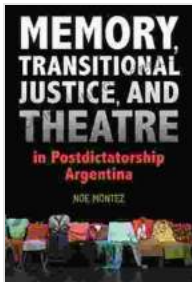


# Memory, Transitional Justice, and Theatre in Post-Dictatorship Argentina

The military dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983 was a dark period in the country's history, marked by widespread human rights abuses, including torture, murder, and disappearances. In the aftermath of the dictatorship, Argentina embarked on a complex and challenging process of transitional justice, which sought to address the legacy of the past and promote reconciliation.



## Memory, Transitional Justice, and Theatre in Postdictatorship Argentina (Theater in the Americas)

by John Marshall

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Theatre has played an important role in Argentina's transitional justice process. Plays have contributed to the recovery and reconstruction of memory, the pursuit of truth, and the search for justice and reconciliation. This article explores the different ways in which theatre has been used to address the past in Argentina, and examines the impact that it has had on the country's transitional justice process.

## **The Recovery and Reconstruction of Memory**

One of the most important tasks of transitional justice is the recovery and reconstruction of memory. This involves uncovering the truth about past human rights abuses, and ensuring that the victims of those abuses are remembered and their stories are told. Theatre can be a powerful tool for recovering and reconstructing memory, as it allows for the exploration of complex and difficult issues in a way that is both engaging and accessible.

In Argentina, a number of plays have been produced that deal with the experiences of victims of the dictatorship. These plays have helped to raise awareness of the human rights abuses that took place, and they have provided a space for victims to share their stories and experiences. Some of the most well-known plays that have dealt with the dictatorship include: *La noche de los lápices* (1986), *El Informe Nunca Más* (1985), and *La historia oficial* (1985).



## The Pursuit of Truth

Another important aspect of transitional justice is the pursuit of truth. This involves investigating human rights abuses, identifying those responsible, and holding them accountable. Theatre can be used to contribute to the pursuit of truth by raising awareness of human rights abuses, and by providing a space for victims and witnesses to share their experiences.

In Argentina, a number of plays have been produced that have focused on the pursuit of truth. These plays have helped to shed light on the human rights abuses that took place during the dictatorship, and they have contributed to the efforts to bring those responsible to justice. Some of the most well-known plays that have dealt with the pursuit of truth include: *Nunca más* (1985), *El juicio de Nuremberg* (1990), and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1995).



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## National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

 This article contains **weasel words**: vague phrasing that often accompanies biased or unverifiable information. Such statements should be clarified or removed. (September 2015)

**National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons** (Spanish: **Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas**, CONADEP) was an Argentine organization created by President Raúl Alfonsín on 15 December 1983, shortly after his inauguration, to investigate the fate of the desaparecidos (victims of forced disappearance) and other human rights violations (see: Dirty War) performed during the military dictatorship known as the National Reorganization Process between 1976 and 1983.

The research of the investigation commission was documented in the *Nunca Más* (Never Again) report, which was a complete summary published as an official report in Spanish, and delivered to Alfonsín on 20 September 1984, which opened the doors to the trial of the military juntas of the dictatorship. CONADEP recorded the forced disappearance of 8,961 persons from 1976 to 1983, although it noted that the actual number could be higher (estimates by human rights organizations usually place it at 30,000 persons). The report also stated that about 600 people were "disappeared" and 456 were assassinated (by death squads such as the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance) during the Peronist governments from 1973 to 1976.<sup>[?]</sup>

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- Creation of CONADEP
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### History of the disappearances [ edit ]

Military intervention in the political sphere was common in Argentina since the 1930s. Torture and violence were used as mechanisms to control political conflicts or to deter the actions of opposition. But, the implementation of forced disappearances began to be prevalent following the 1976 Argentine coup d'état, displaying a determination to eliminate opposition with a more hidden method.

The dictators denied any involvement in the disappearances and used "Centros Clandestinos de Detención" (Clandestine Detention Centers) to place the "disappeared". They were similar to the prisons of Argentina in regards to condition and structure but the detention centers could deny if a captive was being retained there. This gave the captors more freedom for torture or to kill the captives. Most disappeared people were eventually murdered and their bodies were either buried in unmarked graves, incinerated or disposed into the sea.<sup>[?]</sup> These hidden methods kept the Argentine government from being susceptible to international scrutiny and allowed the murder and torture of anyone without someone having to be held accountable to explain for the actions.

