

Memory, Mourning, and the Chilean Constitution: An Account of Grief in Response to the 2022 Constitutional Election

Memoria, duelo y constitución chilena: un relato de duelo en respuesta a la elección constitucional de 2022

María Berta López Ríos^{*}; Christopher Jude McCarroll^{**};
Paloma Muñoz Gómez^{***}

^{*}Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

m.lopez-rios@bathspa.ac.uk

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6200-5278>

^{**}Institute of Philosophy of Mind and Cognition, National Yang Ming Chiao Jung University, Taiwan

chrismccarroll@nycu.edu.tw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7555-1355>

^{***}Independent scholar, Chile/Taiwan

palomamunozgomez2@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6818-0464>

Abstract

The present paper investigates and provides an account of the feeling of grief evidenced in certain sectors of the Chilean population after the electoral defeat following the constitutional plebiscite of September 2022 in Chile. How can one experience grief at the rejection of a political referendum? We suggest that the experience of grief is importantly related to a loss of life possibilities and disruptions in one's practical identity. The outpouring of grief experienced by many Chileans at this political loss can be traced to the importance of the constitutional plebiscite for their identities. The grieving process involves



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a renegotiation, through memory and future oriented imagination, of past, present, and future aspects of one's practical identity.

Keywords: grief, memory, trauma, practical identity, political emotions, Chile.

Resumen

"El presente trabajo investiga y da cuenta del sentimiento de duelo evidenciado en ciertos sectores de la población chilena luego de la derrota electoral tras el plebiscito constitucional de septiembre de 2022 en Chile. ¿Cómo se puede experimentar el duelo ante el rechazo de un referéndum político? Sugerimos que la experiencia de duelo se relaciona de manera importante con una pérdida de posibilidades y con un quiebre en la identidad práctica de la persona. La efusión de dolor experimentada por muchos chilenos ante esta pérdida política puede atribuirse a la importancia del plebiscito constitucional con respecto a sus identidades. El proceso de duelo implica una renegociación, a través de la memoria y la imaginación orientada al futuro, de los aspectos pasados, presentes y futuros de la identidad práctica propia de la persona."

Palabras clave: luto, memoria, trauma, identidad práctica, emociones políticas, Chile.

1. Introduction

The historically significant social protest of 2019–2020, 'Chile Despertó' or 'El Estallido Social' as it is known in Chile, triggered the current efforts aimed at changing the Chilean constitution, a constitution that had been in place since the Pinochet dictatorship. A first plebiscite was held on October 25, 2020, where Chileans unanimously voted to change the Pinochet-era constitution. A constitutional convention of directly elected members was formed, and after a year of deliberations (July 2021–July 2022), the convention proposed one of the most progressive political constitutions ever produced—upholding environmental, gender, and indigenous rights, amongst others. Once this document was completed, a new plebiscite, or exit plebiscite, was held on September 4, 2022, where the people voted to approve ('apruebo') or reject ('rechazo') the new draft constitution. The 2022 exit plebiscite rejected the constitution proposed by the constitutional convention by a margin of 62% to 38%. The rejection of the 2022 draft constitution was unexpected for many people, and was felt as a severe blow for a segment of the population that regarded this constitutional project with a strongly held hope for progressive change for the country.

Indeed, for some people the rejection of the draft constitution was felt as a loss so deep that it was akin to a bereavement. In an opinion piece published days after the 2022 Chilean plebiscite by *The Guardian* newspaper, the Argentine-Chilean-American novelist Ariel Dorfman (2022) declares in response to the result of the referendum: "I confess that I

am in mourning”. This line summarises the feelings of a number of people whose hopes for a better future were invested in the 2022 constitutional project. Similarly, alternative media reflected on the defeat as a process of mourning, or ‘duelo’, and called for the deep disappointment and sadness not to be sustained for too long in order to be ready to face the new challenges (Berwart, 2022). In a similar fashion, the psychologist Estevan Muñoz, upon learning about the referendum’s result, describes the sadness and loss of hope he experienced, emotions which he designates as ‘tristeza política’ (political sadness), which involves ‘un duelo necesario’ (a necessary mourning). These are, for him, part of a grief process necessary for recovery (Muñoz, 2022). Further, multiple reactions of profound sadness and sorrow can be tracked on social media.¹

The present paper investigates, and presents a preliminary analysis of, how a large group of people experienced a strong feeling of grief in the face of the defeat of their preferred constitutional project. If we understand grief as an emotional process associated with a loss, which is typically experienced as a period of painful sadness following a traumatic event, such as a loved one’s death, then how can one grieve something like the rejection of a constitutional draft in a political referendum? How is it that the rejection of a new constitution’s implementation resulted in mourning for many Chileans?

