“Iceberg! Right Ahead!” (Re)Discovering Chile at the 1992 Universal Exposition in Seville, Spain

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“Iceberg! Right Ahead!” (Re)Discovering Chile at the 1992 Universal Exposition in Seville, Spain

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“In a few minutes,” the Ministro said, waiving aside my father’s objections, “every important businessman in this country will trample in here. Ready to invest in Expo ’92, to buy into the new image Chile is marketing to the world. They’ve begun to understand that you don’t sell a product, you sell a whole goddamn country, you trademark and position the whole goddamn beautiful country. They’re primed, they’re panting for something new, anything that will close the doors of the past and advertise who we are. They’re looking at the future with modern eyes. . . .”

—Ariel Dorfman, The Nanny and the Iceberg

Summer visitors to the 1992 Universal Exposition held in Seville, Spain, encountered intense sunshine and stifling temperatures upward of 95°F. The sweltering Andalucían heat challenged the stamina of tourists, who explored more than one hundred regional, international, and thematic pavilions located on a 531-acre site on Cartuja Island in the middle of the Guadalquivir River. One pavilion in particular offered respite for overheated guests. While trees provided shade and a so-called bioclimatic sphere shot a refreshing mist of air on one of the fair’s main avenues, the Chilean pavilion featured a cool alternative in one of the most talked-about exhibits at the fair: a one-hundred-ton (think fifteen full-grown African male elephants) iceberg sculpture maintained by an intricate refrigeration system. Six columns surrounding the ice provided a 10°F “air curtain” while internal ducts filled with water and glycol kept the core of the berg at a cool 5°F.

This central exhibit, a twenty-eight-foot-tall installation composed of several smaller pieces of iceberg from Chile’s Antarctic territory, provoked a wide range of reactions among visitors, journalists, environmentalists, and intellectuals. A glossy analysis of the pavilion printed soon after its inauguration offered a quartet of photographs depicting visitors’ reactions to the exhibit. Some took pictures, while others stared up in amazement at the gigantic sculpture. Environmental advocacy groups such as the “Ice for Antarctica” organization and Chile’s National Committee for the Defense of Flora and...
Fauna (CODEFF) protested the exhibit, arguing that the iceberg removal was tantamount to the destruction of natural resources, as was the amount of fuel used to transport the pieces to and from Spain. The editors at *Time* magazine did not mince words in their assessment of the controversy, asking readers, “What’s dumber than hauling eighty-five tons of Antarctic ice halfway around the world to be showcased at Expo ’92 in Seville?” The magazine provided readers with the answer: “Hauling it back again.” Indeed, pavilion organizers arranged for the return of the iceberg to Chile and Antarctica after the Exposition closed on October 12, 1992, prompting *Time* to liken the plans to carrying “coals to Newcastle.”

Chilean scholars and cultural critics, in their assessment of the pavilion, focused on the symbolism of the iceberg given the country’s recent transition to democracy after seventeen years of dictatorship. Official rhetoric linked the sculpture to Chile’s natural beauty and its ability to compete in a technologically advanced global market. Given the theme of the Universal Exposition—the Age of Discoveries—and the fact that it coincided with the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus’s maiden voyage across the Atlantic, those involved with the project pondered the significance of the iceberg in relation to both the history and contemporary state of the Americas. Guillermo Tejeda, the pavilion’s artistic content director, viewed the exhibit not only as proof of his country’s ability to conduct global business, but also as representative of Latin America’s abundance of natural resources. In an interview with the *Calgary Herald*, Tejeda reflected on European conquest of the region, noting that ice was “the only booty Europeans didn’t carry out of America—because they couldn’t.”

The fervent local, regional, and international debates about the symbolism of the iceberg pointed to the success of the pavilion on at least one level. Creative content director Eugenio García and his team aspired to provoke among exposition visitors both a sense of amazement in something never before seen at a world’s fair and a desire to take an active part in this temporary re-creation of Chile. The contents of the pavilion and the choice of exhibits got people talking, and a plethora of newspapers published article whose pun-filled titles reflected what some considered the absurdity of iceberg: “Chile’s Chilly Idea” and “An Iceberg Bobs in the Latin American Imagination” (*New York Times*); “Chile’s Icy Exhibit Starts a Hot Debate” (*Calgary Herald*); “Icy Reception” (*New Scientist*); and “Arde un iceberg en Chile” (“An Iceberg Burns in Chile,” *Bohemio News*).