Relatives of the "disappeared" for many years following the abductions demanded solely for truth about the fate of the "disappeared". Over 5,000 reports were filed from Argentina to the La Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, APDH) and thousands of complaints were submitted to the Organization of American States, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Human Rights Division, Amnesty International and organizations with various religious affiliations. These reports promoted visits from both Amnesty International and IACHR, but the dictatorship succeeded in denying the charges until the Falklands War in June

### Operation Condor

#### Background histories

Argentina - Bolivia - Brazil (CIB) - Chile (DIT) - Cuba - France - Paraguay - Peru - Uruguay

#### Events

Dirty War - National Reorganization Process - Operation Colombo - Operation Charly - Operation Gladio - Night of the Pencils - Operation Independence - Ezeiza massacre - Margarita Sívori massacre - Death flights - Desaparecidos (the "disappeared") - 1973 Chilean coup d'état

#### Government leaders

Jorge Anaya - Hugo Benítez - Emilio Lami Dozzi - Julio Figueroa - Leopoldo Galtieri - Augusto Pinochet - Adolfo Bordaberry - Jorge Rafael Videla

#### Targeted militias

Montoneros - Tupamaros - People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) - Revolutionary Left Movement (MLR)

#### Principal operatives

Adolfo Azpil - Orlando Bosch - Hugo Campos Hermida - Manuel Contreras - Stefano Delle Chiese - José López Rega - Virgilio Paz Romero - Luis Posada Carriles - Paul Schärer - Michael Townerly

#### Organizations responsible

Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA) - Cavalry of Death - Batallón de Inteligencia 601 - Coordinación de Unidades Revolucionarias Organizadas (COURO) - National Intelligence Service of Brazil (SNI) - School of the Americas (SOA) - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Militare (SISMI) - Argentine Anticommunist Alliance ("Triple A") - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

#### Places

Esmeraldas - Estación Nacional de Chile - Villa Ormaiztegui - Colonia Dignidad - Navy Petty-Officers School of Mechwartick (ESMA)

Poster for the play 'Nunca más'

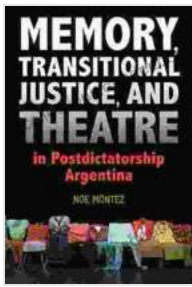
## **The Search for Justice and Reconciliation**

Transitional justice also seeks to promote justice and reconciliation. This involves addressing the needs of victims, seeking accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses, and promoting a culture of respect for human rights. Theatre can be used to contribute to the search for justice and reconciliation by providing a space for victims and perpetrators to come together, and by facilitating dialogue and understanding.

In Argentina, a number of plays have been produced that have focused on the search for justice and reconciliation. These plays have helped to raise awareness of the importance of justice and reconciliation, and they have contributed to the efforts to build a more just and equitable society. Some of the most well-known plays that have dealt with the search for justice and reconciliation include: *El secreto de la esperanza* (1999), *El abrazo* (2000), and *La reconciliación* (2005).



Theatre has played an important role in Argentina's transitional justice process. Plays have contributed to the recovery and reconstruction of memory, the pursuit of truth, and the search for justice and reconciliation. Theatre has provided a space for victims to share their stories, for perpetrators to come to terms with their actions, and for the whole society to reflect on the past and work towards a more just and equitable future.

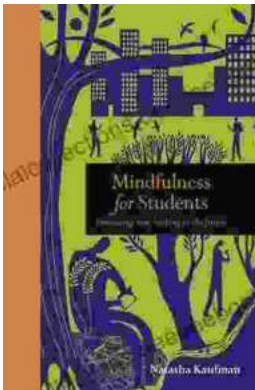


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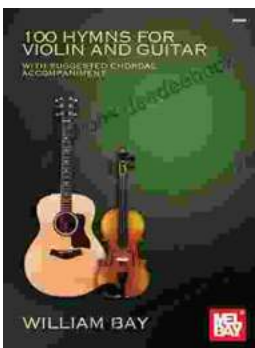
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