

14. FILM, MEMORY, AND INTERMEDIALITY: EXPLORING THE ANDES IN *LA CORDILLERA DE LOS SUEÑOS* (2019)

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Mountains and waterways have long been instrumental in defining international borders. Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz trace this practice to antiquity, when a variety of sources highlighted “the interest in adjusting political territories with the topography of their substratum” (2010, 51).¹ While Chile declared its independence in 1818, its constitution did not mention its territory until four years later when it was defined “by natural limits to the south, Cape Horn, to the north, the Atacama Desert, to the east, the Andes, [and] to the west, the Pacific Ocean” (Ch. 1, Art. 3). Consisting of *Nostalgia de la luz* (*Nostalgia for the Light*, 2010), *El botón de nácar* (*The Pearl Button*, 2015), and *La cordillera de los sueños* (*The Cordillera of Dreams*, 2019), Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzmán’s latest “triptych”—as he calls it (see, for example, Samoili 2016)—explores these geographical markers, with the exception of Cape Horn. The film series not only suggests that these geographical reference points are key to Chilean national identity, but it also reflects on cinema’s role in producing collective memory and connects human history to the Chilean landscape and geological timescales.

As its title suggests, *La cordillera de los sueños* focuses on the Andes. The film figures the mountains as unmoved and unmovable witnesses to the human drama unfolding at their feet. The mountains become vehicles that allow Guzmán to explore both his personal past and Chile’s history through interviews with painter Guillermo Muñoz, sculptors Francisco Gazitúa and Vicente Gajardo, volcanologist Alvaro Amigo, musician Javiera Parra, and

writer Jorge Baradit (in a rather exclusive line-up circumscribed to peers with whom Guzmán possibly identifies when imagining a non-exiled life). *La cordillera* practices what Isis Sadek has called “documentary archaeology” (2013, 31), a process of spatialization of collective memory through a focus on the survivors, witnesses, and documenters who experienced the unfolding of Augusto Pinochet’s repressive rule and the complex transition to a democracy that followed and was riddled with fallacies. By looking at the political history of Chile through the eyes of his interviewees and his own, Guzmán channels the reconstruction of historical memory and links it to cinema’s role in both archiving memories and producing mountains as symbolic vehicles, thereby interlacing memory, nation, and landscape.

Andrea Vidal has described Guzmán’s triptych as a “geo-trilogy of the memory,” in which historical layers are inscribed into Chilean geography and the landscape thus becomes a vast archive of memories (2020, 48). *Nostalgia de la luz* centers on the desert and integrates the collective pain produced by Pinochet’s regime into the desolation of the Atacama Desert, connecting the astronomic scale “to metaphorical images of the silenced memory” (Schürch 2013, 141) shared by the relatives of *desaparecidos*—that is, people who “disappeared” during Pinochet’s dictatorship. The unrecovered bodies of the regime’s victims—and the suspension in which their families have lived since—inhabit this vast timescale and are consigned “to nothing less than planetary memory” (Andermann 2018, loc. 4971). The film thus “contains a focus on individual testimony, the hunt for remains of the disappeared, and the need to consider how the past is archived,” while simultaneously acknowledging “the archival nature of landscape” (Martin-Jones 2013, 708). *El botón de nácar* turns to water; the Pacific Ocean in particular. Despite some 3000 miles of coastline, Chile, Guzmán muses, “denies its relationship with the ocean” (2015). This rejection of the watery world stands in stark contrast to the coastal Indigenous populations who “were one with the water” (Guzmán 2015). The film compares the genocide and forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples during the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century with how Pinochet’s regime killed between 30,000 and 40,000 people. This comparison oversimplifies historical conjunctures and carries problematic connotations by equating the experiences of Indigenous populations with the people oppressed and terminated by the regime, but the argument seems sufficiently clear: Chile’s history and Chilean identities have been shaped by mass violence and its concealment, even since before Pinochet seized power.