We propose that a way to make sense of the deep feeling of loss felt by many Chileans in this electoral defeat can be explained by understanding grief as an emotional, painful processing (Goldie, 2012) that is felt upon ‘losing life possibilities’ (Varga & Gallagher, 2020; Ratcliffe et al., 2023), which impacts one’s practical identity (Cholbi, 2021). One’s practical identity can be understood as involving a set of values, projects, commitments, and actions over time with which one identifies (Korsgaard, 1996a), and we grieve after we lose someone, or something, that profoundly impacts our sense of practical identity.² In the

¹ See, for example, the reactions to the video *#Un poema desde el despecho constitucional*, posted by the comedian @kakoamedia (TikTok profile), 6 September 2022.

² As we note above, this is a preliminary analysis of the experiences of grief that appeared to manifest in certain members of Chilean society at the rejection of the draft constitution. In order to fully explain these experiences, we would need to explore the collective dimension and the shared intention of the people involved in the social movement in Chile to bring about change. This might involve the idea that practical identity, at least in this political context, is importantly tied to the notion of a ‘collective identity’ shared by citizens, which can be understood as an identity born of a collective volition (similar to what Korsgaard (1996b) describes, in her interpretation of Kant, as *Creating The Kingdom of Ends*) aimed at an ethical common purpose pursued by means of legal protests and also practices of civil disobedience. In the Chilean case, for example, the social movement took to the streets to express a collective volition to transform society into one in which everyone could feel dignified. The right to be treated with dignity was the main banner of the movement (Paredes, 2021). Although the social movement bravely and emphatically expressed ethical and peaceful banners with which people identified or deeply identified, this collective effort has been interpreted differently depending on political alignments. For example, people leaning more towards the right, focused their attention on the contradictory ethical expressions of some adherents of the social movement who were indeed involved in violent actions and confrontations with the police (Molina, 2019). Because we only have



Chilean political context, we understand that grief first makes one acknowledge a loss (a loss of life possibilities or autonomy) that impacts one's practical identity,³ moving us then to the traumatic confrontation of this fact without avoidance. However, we also see grief as more than that. If the first stage of the grieving process (the traumatic confrontation with the loss) is completed, grief will lead us to acknowledge the necessity of renegotiating our previous practical identity. Thus, through grieving, our practical identity can complete a process of disintegration, which is then followed by an uncertain healing and reformulation, so that we might be able to create the opportunity to develop a new practical identity in the future.

The paper unfolds as follows: we first describe (section 2) the different objects of grief—how we may grieve over different things, from people to places, from close friends and family to complete strangers, to non-human animals and inanimate objects. The objects of grief are multiple and diverse. Despite this diversity we might be able to bring some unity to the objects of grief. The objects of grief can all be understood as relating to a loss of life possibilities and a disruption to one's practical identity. This way of understanding the proper object of grief allows us to understand how one can mourn something seemingly as abstract as the rejection of a political constitution. Finally, we show (section 3) that changing the constitution was, for a sector of the Chilean population, a way of coming to terms with traumatic memories of the past, which helped form their practical identities, and of forging a new political vision that aligned better with the set of values, commitments, and concerns of this sector of society. Rejecting the constitution thus involved a painful and unsettling disturbance to many people's practical identities. The rejection of the 'apruibo' marked a loss of life possibilities that was mourned by one sector of the population at the same time that it was celebrated by another.⁴

(limited) evidence of individual experiences of grief and not grief at the collective level, a level that also needs to be studied from a political and/or sociological perspective, we maintain our focus on the individual and omit discussion of these important collective aspects. This could be explored in further work, which examines the socio-political history and context of the Chilean social movement.

³ We use the verb 'acknowledge' as related to emotions, following the Practical View, explained in Müller (2022).