This article explores these debates, placing them within the complex context of Chile after seventeen years of dictatorial rule. In May 1988, five months before the October plebiscite in which Chileans voted to elect a new president, the government of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte confirmed with Spanish authorities that it would participate in the 1992 Universal Exposition. Questions soon arose about what Chile would send to Seville. What kind of exhibit could serve as a representation of national culture? What
exactly constituted national culture, and for that matter, national identity? Would the pavilion deal in some way with issues surrounding the nascent transition to democracy? The organizers intended both the structure and content of the pavilion to highlight Chile’s technological capability, inimitable beauty, and material abundance; every element was chosen for its physical and symbolic characteristics. Architects used pine instead of plastic or steel to build the pavilion because the wood was indicative of the country’s natural resources. Boxes at the Market of Merits opened up to reveal photographic and actual examples of typical goods like marraqueta bread and the lapislázuli stone. Paintings, sculptures, music, and film reflected everyday life and acknowledged famous Chileans such as poet Gabriela Mistral and war hero Arturo Prat. The Data Chile area allowed visitors to interact with computers using touch-screen technology.

The broader significance of the iceberg’s form and function, on the other hand, were not so clear-cut, and the pavilion became a contested space in which Chileans attributed meaning to an ephemeral monument to their country. Two levels of discourse operated in Chile during the early years of the democratic transition (1988–1992). The first concerned the sculpture and what it symbolized for the nation. Given the temporary nature of the exhibition, conversations about the iceberg tended to take place between early 1992 and early 1993. The second level of discourse focused on the process of redemocratization and the viability of a nation in a state of political flux. Politicians, scholars, and international observers began to debate the significance of this process for Chile’s future prior to 1988, when Pinochet still ruled with an iron fist. Discussions about national identity and about the cultural and socioeconomic implications of postdictatorship continued through the 1990s and persist today. Examination of scholarly critiques, official exposition material, and newspaper articles from Chile, Spain, and the United States highlights where these two discourses did and did not overlap. Debates about the symbolism of the iceberg interacted with broader, multifaceted discussions about the transition to democracy, particularly in the areas of historical memory, economic development, and about how to reconcile a painful past with a promising future.

The Hunt for Blue Ice

Captain Pedro Urrutia steered the frigate _Galvarino_ south from the port of Valparaíso in November 1991 toward Bahía Paraíso (Paradise Bay), located in Chile’s Antarctic territory. Contracted by the Chilean Commission for the 1992 Expo and content production company _CRISIS_, Urrutia and his crew needed to find, capture, and transport to Punta Arenas approximately 150 metric tons of ice. The _Galvarino_ needed to hunt for blue ice, the subject of many breathtaking photographs of the Antarctic region. Blue ice was
older, Urrutia noted, and did not break apart as easily. Chunks of this ice would not ended up in tourists’ glasses as novelty ice cubes (as they do on cruises through Chilean Patagonia, chilling fine whiskey); rather, engineers would prepare the pieces of berg for the long trip through the Panama Canal to Seville. After seven days navigating through ice floes, narrow corridors, and choppy waters, the crew found the perfect specimen. Using wire nets, large cranes, and even scuba divers, the team hauled the ice onto the Galvarino and stored seven twenty-ton pieces in containers topped with thermal covers.

In Seville, the iceberg was the last exhibit to be finished; on April 20, 1992, the first day of the fair, commission members and exposition representatives inaugurated the pavilion, declaring it open for business. By June 10, about one million people had visited the Chilean building and, according to services committee member Rudolf Araneda, had the chance to “remove themselves from the world [and] know and live the iceberg and all its conceptual content presented in graphic and modern forms.”

Disputed Symbol of a New Nation

The Exposition Commission had rejected early proposals concerning the staging of the iceberg. After much discussion, installation director and designer Juan Carlos Castillo and the group decided to place the iceberg on an altar-like structure that would highlight the sculpture’s frigid beauty, thinking of the entire pine and copper pavilion as a sort of “Church Boat.” The commission met with engineers and envisioned an intricate refrigeration system that would keep the iceberg from melting during the six-month-long fair. The resulting “altar” stood almost twenty-eight-feet tall and housed the insulated iceberg sculpture, mounted in a pyramid-like fashion. From its conception as the central exhibit of the pavilion to its installation in Seville and finally to its return voyage to Antarctica (more about that later), the iceberg almost begged to be the subject of debates and discussions about its broader meaning. What did the commission hope to communicate about Chile by capturing, manipulating, transporting, and erecting an iceberg?