While the first two films of the triptych focus on the desert and the water, respectively, the Andes play a significant role in both *Nostalgia* and *El botón*. The mountains are always there—often, they occupy the background of the narrative and tower in the background of the image, a silent presence witnessing the unfolding of human and geological history. Sometimes, however,

they are foregrounded, such as when observatories, and the giant telescopes that they house, reign over their surroundings on mountaintops in *Nostalgia* (Figure 14.1) and when satellite images make visible the cordillera's north-south expanse in *El botón* (Figure 14.2).²

Although the Andes are a constant presence in *Nostalgia* and *El botón*, in *La cordillera*, they—somewhat paradoxically—simultaneously take center stage and are reduced to mere symbols, as their materiality is buried beneath various layers of semantic deposits. The film's title epitomizes this tension, as “la cordillera” might seem to highlight the Andes in their material dimensions, but “de los sueños” quickly transports the cordillera to the symbolic domain. The Andes epitomize how Guzmán “imagine[s] Chile from afar” (Guzmán 2019), demonstrating that the film is not primarily concerned with material mountains, but rather with “hallucinated material,” as sculptor Francisco Gazitúa puts it (Guzmán 2019); more than their physical presence, it is their cultural significance that matters, to paraphrase sculptor Vincent Gajardo (Guzmán 2019).

While the film projects a variety of possible meanings onto the Andes, layers of the Chilean past assume a particularly prominent role, continuing Guzmán's creative engagement with what Nelly Richard has called the “unresolved tension between recollection and forgetting” in Chilean culture (1994, 12). In *La cordillera*, the Andes embody unity and separation, repression and freedom, functioning as a geological fold that affords identity and fragments memory at the same time. Historical memory becomes inscribed into the landscape, layer



Figure 14.1 Astronomical observatories on mountaintops in *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010)



Figure 14.2 Composite illustration of the vertical pan that showcases the north-south expanse of the Andes in *El botón de nácar* (2015)

by layer, in palimpsestic fashion. As the Andes thus become semantically charged, *La cordillera* reflexively engages with how cinema produces mountains and deploys them as meaning-machines. This self-reflexive dimension, we will demonstrate, becomes particularly apparent in transitions in which Guzmán's film moves from representations of mountains in media other than film, such as paintings, to recorded motion pictures of mountains. Evoking Gilles Deleuze's notion that "every actuality surrounds itself with a fog of virtual images" (1996, 197), these intermedial circuits simultaneously render the mountains elusive, as they self-reflexively showcase that no representation can truly capture mountains, and point to their seemingly innumerable potentials of meaning, as different interpretations of the Andes are contrasted and various representations of the cordillera are visually superposed, stratifying the various possible meanings of the mountains.

GEOLOGICAL MEMORY AND HUMAN HISTORY

Patricio Guzmán is widely considered one of the key figures of New Latin American Cinema. His filmography arguably covers Chile's history of the past fifty years: His acclaimed trilogy *La batalla de Chile: La lucha de un pueblo sin armas* (*The Battle of Chile: The Struggle of an Unarmed People*, 1975–1979) documents the final days of the Allende presidency, while his more recent post-dictatorship films explore the legacies of exile and military violence as well as the systemic changes and continuations of exploitative practices brought about by neoliberalism. After being briefly detained in 1973 in the wake of Pinochet's coup, Guzmán left Chile and has since self-exiled in Europe, returning to his homeland almost exclusively to work on his films. Most of his work both explores and negotiates Chilean national identity and collective memory, echoing his personal struggles as a Chilean intellectual living abroad—and thus coping, to an extent, with the idea of having abandoned his peers.

By investigating Chile's past and present, Guzmán's films highlight the systematic processes of selective omission and their impact on collective memory that have characterized the Chilean experience of political repression. On September 11, 1973, Pinochet, then Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army, led a group of military officers to overthrow the government and seize power. The military coup came after an extended period of social unrest and political tension, during which the majority of conflicts were addressed institutionally and within constitutional frameworks (Monsálvez Aráneda 2012, 38). The dictatorial turn of Pinochet's government unfolded under the label of "republican presidency" from 1974 until 1988, when a referendum to decide on the transition to democracy led to Pinochet's eventual removal from office in 1990—he did, however, remain Commander-in-Chief of the Army until his indictment in 1998.