⁴ It is important to be precise about the target of our investigation, which is a subgroup of the (largely) Chilean population that experienced grief at the rejection of the draft constitution. Many Chileans may have been fully invested in the constitution but they may not have mourned the loss, having instead a different response. They may have felt a disruption to their practical identities after the rejection of the draft constitution and yet not experienced the typical emotions associated with grief. This does not mean that these individuals did not experience grief (perhaps they did) but rather that their responses were not the quintessential emotions of grief (e.g., sadness). In fact, because grief is a process it may involve many kinds of emotional responses. Also, even if such individuals did not experience grief (or not fully), it may be that their practical identities were not as seriously impacted, or that they could deal with the impact to their practical identities more readily. We don't have evidence for the exact reactions for this group of people and whether



2. The Concrete and Formal Objects of Grief⁵

Grief is commonly depicted as a complex emotional experience or process that is related to a traumatic event, which is most typically the death of a loved one (Goldie, 2012; Cholbi, 2021). Grief is commonly considered a multifaceted and multifarious painful phenomenon that primarily serves to acknowledge a loss. It seems to attend to psychological, physical, cultural, and normative aspects (O'Connor, 2022). It has been said that in order to overcome grief, we may have to relearn the world (Attig, 2011), and walk through uncertainty without avoiding the pain in the process (Goldie, 2012; Carel, 2007).

By understanding grief as a process (Goldie, 2012), and also considering some of Freud's thoughts in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1953), we can realise that grief differentiates itself from other feelings such as resentment or melancholia.⁶ The feeling of melancholy for example does not embrace the whole process of death and the reformulation of our practical identity; instead, it acknowledges us as being stuck in the trauma of the loss and at the same time in the negation of it, hampering the healing move towards the reformulation of our practical identity. Offering a psychoanalytic view, Havi Carel highlights the idea that the melancholic subject becomes stuck in repetition, "[t]here is not moving on in melancholia, just repetition of gestures and emotions of grief, an unending retreat from life" (2007, pp. 1072–1073). If we pay attention to these feelings, we can realise that resentment and melancholy have something in common: both feelings are (1) accompanied by the subject's avoidance of the critical fact of the loss itself, and (2) they lead the subject to keep a strong focus on the frustrated longing. Those feelings, in contrast to grief, do not let the agents pay enough attention to the actual painful situation—precisely because the memory of the loss is so painful and the whole situation of loss feels so unfair—nor to the need that urges us to leave the past behind in order to look for a new beginning.⁷ However, in this moving forward, Carel highlights the relevance of the memory. Carel agrees with Melanie Klein and says, "the central issue in grieving is not

they experienced grief or not. Hence, our target is only a subset of people who did, on the face of it, experience grief at the result of the political process.

⁵ Part of the scholarly discussion in this section is presented in McCarroll & Yan (2024) although it has undergone several changes for the purpose of the present paper.

⁶ Melancholy is importantly related to grief, but one important way in which resentment differs from these is that its formal object is different. The formal object of resentment might be something like seeing offense in a particular action that expresses a lack of regard for others (Weber, 2015). We discuss the formal objects of emotions below.

⁷ However, individuals with prolonged grief have difficulty leaving the past loss behind and in imagining a new future without loss (Maccallum & Bryant, 2010, 2011). Resentment, on the other hand, has been classified as a moral emotion by some philosophers, such as Samuel Scheffler (1992, p. 68), who, echoing John Rawls, states that resentment is always a response to a situation of injustice. Our point here is simply to emphasise that resentment does not relate to the idea of processing in the way that grief does.



forgetting but remembering [the object of loss] well” (2007, p. 1071). We will return to the aspect of memory in the final section.

A traumatic event is one that is exceptionally disruptive and distressing physically and/or psychologically (Ratcliffe, 2022). The death of a loved one is typically understood as such a traumatic event, and grief is the typical response felt to such an event.⁸ The trauma that grief seems to be quintessentially about is loss in the form of bereavement, when a person we are close to—a family member, child, or partner—passes away. We can make the preliminary remark that it is this massive loss of a loved one that grief is typically about. Nonetheless, the people and things that we grieve over are much more varied than this. We can grieve for people we have never met (Moore, 2016). Indeed, death need not be involved for one to mourn. Individuals have reported grief for people who are absent from their lives in some way, even though that person is still alive. For example, we may grieve for a former partner after the breakup of a relationship (Solomon, 2004); parents suffering from *empty nest syndrome* often report experiencing grief when their grown-up children leave the family home (Schultz & Harris, 2011).

Another way in which the diversity of grief becomes apparent is that it is not just persons that we mourn. Archer & Winchester (1994) point out that we can feel grief for the deaths of our pets. People have also described feeling grief about the destruction of the natural environment, or homes or important man-made buildings (Roberts, 1992; Varga & Gallagher, 2020).

In fact, grief may also be experienced at a more collective level and can manifest as a result of events that take place at the socio-political level (Harris, 2022). It is this kind of ‘political grief’ that seems to be experienced by certain sectors of the Chilean population in response to the referendum result. How can we understand the varied ways in which we might experience grief and the multiple things that we can mourn? Indeed, how can we understand a response to the Chilean referendum that results, for some, in a form of mourning? To try and answer these questions, we must first try to better understand the proper objects of grief and the precise nature of the loss that underpins grief experiences in general.

