

Terror and Awe: Toward a Posthuman Politics in Patricio Guzmán's *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010)

'In conception and technique I tried to depict the earth which is prehuman and presumably posthuman'.¹

Introduction

By now, the content of Patricio Guzmán's celebrated film *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010) is well known: the film records the female relatives of those imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared from the Chacabuco concentration camp in northern Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship as they scour the Atacama desert in search of their loved ones' earthly remains. Simultaneously, archaeologists examine traces of the pre-Columbian people that passed through the area, and astronomers explore the origins of the universe by analysing the light and radio waves emitted from stars distant in both time and space. This cosmic reminder that 'man is an invention of recent date', '[a]nd one perhaps nearing its end'² suggests that James Joyce's description of the 'Penelope' episode of *Ulysses* cited above is one which could equally be applied to Guzmán's film. Indeed, it is my contention that in *Nostalgia de la luz* Guzmán emphasizes the tactile qualities of the visual image and the materiality of the cinema system itself in order to generate an embodied experience of viewership which establishes the foundation for a possible posthuman politics. Moreover, I will argue that Guzmán's film is ultimately grounded in a logic that is simultaneously theological and scientific and which may have important implications for how certain strands of new materialist and posthuman thought are understood.

As *Nostalgia de la luz* develops, Guzmán brings the various investigative agents based in the Atacama together so that their inquiries are intertwined and each search illuminates the others. As Guzmán's commentary reminds the viewer, the desert 'está lleno de historia' [is replete with history] and each group examines a distinct region of the past. In each case these explorations are enabled by the unique climactic conditions of 'el inmenso desierto de Atacama' [the immense desert of the Atacama], the driest area of the planet, which ensure that 'los restos humanos se momifican y los

objetos permanecen' [human remains mummify and objects are frozen in time]. Similarly, Guzmán notes that it was due to these same characteristics that a group of astronomers discovered that 'las estrellas se podían tocar con la mano' [the stars could be touched with the hand]. Despite this common root, however, each investigation is notably distinct and the relationships between them vary considerably. The most direct accord is that established between the archaeologists and the women searching for their loved ones. As Lautaro Núñez, one of the scientists interviewed by Guzmán explains, when the relatives of the disappeared discovered bone fragments in the desert, resident archaeologists were able to utilise their expertise to discover and exhume a mass grave and recover the partial remains of some of the victims. The relationship drawn between the astronomers' investigations and those of the women, however, is rather more abstract in nature. For Jens Andermann, as the act of disappearance (withholding the body of the deceased from their loved ones) suspends both the normal processes of mourning and the construction of cultural memory, 'the reference to a non-human – a natural, geological, cosmic – temporality allows one to imagine a renewal of the bond that has been broken, on the level of social time, by dictatorial terror'.³ While I recognise that Guzmán's film certainly appears to suggest that this is the case for those directly affected by state violence, and that it moves to reconcile interviewees with their past in this way, I want to propose that the film establishes a rather different relationship with, and triggers a different memory process for, the audience who views the film. Indeed, I will go on to argue that the film is designed not to heal, but rather to transmit awe and terror to the viewer.

Ambivalence in the Atacama

In interview, Guzmán has described the unique composition of *Nostalgia de la luz* by arguing that 'la materia misma del film nace [...] de una serie de metáforas que están depositadas en el desierto' [the very material of the film is born of a series of metaphors which are deposited in the desert], before stating categorically that '[l]as metáforas ya existían, yo solamente las filmé' [the metaphors already existed, I only filmed them].⁴ This is to say that Guzmán foregrounds the material reality of the Atacama, which in turn transforms seemingly poetic metaphors into objective physical

reality. As Andermann continues his discussion of Guzmán's film, he associates these processes with the historical actions of the Pinochet dictatorship, noting that

when, after the 1973 coup, the Pinochet dictatorship chose the Atacama desert for constructing its most infamous torture and examination camps as well as to bury there the bodies of its victims, in the belief that its sterile and remote geography equalled absolute oblivion, it was actually confiding its crimes to nothing less than the memory of our planet.⁵

Andermann's point is that the dictatorship sought to exploit the characteristics of the Atacama both to effectuate and to mask their heinous crimes. Indeed, due to its vast scale, inhospitable nature and isolation, it seemed to the dictatorship that the desert effectively 'lent itself to imprisonment and execution'.⁶ In this, the dictatorship's plan shares much in common with the appropriation of the unique climactic conditions of the Sonoran Desert by US border agents, as described by Jason De León, whereby the desert becomes the means for realising a brutal form of necro-violence while simultaneously distancing those same human agents from the grim reality of their deadly 'Prevention Through Deterrence' policy.⁷ Expanding his analysis further, De León draws on the work of Michel Callon and John Law to propose that human actors and the unique natural forces present in the Sonoran desert interact to form a '*hybrid collectif*, which posits that agency is an emergent property created by the interaction of many heterogeneous components known as actants',⁸ where an actant, in Bruno Latour's formulation, 'is a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can *do* things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events'.⁹ Nonetheless, as Andermann's comments make clear, the agentic capacities of the Atacama in reality demonstrated a certain 'vitality', understood as 'the capacity of things [...] not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own',¹⁰ and thus only partially fulfilled the dictatorship's objectives.

It is the combination of 'aridity, little groundwater and sandy soil' acting together with the presence of 'nitrates and arsenic'¹¹ which results 'in natural mummification of all corpses' in the

Atacama.¹² Nonetheless, even in these conditions, ‘the impact of both the environment and cultural practices is critical when assessing naturally mummified remains’,¹³ a process denominated ‘taphonomy’ by the soviet palaeontologist Ivan Efremov and defined as ‘the combination of human and nonhuman elements that impact biological remains’.¹⁴ Some twenty minutes into *Nostalgia de la luz*, an example of the unique taphonomic properties of the Atacama are displayed on the screen. An extreme close up captures what appears to be a solid mound of earth laid upon immaculate white paper. The camera slowly pans along the object allowing the viewer to discern the fragile textures on its surface and its deep burnt auburn hues and tones. As the camera moves upwards, an angular projection of the same material comes into view and at its extremity a recognisable form comes into view: the articulations of a wrist and thumb, raised tendons below taught skin, and finally the fingers of an identifiable hand. Retrospectively, the viewer understands they have been gazing upon one of the pre-Columbian mummies from the Atacama, now removed and stored for its own protection.¹⁵ Nonetheless, over the course of the film Guzmán also emphasizes the ambivalence of the Atacama’s agentic capacity. As Nilo Couret notes, the film ‘plays with issues of scale at its thematic and formal registers’.¹⁶ From intimate close-ups the camera frequently cuts to wide shots capturing the vast expanse of the desert. In the first instance in which the women searching for their loved one’s remains in the desert appear, for example, the camera first focuses in incredible detail on the contact between a shovel and the desert floor as dry earth is slowly overturned. The camera subsequently pulls back through a series of cuts and the group appears infinitesimal when compared with the immensity of the surrounding landscape. Thus the ambivalence proper to the desert becomes apparent: while its unique climactic conditions ensure that the bodies disappeared within it remain to be discovered, its vast scale makes the search seemingly impossible. While Couret goes on to argue that *Nostalgia de la luz* ‘is more productively understood through synecdoche than metaphor’, and he mobilizes the concept of ‘scalar conversion’ to define the film’s spatial, temporal and corporeal characteristics, I propose a rather different interpretation.¹⁷ As I will go on to argue, the film is neither synecdoche nor metaphor, but rather draws attention to the material reality of the cinema system itself to produce an embodied experience for the audience. In the first instance, however, the desert’s innate ambivalence, leads to further reflection on the nature and function of the bodies which appear onscreen.