To be sure, the exhibits that accompanied the installation were not merely for decoration. Creative directors worked with film directors, artists, photographers, and sound engineers to emphasize the country’s technological capabilities, highlight its natural resources, and offer a glance at lo cotidiano chileno, or the everyday Chilean experience. Chile-Seville Commission president Fernando Léniz noted that the organizers had a clear understanding of what they wanted the pavilion to convey: “a country basically without conflict, honest, hard-working, efficient, with many natural resources, with a very special, remote geographical location.” Léniz also wanted the exhibits to send a message that the country was a democratic nation and a viable trading partner due to its stabilized economy.
Expo ’92 was not the first world’s fair in which Chileans touted their natural wealth and economic potential. About one hundred years earlier, Chile’s exhibit at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition (which like the 1992 Universal Exposition celebrated the anniversary of Columbus’s encounter with the Americas) featured a lesson about the country’s northern sodium nitrate deposits. There was no sculpture made out of saltpeter in the Hall of Mines, Mining, and Metallurgy, but rather a display of statistics about the nitrate industry’s impressive growth and a model of the Rosario de Huara nitrate oficina (plant).\(^{22}\) Like other Latin American exhibits (Brazil’s offered a pyramid of gold and Argentina’s displayed pieces of marble), Chile’s invited visitors to think of the country as more than just a faraway—perhaps exotic and sweltering—land. Rather, the statistics and oficina model acted as proof of technological innovation, economic development, and investment security. These exhibits, it was hoped, would encourage visitors to associate Chile with progress and the ability to provide the supply for global economic demand. Chile also had hosted its own fair, the 1875 International Exposition. Fair organizers invited European countries such as Germany, Belgium, France, and England as well as several Central and South American countries to take part in the exposition celebrating global commerce and Chile’s economic growth.\(^{23}\)

As in the 1875 and 1893 fairs, and following the twentieth century trend of promoting progress at world exhibitions,\(^{24}\) the Chilean commission for the 1992 event in Seville sought to offer fair visitors, foreign media, and other international observers a spectacular view of Chile’s economic potential. The iceberg definitely captured the desired attention; it stood out from behind its insulated, refrigerated showcase and symbolized a country in flux as no other symbolic exhibit possibly could, given the multiple reactions and interpretations it provoked. The commission, emphasized artistic director Guillermo Tejeda, was very much aware of the complex political and cultural atmosphere of early 1990s Chile, noting that the challenges of the transition most likely would find some expression in the pavilion’s exhibits.\(^{25}\) Tejeda described the tensions associated with dictatorship and the transition to democracy as “confusion between what is hidden and what is visible, between past history and future desires”;\(^{26}\) the debates surrounding the iceberg display wrestled with these conflicts, which seemed to be at the heart of broader discussions about nationalism and the political and cultural ramifications of seventeen years of dictatorship, the transition, and of how to negotiate the two.

“From Arica to the South Pole”

Historian Robert W. Rydell has noted that after World War I, government representatives, supported by business leaders and local intellectuals, sought to revive interest in world expositions in order to reaffirm their country’s economic and political strength both at home and abroad.\(^{27}\) Although Rydell
limits his analysis to fairs held during the early to mid-twentieth century, his argument is relevant for comprehending the motives of Chilean leaders who in 1992 needed to encourage pride and unity in a nation undergoing significant political and cultural changes and at the same time advertise, or rebrand the country as an ideal business partner in the global economic market.

The frigate *Galvarino* could have found just as well the ice necessary for the sculpture within Chile’s contiguous territory. The shipping ferry *Navimag*, for example, traveled to the Aisén region in northern Patagonia in order to harvest an iceberg for the main exhibit of the Travel Mart Patagonia 2009 international tourism fair in the southern lakes city of Frutillar. The berg was smaller—only fifteen tons—but it served a similar purpose: remind Chileans of national resources and promote international and internal tourism. What was the benefit of traveling to Antarctica in search of the perfect iceberg for the ’92 Expo in Seville?

