
sobre héroes y tumbas

the park and political logics of memory
in argentina

daniel james
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declaration

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abstract

The memory of the disappeared in Argentina is heavily and historically regulated and framed. We can use landscapes of memory as a prism to reconstruct the wider constitutive field of memory through which the reality of the past has been framed. By reconstructing this field, we can trace the discourses and logics of memory according to which meaning has come to be attributed to the past and a project for a future politics has been delineated.

A study of the *Parque de la Memoria* reveals that Argentine collective memory has a cultural biography in which it tends towards two politics logics of memory which shape – and are shaped by – the concrete interventions over time and space of human rights actors and the understanding of the past among the wider interpellated Argentine public who situate within it in an expanded field.

As a politics shaped by memory and mourning, the politics of transition in Argentina is revealed to be paradoxically emptied out of politics. Whether human rights groups choose to remember the *desparecidos* as innocent victims or 30,000 revolutionaries, so as to advance a social grieving or a politics of grievance, there is a lacuna at the heart of the memory of the disappeared as to who the disappeared really were. Though we find images and narrative discourses of quotidian humanity and political activism, we do not find the two together. The political logics of memory that have regulated the memory of the disappeared do not correspond to the reason of human rights groups, however, but that of society. The ontological subjects of the disappeared have been socially constructed in and through this memory as subjects that this society was willing to recognise and remember, with lasting implications for Argentine society and politics that continue to this day.

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Was ever an immolation so belied
As these intolerably nameless names?
Siegfried Sassoon

*Por respeto a los desaparecidos, busco
siempre y busqué siempre mientras estuve
en la Asamblea y en la CONADEP, el nombre,
el apellido, datos; el máximo de identidad
posible para encarnar a cada uno. Todo lo
que sean números englobantes demuestra
la poca importancia que se les daba a las
vidas, no importa quien se los haga.
Graciela Fernández Meijide*

table of contents

title page	1
declaration	2
abstract	3
acknowledgements	4
epigraph	5
table of contents	6
list of figures	7
I. the emptying out of the park	
<i>an introduction</i>	10
II. spaces of memory, spaces for memory	
<i>a literature review</i>	27
III. reconstructing the field to trace the discourses and logics of memory	
<i>a cultural biography</i>	46
IV. the field, frames and political logics of memory	
<i>a theoretical framework</i>	65
V. whose park for whose memory?	
<i>entering the field</i>	84
VI. <i>los desaparecidos</i> as (un)grievable lives	
<i>a cultural biography of the representation of the disappeared</i>	105
VII. <i>el parque de la memoria</i> in an expanded field	
<i>the representation of the disappeared in the Park of Memory</i>	133
VIII. bearing witness, proving fact, unmourning the undead	
<i>a discourse analysis of relatives' testimony</i>	157
IX. <i>el parque de la memoria</i> as a symbolic cemetery of the innocents	
<i>embodied practices of memory and mourning in the Memory Park</i>	180
X. the emptying out of the <i>desaparecido</i>	
<i>a conclusion</i>	209
XI. annex	
.....	231
XII. bibliography	
.....	240

list of figures

Figure 1

Figure 1: Obama and Macri with Marcelo Brodsky in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Image courtesy of *Televisión Noticias*, used without permission.

Figure 2

Figure 2: The Memory Park is host in January 2014 to a demonstration over the pay and conditions of its staff. Photo courtesy of *Infojusnoticias*, used without permission.

Figure 3

Figure 3. Argentina. The white box shows the location of its capital city, Buenos Aires (see figure 4). Image courtesy of *Google Maps*.

Figure 4

Figure 4. Buenos Aires. The white box denotes the location of the Memory Park (see figure 5). Image courtesy of *Google Maps*.

Figure 5

Figure 5. The *Parque de la Memoria* (headed “Memoria Park”) is clearly visible to the north-east of Buenos Aires (as shown by the red arrow and white box). The site marked “*Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos*” in the north-west is the former clandestine detention centre, ESMA, now a Space of Memory and Human Rights. The *Estadio Monumental* is home to football team, River Plate. It also hosted the final of the 1978 World Cup. The airfield to the south-east is the *Aeroparque Internacional Jorge Newbery*. Some of the ‘death flights’ took off from here during the dictatorship in which *desaparecidos* were thrown into the river. Image courtesy of *Google Maps*.