As De León points out, in situations of human conflict ‘the desecration of the enemy’s body is practically a cultural universal’.¹⁸ Developing similar themes, Elaine Scarry notes that within any given conflict the injuring of bodies serves a double function: ‘to determine which population and set of disputed beliefs will be the winner’ and ‘to substantiate whatever outcome was produced as a result of the first function’.¹⁹ Nonetheless, as she goes on to argue, following the conclusion of the conflict, there remains a ‘*referential instability* of the hurt body’²⁰ precisely because it could either substantiate the claim of victory, or testify to the continuing existence of the belief systems seemingly defeated.²¹ By disappearing the bodies of their defeated ‘enemies’, however, the Pinochet dictatorship essentially sought to forego the referential instability inherent to those same bodies. The absence of their victims’ mortal remains substantiates only the dictatorship’s omnipotence, while the same practice simultaneously denies the possibility that the bodies could rally support to the defeated cause. What *Nostalgia de la luz* makes clear, however, is that the ambivalence of the body has been transferred to the Atacama itself. The desert becomes body as it proffers the hope of substantiation to both sides of the conflict. Or rather, the desert and the bodies are bound in a reciprocal relationship, each fusing with the other to produce a new amalgam. Consistently interspersed with numerous lingering shots of human remains, the film records the becoming-desert of mortal remains, and the becoming-body of the desert. And I will go on to argue that Guzmán manipulates this situation in order to overcome the desert’s ambivalence.

Time and Memory in *Nostalgia de la luz*

From pre-Columbian mummies, to the skeletal remains of nineteenth-century miners, to partially excavated corpses which appear almost as if they were sculpted from the same material as the desert floor, to bone fragments which exhibit only minute differences from the grains of sand in which they rest, Guzmán’s film records various stages in the slow process through which bodies gradually merge with the desert landscape. While it appears that these bodies are perfectly preserved, the film actually makes it clear that they deteriorate by a different mechanism and ‘are still on their

taphonomic journey back to the elements'.²² The intervention of the desert ensures that metaphors assume physical form and the bodies are absorbed into 'the memory of our planet', as Andermann asserts.²³ This is to say that, while *Nostalgia de la luz* is sonically constructed from the memories of survivors of the dictatorship's concentration camps, the relatives of the disappeared, and the scientists working in the Atacama, a rather different conception of memory is visually presented to the viewer.

Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's Bergsonian interpretation of cinema, David Martin-Jones argues that in Guzmán's film the Atacama becomes 'the foundation of a gigantic universe memory, or universe archive'.²⁴ This argument is certainly supported by Guzmán's comments that he believes that 'memory encompasses all life, [...] but also matter, the earth, the cosmos, all combined'.²⁵ In this reckoning memory is 'identical to the totality of the past'²⁶ arranged in sheets and regions which are variously contracted into the present and dilated into the past, an experience of time which Bergson names 'duration'. As Martin-Jones intimates, then, in *Nostalgia de la luz* the various layers of the past assume physical form and testify to the 'radical plurality of durations'²⁷ experienced by both the human and nonhuman alike.²⁸ As previously discussed, lacking micro-organisms to break down their organic matter, the bodies which Guzmán records are whipped by the wind and sand and their deterioration absorbed into the geological duration of the earth. As Guzmán has stated, 'memory is a problem of very long duration'²⁹ and the inclusion of various star-scapes reminds the viewer that even the seemingly constant and eternal desert landscape of the Atacama, which has existed 'for at least the last 15 million years',³⁰ represents a rapid duration when compared with the astral processes analysed by the astronomers whom Guzmán interviews. It would appear that the reference to non-human duration is entirely indifferent to the designs of the human.

As *Nostalgia de la luz* progresses, Guzmán ranges through human, archaeological, geological, and cosmic sheets of the past incorporating shots of bodies, artefacts, desert rocks and stars into the film. To transfer between these regions, however, Guzmán frequently cuts from these various depictions of the past to protracted shots of the mechanical movements and rotations which cause telescopes of varying types and sizes to revolve. To describe the process of human recollection,

Bergson proposes that the pure past of memory first constitutes ‘a nebulous mass’ which, when ‘seen through more and more powerful telescopes, resolves itself into an ever greater number of stars’.³¹ Subsequently, Bergson argues that in order to draw a particular recollection from the past, ‘we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first, in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focussing of a camera’.³² Each part of Bergson’s metaphor is present in Guzmán’s film: the revolving telescopes mark transitions to shots of stars and planets which represent the totality of the past, as they serve as a metonymic device and represent the revolutions of Guzmán’s camera which draws particular recollections from this past into the viewer’s present. Thus it would appear that there is a fundamental contradiction between human and non-human memory in the film, between the need to remember and the universe’s temporal indifference. However, I want to propose that Guzmán actually seeks to convert ambivalence into agency and that he does so through the representation of matter and time itself. For Deleuze, Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* is the first film which presents Bergsonian sheets of the past on the cinema screen.³³ Rather than Guzmán’s telescopic visual metaphor, Deleuze argues that it is Welles’ ‘images in depth’ which represent these regions. However, further visual comparisons can be drawn between these two films which ultimately demonstrate that *Nostalgia de la luz* contains ‘an orientation that is posthumanist in the sense that it conceives of matter itself as lively or as exhibiting agency’.³⁴

The Cinematic Image as Haptic Relic

In constructing *Citizen Kane*, Welles and his cinematographer Gregg Toland sought to intersperse the film with a number of extreme close-ups of inanimate objects. Indeed, Welles even ‘wanted the camera not just to come near the objects but actually to seem to move inside or through them’ an effect that could only be achieved through the innovative use of an optical printer.³⁵ However, in certain instances, this technique produced unwanted effects. For example, when ‘Kane on his deathbed looks into the glass globe’ the repeated use of the optical printer meant that the final ‘image was grainy and had noticeably lost resolution’. Thus ‘Welles came up with one of his “inspirations” – superimpos[ing] an image of whirling snow over it’ such that ‘the loss in resolution

would scarcely be noticed'.³⁶ The screen flooded with snow thus becomes the leitmotif for the transitions through the various sheets of the past which the film explores. As in Greg Hainge's ontological description of noise, the material 'medium resists the transmission of the expression at the same time as the expression is entirely dependent on the system at the most fundamental level of base materiality'³⁷ and the swirling snow visually represents 'the trace of the virtual out of which all expressive forms come to be',³⁸ 'the artefact of the relation in which being expresses itself in its actualisation'.³⁹ This process finds its correlate in Guzmán's film in the frequent shots in which desert dust fills the screen and glistens in the foreground. As in *Citizen Kane*, the inclusion of this dust is also the result of a serendipitous accident. When unable to film due to the heat of the midday sun, Guzmán and his crew began recording scenes inside an abandoned telescope. Noting that the telescope was full of dust and powdered glass, the crew began throwing it in the air and recording it as it reflected the light streaming through cracks in the structure.⁴⁰ Thereafter the dust was included in numerous shots and visually represents the transitions between the different virtual layers of the past shown on the screen, and it is echoed again in stills of space-dust reflecting the light of adjacent stars which are also incorporated into the film.⁴¹

As mentioned, Guzmán also shares a preoccupation with intimate close-ups of inert matter: the surfaces, textures and forms forged in the Atacama and in the depths of space feature heavily in *Nostalgia de la luz*. Delicate cylinders formed of ice whose surfaces are covered with almost imperceptible fibrous strands, the irregular cracked and intersecting polygons of a dry lake which rise and fall revealing the divergent tactile properties of their different surfaces, the craters found in the desert moon, and, of course, the sensuous surfaces of bones and bodies are all recorded and carefully presented to the viewer. As William Guynn has argued, by utilizing such techniques, Guzmán seeks 'to touch the process of memory'⁴² and the resulting ensemble of images produces 'a haptic composition [which] appeals to tactile connections on the surface plane of the image', as in Laura Marks' analysis of haptic visuality in contemporary cinema.⁴³ By drawing on the work of early film theorist Béla Balász, Marks suggests that the close-up 'is capable of capturing the subtle realm of nonorganic life', and that it is endowed with 'the power to materialize invisible phenomena'.⁴⁴ As in