It is widely agreed that at least some emotional experiences in general exhibit intentionality. Emotions are *about* certain things (Ratcliffe, 2019). However, those things or entities are linked to emotions only in a certain way; it seems that emotions are somehow related to the agent’s normative perspective that offers those things a specific value (see Scheffler, 1992; Naar, 2021; Müller, 2022; cf. Ratcliffe et al., 2023). For

⁸ While not all grief is linked to trauma, they are often importantly connected. According to Blehm, “The DSM-V shows that there is a strong consensus that one can be traumatized and develop PTSD from hearing about the loss of a loved one” (2022, p. 40); see also Neria & Litz (2004). Further, one can experience grief towards physical traumas such as injuries (Cole & Ratcliffe, 2022).



example, when we experience fear, there is something that we fear, but we fear “something” considering it within a specific context of evaluative properties that offers it the connotation of dangerous; when we are angry or sad, there is something, which is related to some situation, that we are angry or sad about. Indeed, we can fear (or feel sad or angry about) many different things related to many different normative contexts. The same person may fear both heights *and* spiders while visiting a dark cave near a steep cliff and feel no fear at all of heights or spiders while visiting a very safe Zoo, for example.⁹ The same is true for other emotions. We can experience the same emotion for many different objects, but our emotional output for those objects can vary according to the normative context that is offering value to them. As we just saw, this is also true of grief.¹⁰ Experiences of grief are varied, and we can grieve over many different things. Is there anything that unites these diverse objects of emotion? How can we make sense of the idea that an emotion such as grief might be felt in relation to many different situations?

To answer these questions and simplify our view, first we must introduce a distinction between the concrete (or particular, or material) objects and the formal objects of emotions and emotional experiences (De Sousa, 1987; Teroni, 2007; Cholbi, 2021; Ratcliffe et al., 2023). Concrete objects are the particular things (or people, or situations) that an emotion is about. To return to the example of fear, when someone fears sharks, snakes, or spiders, these are all different concrete objects of fear. Despite their differences, these various objects of fear share a formal object, which is an evaluative characteristic that one attributes to the concrete object (Ratcliffe et al., 2023). In the case of fear, the formal object may be understood as something like danger or threat (Teroni, 2007; Ratcliffe et al., 2023). The diverse things that we fear are all things in which we acknowledge danger or threat (Müller, 2022). Understanding the formal object of fear helps unify different instances of fear as belonging to the same kind of emotional experience.

In the case of grief, the concrete objects can, as we saw, range over many different things (see, e.g., Averill, 1968; Ferraro et al., 2011). Grief, in other words, would appear to have many different concrete objects. Yet if we appeal to the notion of grief’s formal object, we

⁹ As a further explanation, we can say that if there is a possibility of going into a dark cave near a steep cliff, I have to decide whether it is a good idea to do it or not; shall I? Perhaps I can have a fatal accident if I fall while passing by that cliff, perhaps I can be bitten by a hidden spider and die. My fear in that case would be reacting to an imaginary **danger** based on an evaluation of a future possibility that involves my choice for action. Thus, contemplating the normativity of an emotion means contemplating the dimension of the subject as an agent with choice. Regarding fear and normativity, Naar explains, “Consider fear. In claiming that my fear is inappropriate because the object of my fear does not constitute a threat, we are not simply complaining about my inaccurate representation of the object; we are evaluating my *fearing* the object on top of my misrepresenting it” (2021, p. 13610).

¹⁰ We have seen that grief is related to a loss, but in this paper we also want to argue that this loss is related to our identity, which also involves a spontaneous, conscious or unconscious, normative evaluation of its disintegration.

might get a more unified picture. One recent proposal that captures the diverse concrete objects that we can grieve over is to think of the formal object of grief as involving a ‘loss of life possibilities’ (Ratcliffe et al., 2023; cf. Varga & Gallagher, 2020). This loss of life possibilities can be understood as a loss of “significant possibilities that are integral to the structure of one’s life, to one’s various projects, pastimes, habitual activities, and commitments” (Ratcliffe et al., 2023, p. 329).¹¹ Importantly, the loss of life possibilities need not just be singular or first-person (my life possibilities), but it may be more relational. The loss of possibilities need not be mine, but could also be yours, or ours, or theirs (Ratcliffe et al., 2023). We must also consider that the acknowledgment of this loss of our life possibilities, possibilities that support our structural integrity, may come into focus at different times (Ratcliffe et al., 2023, p. 320).