La cordillera attests to the difficulty that even talking about the onset of the regime implied. In the film, a volcanic eruption symbolizes the coup d'état that allowed the inception of a dictatorship.³ Guzmán's voice-over explains, "The coup was a massive earthquake that changed our lives forever. We were trapped in a giant explosion [. . .] We were millions of people who felt a type of profound fear that we had never experienced before. For years, we refused to explain to our children what had happened and what continued to happen" (Guzmán 2019). The symbolism employed in these moments combines different images: Whereas the voice-over describes the coup as an earthquake that causes an explosion (and shakes the foundations of Chilean society in the process), the images (and sounds accompanying it) liken the coup to a volcanic eruption (Figure 14.3). The seemingly contradictory verbal and visual images share the idea that a massive natural force was unleashed, suggesting the social tension that was brewing in Chile in the 1960s and early 1970s resulted in the unexpected coup. At the same time, the dust clouds emerging from the volcano endow the verbal description with a distinctly dystopian touch evocative of the realities of life during Pinochet's dictatorship.

The volcanic eruption represents the caesura in the lives of many Chileans brought by the political repression institutionalized under Pinochet's regime. State terrorism and political violence were legitimized through a complex configuration of repressive mechanisms, which resulted in the torture, abduction, tracking, threat, detention, and murder of civilians that would have been otherwise extrajudicial. In addition, the regime internalized the acceptance of systematic processes of memory erasure, suppressing historical consciousness.



Figure 14.3 A highly symbolic volcanic eruption in *La cordillera de los sueños* (2019)

The process of transitioning back to a democracy in the 1990s was then accompanied by narratives of reconciliation, which facilitated a seeming collective unwillingness to critically confront the recent past. These two dimensions coalesce in a third, which Nelly Richard has identified as “the challenge of [memory’s] pacification when today, a community divided by the trauma of homicidal violence seeks to reunite in the post-dictatorial era” (1994, 13).

In *La cordillera*, Guzmán digs into his interviewees’ personal accounts of the experience, as well as into filmmaker Pablo Salas’s film archive, to unearth the cracks through which alternatives to the official historical record surface. Guzmán follows Salas through the streets of Santiago, filming protestors engaging with questions of collective memory (such as a *desaparecidos* protest and a *Día nacional del ejecutado político* march remembering people executed during the regime) and visits him at his office, concluding, “With his recordings, today we could reconstruct the lost years of Chile’s history” (Guzmán 2019). As Salas reconstructs his personal memories and *La cordillera* incorporates historical footage of policemen attacking peaceful protestors, military invading homes, and dozens of men being held captive in the Estadio Nacional, the film hints at an interstitial history connected to “the nevertheless clandestine threads of many other artistic and cultural memories that rebelled against the ideological determinism of rationalities unified by final and totalizing truths” (Richard 1994, 14). Whereas Salas and Guzmán acknowledge that the state controlled the messages circulating in Chile, they are nevertheless committed to the idealist belief that filmic storytelling allows for the rediscovery of neglected aspects and voices as well as the reinvention of a collective memory that has been flattened by dominant narratives revolving around notions of “reconciliation.” Notably, Salas stresses that only a small fraction of what the Pinochet regime did is truly known to the public: “What others and I were able to film during the dictatorship accounts for, maybe, five percent of what the repression by the regime implied.” However, he continues, the film recordings “prove how dreadful the dictatorship was. You can imagine the rest [...] These video documents were produced during the dictatorship. There is no way to claim that people didn’t know” (Guzmán 2019).

Yet Guzmán also engages with his own memories and his own past in *La cordillera*. The film’s opening introduces the problem of trying to access a space of nostalgia. This process is inseparable from trying to transport the past into the present: “[N]ostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood,” Svetlana Boym has explained (2001, xv). In *La cordillera*, the Andes function as the geological projection screen for this journey into the past. In the film’s opening moments, an aerial perspective provides the audience with a view of Santiago de Chile in the foreground and the snow-covered mountains towering in the background (Figure 14.4). These images are accompanied by music that creates a