Figure 6

Figure 6: the Kirchners in the Parque. Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner are shown around the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism during its inauguration in 2007. Photo courtesy of the Parque de la Memoria, used without permission.

Figure 7

Figure 7: A memorial in Rosario to gay and lesbian people disappeared during the dictatorship. At the bottom can be seen the beginning of a row of railway lines. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 8

Figure 8: A copy of the advertisement taken out by the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* and other human rights groups in *La Prensa* newspaper on 28 August 1977. Courtesy of CELS.

Figure 9

Figure 9: A copy of the advertisement taken out by the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in *La Nación* newspaper on 10 December 1977. Courtesy of CELS.

Figure 10

Figure 10: The Plaza de Mayo is converted into a giant open-air factory for the production of life-sized silhouettes in the *siluetazo*. Image courtesy of *Revista Haroldo*, used without permission.

Figure 11

Figure 11: People line up and lay down for their silhouette to be traced as a representation of the disappeared. Image courtesy of *Telam*, used without permission.

Figure 12

Figure 12: some participants in the *siluetazo* added the names of the disappeared to the silhouettes. Image courtesy of the Argentine Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, used without permission.

Figure 13

Figure 13: During the *Marcha de las Máscaras*, demonstrators accompanied the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* wearing masks. Hebe de Bonafini said the *desaparecidos* were 'present in each one of the young people that [was there] in solidarity with [their] pain.'

Figure 14

Figure 14: *Sin Título*, by Roberto Aizenberg.

Figure 15

Figure 15: Aizenberg's *Sin Título* seen from the opposite direction. Seen in conjunction with William Tucker's *Victoria*, the figures are now suggestive of *siluetas*, or silhouettes.

Figure 16

Figure 16: *30,000* by Nicolás Guagnini.

Figure 17

Figure 17: *30,000* by Nicolás Guagnini. Seen from a different direction, the representation of the face of the *desaparecido* seems to disappear again.

Figure 18

Figure 18: *Memorial* by Luis Camnitzer. The memorial replicates a phone directory in which the names of *desaparecidos* have been (re)inserted.

Figure 19

Figure 19: "*aquella mañana*", by Osías Yanov and curated by Inés Katzenstein and Javier Villa.

Figure 20

Figure 20: Interpellated by the figure of the *desaparecido*, two generations attempt to build an interpretation of the recent violent past as a past that between them, and through them, and others, is shared.

Figure 21

Figure 21: Visitors approach the river, down the slope from Guagnini's *30,000* on the crest of the hill. The fourth and final wall comprising the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism is on their right, the Sala PAYS their left. In front can be seen the walkway that protrudes into the river, where Claudia Fontes' *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez* can be viewed (see Figure 22). Image courtesy of Marcelo Brodsky: used without permission.

Figure 22

Figure 22: the *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez*, as seen from the walkway.

Figure 23

Figure 23: Nicolás Guagnini's *30,000* helps us and taunts us as we try and make sense of the recent violence of the disappearances by building a memory around the memorial as a medium, and frame.

Figure 24

Figure 24: the dance of the sun on the sea creates a wonderful silhouette-figure of Pablo Miguez in Claudia Fontes' *reconstrucción* as it bobs and weaves in memory with the pulse of the tide.

Figure 25

Figure 25: Visitors situated in an expanded field of representability try to move their memories around Yanov's figure-silhouette in Katzenstein et al.'s production in order to construct an interpretation of the recent violent past.

Figure 26

Figure 26: the nameless names and empty spaces on the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism as a screen inscribe the emptiness of some frameworks of memory and not the memory of the disappeared themselves.

Figure 27

Figure 27: A decision was taken not to throw out the skateboarders that skate on the opening plaza, though they have been asked out of respect not to skate next to the Monument.