This notion of grief involving a loss of life possibilities is relatively abstract. One way of making it more concrete, however, is to think about it in terms of disruptions to one’s practical identity. One’s practical identity is “a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking” (Korsgaard, 1996a, p. 11).¹² We all hold a set of commitments, values, and concerns which we use to guide the decisions we make and the actions we engage in. This set of commitments and subjective concerns is what constitutes our practical identities. We can see that Korsgaard’s concept of practical identity incorporates an ethical dimension,¹³ and therefore we can suggest that the normative evaluative capacity of the agent in relation to his or her resonance with his or her emotions becomes particularly relevant in the case of grief. If our practical identity gets disintegrated our agency gets especially affected. That is why grief can be understood as an intermediary restorative process commonly accompanied by a lack of action, lack of motivation or depression, and

¹¹ Because it may be best understood as a process that unfolds over time, Ratcliffe and colleagues think that the traditional formal/concrete object distinction might not easily apply to grief. Nonetheless, they hold that it can still be useful as long as we think of the concrete/formal distinction as a part-whole relation: “The process [of grief] as a whole engages with a loss of life possibilities, while constituent experiences relate to more specific aspects of this loss, which have varying degrees of concreteness” (Ratcliffe et al., 2023, p. 332).

¹² The notion of practical identity is related to how one views oneself and attempts to align one’s actions with this understanding. Even if connected, the notion of practical identity is importantly different from that of ‘personal identity’, which in some cases carries more metaphysical or ontological commitments (e.g., Schechtman, 1996).

¹³ Korsgaard explains, “as agents, we view ourselves as free and responsible, as the authors of our actions and the *leaders* of our lives” (1996b, p. 378). “[F]rom the practical point of view, actions and choices must be viewed as having agents and choosers. This is what *makes* them, in our eyes, our own actions and choices rather than events that befall us. [...] [F]rom the practical point of view our relationship to our actions and choices is essentially *authorial*: from it, we view them as *our own*. I believe that when we think about the way in which our own lives matter to us personally, we think of ourselves in this way. We think of living our lives, and even of having our experiences, as something that we *do*. And this is the important feature of our sense of identity” (1996b, p. 378, emphasis original).



silence (Degerman, 2023). It is important to highlight that the set of values and subjective concerns that constitutes our practical identity are not simply isolated to the individual but are often relational. Our practical identities involve “roles and relationships, citizenship, memberships in ethnic or religious groups, causes, vocations, professions, and offices” (Korsgaard, 1996a, p. 20). Losing life possibilities involves experiencing and negotiating a disrupted sense of who one is—how one’s roles, statuses, commitments, and projects have been changed and have to be renegotiated.

Grief occurs, then, whenever we lose someone (or something) in whom we have invested our practical identities: “we grieve those who come to play crucial roles in our aspirations and commitments” (Cholbi, 2021, p. 16). Indeed, “[t]he more central another person is to our practical identity, the greater cause we have for grieving them upon their deaths” (Cholbi, 2021, p. 31). Thus, when the individuals, things, or entities in whom we have invested our practical identities die or get destroyed, this forces upon us a most profound change in our own practical identities.¹⁴ There is an important sense, then, in which “grief is fundamentally self-focused”, even if it is not selfish (Cholbi, 2021, p. 22).

Thinking about the formal object of grief as a loss of life possibilities, which involves a disruption to one’s practical identity, covers the many different manifestations of grief. Why might someone feel grief at the loss of a glacier or some other element of the environment? If one views oneself as an environmental activist, the destruction of the environment can be felt as a disruption to one’s values and concerns, and one may feel this loss as painful. One’s practical identity has been disrupted, and one may experience grief. In a similar way, why might one experience grief at the death of David Bowie despite never having met the singer (Moore, 2016)? Again, it might be that Bowie (and his music) plays an important role in how one sees oneself and the commitments and values that one holds as part of one’s practical identity. For example, Bowie was often seen as someone who broke down gender stereotypes and was seen as a ‘lifeline’ to many gay, lesbian, and transgender people (Rogers, 2016). If one identifies with the same commitment to gender diversity that Bowie seemed to embody, his death can be something that impacts one’s practical identity even if he were a stranger.