Figure 14.4 The Andes and Santiago at their feet in *La cordillera de los sueños* (2019)

pensive mood. After a smooth cut, the camera passes over the mountains, a type of imagery that is continued after the brief opening credits. As the camera hovers above the Andes, Guzmán's voice-over narration starts: "Whenever I cross the Andes, I feel like I'm reaching the land of my childhood, my land of origin. Crossing the mountains means coming to a place that's past" (Guzmán 2019). Due to his prolonged exile, the homeland he returns to is inevitably situated in the past and, thus, no longer there. Indeed, the filmmaker puts into words his struggle to cope with the fact that the Santiago he hailed from and then left, the city he remembers, can no longer be reached because it exists only in his own memory. Santiago has been transforming and, for Guzmán, the city is increasingly unlike the Santiago he used to be familiar with. His perception of his homeland is frozen in a specific moment in time, and thus Guzmán's Santiago—the locus of his childhood and youth, strictly connected to his political and intellectual experience before the coup—moves farther and farther into a distant past that can only be recreated through his narration. However, as his memorialized past-Santiago becomes distant and inadequate to keep up with the unfolding of time, Guzmán feels that he also becomes increasingly alienated from present-day Santiago: "I remember a place where I felt more at home," he laments (Guzmán 2019).

These opening moments demonstrate that Guzmán struggles with his alienation from his childhood home, on the one hand, and the process of individual and national memory-making, on the other. Guzmán is caught in the nostalgic idealization of "a youth of political and cinematographic militancy and its tragic and abrupt end with the 1973 coup," to draw on Jens Andermann's

analysis of *Nostalgia de la luz* (2018, loc. 5022). In Johannes Hofer's original coinage, "nostalgia" meant "a sad feeling arising from the burning desire to return to one's country" (1688, A3). However, as much as Guzmán may long to return to Chile—or the homeland he remembers and cherishes—when being exiled, his temporary visits to Chile reopen a wound that paradoxically further alienates him: The trauma resulting from the coup and the self-imposed exile aggravate the pain to return to a home that no longer exists, rendering his yearning unresolvable.

Discussing the larger national contexts within which Guzmán's work is embedded, Nelly Richard has explained that despite the myriad discontinuities characterizing Chile's past, the national discourse tries to "maintain the illusion that history and tradition are reconstructable continuities, despite the suddenness of their interruption" (1994, 23–24). However, she has also highlighted diverse strategies to produce (counter-)memory by embracing the ruptures and discontinuities of the Chilean past. *La cordillera* suggests that the Andes do not simply provide a gateway to the past but have rather monolithically borne witness to all the sudden political disruptions that define Chile. Guzmán hopes that the glimpses of the past, to which the cordillera provides access, will allow him to understand the present. Exploring the conflation of personal recounts, unofficial records of the dictatorship, and indescribable perceptions, Guzmán constructs the mountains as immanent witnesses to the stratification of historical violence and political repression, and the consequent erasure of related memories. As Guzmán struggles with the difference between his self-exile and Salas's decision to stay in Chile and document the widespread opposition to the regime on film, the cordillera assumes a role similar to Salas's recordings: The Andes "saw things that [the authorities] wanted to conceal from us," Guzmán (2019) muses, as the camera slowly proceeds through the clouds to approach the snow-covered mountain peaks. But whereas Salas's analog tapes will become forgotten due to technological progress and the attendant incompatibilities (lest someone digitizes the video cassettes), the Andes are here to stay, continuing to witness history unfold. The Andes, Guzmán explains earlier in the film, have nothing "revolutionary" about them. While this characteristic feature made the cordillera representative of what his generation sought to leave in the rear-view mirror when they tried to "create a new society" in the turbulent years preceding the coup (Guzmán 2019), that very same trait evokes stability and continuation in view of the revolution that actually took place in the early 1970s.

Beyond emphasizing cinema's production of history and reproduction of memories, *La cordillera* leverages the incomprehensibility of mountains to produce a counter-discourse that explores the legacy of the dictatorship whose repressive workings were based on systematic enforced disappearances and cover-ups of evidence. The silence of the mountains comes to embody the

enduring silencing of political voices, or what Macarena Gómez-Barris defines as “a particular kind of historical memory of torture and disappearance as absent in the nation, despite ample evidence to the contrary” (2012, 3). With its overwhelming and at the same time detached presence in the background of Chileans’ daily lives, the Andes embody the ineffable and seemingly static—because muddled and purposely concealed—“peeling” of the historical layers laid by the dictatorship. Tellingly, one of Guzmán’s interview partners, sculptor Vicente Gajardo, notes at one point that when you conquer a mountain in the Andes, the next one is waiting right behind it. In other words, ascending to a single mountaintop is not the end, but rather the beginning of a much longer journey, a journey that—in the context of memory—inevitably leads into the past and reveals additional layers of meaning. The frustrating impossibility to uncover the “truth”—or at least the actual workings of state terrorism—marks the Chilean quest to reconnect with one’s own memories and past.

