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Art from a Fractured Past

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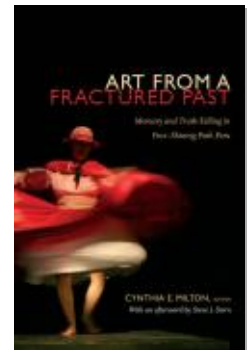
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project started ten years ago, almost to the day, when I wandered through Ayacucho's central plaza on the late afternoon prior to the Peruvian Truth Commission's arrival the next day to submit their *Final Report*. Colorful carpets (*alfombras*) made by schoolchildren and local groups from flower petals, chalk, and other materials surrounded the plaza, posterboards displayed images of the conflict and visitors' comments about them, in the corner stood an enormous stage in a style of a wooden triptych *retablo*. Nearby, an exhibition displayed some of the entries for an art contest on memories of the internal conflict. On this day, and those that followed, I was struck by how visually rich the conflict was and its aftermath as Peruvians engaged with their recent fractured past. As an historian, I wondered what stories and memories emerged from these representations. A few of us were pondering similar questions at the time, Olga González, Jonathan Ritter, María Eugenia (Makena) Ulfe, and Víctor Vich, among others. Soon it became clear that the range and array needed a cooperative and collective approach to begin to understand the myriad of cultural responses to the conflict. This edited volume is the result. However, the work is far from complete. A whole new generation of Peruvians and Peruvianists are continuing to ask about the cultural impact and means of broaching Peru's conflict.

The intellectual origins of this book also trace back to a workshop held on Robben Island, organized by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Legacies of Authoritarianism (LOA) Research Circle. With its infamous history as a former leper colony, holding spot for immigrants, and later apartheid prison, the island has since transformed into a memory museum and education center. Here in June 2000, activists, artists, practitioners, former and future truth commissioners, academics, journalists, and students from around the world came together to reflect on the dark heritage of authoritarian rule. Over the course of those few

days, both art as a medium for truth-telling and the creative practices necessary for transition away from authoritarian regimes came to the fore. One result of our conversations was a book that tried to visually lay out the possibilities of artistic engagement with difficult pasts, *The Art of Truth-Telling about Authoritarian Rule*. I thank Leigh A. Payne, Ksenija Bilbija, and Jo Ellen Fair for this experience, and Louis Bickford as well for bringing me into the larger project.

Another root of this book lay deeply in the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) training and research project led by the faculty scholars Elizabeth Jelin, Carlos Iván Degregori, Eric Hershberg, Steve J. Stern, among others. While I was only indirectly involved in this SSRC project (via the LOA Research Circle) and only one contributor to this book, Ponciano del Pino, had an official role in it, it created a whole generation of Latin and North American scholars dedicated to studying the aftermath of dictatorships in Peru and the Southern Cone. This SSRC project inflects this book, and many of us have benefited from the energy and dynamism that continues to be felt in the region.

Many, many people have contributed to this book in conversation and public presentations (in particular at a panel on this topic held at Latin American Studies Association meeting in Montreal in 2007 and at the 2008 conference in Lima coorganized by the IEP and IDEHPUCP five years after the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission). Just to name only some people who have participated in discussions leading to this book: Carlos Aguirre, Claudio Barrientos, Karen Bernedo, Ralph Buchenhorst, Jo-Marie Burt, Gisela Cánepa, Peter Dietsch, Eduardo González, Olga González, Elizabeth Jelin, Richard Kernaghan, Catherine LeGrand, Erica Lehrer, Salomón Lerner, Lika Mutal, Nelly Plaza, Félix Reátegui, José Luis Rénique, Javier Torres, Alberto Vergara, María Inez Vásquez, and Markus Weissert. Others are acknowledged in the following chapters. I express my gratitude to all the artists whose works are included here, and to the different organizations that have granted permission for their inclusion, especially the Servicios Educativos Rurales. I heartily acknowledge as well those people who have helped with the tricky mechanics of putting this mélange of languages, texts, and images together: Jen Akers, Elizabeth Becker, Jane Remick, and Katherine Saunders-Hastings for their assistance in various stages of translation; Andrea García, Socorro Naveda, Vera Lucía Ríos, and Sofía Vera for information that they helped gather; Bill Nelson for the maps; and

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My gratitude to the many funding organizations that have contributed to this book and to the larger research projects on alternative truth-telling and art in the aftermath of violence of which this book is a part: the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture, the Canada Research Chairs Program, the Faculté des arts et des sciences at the Université de Montréal, and the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation.

This book is dedicated to Carlos Iván Degregori, who has been a mentor without borders for many of us and an inspiration to all. He understood the importance of the intersection between academia and public obligation. Through his compassion and intellect, Carlos Iván shows us how with one life it is possible to touch many, to listen, to learn, and to share with others.