Figure 28

Figure 28: Obama and Macri in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Image courtesy of *La Nación*.

Figure 29

Figure 29: Hollande in the Parque de la Memoria. Hollande is joined by French Foreign Secretary Jean-Marc Ayrault (left), *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* President Estela de Carlotto (centre) and her *nieta recuperado*, Guido Carlotto (right). Image courtesy of *La Nación*, used without permission.

Figure 30

Figure 30: Trudeau in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Trudeau is accompanied among others by MP Victoria Donda (to his right) and *Madre de Plaza de Mayo* Vera Jarach (in the headscarf to his left). Donda was the daughter of *desaparecidos*, and a *nieta recuperada* by the *Abuelas*. She is also the Victoria, née Claudia, who features in Ari Gandsman's 2012 article (see chapter two). Image courtesy of *Clarín*, used without permission.

Figure 31

Figure 31: Ban Ki-moon in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Ban is joined by the *Abuelas'* Estela de Carlotto (centre left), Argentina's Sub-Secretary of State for Human Rights Claudio Avruj (centre) and Marcelo Brodsky (centre right) among others. Image courtesy of Twitter, used without permission.

Figure 32

Figure 32: Reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez.

Figure 33

Figure 33: Baylee Almon. Image courtesy of *USA Today*.

Figure 34

Figure 34: Aylan Kurdi. Image courtesy of the *guardian*.

Figure 35

Figure 35: Kathy Kollwitz's Pietà in the Neue Wache.

Figure 36

Figure 36: 'All we see are the names' on the monumental walls. These names invite us as tourists of history to mourn the victims of a depoliticised conflict whom we help to produce through these practices of mourning and embodied memory as depoliticised subjects, and innocent victims. Image courtesy of *Infobae*, used without permission.

the emptying out of the park

an introduction

'there is no shortage of candidates for the moment
when the country started to go wrong.'

The Economist

'Perón's administration fought violence with violence'

Francesca Lessa

In August 2016, the Argentine President Mauricio Macri, was asked in a television interview how many people he thought had been killed under the last military dictatorship. 'I have no idea,' he replied. 'That's a debate I'm not going to enter, whether they were 9,000 or 30,000.'¹ Macri's answer was surprising, given that only a few months before he had been joined by his US counterpart Barack Obama in a visit to the *Parque de la Memoria*. The Park of Memory remembers the victims of the dictatorship. The visit was designed to mark the fortieth anniversary in March 2016 of the military *coup*. As part of the visit, the two statesmen gave a short press conference in the Sala PAYS exhibition centre.² From there they were accompanied by Marcelo Brodsky and other members of the human rights community in a tour of the park and its Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism (see Figure 1). The Monument contains the names of each of the nine thousand or so people confirmed as having been forcibly disappeared or executed under military rule. Why then, did the President of Argentina refuse to enter into a debate a few months later? What prevented Mauricio Macri from entering the debate over the fate of the disappeared?

Visitors to the same park in January 2014 could be forgiven for having been confused. Strolling among the monument and various memorials in the thirty-five acre landscape under a bright southern hemisphere summer sun, they would have confronted an unlikely installation. A huge banner had been unfurled on which was written in bold, black letters: *0% AUMENTO = VACIAMIENTO = PRO*³ (see Figure 2). The Buenos Aires city government, led at that point by Mauricio Macri as Mayor, had informed staff working at the site that there would be no money that year for salary increases and reportedly told those who disagreed to look for something else. Staff and supporters took to the media in protest. They also took to the barricades.

¹ Blaming the victims: dictatorship denialism is on the rise in Argentina, *guardian*, 29 August 2016

² Remarks by President Obama and President Macri of Argentina at Parque de la Memoria, *White House Office of the Press Secretary*, 24 March 2016 (correct as at 18 August 2016). Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/24/remarks-president-obama-and-president-macri-argentina-parque-de-la>

³ "0% INCREASE = EMPTYING OUT = PRO. PRO is *Propuesta Republicana*, or the Republican Proposal party.