In his discussion of the intersections between memory and truth in *La fable cinématographique* (*Film Fables*), Jacques Rancière notes that “as the abundance of facts grows, so grows the sense [. . .] of ever being able to read, in the facts and their juxtaposition, the meaning of one story” (2001, 202). Grasping the meaning of the Andes is a process as complex, meandering, and riddled with obfuscated narratives as is unearthing memories of a dictatorial regime such as Pinochet’s. Guzmán collects and overlaps personal memories as a way to reconstruct the history of the coup beyond mere facts and official statistics. The interrogation of the meaning of the mountains seems inextricable from the conception of history as a perceptual horizon in which the sensory field interplays with “ideological, imaginary, mythical, practical, and symbolic fields—historical contexts and perception as reading of these contexts” (Merleau-Ponty 2015, 143). Exploring the mountains thus becomes interwoven with studying the past, which Guzmán ties to the re/construction of history through film: The director continuously juxtaposes and interlaces the production of filmed records of the dictatorship with his own medium of choice for investigating (the meaning of) mountains, rendering the correlation inextricable.

MOUNTAIN MEDIA

In his quest to understand the persistence of the mountains—always present yet nearly invisible and taken for granted—Guzmán asks his interviewees to share their insights about the cordillera. They all provide their interpretations and understandings of the mountains: The Andes are a material presence, constant and almost motherly; they provide an almost impenetrable barrier against external attacks, but at the same time, they separate Chile from the rest of the world, and they represent millions of years that passed without human presence. Nonetheless, they all conclude that, in the end, the Andes remain a

mystery, as mountains cannot really be explained. Through these complementary takes, Guzmán begins to understand that by digging into the mountains layer by layer, he may approach the past, echoing Robert Macfarlane's conclusion that spaces such as the insides of mountains hold what we bury and "wish to lose" just as much as "what we love and wish to save" (2019, 8). As the volcanologist puts it in the film: "The deeper you advance into the mountains, [. . .] the farther you go into the past" (Guzmán 2019).

As Guzmán explores the meanings of mountains, the camera repeatedly focuses on representations of mountains (that are, of course, framed by film). However, just when these images are about to convey a particular idea of what the cordillera is, the film overlays—or even returns to—cinematic renderings of mountains (see Figure 14.5 and Figure 14.6 below). These intermedial circuits, framed by film, suggest that film has more impact on shaping the public understanding of mountains than the various representations incorporated into *La cordillera*, while acknowledging that the meaning of mountains remains elusive.

Gilles Deleuze's conception of crystal images may help explain how these intermedial strategies address questions of temporality. Deleuze draws on Henri Bergson's understanding of time, of a virtual past and an actual present. Time always consists of two interrelated layers: a present that passes and a past that is preserved. Crystal images capture the particular moment when the present does not simply turn into the past, but rather when the two are momentarily indiscernible. Notably, Deleuze suggests that these crystal images are "circuits" of exchange. Discussing mirror images as "the smallest internal circuit," Deleuze explains that

the mirror image is virtual in relation to an actual character that the mirror catches, but it is actual in the mirror which now leaves the character with only a simple virtuality and pushes him out of the frame [. . .]. Distinct, but indiscernible, such are the actual and the virtual, which are ceaselessly in exchange. When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid, as in the mirror or the solidity of a completed crystal. But the actual image becomes virtual in its turn, referred elsewhere, invisible, opaque and dark, like a crystal just dislodged from the earth. (1985, 94–95)

Whereas Deleuze focuses on temporal implications, the intermedial overlays in *La cordillera* just as much meta-cinematically address their mediated nature—as filmic representations of mountains and other-than-filmic representations of mountains framed by film.