Bergson's conception of recollection, then, each specific image moves from the virtual past to the actual present and in doing so 'its outlines become more distinct and its surface takes in color' as 'it tends to imitate perception'.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the use of haptic visuality extends further than this as it forces 'the eyes themselves [to] function like organs of touch'⁴⁶ and posits 'knowledge as something gained not on the model of vision but through physical contact'.⁴⁷ I propose that this 'appeal to embodied memory'⁴⁸ serves as a means of 'analogical substantiation' whereby a society suffering from 'a crisis of belief' as it has 'been divested of ordinary forms of substantiation' will return to 'the sheer material factualness of the human body' in order 'to lend that cultural construct the aura of "realness" and "certainty"'.⁴⁹ This is to say that, by focussing on the taphonomic depiction of corpses and bones, Guzmán attempts to resolve the crisis precipitated by the disappearance of earthly remains. Given 'the enduring influence of baroque Catholicism in Latin America',⁵⁰ however, it is my contention that the bodies in *Nostalgia de la luz*, not only verify the crimes of the dictatorship and substantiate the political convictions sustained by those persecuted, but that they also exert a radically different form of agency, essentially functioning as religious relics.

In discussing Guzmán's film *Salvador Allende* (2004), Patrick Blaine argues that the Chilean director attempts to access memory and construct a narrative by seeking out 'the few material traces that remain – almost like the bones of saints'.⁵¹ With regard to *Nostalgia de la luz*, Julieta Vitullo also makes the intriguing suggestion that Guzmán depicts 'el desierto como osario' [the desert as ossuary],⁵² a passing comment that merits closer consideration that the author herself allows. As Alexandra Walsham notes, '[d]urability and resistance to decay are frequently defining features of the relic'⁵³ and they are 'material manifestations of the act of remembrance' as they 'sublimate, crystallize, and perpetuate memory in the guise of physical remains, linking the past and present in a concrete and palpable way'.⁵⁴ As previously explained, the climatic conditions of the Atacama ensure that bodies and objects within its confines appear to endure and thwart decomposition. Commenting on the handling of archaeological objects from even the most distant regions of the past, the conservator Sanchita Balachandran reminds us that 'human remains are more than mere objects, and thus demand our empathy and emotional engagement'.⁵⁵ So, too, in *Nostalgia de la luz*, the recording

of bodies from diverse and distant epochs ensures that the link between past and present is established in the most visceral manner. Indeed, in some of the most painful scenes contained within the film, two of Guzmán's interlocutors describe recovering the partial remains of their loved ones. In the first instance, Vicky Saavedra recounts being presented with part of her brother's skull, smashed by the bullets which killed him, and a solitary foot. Shamefully, the rest of his body was destroyed by the metal teeth of an earth-mover callously used by the dictatorship to relocate the bodies of those they had killed. In the second case, Violeta Berríos describes being given her partner's recovered jawbone. The two women give contrasting accounts of these encounters. For Vicky, her brother's foot in particular brought back powerful memories and she describes embracing and caressing it in a heightened and bewildering emotional state. She also describes the sock in which it was swathed in great detail. Violeta's reaction is more ambiguous; while she forcefully asserts her desire to be reunited with her loved one's bones, she also rejected the jawbone stating that 'yo le quiero entero. Le llevaron entero. No quiero un pedazo' [I want him whole. They took him whole. I don't want a mere piece of him]. Vicky's comments perfectly encapsulate several further features of religious relics. Her attachment to her brother's foot testifies to the fact that each relic fragment was believed to retain 'toute la *virtus* du corps intégral' [all of the *virtus* of the entire body],⁵⁶ and her tactile relationship with it emphasizes that corporeal relics could be handled by ordinary people despite the fact that 'they belonged not to this transitory world but to eternity'.⁵⁷ That it was believed that '[m]atter gained holiness through contact with other holy matter, like a sacred contagion',⁵⁸ is also echoed in Vicky's careful description of her brother's sock. Moreover, this relic quality ensures that, as the bodies fuse and become one with the desert, it too is infected by the same contagion and becomes a sacred space. Endowed with the *virtus* of the disappeared, the desert becomes body in a new way. For her part, Violeta's words ultimately retain the hope of a literal bodily resurrection, much as it was believed 'that on the last day the martyrs' physical bodies' would be taken up again by their owners'.⁵⁹ Indeed, while the strategic objective of political disappearance was undoubtedly designed to deny 'an enemy of voice and agency',⁶⁰ I will go on to argue that Guzmán exploits the capacity of relics 'to arouse awe and enthusiasm, to foster emotion and loyalty, and to galvanize people to take dynamic action to

transform their everyday lives',⁶¹ which is to say, their agency, in order to effectuate a new form of resurrection.

Agency in the Atacama

As *Nostalgia de la luz* progresses, Guzmán interviews the astronomer George Preston, who states that he searches for traces of calcium forged during the Big Bang and emitted from distant stars. As he explains, this calcium is the same as that found in the bone fragments of the disappeared scattered throughout the desert. In this way, the disappeared are transformed into heavenly bodies, and the calcium circulating throughout the universe finds its visual representation in Guzmán's frequent depiction of desert and space dust. I suggest that Guzmán includes these elements as a method of inducing enchantment in the audience, where '[t]o be enchanted is to be struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday,' as Jane Bennett explains the term.⁶² In contrast to 'the image of modernity as disenchanting, that is to say, as a place of dearth and alienation [...] or a place of reason, freedom, and control',⁶³ Bennett builds on the work of Deleuze, Epicurus and Lucretius, and others, and offers an 'enchanting but materialist explanation for how nature came to have its complexity and patterns, a materialism where matter (the "primordia") is animated but not designed'.⁶⁴ The dust which fills the screen conveys this enchanting effect and Guzmán thus situates the audience '[w]ithin a world of animate primordia continually entering into particular proximity with each other, within a world where objects are macrolevel assemblages of billions of invisible primordia' which have the power to instil a sense of wonder in the observant human.⁶⁵

Throughout the film Guzmán describes the universe in particularly animist or enchanting terms. He states that 'las estrellas nos observan' [the stars observe us], describes Miguel Lawner as 'un amante de las estrellas' [a lover of the stars] and argues that, 'al comunicarse con las estrellas' [on communicating with the stars], the prisoners in the Chacabuco concentration camp 'lograron conservar su libertad interior' [managed to conserve their inner freedom]. Ultimately, however, it falls to Valentina Rodríguez, both an astronomer and the daughter of disappeared parents, to encapsulate

this conception of the universe. As she explains: ‘Somos todos parte de una corriente, de una energía, de materia que se recicla. Como ocurre con las estrellas, las estrellas tienen que morir para que surjan otras estrellas para que surjan otros planetas, para que surja la vida’ [We are all part of a current, an energy, a recyclable matter. As it happens with the stars, stars have to die so that other stars emerge, other planets emerge, so that life emerges]. In this instance, Guzmán diverges significantly from Bennett’s account of enchanted materialism. Where Bennett argues that ‘[s]cience progressively takes the spirit out of things and reduces them to uninspiring matter’,⁶⁶ it is precisely through scientific explorations of matter that Guzmán seeks to enchant his audience. Beyond this enchanting effect, however, the dust in the film highlights the materiality of the cinema system itself. From dust to dust Guzmán draws the audience from the filmic screen to the dust drifting through the light of the projector within the environment they inhabit.⁶⁷ Thus, I argue, the movement from screen to theatre brings the audience to consider the material reality of both the film and their own environment. The viewer witnesses the bodies of the disappeared, whipped by the wind, gradually becoming dust in the desert. This dust, in turn, distributes minerals and ‘essential nutrients to terrestrial and marine ecosystems’ far from the deserts themselves’.⁶⁸ And in the cinema, the viewer’s own skin cells imperceptibly dry, harden, die and peel off to mix with the plant pollen, human and animal hairs, and textile and paper fibres that form the dust illuminated in the projector’s beam. As their lungs contract this dust is in turn pulled into their respiratory system where it is absorbed in the phlegm excreted by mucous-membranes, and is either expelled or transferred to the digestive system and consumed. Just as Guzmán suggests that the astronomers in the Atacama observe the stars through the ‘sesenta orejas’ [sixty ears] of the ALMA radiotelescope, so, too, I suggest that his film reconfigures the viewer’s body and demands to be watched through the lungs.