Figure 1: Obama and Macri with Marcelo Brodsky in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Image courtesy of *Televisión Noticias*, used without permission.



Figure 2. The Memory Park is host in January 2014 to a demonstration over the pay and conditions of its staff. Photo courtesy of *Infocusnoticias*, used without permission.

Supporters organised a demonstration outside the city government's offices.⁴ An online petition was launched which gathered thirteen and a half thousand signatures.⁵ More than eighty academics based at universities around the world drafted a letter of support,⁶ as did colleagues working at other sites of memory in Buenos Aires.⁷ Walking around the city at that time, I stumbled across more banners proclaiming: ¡NO AL VACIAMIENTO!^{8 9} The park was in 'crisis.'¹⁰ There were suggestions that it was going to close.¹¹

This is a thesis about that park. About the kind of things we find going on there, and the debates that centre there or that somehow pass through. But more than that, it is a thesis which uses the park as a lens onto the different ways that the "disappeared"¹² are represented, remembered and recognised in Argentine collective memory today as a means of deciphering the country's current political transformation. As the events during the 'crisis' over its future make clear, what goes on at the park can tell us much more about the politics of transition in Argentina than we might expect, even when the controversy has to do with something as seemingly anodyne as the pay and conditions of its staff (see chapter five). As the events of Barack Obama's visit illustrate, the lines between politics and non-politics, memory and mourning are often tantalisingly blurred (see chapter nine). In this thesis, I use the Memory Park as a prism to sharpen and refine the often complex but always fascinating constellation of memories, discourses and meanings that circulate around the disappeared in Argentine collective memory and wider society: about who they were; what their disappearances mean (or should mean); and how their lives – now lost – are deserving of being remembered today. How do the representations, discourses and practices of memory and mourning that situate at or traverse the park help us to understand the complex ways that Argentine society has attempted to come to terms with its recent violent past as it continues to transition to liberal democracy? What role do the politics of memory and mourning play in helping to define, and demarcate, the politics of transition? Is the memory of the disappeared regulated, to the extent that the President of the Nation has to moderate what he says and does in relation to their memory? If so, how? If so, why?

⁴ Parque de la Memoria: el jueves habrá un reclamo de los trabajadores, *Infojusnoticias*, 6 January 2014.

⁵ NO al cierre del Parque de la Memoria, *Change.org*, correct as at 15 December 2014. The petition can be found at: <https://www.change.org/p/horacio-rodriguez-larreta-no-al-cierre-del-parque-de-la-memoria-2>

⁶ Con el respaldo de la academia, *Página 12*, 18 January 2014.

⁷ Compartimos la adhesión de Eduardo Jozami, director del Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti, recibida a partir de la actual situación en el Parque de la Memoria, *Facebook*, 9 January 2014.

⁸ "NO TO THE EMPTYING OUT [of the Park and the Ministry of Human Rights]". See chapter five.

⁹ Please note, all translations from the original Spanish to English that appear in this text are my own unless stated.

¹⁰ Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014.

¹¹ "El cierre del Parque sería un delito contra la memoria," *Infojusnoticias*, 4 January 2014.

¹² As a social construction, "the disappeared" as a term often appears in inverted commas. I do not adhere to this in this text. Rather, when referring to the disappeared in Spanish, as the *desaparecidos*, I use italics.

Before we proceed, a few definitions are in order. *El Parque de la Memoria* translates generously in English to Memory Park, Park of Memory or Remembrance Park; I use all three terms interchangeably throughout the text along with the original Spanish. Following the recent memory 'boom' (Winter in Bell 2006), there is an abundant scholarship on collective memory (or memories), cultural memory and the politics of memory. Though mindful of their subtle but important differences (see chapter two), I understand these three terms to mean broadly the same thing. By collective memory, then, I take to mean the fluid, dynamic and contested process through which groups (whether as part of a community, society or nation) struggle to attribute meaning to the events and persons of the past and shape the future politics. By *los desaparecidos*, or "the disappeared," I am referring to those persons who were forcibly disappeared as part of a conflagration of violence that culminated in a campaign of state terrorism by the military *junta* in Argentina in the 1970s and '80s. This is tautological. By forced disappearance, then, I mean all those who were abducted by organs or agents of the state outside of judicial process before being tortured and executed and their bodies clandestinely disposed of or destroyed. The definition provided by Article II of the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons is instructive:

For the purposes of this Convention, forced disappearance is considered to be the act of depriving a person or persons of his or their freedom [sic], in whatever way, perpetrated by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support, or acquiescence of the state, followed by an absence of information or a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the whereabouts of that person, thereby impeding his or her recourse to the applicable legal remedies and procedural guarantees.¹³

Article II of the United Nations' International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance understands 'enforced' disappearances thus:

For the purposes of this Convention, "enforced disappearance" is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.¹⁴

Both definitions allude elliptically to an important point of forced (or 'enforced') disappearances, which is that the victims are usually assassinated as part of the concealment of their fate and their bodies clandestinely disposed of or destroyed. This might be carried out through cremation, the burial of the bodies in unmarked graves, their depositing in the street to make it appear as if they died in armed confrontation, or their disposal in "death flights" in which the victims were flown in aircraft before being dumped while still alive into the river or

¹³ Article II, Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons, *Organisation of American States*, 9 June 1994. Correct as at 30 September 2016.

¹⁴ Article II, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, United Nations resolution 47/133, *UN*, 18 December 1992. Correct as at 30 September 2016.

sea (CONADEP [1984]). Both definitions post-date the forced disappearances that took place in Argentina, and indeed were partly inspired by the activism of human rights organisations including many relatives of the victims who helped to draft the legislation (Keck and Sikkink 1999, Lutz and Sikkink 2001, Sikkink 2008, 2011).

What I would like to do in this introductory chapter is to set the scene for the piece of research that follows. The introduction is divided into three sections. Firstly, I begin by painting in broad brushstrokes the political, social and economic currents out of which a period of political turmoil emerged in Argentina that culminated with the use of forced disappearances as a technique of political repression and state terrorism. Secondly, I introduce the park and set out my research questions, reflecting on the choice of the park as the means through which to pursue these. In section three I look ahead to the thesis as a whole. Here, I outline the main argument of the thesis and summarise the chapters that follow.

argentina's 'downwards spiral'

If that august club of the world's wealthiest nations the G7 had convened at the turn of the previous century it would have counted among its members Argentina. By 1900, Argentina was the seventh richest country in the world, its economy soaring, its future bright. Between the years 1871 – the year of the Paris Commune – and 1914 – the year Europe collapsed in on itself – Argentina's GDP had grown by an annual rate of 6 per cent. This was the fastest rate of any country in the world. Argentina was wealthier at that point than Italy, France or Germany. This was reflected in its social make-up. When wealthy Argentines travelled to Europe it is said that they took their livestock with them, so superior was their produce (Hedges 2011). It was also illustrated in the urban canvas of its capital city. Following successive improvements, the Casa Rosada was completed in 1898. Work began on the Buenos Aires Central Post and Telecommunications Office a year later. Generally considered among the finest opera houses in the world, Teatro Colón opened in Buenos Aires in 1908, shortly followed by that other bastion of modernity, Retiro railway station seven years later. The country was on the march, a 'magnet' for Europeans who looked to its new world *pampas* of plenty and its booming metropolitan economy in the hope of finding jobs, land and opportunity. By 1914, half of Buenos Aires' population was foreign-born.¹⁵

Today, economists are fond of arguing that there are four types of global economic model. There is that of the developed nations, and what they persist in calling the developing nations. There is that of Japan. And then there is Argentina (Ibid.). The latter is a byword for decline; shorthand for how not to manage an economy in the transition towards modern industrial

¹⁵ A century of decline, *Economist*, 15 February 2014. Correct as at 30 September 2016.