The first of these intermedial reflections seeks to advance Guzmán's argument that rather than ever truly seeing the Andes, the inhabitants of Santiago

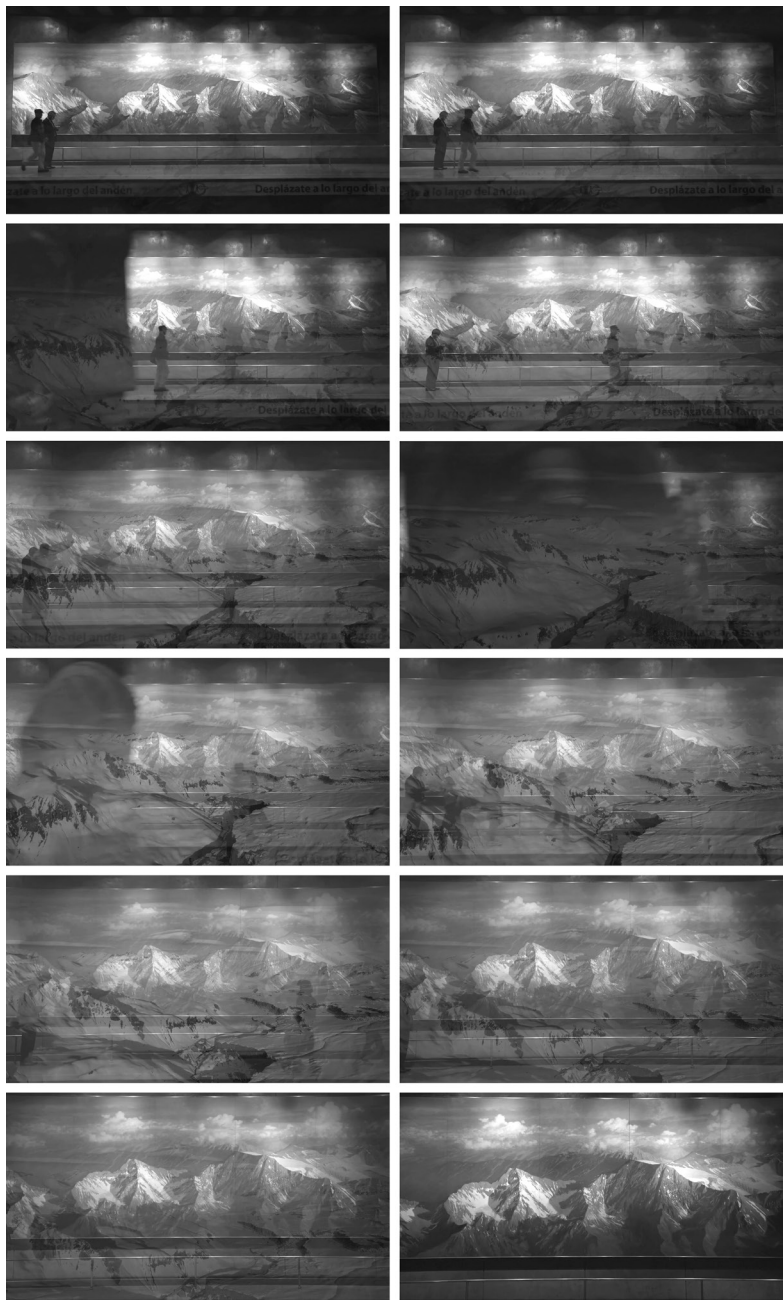


Figure 14.5 A selection of individual frames illustrating the transition from a painting of the Andes in the subway station (captured on film) to motion pictures of the Andes in *La cordillera de los sueños* (2019)

experience the cordillera through representations, notably paintings in subway stations. Accordingly, *La cordillera* introduces the setting: a crowded, bustling subway station defined by quick movement, as countless people pass by and trains constantly arrive and depart. A painting of the Andes, which is slowly revealed, contrasts with the ceaseless motion in the foreground: Seemingly immovable and frozen in time, the visual symbol evokes notions of stability in the face of perennial change. As the camera slowly zooms in on the paintings, the filmic overlay of the Andes, which slowly moves, begins to disrupt the stability of the painting (Figure 14.5), highlighting that the mountains are subject to change, not only because of geological processes but also—and primarily, the film seems to suggest—because although mountains simply are, our perceptions of them evolve.