Despite the scant number of inhabitants and its peripheral location, for Chileans their country’s Antarctic territory seems to be much more than a slice of ice-covered land whose meteorological conditions make the nightly weather report on the state-owned television channel TVN (Chilean National Television). Since 1940, Chile has claimed ownership of about 480,000 square miles of Antarctic territory between 53°W and 90°W longitude, a chunk of land located within an area also claimed by Argentina and Great Britain. In the mid-twentieth century, Argentine and Chilean nationalist sentiments clashed with British imperialist intentions in disputes over Antarctic territory and sovereignty. On December 1, 1959, representatives from Chile joined delegates from eleven other nations in Washington, DC, and signed the Antarctic Treaty, which called for scientific cooperation between the participating countries and preventing the use of Antarctica for anything other than peaceful purposes, a stipulation of ostensibly utmost importance given the global Cold War context. The territory, occupied by about 2,000 people according to the 2002 census, forms part of the XII Region of Magallanes and the Chilean Antarctic.

The decision to search for ice from Antarctica reflects nationalist pride in the territory that dates back to the late 1940s. In February 1948, President Gabriel González Videla refused to minimize the importance of the claimed land and stated that it was necessary to “defend the sovereignty and unity of our territory, from Arica to the South Pole.” On May 10 of the previous year, to commemorate the claim and reinforce expressions of national identity celebrated Chile’s ice-covered noncontiguous territory, Correos de Chile issued two postage stamps that depicted the country’s Antarctic terrain. The stamps conveyed a simple yet powerful message: Despite the ongoing territorial disputes, Chile owned a piece of Antarctica according to Decree No. 1747, issued on November 6, 1940 (Figures 1 and 2).

The commission’s choice to display what was a piece of Chilean Antarctic territory reinforced the idea that despite years of political turmoil, the country and its people, on the one hand, could rally around a symbol
that reflected no one person, region, political party, or social class, but rather the nation as a whole. On the other hand, the exhibit highlighted the fact that Chile was able to organize, manage, and manipulate its technological and natural resources for the benefit of both a national and international audience. Correos Chile again supported the effort to encourage national pride by issuing stamps to commemorate the exposition and in particular, the iceberg (Figures 3 and 4).  

For director and designer Juan Carlos Castillo, the decision to capture ice from the South Pole pointed more to both the mysterious nature of Antarctica and the precarious ecological state of the continent. Castillo noted that displaying the iceberg in Seville was “a way of taking visionary possession of a marginal territory of our country.” The iceberg represented the fragility of the land, also a concern of environmentalists, who balked at the original idea of removing ice from Antarctica and burning fuel in order to transport it to Seville. In an interview with the Spanish newspaper El País, Chilean Institute of Political Ecology president Manuel Baquedano called the iceberg a “bad symbol” of Chile and a “gesture of ignorance and arrogance.” Commission organizers invited more ire when they made the decision to break down the sculpture and send the iceberg back to Chile, in a sense repatriating the ice that served its purpose for six months in Seville.  

Creative content director
Eugenio García defended the decision to showcase an iceberg sculpture, explaining to El País that the technological feat of transporting the berg proved that Chile successfully could ship goods demanded by the global market. “If we can transport this ice,” he noted, “we can transport fresh Chilean products, such as fruit or salmon, to any part of the world with the same efficiency.”

Polar Opposites?

In a 1940 poll conducted by the U.S. Office of Public Opinion Research, only 5 percent of respondents chose the word “efficient” to describe the people of Central and South America. The stereotype persisted throughout the twentieth century, along with labels of hot, lazy, and un- (or under-) developed. By accomplishing the impressive technical feat of harvesting the ice and transporting it to Seville and by occupying an individual pavilion separate from those of other Latin American countries, the Expo commission sought to differentiate Chile from other Latin American countries that were perhaps less prepared to participate competitively in the global market. Headlines such as the New York Times’s “Chile’s Iceberg Message: We’re Both Cool and Efficient” suggested that the coldness embodied by the iceberg contrasted with the tropical warmth and languid atmosphere stereotypically attributed to Latin America. Furthermore, as Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulian noted, the exhibit projected an image of Chile as an efficient and professional nation that was different from its slothful neighbors. In an exposition with the official theme of “Age of Discoveries,” many pavilions contained exhibits that offered a tribute to a particular country’s past. The more explicit, visible connotation of the iceberg focused on future potential and avoided references to the recent, tumultuous past. The sculpture and the refrigeration system that kept it “alive” suggested that Chile was a model, modern country firmly committed to strong economic development.