What we want to suggest is that this way of understanding grief helps explain why a subset of the Chilean population seemed to experience grief in response to the rejection of the referendum. We believe that many Chileans experienced a disruption in their sense of practical identity when the plebiscite was rejected. Consequently, many citizens

¹⁴ In many cases it might be unlikely that one’s identity will fully shift or change. It might be that one has to change some aspects of one’s practical identity (e.g., one’s role as a partner if one’s spouse dies), but even if one’s practical identity remains importantly the same (e.g., one is committed to environmentalism), one will have to negotiate a world that in some way is in tension or conflict with one’s practical identity and does not allow it to flourish. This is part of the renegotiation of one’s practical identity.

experienced the bewilderment, confusion, and dejection associated with grief. The draft Chilean constitution was one of the most progressive political constitutions ever produced, for example upholding environmental, gender, and indigenous rights. If these ethical causes were ones that people identified with and had hoped to change through the political institution of a new constitution, then its rejection may have been felt as a painful loss, so powerful that one may have experienced grief.¹⁵ Many people would have experienced a significant loss of life possibilities and a disruption to their practical identities.

At this point, the reader may have a worry. One may wonder whether the constitutional amendment's supporters really lost significant possibilities that are integral to the structure of one's life, to one's various projects, pastimes, habitual activities, and commitments. This might seem more plausible in the scenario in which the constitution that enshrines their values is operative but then revoked after some time. But when it was never more than a hope, could it really have become so thoroughly engrained in the structure of their lives? If it was never more than a hope, did they really lose any possibilities when the voters rejected the constitution? In order to fully answer these questions, we must show how the new draft constitution, despite never being operative, was a way of tethering the voters' identities in the past with the hopes of overcoming past wrongs, and as spanning hopes for a better future. We must show how the practical identities of these voters encompass past, present and future aspects.

3. Political grief and its past, present, and future aspects

It might seem strange to think that some members of the Chilean community felt grief in response to the defeat of the plebiscite. How can someone feel grief over something so abstract as a loss at the political level? This experience is not unique, however. In fact, there is precedent for political grief. Darcy Harris, a professor of thanatology, writes about her experience of the day when the 2016 US election results confirmed Donald Trump had won the election:

...I was attending an international bereavement conference in Scotland. ...I was awakened by the sound of people crying in the hallway of the hotel where I was staying... Throughout the day, the overt grief of many conference attendees was palpable... Many described the events and their feelings surrounding the election results with the language of grief, loss, and despair. Some were so overwhelmed by

¹⁵ Even though the rejection of the draft constitution may have been cause for some people to grieve, this still leaves open the possibility that there is a heterogeneity to these grief experiences. Different people may have identified with different aspects of the constitution, and so its rejection involved different losses of life possibilities for different people.



their grief that they were unable to participate in the meeting that day. (Harris, 2022, p. 573)

It is precisely this kind of political grief that the results of the referendum on the Constitution provoked in a subset of the Chilean population. According to Harris, grief occurs when one's assumptive world (Parkes, 1975), i.e., the way one views oneself, the way one believes how the world works, and how one finds safety in the world, is shattered (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). This shattering of the assumptive world results in the loss of a sense of coherence and meaning. Harris' usage of shattered assumptions theory is to a large extent in line with our application of the idea of practical identity, as in both models the grief process is said to deeply affect the subject's identity. Here we can also see the way in which these forms of political grief are intimately related to one's individual commitments, values, hopes, and ideals that go to make up one's practical identity.

In Chile, the 2022 proposed constitution was meant to be a blueprint for a more plural and socially inclusive country, a country that was willing to leave behind the traumatic experience and 'unfair values' imposed by the military dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet.¹⁶ The draft incorporated demands made by the Chilean environmentalists, the representatives of the Native Nations, and Chile's feminist movement, among others. We can predict that the more a person identified with the laws, reforms, and political changes that would have been enshrined in the new constitution, the more the rejection of this draft would have impacted their practical identity and the more likely they would have been to mourn the result. Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of how these practical identities emerged, we need to recognise their past and future aspects.