The bodies of the disappeared become the dust of the desert, which becomes the dust of the theatre, which is returned to the body of the viewer. I am, of course, suggesting that watching *Nostalgia de la luz* is an act of communion. It is not, however, an act of exceptional, divine, transubstantiation, but rather one of everyday, material, substantiation. Or, perhaps it would be fairer to say, as does Guzmán, that ‘nous sommes entre la métaphysique et la religion’ [we are between

metaphysics and religion].⁶⁹ As the corpses which appear in the film function as relics, *Nostalgia de la luz* thus contradicts Bennett in a second way: where Bennett argues that the time of purposive Nature and God's active participation in human life has given way to 'scientific and instrumental rationality, secularism, individualism, and the bureaucratic state',⁷⁰ Guzmán instead presents a world wherein science and religion interact to enchant the audience and bring them to commune with those disappeared in the Atacama. Indeed, I want to propose that *Nostalgia de la luz* is a deeply Catholic film.

For Brad Epps, 'the cosmovision that *Nostalgia de la luz* advances is in many respects more consistent with that of the indigenous people of the south of Chile'.⁷¹ While this is certainly true of Guzmán's later film, *El botón de nácar* (2015), I propose a more Christological reading of *Nostalgia de la luz*. This reading is reminiscent of, or consonant with, elements of Guzmán's wider oeuvre. It is important to remember that, on returning to Chile following his exile, the first film that the director made was *En nombre de Dios* (1987), a documentary which records the active role played by the Catholic Church in resisting the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. In *Nostalgia de la luz*, I contend that, rather than cataloguing the actions of the Church as an institution, Guzmán's film is underpinned by a spiritual, sacramental and theological logic. Not only do I argue that the bodies contained in the film function as relics, but that watching the text itself is a sensual, embodied, act of communion. This, too, reflects the fact that, within the Catholic faith, 'l'hostie, exposée dans sa monstration lors de la fête du *Corpus Christi*, évoque une super-relique, de même les reliques' [the host, exhibited within its monstration during the festival of *Corpus Christi*, evokes a super-relic, just like other relics]⁷² and that '[e]very Catholic altar required a relic' so that 'Christ's sacrifice was substantiated by the martyr's sacrifice, and Christ's real presence was confirmed by the real presence of the saint's body'.⁷³ Images of Christ are also encountered in Guzmán's film: crosses are boldly visible against the immaculate azure of the desert sky and, in a later shot; the camera slowly rises up an auditorium to reveal a monochromatic and somewhat abstract rendering of Hans Holbein's iconic image of Christ lying supine in the grave. Thus Guzmán equates Christ's sacrifice with that made by those murdered and disappeared in the desert, and their bodies effectuate an act of materialist communion in imitation of

the Eucharist. As in the Catholic sacrament, the sense of enchantment, wonder and awe is also predicated on torture and death; it is simply that Christ's suffering has been substituted for that of the disappeared, and the act of transubstantiation for the slow material deterioration of their bodies. The vertiginous joy experienced marvelling at the universe in Guzmán's film is always tempered by the sorrow experienced observing the women in the desert who cannot reclaim their loved one's bodies, and are thus trapped in a melancholic search for their remains. Perhaps unexpectedly, it is precisely at this juncture that an underlying politics emerges from Guzmán's film.

***Nostalgia de la luz* and Politics**

Utilizing dust as the material means to enact a process of embodied communion is a particularly effective way of rendering the complex mystery encapsulated within the Eucharist. For dust, too, is inseparable from its associations, and Guzmán's use of the substance cannot but lead the viewer to Genesis, the fall of Adam, and the discovery of death through God's fateful command that 'dust you are and to dust you will return'.⁷⁴ From sin to death to rebirth through communion, Guzmán's film generates an affective dissonance through the uncomfortable juxtaposition of the joy the audience is encouraged to share, and the guilt they feel when they recognise its origin. This incongruity, too, is central to the Catholic faith and conforms to the logic of the 'felix culpa' the full text of which reads '*O felix culpa quae talem et tantum meruit habere redemptorem* / O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer' and refers to the fact that 'the Fall of Adam makes possible the coming of the Messiah and his salvation'.⁷⁵ In Guzmán's film as in religious practice, the 'very centre of our affliction becomes the means of our salvation'.⁷⁶ The contradictory emotional response engendered by *Nostalgia de la luz* is one which Guzmán himself has recognised and encouraged. In interview, he has stated that he sought to contrast the themes of pain and death with luminosity in the image and joy in the soundtrack.⁷⁷ Importantly, the paradoxical joy which is felt as '[g]race emerges from the place of terror and punishment in order to erase them', is exactly the starting point for Argentine philosopher León Rozitchner's examination of post-dictatorship society in that country.⁷⁸ While Rozitchner never directly references the term 'felix culpa', he does argue that,

following ‘the harvest of death and torture’ that was the dictatorship, ‘[d]emocracy also appeared as if it were grace granted to us’⁷⁹ by the ‘power of terror’.⁸⁰ Thus for Rozitchner ‘democracy’, the supposedly great redeemer gained through these sins, retains a trace of this same terror and an underlying threat that violence could always be redeployed. And I would argue that *Nostalgia de la luz* encourages an enchantment with the world in order to uncover the ‘disguised terror’⁸¹ which lays dormant in post-dictatorship Chile. Guzmán’s film closely binds enchantment and awe to the torture, murder and disappearance of those imprisoned in the Atacama Desert. In addition, the recollections that Guzmán draws from the pure past of memory to represent on the screen form a narrative which also reflects Rozitchner’s argument that democracy’s ‘disguised terror’ is deployed to convince the populace that in order ‘to deserve to have a future, to be able to carry on living, we have to be good and submit to the law of the Market and the State’.⁸² Indeed, by including archival photographs of the Chilean miners brought to the Atacama to work in the expanding nitrate industry, Guzmán succinctly captures an entire historical narrative of colonisation, capitalist exploitation, and dictatorship in a few simple shots. As Louise Purbrick argues, such images from the nineteenth century encapsulate both the history and the future of capitalist expansion in Chile.⁸³ Guzmán links these earlier moments of Chilean history directly to the disappeared by including shots of the bodies of the miners deteriorating in the wind and by noting that the remains of Chacabuco ‘son en realidad las ruinas de una mina’ [are, in fact, the ruins of a mine] and that ‘los militares no tuvieron que construir un campo, pues, las celdas eran las mismas casas de los trabajadores del siglo diecinueve, cuando la explotación minera se parecía a la esclavitud. Los militares solo tuvieron que poner el alambre de púa’ [the military did not have to construct a camp as, for cells, they simply used the workers’ houses from the nineteenth century, when the mining industry was akin to slavery. The military only had to install the barbed wire]. Thus, much like Willie Thayer, Guzmán proffers a view of Chilean history within which ‘[n]o se entiende [...] la “transición” como el proceso posdictatorial de redemocratización de las sociedades latinoamericanas, sino, más ampliamente, como el proceso de “modernización” y tránsito del Estado nacional moderno al mercado transnacional post-estatal’ [the ‘transition’ is not understood as the post-dictatorial process of the redemocratization of Latin American societies, but rather, more generally, as the process of ‘modernisation’ and the transit from modern national State, to post-State transnational

market]. This is to say that Guzmán and Rozitchner share Thayer's vision of history within which 'la transición es primordialmente la dictadura' [the transition is fundamentally the dictatorship].⁸⁴ Articulated in this way, Guzman's critique of democracy shares much in common with that of Manuel Antonio Garretón Merino who argues that

en el caso chileno de democratización, lo que se llamó democracia de los consensos no era tal, sino que hubo imposición de un orden por parte de quienes habían sido parte de la dictadura y una adaptación obligada o forzada de quienes se oponían.⁸⁵

[in the Chilean case of democratization, that which they called democracy by consensus was a misnomer. Rather there was the imposition of an order by some of those who had been part of the dictatorship and the obligatory or forced adaptation of those who opposed it.]