The overlay sequence stretches over some fifteen seconds, providing a rather extended example of the crystal image. Nevertheless, these fifteen seconds render visible not simply the exchange between the two spatio-temporal and medial layers, but also that their combination produces additional dimensions of signification. As the cinematic renderings of the Andes intrude into (the filmic depiction of) the painting, a hazy quality is created, for neither layer is perfectly visible. The two layers begin to visibly influence each other, as the outlines of the painting gradually blur, while the slow fade-in of the filmic representation renders the second layer increasingly dominant: Symbolically, the past becomes overwritten by the present. Crucially, however, this sequence does not conclude with the filmic representation of the mountains, but instead returns to the painting. The resultant emphasis on painting the cordillera acknowledges the consolidated Chilean production of landscape paintings focused on the Andes, which has represented a “modern platform through which both art and the nation can be talked about” (Valdés Echeñique 2014, 117). The immensity and incomprehensibility of mountain landscapes serve as a symbolic canvas to configure the geopolitical conception of the nation, define the nation’s limits—both geographical and metaphorical—and consciously locate one’s own origin, turning the mountains into “the vessel for a Latin American expression” (Valdés Echeñique 2014, 121). As Andrés Núñez has evidenced, the cordillera has been an integral part of the hermeneutic spatial construction of the Chilean nation since its independence, helping shape a consolidated nationalist iconography supported by the fabrication of a “geographic imaginary that ‘normalized’ the meaning” of the mountain’s static presence (2014, 135). Guzmán’s work leverages the mountain space as a container of historical memory, as the Andes “cannot be alienated from a materialization of collective memory” that projects onto the cordillera its social imaginary, preoccupations, and identity (Núñez 2014, 127).

MOUNTAIN MEMORY

Guzmán's recent work has been characterized by the connection between the idea of nation and the focus on what Natalia D'Alessandro has called "macro-landscapes": The Chilean experience is shaped by geological and geographical aspects, epitomized by Guzmán's focus on monumental landscapes. The resultant "cartography of giganticness" (D'Alessandro 2022, 746) inscribes Chilean history—undergirded by the disappearance and silencing of the Chilean people—into the landscape. However, the materiality of mountains "comes to matter," too, to draw on the subtitle of an essay by Karen Barad (2003). After all, landscapes, Donald Mitchell has explained, "work" in the construction, articulation, and maintenance of identity; landscapes are not passive objects, but rather participate—symbolically and materially—in various types of social relations (2000, 91–119), as human beings are entangled with nonhuman bodies and nonhuman matter. In other words, the process of inscribing Chile's history and the Chilean national identity into the Andes is not a one-way street, for the mountains influence the country's people, too: Whether as a wall protecting Chile from outside enemies, as a natural national boundary, or as a source of valuable minerals, the Andes have shaped the Chilean people and their ways of living.

This intra-action (Barad 2007) adds to the complexity of mountains. And, indeed, in *La cordillera*, Guzmán avers that mountains elude human comprehension. One example of what we have called "intermedial circuits" above illustrates this point. When Francisco Gazitúa likens the Andes to a labyrinth that contains "traces of our ancestors" that date back 20,000 years (Guzmán 2019), the artist evokes values connected to ancestral cultures and thus spotlights human life that preceded European settler-colonialists. The visuals respond to this idea, as a map of the Andes fades into a bird's eye view of a river running through a canyon that becomes a waterfall before the images cut to a wide-open hilly landscape with the imposing mountaintops of the Andes in the background (Figure 14.6). By rejecting the containment of the landscape in the cartographic system, the film symbolically rejects the imposition of Western knowledge systems onto the Andes and, quite literally, opens up the meaning of mountains. The music evokes stately and majestic grandeur at first, but quickly becomes more reflective as the camera lingers on the mountains, inviting viewers to think about them. "Mountains [. . .] are simply there, and there they remain, their physical structures rearranged gradually over time by the forces of geology and weather, but continuing to exist over and beyond human perceptions of them," Robert Macfarlane has explained (2003, 19). At the same time, however, mountains are "products of human perception; they have been *imagined* into existence" (Macfarlane 2003, 19). The mountains thus embody notions of geoheritage and become a bio-geo-cultural landscape,

NOTES

1. All translations of sources in languages other than English are by the authors of this chapter.
2. Four of the five highest permanent astronomical observatories on the planet are located in the Andes, three of them in Chile.
3. A major volcanic belt accompanies the Andes from north to south. The vast majority of Chile's 6000m peaks are either of volcanic origin or volcanoes, including Ojos del Salado, the highest volcano on the planet.

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