



“PROFESSIONS AND PROFILES IN THE ARCHIVE”

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Just as civil society (organizations, groups, people) was faced with a situation with which it had no prior experience (State terrorism), the social sciences and humanities that were committed to the cause of human rights were challenged to put their knowledge to work regarding the urgent need to record and produce information and testimonies for various purposes and agendas, often risking the very lives of social workers, psychologists, sociologists, and lawyers, among others. How does one record a testimony of torture? How does one establish a professional relationship with a torture survivor who is being persecuted? How can a database be constructed that allows researchers to cover and operationalize that which when spoken appears as silence in the face of horror? How can a ‘knowing’ that is useful, communicable and transferable to various professional fields (such as legal, therapeutic, political-institutional, etc.) be configured? This paper addresses the ways in which different professions of the social sciences and humanities were put at the service of a hitherto unconceivable task: the assistance and denunciation of human rights violations. Willingly or unwillingly, as a result of undertaking this job, a generation of human rights experts was forged in Chile. Key figures of this generation took part in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions of the 90s and 2000s, and have provided expert counseling to pacification processes abroad. Imbued with a sense of urgency, through differing cycles and social learning processes, they create procedures, languages and conventions to deal with gross violations of human rights. These professional stories, which are political and moral testimonies too, also pertain to the country’s historic memory and are of great value for the current generation of professionals being trained in the social sciences, and who are committed to human rights activism throughout the world.

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