For Garretón Merino, the fact that Chilean politics continue to be underpinned by a Constitution authored by the dictatorship in 1980 means that contemporary democracy 'enfrenta una crisis de legitimidad del modelo de sociedad, de sus instituciones y de sus principales actores' [confronts a crisis of legitimacy in its societal model, in its institutions, and in its principal actors] and he promotes a 'proceso constituyente que lleve a una nueva Constitución que reemplace la actual, heredada de la dictadura' [a constituent process which would lead to a new Constitution to replace the current version, which was inherited from the dictatorship].⁸⁶ It is notable that, in Guzmán's earlier film *En nombre de Dios*, several of his interlocutors directly critique the constitution of 1980 in much the same way. Moreover, where Garretón Merino argues forcefully that any new Chilean constitution must contain 'el reconocimiento de los pueblos originarios, lo que obliga a establecer la plurinacionalidad del Estado y no sólo su pluriculturalidad' [recognition of the natives peoples, which means establishing a plurinational, and not only pluricultural State],⁸⁷ Guzmán strongly defends indigenous rights in both *Nostalgia de la luz* and *El botón de nácar*. Similarly, Garretón Merino's critique is ultimately one of the socio-economic order created by the Pinochet regime and, as Brad Epps notes, 'Guzmán's entire corpus [...] is bound up in struggles, at once symbolic and material, in which the economic, however diversified, is arguably determinative in the last instance', and *Nostalgia de la luz* is no different.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, it is inescapable that Guzmán diverges from Garretón Merino by proposing a radically different relationship between the human and the non-

human concomitantly with his economic critique. Reconciling these two positions is the task to which I will now turn.

Conclusion

In her discussion of photographs of the mining industry in the late nineteenth century in the Atacama, Purbrick makes the point that the ‘site was set in geology but everything was determined by capital’.⁸⁹ In *Nostalgia de la luz* Guzmán presents a similar argument, yet the bodies of those imprisoned and disappeared in the Atacama for their participation in the democratic route to socialism are also united with the landscape. As in the work of Deleuze, then, in Guzmán’s film ‘the visual image, the telluric landscape, develops a whole aesthetic power which reveals the layers of history and political struggles on which it is built’.⁹⁰ The question now is how the viewer should respond to this new relationship between politics and the material universe. One answer is provided by Bennett who proposes that enchanted materialism precipitates an alternative ethical practice derived from the Epicurean conception of ‘ataraxy,’ the acceptance and contentment with one’s own finitude, which ‘encourages the finite human animal [...] to give away some of its own time and effort on behalf of other creatures’.⁹¹ Yet Guzmán attaches this sensibility to a concrete historico-political narrative. In *Nostalgia de la luz* Chilean political history seems not only to be preserved in, but to spring forth from, the Atacama desert. Even the ascendancy of the Allende government is conflated with natural phenomenon and described as ‘un viento revolucionario’ [a revolutionary wind]. With this in mind, it is particularly notable that the *felix culpa* not only invokes the story of Genesis, but also the Exodus. Included within the Exultet, the prayer is pronounced as the Paschal candle is ‘blessed in remembrance of the pillar of fire that led Moses out of Egypt’.⁹² And as Vitor Y. Haines notes, the Exodus, too, is underpinned by the logic of the *felix culpa*, as ‘there could be no Exodus without slavery in Egypt’.⁹³

It seems almost too obvious to suggest that *Nostalgia de la luz* strongly evokes the biblical Exodus from Egypt. When released, the women searching for their loved one’s remains had spent

almost exactly forty years wandering in the desert, and Guzmán's long exile had endured for a similar length of time. As Haines argues, '[o]ne cannot return from exile without having been in exile',⁹⁴ to which I would add, there can be no exile without a point of origin, and the search for an origin also runs throughout *Nostalgia de la luz*. The film is replete with Guzmán's childhood remembrances, and in his commentary he states that 'siempre he creído que nuestro origen está en el suelo enterrado bajo la tierra o en el fondo del mar. Pero ahora, pienso que nuestros raices pueden estar arriba, más allá de la luz' [I have always believed that our origin is in the ground, buried under the earth or in the depths of the sea. But now, I think that our roots could be above us, beyond the light]. Developing this theme, Guzmán later notes that the ALMA telescope 'registra la energía que se produjo en el Big Bang' [captures the energy produced in the Big Bang], an event which George Preston describes as 'the beginning of us'. While Guzmán has frequently reflected on Salvador Allende's democratic implementation of socialism by referring to the 'aceleración de la Historia' it contained,⁹⁵ this linear historical narrative assumes a rather more religious inflection in *Nostalgia de la luz*. This is to say that the film depicts creation and exile, genesis and exodus, and binds them all to human struggles for liberation in Chile. As in Gustavo Gutiérrez's *Teología de la liberación*, then, '[c]reación y liberación de Egipto son un solo acto salvífico' [creation and liberation from Egypt are but one salvific act].⁹⁶ Within this schema, the story of creation 'le quita su carácter mítico y numinoso' [does away with its mythical and supernatural character]⁹⁷ and demands the active participation of the human because 'el cosmos, sólo sufre las consecuencias del pecado' [the cosmos, suffers from the consequences of sin],⁹⁸ where sin is specifically understood as 'la causa última de la miseria, de la injusticia, de la opresión en que viven los hombres' [the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, and the oppression in which persons live].⁹⁹ So, too, in *Nostalgia de la luz* the violence and oppression of the Pinochet dictatorship, the structural violence that accompanies the development of capitalism in the desert, and resistance to these developments are implicated in natural, geological, and cosmic processes. Furthermore, as in Gutiérrez's account of liberation history, *Nostalgia de la luz* does not invoke 'un espiritualismo desencarnado' [a fleshless spiritualism]¹⁰⁰ but rather a fully embodied experience of cinema viewership designed to encourage the audience to act.

Drawing on the work of Nelly Richard, Epps reminds us that 'in its violent defeat, [the project of the Unidad Popular] has been pronounced utopian, dreamlike and/or irrational'.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, it is precisely these qualities that Guzmán exploits, in a positive way, by encouraging his audience to adopt an enchanted, posthuman, conception of the interconnectedness of everything in the universe. In his critical analysis of Marianne Hirsch's concept of 'post-memory', Adam Sharman argues persuasively that 'it not only approximates art [...], but a particularly religious, Judeo-Christian art at that'.¹⁰² Through its enactment of a materialist act of communion, so, too, *Nostalgia de la luz* raises the tantalising possibility that 'posthumanism' as a concept, is similarly theologically endowed. Despite the attempts of Bennett and others to rediscover enchantment following the disappearance of God from the world, Guzmán's film forces the viewer to question whether such an ideal can be separated from its theological origins after its resurrection. More than this, however, in *Nostalgia de la luz* the theological contribution is absolutely necessary historically to orientate this enchanted disposition towards a specific political goal. As Gutiérrez notes:

Las religiones piensan en términos de cosmos y naturaleza, el cristianismo, nutrido por sus fuentes bíblicas, lo hace en términos de historia. Y en esa historia, la injusticia y la opresión, las divisiones y los enfrentamientos, están presentes. La esperanza de una liberación también.¹⁰³

[Other religions think in terms of cosmos and nature; Christianity, rooted in Biblical sources, thinks in terms of history. And in this history, injustice and oppression, divisions and confrontations exist. But the hope of liberation is also present.]

