

This uncomfortable truth is difficult to address, 16 years after the so-called transition to democracy and this is where *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* takes its place in a socio-historical context that lasts to present-day in its overt criticism of the failure to effect

major change since 1990. This condemnation of the social and political remnants of the dictatorship only intensified between the novel's publication in 2014 and the social upheaval in 2019, where these same issues continued to be debated and whole communities were disfavoured economically and politically.

The creators did not depend solely on their hybrid novel to communicate their message. They also created a website dedicated to their pedagogical endeavour.[5] There, a reader can peruse the critical reception of their novel, as well as interviews they have participated in, to ensure the message is shared as widely and in as many media forms as possible. Moreover, following the lead of other hybrid and graphic novels from more recent years, they created a book trailer—an audiovisual sample of the opening lines of the hybrid novel, which includes moving graphics from the printed format and voiceovers in Spanish and English—to attract a wider audience. This, combined with the English translation of the first chapter of the novel, a summary of the plot and a biography of the two creators, also in English, leaves little doubt to the function of this website—to publicise the novel and its contents, while celebrating the student revolution that inspired it. This carefully curated website is generous in its offerings, and with the inclusion of entirely new and free material, it challenges neoliberal values. The fanzine, *Apuntes para una historia de las movilizaciones estudiantiles,* is probably the most educational element of this online offering. Published online in 2017, it is an electronic notebook, owned by Pablo Mellado, Nicolás' classmate. The graphic style is the same as Luisa's narrative in the hybrid novel, but it takes the visual form of a scrapbook. The graphics depict some informative texts seemingly pasted into the pages of the notebook, with Mellado's musings handwritten neatly in the margins.

Mellado is an important pedagogical agent of both the hybrid novel and the fanzine. Larra and Reinamontes use him to place the Penguin Revolution in dialogue with other memories from beyond Chile. His daily lectures, depicted in both narratives of the hybrid novel

and the fanzine, introduce his fellow Penguins to the most renowned student protests of the 20th century. Rothberg contends that multidirectional memory is a 'series of interventions through which social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing […] present' (2009: 4) and it is this focus that Mellado takes when speaking to his fellow students about their experience and others that preceded them. Declaring the importance of the movements that came before them, Mellado explains to his audience:

> Si nos hemos lanzado a las protestas para desafiar el orden establecido, el obsoleto sistema educativo, la injusticia […] lo mínimo que podemos hacer es saber un poco de lo que pasó antes de nuestro modesto mayo 2006 en esta materia. Para no caer en la soberbia de pensar que somos los primeros, los únicos y los más bacanes. (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 179)
>
> [If we have launched into these protests to challenge the status quo, the obsolete education system, injustice […] the least we can do is know a bit about what happened before our modest May 2006 in that sense, so that we are not too proud to think that we are the first, the only and the best.]

Nicolás' and Luisa's narratives intertwine to highlight the protests that Mellado focuses on. He considers May '68 in Paris and October of the same year in Mexico, during which the Tlatelolco massacre occurred. Given the profound impact it had on their country, some of the students may have had some knowledge of the protests that occurred during the dictatorship, but this wider scope places the national context on an international and transnational platform, indicating their external influences.

Rothberg claims that when the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is claimed 'it has potential to create new forms of solidarity and new versions of justice' (2009: 5). It is through the pervasive presence of France in the hybrid novel and fanzine that Larra and Reinamontes seek to create these links of solidarity. France's reputation for protest permeates the texts, sometimes challenged, other times lauded, and always with a level of reverence. The hybrid novel opens with Paul Éluard's poem *Couvre Feu* [Curfew] placed

directly after the title page and just before the graphic novel narration that starts the text. The poem is published in its source language, French, without any explanation or commentary. Written during the German occupation of France, this work of resistance represents defiance and solidarity, key emblems of the student protests in Chile in the 1980s and 2006. In Luisa's narrative, she sees Paula—Nicolás' love interest and French classmate— clutching a book of poetry written by Paul Éluard under her arm. The poet's presence is later felt when Paula, during an intimate exchange with Nicolás, reads him the Spanish version of *Curfew,* before reciting it in French in alluring tones (58).