Grief can be understood as an emotional acknowledgement of the trauma of a loss, and involves past, present, and future aspects (Ratcliffe et al., 2023; Debus & Richardson, 2022; Carel, 2007). In fact, this intertemporal element of grief is crucially related to the self. Grief occurs not only because of our ties to other people or things that we have lost, but also because of 'our ties to our own past and future selves' (Cholbi, 2021, p. 11). This intertemporal aspect of grief is crucially thought to involve mental time travel, the capacity to remember the personal past and imagine the personal future (Tulving, 1985; Carel, 2007, p. 1079). The ability to remember the past and imagine that future are key capacities involved in grief in that they help bring to mind the loss of possibilities that grief involves (McCarroll & Yan, 2024). Indeed, because the notion of practical identity presupposes 'a cross-temporal evaluative perspective on oneself' (Cholbi, 2023, p. 426), and the grieving process involves dealing with disruptions to one's practical identity and renegotiating this

¹⁶ We will refer here to 'unfair values' only taking as reference Kant's categorical imperative to "act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (1786/2011, p. 421). In the sense that the values pursued by the military dictatorship were not categorical.

practical identity, memory and mental time travel play a crucial role.¹⁷ The process of dealing with grief involves coming to terms with one's past, and one's memories of the past loss, as well as imagining a new future without the person, place, or object whose loss one is grieving. In short, dealing with grief involves renegotiating one's practical identity, and this renegotiation seems to rely strongly on our abilities to remember the past and imagine the future.

We suggest that, for many people in Chilean society, the draft constitution was seen as a chance to change a political system that was enshrined under Pinochet's dictatorship, and begin, or in many cases continue (at least in part), the difficult process of renegotiating painful and traumatic memories of that time. Our reading is that the violent oppressive force to which the 2019–2020 social movement fell victim brought to the fore memories of repression experienced by social movements in the recent past (Pinochet times), and with it, a sensation of experiencing a transgenerational trauma (Matamala, 2021).

We might be able to extrapolate and state that this transgenerational trauma stemming from historical repression of social movements is deeply embedded in progressive sectors of the Chilean population that might have supported the 2022 draft constitution. Indeed, the notion of trauma related to the Pinochet era is an important element of the practical identities of a large sector of the Chilean population (Jara Ibarra, 2019, pp. 107–114). Studying the re-emergence of social protests in Chile, Jara Ibarra proposes a connexion between traumatic memories of the dictatorship, and how these memories evolve and are transformed by the younger generations, who did not experience them, acting as an imaginary in a dynamic process that informs a group identity and is used for future oriented actions, which can be understood as a component of social action in articulating the demands of this group (2019, pp. 217–229). This framework can also be applied to the 2019 protests, which re-utilised various symbolic repertoires of the dictatorship era protest, such as, for example, that of the music of the Chilean composer Victor Jara (who was tortured and murdered by Pinochet's soldiers), and his famous song '*El Derecho de Vivir en Paz*' (*The Right to Live in Peace*), which perfectly aligned with the new multi-ethical demands of the moment (related to feminism, gender identity, environmentalism, indigenous rights, etc). In our view, for the social movement the demand of changing Pinochet's constitution became a key claim of transgenerational symbolic convergence aimed at rectifying the damage caused under the regime. In other words, the demand for changing the constitution was, for a sector of the Chilean population, a way of coming to terms with traumatic memories of the past, and forging a new political vision for the present and future.

¹⁷ Cholbi makes the case that we see diminished abilities to grieve in psychopaths because they lack a special kind of interpersonal empathy, which can be understood as not only “an ability to relate (emotionally and ethically) to other individuals but also as an ability to relate to past and present iterations of ourselves” (2023, p. 413).

Returning to Dorfman (2022), we can see the connection between the 2022 proposed constitution and the transgenerational struggle to change society. For Dorfman, the constitution would have

extended democracy, established gender parity and popular participation, granted Indigenous peoples the recognition they had been denied for centuries, lovingly answered the need for universal health care, decent education and pension funds, access to water, sovereignty over mineral resources, the care for animals and children — *things that generations of Chileans have been fighting for*. (Dorfman, 2022, emphasis added)

Indeed, Dorfman further laments that “we have missed a unique chance to finally bury the authoritarian Pinochet constitution — which has been the facilitator of Chile’s neoliberal economic policies and, therefore, of its current crisis” (2022).

In this way, the draft constitution and the hopes, values, and commitments that it embodied, can be seen as spanning past and present and reaching into the future. It is in this sense that memory and future oriented mental time travel play a key role in the grief many Chileans experienced at the rejection of the draft constitution. They saw the constitution as a way of dealing with ghosts of the past, and of installing the hopes of a brighter future. There is a sense in which many people who voted in favour of the draft constitution did so, in part, to overcome past traumas, and this can be so even if they did not experience these traumas first hand.¹⁸ Collective trauma can be understood as a “cataclysmic event that shatters the basic fabric of society”, which results in “a crisis of meaning” (Hirschberger, 2018). Collective trauma coalesces into a collective memory, and “culminates in a system of meaning that allows groups to redefine who they are and where they are going” (Hirschberger, 2018). This collective memory is importantly related to our identities and the sense of who we are and can result in the “construction of a *trans*-generational collective self” (Hirschberger, 2018).¹⁹ The Pinochet era constitution is seen by many as a representation of that repressive regime and even as a continuation of it (Jara