Under the Surface

Production coordinator Carlos Tironi summed up the commission’s official position on the iceberg. He stated: “We want something universal and spectacular, which would break with the cliché of Chile as the country of Pinochet and earthquakes.” The latter threat had been—and continues to be—buffered by advances in architecture and technology. The stigma (and threat) of the former remained much on Chileans’ minds, including those of the Expo commission, as demonstrated by Tironi’s comment. The exhibit broke any direct connections with the dictatorship of General Pinochet. Yet, by lacking any reference to what seemed to be the elephant in the room, it called attention to what exactly was omitted in the pavilion: an acknowledgment of
the regime’s atrocities and a commitment to deal critically with difficult issues related to repression, reconciliation, and the transition.

Overlapping debates about the symbolism of the iceberg and the broader implications of Chile’s transition to democracy began with a choice between “yes” and “no.” Chileans exercised their constitutional right to vote on the extension of Pinochet’s presidency during a plebiscite held on October 5, 1988. As provided by the Constitution of 1980, ratified by 67 percent of votes in a questionably “fair” plebiscite on September 11, 1980, a “yes” vote would guarantee eight more years of rule for the general, while a “no” vote would provide for congressional elections. A coalition of several political parties from the political left and center, the Concertación de Partidos por el No (Coalition of Parties for the “No”), came together to encourage a vote of “no,” while two parties on the right, Renovación Nacional (National Renewal) and the Unión Democrática Independiente (Independent Democratic Union), rallied for the “yes” vote. Prior to the plebiscite, supporters on both sides vigorously campaigned, using posters, pamphlets, and television time to back their arguments. Rhetoric used by both sides in their propaganda revealed concerns about Chile’s future and fear that progress and democracy would be hindered by both memories and practices associated with the past. Ninety-seven percent of those who registered showed up at the tables on the day of the plebiscite. The “no” vote won with 54 percent, while the “yes” ballot received 45 percent. The following year, Chileans elected as president Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin Azócar, the candidate of the Concertación. Aylwin took office, and seventeen years of dictatorial rule came to an end in 1990.

Although Pinochet no longer held the title “head of state,” he remained a strong presence in politics and society after the transition; indeed, he remains so today even after his death of December 10, 2006, due to his administration’s negotiations with the Concertación about possible amendments to the 1980 Constitution. Pinochet had emphasized that he would respect the outcome of the plebiscite and transfer power to the winner of the December 1989 election. Nevertheless, the general and his team ensured at least the political and economic legacy of the authoritarian regime through these negotiations; the binomial electoral law, which guaranteed the Right’s control of the senate even if the Concertación claimed the majority, remained untouched, as did laws that protected job security for civil servants and military commanders-in-chief. The provisions, approved by Chileans in a July 1989 plebiscite, also guaranteed Pinochet’s position as the army’s commander-in-chief until 1998.

During the early years of redemocratization, Chileans struggled to make sense of their place within the heady atmosphere of political change and the realities of social problems and economic growth. The legal pact that the Concertación made with Pinochet before the transition—a “devil’s bargain” according to historian Peter Winn—blurred the lines between dictatorship
and democracy.\textsuperscript{49} The Concertación government under Aylwin continued to work with many of neoliberal economic policies developed by technocrats and adopted by the bureaucratic authoritarian regime. The “Chicago Boys” and other economists had supported the administration, as they believed that Chile could be politically free only after it had modernized and achieved economic freedom. Pinochet’s economic advisors pushed through a package of free-market policies, which included plans for foreign investment, inflation control, minimal government intervention, and privatized social services.\textsuperscript{50} After the economic crisis of the early 1980s, radical policy gave way to strategies designed to safeguard the stability of local industry and promote the country’s exports.\textsuperscript{51}

After 1990, the Concertación and its economic team placed great value on Chile’s place in the global market. World copper prices for the moment were increasing, as was the amount of the country’s nontraditional industrial exports. The coalition government needed to allay business and industry’s fears—they had seen after all the “yes” factions’ fear-provoking fliers that linked the Concertación with socialism—and assure them that their interests were protected.\textsuperscript{52} The environmental and social ramifications of the regime’s economic restructuring—including forest degradation, marked poverty, and unequal income distribution—also made the transition into the new era of democracy along with the neoliberal economic model, prompting critics to think about the price of modernization and its affect on memory in the 1990s.