In *Nostalgia de la luz* creation is linked to exile, oppression and, finally, to the *hope* of liberation. For this is the final component which *Nostalgia de la luz* shares with the Exodus story: having led his people for forty years during their arduous journey through the desert, Moses dies in sight of the promised land which will be entrusted to his descendants.¹⁰⁴ So, too, in Guzmán's film Valentina is shown embracing her infant child, as her off-screen voice explains that her children will not suffer from the same pain which she has experienced. In addition, in the penultimate sequence contained in the film, the astronomers and the female searchers are finally united as Gaspar Galaz demonstrates the functioning of an antique telescope to Violeta and Vicky. On the soundtrack strings waver and soar, a few notes are picked out on a piano, and coruscating dust floods the screen. The film concludes with a

moment of inter-generational exchange, a subject which has been a consistent preoccupation for Guzmán. In his film *Chile, la memoria obstinada* (1997) Guzmán travels to his home country with a copy of his film *La batalla de Chile* (1976) and records the reactions of groups of young Chileans as they watch his film for the first time.¹⁰⁵ In *Nostalgia de la luz*, however, Guzmán goes one step further and exploits a theologically endowed, materialist, and posthuman form of cinema specifically designed to encourage this new generation to reincarnate the struggles for liberation enacted by their forebears. Due to the combination of scientific exploration, religious imagery and narrative structure, however, it remains undecidable whether the posthuman politics Guzmán promotes is secular or divine in the final reckoning. As he himself has stated: ‘C’est Dieu? C’est le cosmos? C’est impossible à expliquer’ [Is it God? Is it the Cosmos? It is impossible to explain].¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, what is inescapable is that the film is fundamentally underpinned by a logic that is inherently theological, and that is utilised to endow inert material with enchantment and to reinvigorate a contemporary political struggle. Or better still, to reincarnate a past political struggle in a new generation.

Notes:

1. James Joyce, *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), 289.
2. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2004), 422.
3. “Expanded Fields: Postdictatorship and the Landscape,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 166.
4. “Conversación de Frederick Wiseman con Patricio Guzmán,” (2010).
5. “Expanded Fields,” 165.
6. Louise Purbrick, “Nitrate Ruins: The Photography of Mining in the Atacama Desert, Chile,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2017): 269.
7. See Jason De León, *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).
8. *Ibid.*, 39.
9. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), viii. Original emphasis.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Dario Piombino-Mascali, Heather Gill-Frerking, and Ronald G. Beckett, “The Taphonomy of Natural Mummies,” in *Taphonomy of Human Remains: Forensic Analysis of the Dead and the Depositional Environment*, ed. Eline M.J. Schotsmans, Nicholas Márquez-Grant, and Shari L. Forbes (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 105.
12. Pablo A. Marquet et al., “Emergence of Social Complexity among Coastal Hunter-Gatherers in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 37 (2012): 14755.
13. Piombino-Mascali, Gill-Frerking, and Beckett, “The Taphonomy of Natural Mummies,” 104.
14. De León, *The Land of Open Graves*, 72.
15. For further details on the remarkable mummies of the Chichorro people, the most ancient found anywhere in the world, see Calogero M. Santoro et al., “People of the Coastal Atacama Desert: Living Between Sand Dunes and Waves of the Pacific Ocean,” in *Desert Peoples: Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Peter Marius Veth, Mike Smith, and Peter Hiscock (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Marquet et al., “Emergence of Social Complexity among

- Coastal Hunter-Gatherers in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile.”; Bernardo T. Arriaza et al., “Chinchorro Culture: Pioneers of the Coast of the Atacama Desert,” in *Handbook of South American Archaeology*, ed. Helaine Silverman and William Harris Isbell (New York: Springer, 2008).
16. “Scale as Nostalgic Form: Patricio Guzmán’s *Nostalgia for the Light* (2011),” *Discourse* 39, no. 1 (2017): 69.
 17. *Ibid.*, 72.
 18. *The Land of Open Graves*, 69.
 19. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 121.
 20. *Ibid.*
 21. *Ibid.*, 119.
 22. Piombino-Mascalì, Gill-Frerking, and Beckett, “The Taphonomy of Natural Mummies,” 116.
 23. “Expanded Fields,” 165.
 24. “Archival Landscapes and a Non-Anthropocentric ‘Universe Memory,’” *Third Text* 27, no. 6: 716. Martin-Jones subsequently analyses Guzmán’s film through the related Deleuzian concepts of the crystal image and the any-space-whatever. For his part, Couret draws on the work of Agamben subtly to alter Martin-Jones interpretation and propose that we should consider scales of time rather than layers of time. See *ibid.*, 716-19; Couret “Scale as Nostalgic Form,” 79-80.
 25. Rob White and Patricio Guzmán, “After-Effects: Interview with Patricio Guzmán,” *Film Quarterly* (2012).
 26. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 27.
 27. *Ibid.*, 76.
 28. *Ibid.*, 28.
 29. White and Guzmán, “After-Effects: Interview with Patricio Guzmán.”
 30. Santoro et al., “People of the Coastal Atacama Desert,” 246.
 31. *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 166.
 32. *Ibid.*, 134.
 33. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (London: Athlone, 1989), 105-06.
 34. Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost, “Introducing the New Materialisms,” in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham [NC]; London: Duke University Press, 2010), 6-7.
 35. Robert L. Carringer, *The Making of Citizen Kane* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 94.
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. *Noise Matters: Towards an Ontology of Noise* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 17.
 38. *Ibid.*, 13-14.
 39. *Ibid.*, 16.
 40. White and Guzmán, “After-Effects: Interview with Patricio Guzmán.”
 41. For further details of the origins of the still photographs of space, see Patricio Guzmán, “À propos de son film *Nostalgie de la lumière*,” *Essaim* 26 (2011): 127-29.
 42. *Unspeaking Histories: Film and the Experience of Catastrophe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 142. Original emphasis.
 43. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 162.
 44. *Ibid.*, 94.
 45. *Matter and Memory*, 134.
 46. *The Skin of the Film*, 162.
 47. *Ibid.*, 138.
 48. *Ibid.*, 159.
 49. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 14.
 50. Paul Gillingham, “The Strange Business of Memory: Relic Forgery in Latin America,” in *Relics and Remains*, ed. Alexandra Walsham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 205.
 51. “Representing Absences in the Postdictatorial Documentary Cinema of Patricio Guzmán,” *Latin American Perspectives* 40, no. 1 (2013): 126.
 52. “*Nostalgia de la luz* de Patricio Guzmán: el cine como máquina del tiempo,” *Kamchatka: Revista de Análisis Cultural* 2 (2013): 185.
 53. “Introduction: Relics and Remains,” in *Relics and Remains*, ed. Alexandra Walsham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.
 54. *Ibid.*, 13.