¹⁸ One important means of this is through memorial sites, which call on us to remember past traumas: “memorialization serves as a mechanism by which social trauma more broadly can be transmitted horizontally (across populations who come into contact with the memorial) and temporally (intergenerationally)” (Abrutyn, 2023, p. 9). According to Gómez-Barris (2010), such memorial sites provide forms of “witness citizenship” and provide “important complements to the incomplete process of transitional justice in nations that have experienced grave human rights violations” (2010, p. 27). Such witness citizenship involves “forms of cultural, social, and political engagement that share an imagination about a traumatic past in order to activate and promote usually local collective solidarity” (Gómez-Barris, 2010, p. 31).

¹⁹ The discussion of collective trauma is meant to show that many people suffered during Pinochet’s dictatorship, and, as we show, that the memories of the individuals involved can be transmitted to other individuals even if they did not experience the trauma first-hand. In this paper, we are not committed to any ontological assumptions about collective trauma or the collective self.

Ibarra, 2019, p. 220; Piscopo & Siavelis, 2021). The rejection of the draft constitution could be seen as a set-back in the on-going negotiation of one's practical identity for many people.

Even for people who didn't experience or witness these traumas first hand, they can still become part of one's identity, coupled with the drive to renegotiate this traumatic past and lay claim to a better future.²⁰ They can become part of one's identity because collective or shared memories of the past can serve an identity-forming function in a variety of ways. First, it is now a truism of the sciences of memory that remembering is an active and constructive process (Roediger & DeSoto, 2015). Memory is malleable. In fact, it has been suggested that this "malleability of memory promotes the formation of shared memories" (Brown et al., 2012). Through mechanisms such as shared schemata or frameworks for interpreting events, social contagion,²¹ and socially shared retrieval induced forgetting,²² the malleability of memory helps "transform individual memories into shared, and subsequently collective memories" (Brown et al., 2012, p. 3).

Memories of the personal past can also be transmitted to others vicariously. Vicarious memory is a type of interpersonal episodic memory. It occurs when the memories of others become part of the remembered past of those who hear the memories, but did not personally experience the event in question.²³ Vicarious memories are passed from individual to individual, and from generation to generation, becoming part of the cultural memories of the group. In this way, "[e]vents, situations, even emotions and thoughts are passed from one person, generation, or group to others who 'inherit' the pattern of reality contained in the memories. Thus, the sins, pains, happiness, behavior, and realities of those who raise and enculturate us become a part of our repertoire" (Teski & Climo, 1995, p. 9). Given that vicarious memories perform the same functions as episodic memories (Pillemer et al., 2015), including an identity function, even individuals who did not directly experience a trauma can identify with the experience such that it becomes a part of their individual reality and the shared reality of the group.

²⁰ This is not to suggest that there are not important differences between the trauma suffered by individuals first hand. Our point here is simply that trauma can, at least in some sense, be shared and transmitted to others.

²¹ Sharing memories can result in the incorporation of testimonial information into one's memory from external sources and the convergence of memory representations.

²² When people discuss the past together, recalling certain details leads to forgetting those aspects that are not recalled, both in the person doing the recalling but also for the person listening.

²³ We do not take a stance on the controversial question of whether vicarious memory should be considered as a proper part of episodic memory. Our point is simply that the stories of others can help us learn about pasts that we did not directly experience, and these experiences are ones that we can also use to construct our individual and group identities.

In this way, the draft constitution was not just an ephemeral phenomenon, lacking the temporal depth to become embedded in one's practical identity. The draft constitution was embedded in the fabric of the (often traumatic) story of Chilean history and was viewed, at least by some, as a key way to realise the commitments, values etc., that go to make up their practical identities. The rejection of the constitution was a loss of life possibilities for some sectors of Chilean society.

4. Concluding Remarks

Rejecting the constitution involved a painful and unsettling disturbance to many people's practical identities. The rejection of the 'apruebo' revealed a loss of life possibilities that was mourned by the people for whom it was a key aspect of their practical identities. The electoral loss of September 2022 inevitably echoed with the numerous political losses endured and mourned by members of Chilean society throughout its history, losses of life possibilities that imbued the social movement with profound transformative energies as well as significant pain (Vargas & Silva, 2022).

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