capitalism. Today, Argentina's economy is worth 43 per cent of the world's 16 richest nations; a not insignificant sum, though down from 92 per cent in 1900. Today, Argentina just about scrapes into the G20. What the economists are getting at, in the rather truculent way that only economists can perhaps, is that Argentina is the only example we have in the history of the modern world of a country having spiralled so quickly and from such great height downwards. No other nation has imploded so spectacularly in socio-economic terms in such a relatively short space of time. To type the word "Argentina" into search engines is to be rewarded with such titles as: "The tragedy of Argentina: a century of decline",¹⁶ "Argentina's great decline",¹⁷ and "What Happened to Argentina?"¹⁸

What happened to Argentina? According to one newspaper:

'There is no shortage of candidates for the moment when the country started to go wrong. There was the shock of the first world war and the Depression to an open trading economy; or the coup of 1930; or Argentina's neutrality in the second world war, which put it at odds with America, the new superpower. There was the rise of Juan Domingo Perón, the towering figure of 20th-century Argentina, who took power in 1946. Others reckon that things really went downhill between 1975 and 1990.'¹⁹

But if we are right to see Argentina's modern trajectory as a downward spiral, and I think we are, then the political, social and economic eddies that impelled this dramatic tailspin run much deeper than that. Argentina's failures are the failures of a nation to manage sustainably the economic shift from land-based wealth to capital, and from foreign-owned interests to national economic production, to integrate the labour force in politics, map socio-economic interests onto representative political matrices and institutionalise non-violent means and norms of resolving conflict between such heterogeneous interest-sets. Juan Domingo Perón and Juan Carlos Onganía tried (in very different ways) to inculcate the oxymoron of the permanent revolution. Both failed. Denied unequivocal support in the armed forces, General Perón sought to stimulate a working-class consciousness in order to carry himself to power. To do so, he first needed to inculcate a working class, in a country where fluctuating world demands favoured exports of its plentiful beef and grain reserves rather than import substitution and thus the continued economic power outside of politics of the oligarchy and landed elite, to which may have been added in time the beginnings of an artisan craft-based bourgeoisie. To celebrate the New Year in 1952, Perón and his glamorous wife Evita gave each family in Argentina a bottle of cider and a fruitcake along with a photograph of themselves with a propaganda note on it (Hedges 2011:141). Fruitcake and cider were of little

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Argentina's great decline, *Al Jazeera*, 8 February 2014. Correct as at 30 September.

¹⁸ What Happened to Argentina? *New York Times*, Edward L. Glaeser, 6 October 2009. Correct as at 30 September 2016.

¹⁹ A century of decline, *Economist*.

use to those who would later that year suffer a two-year wage-freeze and the curtailing of the staple foods of white bread and beef (2011:149). Rampant and even hyper-inflation would accompany Argentina throughout the 20th century, as it would other countries, including the United Kingdom, until an equally-disastrous solution was found with Carlos Menem and Margaret Thatcher in neo-liberal free-market economics. Argentina suffered the biggest sovereign debt default in history in 2001, and with it, the extraordinary feat of having three presidents and as many finance ministers inside two weeks.

There would be other lasting effects of the two, failed revolutions and Argentina's inability to resolve its internal economic, political and social contradictions. Four are particularly worth noting here. Patron-client relations insidiously put paid to any hopes Argentina might have had of constructing a liberal democracy underpinned by strong and independent institutions that could harness the talents of an immigrant and creole society willing to work hard. Perón was not the first to institute a system of patronage in Argentina; the landed gentry had always promised to look after its servants in response for their backing in the (public) ballot boxes. But Perón collapsed the boundary between the private and public and unleashed the tentacles of the state into every corner of private life. From then on, the direction of travel in Argentina would only ever point one way. Lieutenant General Onganía saw it as the (military) government's job to ban miniskirts for women and long haircuts for men. Universities were routinely intervened in (Hedges 2011:185). Certain books were banned and later even publicly burnt. Secondly, the four pillars of democracy were smashed one by one. More accurately, they were bent to the whim of whoever managed to secure the first. The judicial system was prostrated to the demands of the executive, as was the legislature and the media. The constitution was increasingly seen as an optional guideline to be admired and ignored or simply re-written in line with the interests of those who ruled. Political parties both left and right – and often left-and-right in the case of Peronist fascism or the various factions cobbled together by the UCR – were each at different times proscribed. The intrusion into civil society and whittling away of liberal democratic norms, institutions and practices would have a devastating effect once the military *junta* claimed power in 1976.