After the transition to democracy, Chileans found themselves in a country that had experienced a radical political shift—seventeen years of authoritarian rule gave way to an openly elected government. The new government struggled to address the emotional issue of human rights abuses committed during the dictatorship while at the same time, it yearned to focus on the future and establish Chile as a powerful participant in the global economy.

How to reconcile the past with the future? What place does historical memory of the dictatorship (and the Popular Unity era) have in contemporary Chilean society? Those questions would become central in the connected debates over the iceberg exhibit’s significance and post-dictatorship identity. Aylwin initiated what he called a “re-encounter” with Chile’s history soon after he took office.\textsuperscript{53} Soon after taking office, he created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission—often called the Rettig Commission after its director, Raúl Rettig—to investigate human rights violations that had taken place after the September 11, 1973, coup.\textsuperscript{54} The Rettig Report, released one year after Aylwin’s inauguration, confirmed what many Chileans knew to be the horrible truth about torture and disappearances during the dictatorship and legitimized memories about the repression. The document, unfortunately, possessed no legal power and those responsible for atrocities largely avoided prosecution.\textsuperscript{55} The Concertación acknowledged that the regime had committed violations and that the security brigades and armed forces had caused pain.
not only for the victims and their families, but also for the whole nation. Although Aylwin and his successor, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, attempted to investigate further abuse charges against former officials, the still-powerful military and the provisions granted by the 1980 Constitution thwarted their actions and any progress that they made. Faced with these hurdles and the military constant intimidation tactics, scholar Alexander Wilde has argued that the Concertación understandably chose to focus on Chile’s future. Aylwin and Ruiz-Tagle, in fact, made statements indicating that “their strategy was to move beyond the experience and memory to consolidate democracy.” It was no coincidence that statements made by Chile-Seville Commission president Fernando Léniz and production coordinator Carlos Tironi reflected the positions of former presidents Aylwin and Ruiz-Tagle.

Memories might waver in strength, but they do not disappear, as demonstrated by the recent inauguration (January 11, 2010) of Santiago’s Museum of Memory and Human Rights and the continued struggle of families to find out what happened to their love ones. During the early postdictatorship period, the combination of Chilean society’s conflicted yet ambiguous attitude toward historical memory clashed with an emerging national identity that seemed to value and link economic progress and conspicuous consumption with modernization. Cultural critics Nelly Richard and Bernardo Subercaseaux have examined the debates about the Expo ’92 iceberg exhibit and have discussed the discourses of modernity and memory that have emerged from these debates. Both have questioned the symbolism of the iceberg within the context of the posttransition period: What was the exhibit trying to sell?

For Richard, the commission, through “visual seduction and attraction,” attempted to sell the image of a New Chile, of a country that through its political and technological maneuvers, had a commodity to offer the rest of the world: itself. Using the hook of an attention-grabbing centerpiece, the entire pavilion served as propaganda for a new and improved Chile, as noted by the Ministro character in Ariel Dorfman’s novel The Nanny and the Iceberg. Richard argues that the organizers, informed by advertising experts, developed an exhibit that would confront and discard stereotypical pigeonholing of Chile as an underdeveloped nation governed by brutal dictators. The result, she notes, was a slick, sterile display devoid of any hint of history or memory and sanitized for the easy consumption of tourists and potential investors. Given Richard’s comparison of the iceberg exhibit to an advertising campaign that sought to steer people’s attention not toward Chile’s turbulent political past, but instead toward a promising economic future, it seems appropriate to note that researchers in the hotel and restaurant administration field recently have discussed effective ways that businesses can repair a damaged reputation. Three professors in that field have argued that something called “affective advertising for postcrisis brand repair” is an effective way to manage fallout from a devastating event. The strategy calls for a response that appeals to customers’ emotions, perhaps drawing upon
nostalgia in order to provoke consumers to connect the brand to positive past experiences.\textsuperscript{64} The process of “rebranding,” or of marketing a specific, new image of Chile that would steer tourists and other observers away from potentially harmful associations of the country with brutality and torture used similar methods to the ones described by the researchers, but instead focused on reaching emotions through what Richard called performance, or the advertising of a “discourse of change.”\textsuperscript{65}