55. "Among the Dead and their Possessions: A Conservator's Role in the Death, Life, and Afterlife of Human Remains and their Associated Objects," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 48, no. 3 (2009): 220.
56. Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Les reliques et les images," in *Les reliques: objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte, d'Opale*, ed. Edina Bozóky and Anne-Marie Helvétius (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 150. Charles Thomas describes *virtus* as 'miraculous power, a miracle in itself, and virtue inherent in God, as well as healing virtue residing by God's will in individual persons' cit. Steven Hooper, "Bodies, Artefacts and Images: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Relics," in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer, and Anna Harnden (London: The British Museum, 2015), 196-97. For further description of the development of, and justification for, the division of corporeal relics see Arnold Angenendt, "Relics and their Veneration," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli, et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 22-23.
57. Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 32.
58. Derek Krueger, "The Religion of Relics in Late Antiquity and Byzantium," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli, et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 5.
59. Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 30.
60. De León, *The Land of Open Graves*, 69.
61. Walsham, "Introduction: Relics and Remains," 14.
62. *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.
63. *Ibid.*, 3.
64. *Ibid.*, 11.
65. *Ibid.*, 12-13.
66. *Ibid.*, 62.
67. This transition also appears in *Citizen Kane* where the white, grainy interference of snow gives way to grainy clouds of dust drifting through a projector's beam.
68. United Nations Environment Programme UNEP, "Global Deserts Outlook," (2006) <http://www.unep.org/geo/gdoutlook/046.asp>.
69. Guzmán, "À propos de son film *Nostalgie de la lumière*," 118.
70. *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 7.
71. "The Unbearable Lightness of Bones: Memory, Emotion, and Pedagogy in Patricio Guzmán's *Chile, la memoria obstinada* and *Nostalgie de la luz*," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 26, no.4 (2016): 17n13.
72. Schmitt, "Les reliques et les images," 148.
73. Scott Dudley, "Conferring with the Dead: Necrophilia and Nostalgia in the Seventeenth Century," *ELH* 66, no. 2 (1999): 280.
74. Genesis 3:19
75. Vitor Y. Haines, "The Iconography of the *Felix Culpa*," *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 151.
76. *Ibid.*, 153.
77. "À propos de son film *Nostalgie de la lumière*," 117-18.
78. "Terror and Grace," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 147.
79. *Ibid.*, 148.
80. *Ibid.*, 149.
81. *Ibid.*, 150.
82. *Ibid.*, 148.
83. "Nitrate Ruins," 268.
84. "Crisis categorial de la universidad," *Revista Iberoamericana* 69, no. 202 (2003): 96n2.
85. "La crisis de la sociedad chilena, nueva constitución y proceso constituyente," *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 10 (2016): 81.
86. *Ibid.*, 79. The cause of producing a new constitution for Chile was one taken up by former President Michelle Bachelet. While this process was not without its critics (see, for example the work by Garretón Merino previously cited), its implementation was ultimately frustrated. In the final days of her government, Bachelet submitted a proposal for a new constitution to the Chilean Congress prior to leaving office in March 2018. Nonetheless, as her chosen successor lost the intervening presidential elections, the process was halted by her rival and successor, the conservative Sebastián Piñera. See "Chile New Constitution: Bachelet Launches Process," *BBC News*, (2015); Dan Collins and Jonathan Watts, "Bachelet Pledges Radical Constitutional Reforms after Winning Chilean Election," *The Guardian*, (2013); Karina Martín, "Outgoing President Bachelet

- Scrambles to Draft a New Constitution for Chile,” *PanAm Post* (2017); Gladys Piérola, “Nueva Constitución: ¿La gran reforma de Bachelet que quedó al debe?,” *Pulso* (2018); Javier Sáez Leal, “Bachelet presenta una propuesta de nueva Constitución a seis días del fin de su Gobierno,” *El País*, (2018); Alejandro Navarro, “La unidad política no ha sido suficiente para derrotar la Constitución de 1980,” *El Dinamo*, (2018).
87. “La crisis de la sociedad chilena, nueva constitución y proceso constituyente,” 84.
88. “The Unbearable Lightness of Bones,” 4.
89. “Nitrate Ruins,” 365.
90. *Cinema 2*, 255.
91. *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 156.
92. Haines, “The Iconography of the *Felix Culpa*,” 151.
93. *Ibid.*, 152.
94. *Ibid.*
95. See, for example, Patricio Guzmán and Odile Bouchet, “Chile era una fiesta notas del diario de filmación de el primer año / Le Chili était une fête notes du journal de tournage de el primer año,” *Cinémas d’Amérique Latine*, no. 21 (2013): 27.
96. *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, 7 ed. (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1975), 204; *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988), 88.
97. *Teología de la liberación*, 202; *A Theology of Liberation*, 87.
98. *Teología de la liberación*, 233; *A Theology of Liberation*, 101.
99. *Teología de la liberación*, 66; *A Theology of Liberation*, 24. As previously noted the first film Guzmán made on his return to Chile after his extended exile was *En nombre de Dios* (1987) which documented the efforts of the Catholic Church to resist the Pinochet dictatorship and defend the Chilean people from their its repressive actions. Similarly, in *La cruz del sur* (1991), Guzmán documents the history of religion in Latin America. Crucially, this film presents a linear narrative, opening with pre-Colombian belief systems, tracing the development of syncretism following the arrival of the Spanish, and concluding with an extended meditation on the theology of liberation in which Guzmán interviews the most important theologians within the movement, including Gutiérrez.
100. *Teología de la liberación*, 237; *A Theology of Liberation*, 102.
101. “The Unbearable Lightness of Bones,” 4. Such thoughts are echoed and disucced throughout critical discussion of Guzmán’s post-doctorial cinematic production. See, for example, Thomas Miller Klubock, “History and Memory in Neoliberal Chile: Patricio Guzmán’s *Obstinate Memory* and *The Battle of Chile*,” *Radical History Review*, no. 85 (2003): 275; James Cisneros, “The Figure Of Memory In Chilean Cinema: Patricio Guzmán And Raúl Ruiz,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006): 159-60; Adrián Cangi, “Poética de la luz, política del gesto,” *Nomadías. Incursiones feministas*, no. 14 (2011): 159-60.
102. Adam Sharman, “What is Postmemory?,” presented at *Memosur a Lesson for Europe: Memory, Trauma and Reconciliation in Latin America* (Università di Bologna: 2017).
103. *Teología de la liberación*, 235-36; *A Theology of Liberation*, 102.
104. Deuteronomy 34:1-5
105. In interview, Guzmán has also consistently emphasized the importance of the next generation and his affinity with their struggles. See, for example, White and Guzmán, “After-Effects: Interview with Patricio Guzmán.”; Guzmán and Wiseman, “Conversación de Frederick Wiseman con Patricio Guzmán”; Patricio Guzmán, “Carta abierta de Patricio Guzmán a ministra de Educación por censura del documental *Nostalgia de la Luz* en un colegio,” (2010).
106. “À propos de son film *Nostalgie de la lumière*,” 132.

Bibliography:

- Andermann, Jens. “Expanded Fields: Postdictatorship and the Landscape.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 165-87.
- Angenendt, Arnold. “Relics and their Veneration.” In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann and James Robinson, 19-28. London: British Museum Press, 2011.
- Arriaza, Bernardo T., Vivien G. Standen, Vicki Cassman, and Calogero M. Santoro. “Chinchorro Culture: Pioneers of the Coast of the Atacama Desert.” In *Handbook of South American Archaeology*, edited by Helaine Silverman and William Harris Isbell, 45-58. New York: Springer, 2008.