The poem serves to unite Nicolás and Paula, and to connect their experience in the Penguin Revolution to that of the French under German occupation, the protestors of May '68 and the protestors in Santiago in the 1980s. Mellado's notebook indicates that the French protests ignited worldwide revolutions and highlighted the importance of the surrealist movement, of which Éluard is part, in the May '68 mobilisations. The interwoven narratives then each confirm the importance of Éluard's work and the May '68 protests in influencing and informing the Chilean protests. While the anti-capitalist sentiment and general fight for greater equality unites them, this uncritical acceptance of France as a source of inspiration when it is so far removed from Chile geopolitically and socio-historically during both student protests discussed here, must be questioned. For one, access to education in both countries varies, with it being much more affordable in France. Paula informs her classmates that education is free in France (54), though it receives only a fleeting mention in Nicolás' narrative. There is little discussion of the socio-political circumstances that permit these differences in access to education, which in turn impede wider political upheaval. The creators may succeed in creating new forms of solidarity as Rothberg suggests with the potential for multidirectional memory, but new versions of justice are not evident here. In fact, Larra and Reinamontes, in mapping their work so closely to that of Éluard and the May '68 protests, unwittingly undermine the

critical and innovative mobilisation of the Penguins they seek to laud. Drawing inspiration is fruitful, but there needs to be an element of critique that recognises these comparisons have their limitations.

The fanzine furthers the creators' promotion of contextualising the protests among those of other territories and historical periods. It provides a brief tour of student protests from around the world—including Argentina, France, Mexico and China—across the twentieth century in this 23-page tribute to those who have come before their own Penguin Revolution. The Penguins' Revolution occupies the final 2 pages of Mellado's diary, on the left-hand side a brief description of the aims of the movement are provided, and on the right, an image of students spray painting one of the primary messages of the movement: 'LA EDUCACIÓN NO $E VENDE ¡Se defiende!' (Larra and Reinamontes 2017: 23) [EDUCATION IS NOT FOR $ALE, it's defended!]. By drawing the notebook to a close on the 2006 movements, Larra and Reinamontes are explicitly creating discursive space for all the transnational and transgenerational memories to coexist, without the need to overshadow one another. However, they fail to provide a critical discussion regarding the extent to which these discursive spaces are beneficial to understanding the Penguin Revolution, its origins, motivations and positioning among the other protests mentioned.

The fanzine underpins the pedagogical efforts of Larra and Reinamontes. Its final page is used by Larra and Reinamontes to address their readers directly, alerting us to more recent student mobilisations since 2006, which the creators also connect with their earlier work. Each one listed has a brief explanation and the list is preceded by a brief note from the creators speaking about the importance of the protests dealt with in detail in the fanzine as well as their desire to include the list of those they could not cover in detail. By stopping at 2006, it remains plausible that we are reading the notebook that Mellado kept during the occupation, and that their addition at the end is just that, an addendum produced after the fact.

Conclusions

Following 30 years of struggle against the 'dictablanda' [soft dictatorship] in Chile—the period since 1990, named as such because of the continued impact of the policies implemented during the dictatorship—the sustained collective effort against the neoliberal systems that perpetuate socioeconomic polarisation are making an impact today. Larra's and Reinamontes' *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* is an important contribution to this endeavour. At the time of its publication in 2014, the hopeful tone with which the novel ended may have seemed naïve and lacking critical perspective to some. However, Nicolás' final words, uttered a year after his participation in the Penguin Revolution, instil hope in the reader.

> Ha pasado un año desde entonces y ahora más que nunca creo que la batalla por una educación de calidad para todos, por un país más justo, es algo posible. Estamos trabajando en ello. Somos muchos. En todas partes, (Larra and Reinamontes 2014: 283)
>
> [A year has passed since then and I believe now more than ever that the battle for a quality education for everyone, for a more just country, is possible. We are working on it. There are lots of us. Everywhere.]

Considering this from the standpoint of 2021, following the recent socio-political upheaval and the many protests led by students and others in the meantime, Nicolás' words have never been closer to reality. They visualise the change that is coming, a change that is now evident in contemporary Chile, with the recent formation of an elected citizens' assembly to draft a new constitution for the country, led by Mapuche representative, Elisa Loncón. The aims for this constitution are to cater for a more pluralistic and equal Chile that is no longer governed by neoliberal policies.