The idea that Chile marketed itself as a consumer’s paradise reflects Tomás Moulian’s assessment that daily life in contemporary Chile revolves around the process of buying and selling; capitalistic pursuits, whether shopping or making business deals are not only pleasurable activities, he argues, but also practices that shaped national identity in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{66} Bernardo Subercaseaux argues that the commission attempted to sell the idea of Chile as a model nation for three reasons: It was different from other Latin American countries, it was triumphant with its economic success and transition to democratization, and it was modern, using technology and natural resources in order to become more competitive in the global economic arena.\textsuperscript{67} The design of the exhibit, the rhetoric used by fair officials to describe it, and the absence of traditional cultural artifacts related to folklore for example pointed to a nation that was prepared to leave behind its past for the benefit of the future.\textsuperscript{68} Becoming modern, however, is about more than just achieving economic success and the admiration of foreign observers; Subercaseaux maintains that in order for Chile to be truly modern, it needs to adopt a democratizing project that aims to improve not only the economic life of the country, but also the daily life of its citizens through education, work, health, sports, and culture.\textsuperscript{69} Although the Expo commission did its best to promote—or sell—an image of a consumption-happy New Chile that was primed to keep up in the increasingly competitive world economy, the iceberg caught people’s attention and prompted them to reevaluate the transition process, think about the ways in which their lives had changed or remained the same, and deal with—in one way or another—the memory of a nation that seemed to have lost as well as gained so much.

**Bridging the Pacific**

The story of the iceberg that made its way from Antarctica to Chile to Seville and back again across the Atlantic is more than just an interesting anecdote about a thought-provoking and unusual exhibit. The Expo Commission decided to offer a sculpture made out of ice as a symbol of economic potential and natural beauty. By doing this, the organizers not only achieved their goals, but also accomplished what it seemingly had hoped not to do: call attention to a nation going through difficult, promising, and sometimes painful transitions on multiple levels. In the process, the iceberg took on different
meanings, ones that reflected conflicting ideas about the nature of the so-called New Chile and about what it meant to be Chilean in a period of political, economic, and cultural change.

Memories of the famous—or infamous—iceberg have resurfaced as an Executive Secretariat Team prepares to present a particular image of Chile at the Expo Shanghai, which opens on May 1, 2010, and runs until October 31. For this exposition, the team has shifted its attention from the Atlantic to the Pacific, toward China. Again, it seems as though participation in the global economy has motivated the organizers to focus on strengthening already-established business ties with the host nation. Indeed, the two countries signed a free-trade agreement on November 18, 2005. The theme of the exposition, “Better City, Better Life,” suggests an improvement upon the past; will Chile’s primary exhibit prompt the international media to label the pavilion a representation of magical realism, as they did when the 1992 commission unveiled the ice sculpture? Will the pavilion symbolize the recent presidential elections, which resulted in the end of twenty years of Concertación government? How will the exhibits represent the everyday lives of Chileans while promoting trade with China? Although the answers to these questions remain up in the air, Hernán Somerville, the commissioner general of the Chilean pavilion, has assured the international media of one thing: “The Chile Pavilion,” he noted, “will be second only to the China Pavilion.”

Notes

4. Ibid., 78.
7. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 43, 51, 58.
13. Ibid., 69.
15. Ibid., 73.
16. Ibid., 94.
17. Ibid., 74.
18. Ibid., 18–9.
19. For a brief time (1973–1974) during the Pinochet dictatorship, Léniz served as minister of economics. He also was president of the daily newspaper *El Mercurio*, one of the strongest channels of opposition to the Popular Unity coalition government of Salvador Allende.
20. Ibid., 29.
21. Ibid.
25. *El pabellón del Chile*, 16.
26. Ibid., 76–7.


38. Manuel Délano, “El iceberg antártico que se expondrá . . .”


43. Captain Pedro Urrutia for one thought about the iceberg as a living being. He had this to say about the massive pieces of floating ice: “The affection I have for the ice comes from what I know about it. I know how it formed, and I went about learning about its character and how it behaves. I would like to have vision powerful enough to see the salt particles that I know are moving around in its interior. They have life, and they move about.” Pabellón, 74.


46. For examples of pamphlets distributed during dictatorship (1973–1990), see Panfletos, poniendo el grito en el suelo (Santiago: Biblioteca Nacional, 2003).


49. Winn, 49.

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58. Ibid.
63. Ibid., 111.
68. Ibid., 61.
69. Ibid., 67.
70. http://www.sicc.oas.org/agreements_e.asp