- Balachandran, Sanchita. "Among the Dead and their Possessions: A Conservator's Role in the Death, Life, and Afterlife of Human Remains and their Associated Objects." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 48, no. 3 (2009): 199-222.
- BBC. "Chile New Constitution: Bachelet Launches Process." *BBC News* (14/10/2015): <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-34527165>.
- Bennett, Jane. *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- . *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. New York: Zone Books, 1988.
- Blaine, Patrick. "Representing Absences in the Postdictatorial Documentary Cinema of Patricio Guzmán." *Latin American Perspectives* 40, no. 1 (2013): 114-30.
- Cangi, Adrián. "Poética de la luz, política del gesto." *Nomadías. Incursiones feministas*, no. 14 (2011-11-29 2011): 157-69.
- Carringer, Robert L. *The Making of Citizen Kane*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985.
- Cisneros, James. "The Figure Of Memory In Chilean Cinema: Patricio Guzmán And Raúl Ruiz." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006/03/01 2006): 59-75.
- Collins, Dan, and Jonathan Watts. "Bachelet Pledges Radical Constitutional Reforms after Winning Chilean Election." *The Guardian* (16/12/2013): <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/16/chile-president-elect-michelle-bachelet-election-reforms>.
- Coole, Diana H., and Samantha Frost. "Introducing the New Materialisms." In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, edited by Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost, 1-43. Durham [NC]; London: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Couret, Nilo. "Scale as Nostalgic Form: Patricio Guzmán's *Nostalgia for the Light* (2011)." *Discourse* 39, no. 1 (2017): 67-91.
- De León, Jason. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Bergsonism*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone Books, 1988.
- . *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Athlone, 1989.
- Dudley, Scott. "Conferring with the Dead: Necrophilia and Nostalgia in the Seventeenth Century." *ELH* 66, no. 2 (1999): 277-94.
- Epps, Brad. "The Unbearable Lightness of Bones: Memory, Emotion, and Pedagogy in Patricio Guzmán's *Chile, la memoria obstinada* and *Nostalgia de la luz*." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 26, no.4 (2016): 1-20.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Garretón Merino, Manuel Antonio. "La crisis de la sociedad chilena, nueva constitución y proceso constituyente." *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 10 (2016): 79-92.
- Geary, Patrick J. *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Gillingham, Paul. "The Strange Business of Memory: Relic Forgery in Latin America." In *Relics and Remains*, edited by Alexandra Walsham, 199-226. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*. 7 ed. Salamanca: Sígueme, 1975.
- . *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Translated by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. rev. ed. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Guynn, William Howar. *Unspeakable Histories: Film and the Experience of Catastrophe*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Guzmán, Patricio. "À propos de son film *Nostalgie de la lumière*." *Essaim* 26 (2011): 115-35.
- . "Carta abierta de Patricio Guzmán a ministra de Educación por censura del documental *Nostalgia de la Luz* en un colegio." (2010) <http://ciperchile.cl/2013/10/08/carta-abierta-de-patricio-guzman-a-ministra-de-educacion-por-censura-del-documental-%E2%80%9Cnostalgia-de-la-luz%E2%80%9D-en-un-colegio/>.

- Guzmán, Patricio, and Odile Bouchet. "Chile era una fiesta notas del diario de filmación de el primer año / Le Chili était une fête notes du journal de tournage de el primer año." *Cinémas d'Amérique Latine*, no. 21 (2013): 25-29.
- Guzmán, Patricio, and Frederick Wiseman. "Conversación de Frederick Wiseman con Patricio Guzmán." (2010) <http://nostalgiadelaluz.com/conversacion-de-frederick-wiseman-con-patricio-guzman/>.
- Haines, Vitor Y. "The Iconography of the *Felix Culpa*." *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 151-85.
- Hainge, Greg. *Noise Matters: Towards an Ontology of Noise*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Hooper, Steven. "Bodies, Artefacts and Images: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Relics." In *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, edited by James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer and Anna Harnden, 190-99. London: The British Museum, 2015.
- Joyce, James. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. London: Faber & Faber, 1992.
- Klubock, Thomas Miller. "History and Memory in Neoliberal Chile: Patricio Guzmán's *Obstinate Memory* and *The Battle of Chile*." *Radical History Review* 2003, no. 85 (2003): 272-81.
- Krueger, Derek. "The Religion of Relics in Late Antiquity and Byzantium." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann and James Robinson, 5-17. London: British Museum Press, 2011.
- Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Marquet, Pablo A., Calogero M. Santoro, Claudio Latorre, Vivien G. Standen, Sebastián R. Abades, Marcelo M. Rivadeneira, Bernardo Arriaza, and Michael E. Hochberg. "Emergence of Social Complexity among Coastal Hunter-Gatherers in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 37 (2012): 14754-60.
- Martin-Jones, David. "Archival Landscapes and a Non-Anthropocentric 'Universe Memory'." *Third Text* 27, no. 6 (2013/11/01 2013): 707-22.
- Martín, Karina. "Outgoing President Bachelet Scrambles to Draft a New Constitution for Chile." *PanAm Post* (29/12/2017): <https://panampost.com/karina-martin/2017/12/29/outgoing-president-bachelet-scrambles-to-draft-a-new-constitution-for-chile/>
- Navarro, Alejandro. "La unidad política no ha sido suficiente para derrotar la Constitución de 1980." *El Dínamo*, (5/10/2018): <https://www.eldinamo.cl/nacional/2018/10/05/a-30-anos-del-plebiscito-estamos-en-deuda-la-unidad-politica-no-ha-sido-suficiente-para-derrotar-la-constitucion-de-1980/>.
- Piérola, Gladys. "Nueva Constitución: ¿La gran reforma de Bachelet que quedó al debe?" *Pulso* (28/01/2018): <http://www.pulso.cl/actualidad-politica/nueva-constitucion-la-gran-reforma-bachelet-queda-al/>
- Piombino-Mascali, Dario, Heather Gill-Frerking, and Ronald G. Beckett. "The Taphonomy of Natural Mummies." In *Taphonomy of Human Remains: Forensic Analysis of the Dead and the Depositional Environment*, edited by Eline M.J. Schotsmans, Nicholas Márquez-Grant and Shari L. Forbes, 101-19: Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
- Purbrick, Louise. "Nitrate Ruins: The Photography of Mining in the Atacama Desert, Chile." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2017): 253-78.
- Rozitchner, León. "Terror and Grace." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 147-57.
- Sáez Leal, Javier. "Bachelet presenta una propuesta de nueva Constitución a seis días del fin de su Gobierno." *El País*, (6/3/2018): https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/03/06/actualidad/1520356224_601806.html
- Santoro, Calogero M., Bernardo T. Arriaza, Vivien G. Standen, and Pablo A. Marquet. "People of the Coastal Atacama Desert: Living Between Sand Dunes and Waves of the Pacific Ocean." In *Desert Peoples: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by Peter Marius Veth, Mike Smith and Peter Hiscock, 243-60. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

- Schmitt, Jean-Claude. "Les reliques et les images." In *Les reliques: objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte, d'Opale*, edited by Edina Bozóky and Anne-Marie Helvétius, 145-67. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.
- Sharman, Adam. "What is Postmemory?" Presented at *Memosur a lesson for Europe: Memory, Trauma and Reconciliation in Latin America*. Università di Bologna, 2017.
- Thayer, Willy. "Crisis categorial de la universidad." *Revista Iberoamericana* 69, no. 202 (2003): 95-102.
- UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme. "Global Deserts Outlook." (2006)
<http://www.unep.org/geo/gdoutlook/046.asp>.
- Vitullo, Julieta. "Nostalgia de la luz de Patricio Guzmán: el cine como máquina del tiempo." *Kamchatka: Revista de Análisis Cultural* 2 (2013): 179-92.
- Walsham, Alexandra. "Introduction: Relics and Remains." In *Relics and Remains*, edited by Alexandra Walsham, 9-36. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- White, Rob, and Patricio Guzmán. "After-Effects: Interview with Patricio Guzmán." *Film Quarterly* (12/07/2012) <https://filmquarterly.org/2012/07/12/after-effects-interview-with-patricio-guzman/>.