How then do we situate *Al sur de la Alameda: diario de una toma* in this discussion of memory and public pedagogy? As I have discussed, the creators have been ambitious in their

project, explicitly connecting the student protests of 1985 and 2006, through the parallel narratives of Nicolás and Luisa, while also placing these national protests in the wider transnational context as sources of inspiration more locally in Mellado's lessons and notebook. In doing so, they teach the reader the great importance of understanding what has come before to recognise patterns and actions in the present, as well as encouraging a less insular approach to memory and activism in Chile. To the average adult reader, this may already seem apparent, but for the target audience of young adults this could be their first introduction to these events. The intermedial mode of delivery plays an important role in explicitly connecting the different experiences within and beyond Chile, as well as catering for the interests and modes of communication potentially more appealing to that generation. In creating an intermedial text, which incorporates clear language, diary entries, graphics and an interactive website that contains a fanzine, Larra and Reinamontes present their work in a manner that will reach readers of different levels and interests. The multiple narrators—Nicolás, Luisa and Mellado—each contribute new and overlapping facets to the novel and its story world, each one visually distinctive from the next, and serving a specific purpose in the nuanced construction of events. The creators' work fits the needs of the universal curriculum design, created to exclude nobody and encourage everybody to engage with it at a level they wish. This coincides largely with the notion of public pedagogy which the Penguin Revolution engaged in and to which Larra and Reinamontes contributed.

Criticism of the neoliberalism underpinning the inequalities faced in the educational system and broader Chilean society, as well as its origins being in the dictatorship are emphasised, as they were during the Penguin Revolution. The novel's website, and all that it offers, free of charge, furthers this creative rejection of neoliberal values. In their construction of memories, the creators, do not place them in competition with each other, creating what Rothberg considers multidirectional memories, which can be mutually supportive. However,

there is a tendency to uncritically contextualise the Penguin Revolution with those of previous generations, and across different territories. Even though Mellado's character is quite politically engaged and conscious of the origins of their movement, he does not question the potential differences that exist, particularly in those situations geopolitically removed from the Chilean experience. A more situated discussion would provide a more convincing comparison. Similarly, while we witness an element of postmemory activism through Nicolás' family, his narrative and that of the hybrid novel provokes more questions than answers regarding their participation in the story. Larra and Reinamontes have chosen a protagonist who is politically apathetic initially and who only starts to adopt a stance as the text progresses, but his lack of critical engagement and questioning around his family's situation leaves the reader seeking more. Why does his mother, a left-wing student protestor who risked her life during the dictatorship, send her son to the same private school that obscured any dissident activities against the regime and forced the teacher who encouraged them out of her job? This same school has benefitted from the educational policies against which Nicolás and his classmates protest. This, coupled with the fact that his grandfather had ties to the regime, paints a complicated, if realistic, picture and one which leaves us wanting to know more.

These observations aside, as explored in this article, one cannot deny the value that this work contributes to the efforts of memory making and public pedagogy in Chile. Through its intermedial construction and polyphonic narrative, it draws in new audiences and generations into these important debates, building towards more daring critiques of Chilean society that we have witnessed since 2019.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Cara Levey, Chiara Giuliani and the special issue editors, Katie Brown and Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela, for their careful reading and helpful comments on earlier iterations of this article. Thanks too to the anonymous reviewers whose observations and suggestions helped shape the final version.

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[1] The Penguin Revolution focused its critique predominantly on the inequalities created through the neoliberal education system that was introduced at the start of the transition to democracy, while criticising the broader impacts of neoliberalism on their polarised society. To learn more about the structure, motivations and achievements of this movement, see Acuña-Collado (2016), Donoso (2013), Hernández Santibañez (2018), Kubal and Fisher (2016), Palacio-Vallardes (2016), and Stromquist and Sanyal (2013).

[2] The student protests referenced in 1985 were part of a wider social movement that was key to promoting the return to democracy in Chile between 1983 and 1986. Students joined trade unions, associations that represented victims of the regime, women's groups and many more to protest the brutal repression of the dictatorship, during a period in which political parties were outlawed. Once the parties were reformed, they took the lead in the redemocratisation of the country. Errázuriz (2018) and Moulian (2002) detail this period and the students' participation.

[3] Marguerite Feitlowitz' text, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (1998), while focused on the Argentine context, provides a helpful discussion of this lived experience in dictatorships in the Southern Cone.

[4] The 2011 student protests followed the election of the first right-wing government since the dictatorship under Sebastián Piñera in 2010, which intended to increase the privatisation of education, leading to worsening situations for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The protests gathered momentum with

increased online presence, demands for free education and an end to education for profit. Where the protagonists were the secondary students in 2006, these protests were led by university students. For more information on these protests and how they relate to the Penguin Revolution, consult: Webb and Radcliffe (2013), Stromquist and Sanyal (2013), Picazo and Pierre (2016), Palacios-Valladares (2016), Kabul and Fisher (2016).

[5] http://diariodeunatoma.cl