By that point, and thirdly, democratic regimes were coming to be viewed as the transitional interregnums to periods of authoritarian rule and not the other way round (Duhalde 2013). Argentinians growing up in the 20th century were as familiar with military government as its democratic alternative – perhaps more so. Those opposed to the growing authoritarian and repressive nature of Argentine politics (whether military or at least nominally civilian) came to see that their opposition might also have to be expressed outside of the parameters of the rule

of law. In this, they received support from surprising quarters. Interjecting from his eighteen-year exile in Madrid following his expulsion under the *Revolución Libertadora*, Juan Domingo Perón stoked a violence that he subsequently found impossible to control, and which he bequeathed to others after he died. Perón sent a message in 1967 to the Peronist Youth calling for a 'revolution within Peronism' (Hedges 2011:187). Left-wing violence had been on the rise in Argentina since the early 1960s, stimulated by events in Cuba and the growing repression at home. It was suddenly catalysed. The ageing *caudillo* tickled the belly of the terrorist tiger, yet suddenly found himself in charge of the jungle when it reacted.

It is in this context that we locate the advent of the military government in 1976. More importantly for our purposes here, it is in this context that we situate the use of forced disappearance as a technique of political and social repression, and state terrorism. Underpinned by the three executive branches of the Argentine armed forces and led by Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla, the military *junta* that claimed power on 24 March 1976 took for itself the title *el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*. The name was a direct reference to the *Organización Nacional* of one hundred years before, as part of which General Julio Argentino Roca had "conquered the desert" and cleared it of its native aborigines to create the space for a modernising nation. A thousand aborigines died as part of the 'Desert Campaign.' Fifteen thousand were forcibly displaced. The Conquest still features on the Argentine 100 peso note. A century later, those to be cleansed as part of the *Reorganización* in the 1970s and '80s would not be aborigines but this time terrorists, subversives and communists, or anyone suspected of links to terrorism, subversion or communism. These are yet to feature on any currency.

Beginning in the 1960s, Argentina 'spiralled into an era of political violence.

Several factors were harbingers of the impending brutality. Since 1970, kidnappings, assassinations, bank robberies, and raids on military posts by guerrillas had become commonplace. Two particularly noteworthy guerrilla groups were the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army, ERP), formed in the late 1960s, which was anti-Peronist and originally Trotskyite, but later turned to Guevarism, while the *Montoneros* were the militant arm of the Catholic Peronist Youth. Adopting a cellular and militaristic structure, both organisations – largely composed of idealistic and middle-class students – carried out kidnappings and assassinations of trade union and business leaders, typically to gain funds, and sought to establish a socialist society' (Lessa 2013:33).

In May 1970, the *Montoneros* kidnapped former military dictator and leader of the *Revolución* General Pedro Aramburu. Accused of the destruction of working-class gains, Aramburu was sentenced to revolutionary justice and summarily executed. The same year, the *Montoneros* assassinated trade union leader José Alonso. Perón refused to condemn the violence. The military governments began to respond in kind. The *Cordobazo* and *Rosarioazo* insurrections in the two cities from which they take their names were violently suppressed by the armed

forces in May and September 1969 (Onganía was deposed as a result.) And when a guerrilla unit tried to free twenty-five members of the *Montoneros*, *ERP* and *FAR* (*las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, or Revolutionary Armed Forces) from prison in the southern city of Rawson in August 1972, the sixteen who were successfully recaptured were lined up and shot. This became known as the Trelew Massacre. Following the restoration of democracy, the puppet Peronist president Hector Cámpora invited members of the *Montoneros* to the Casa Rosada. Cámpora signed an amnesty which freed convicted terrorists and political prisoners being held in Devoto prison.²⁰ But when the kidnappings, guerrilla insertions and strikes continued after the return of Perón himself in October 1973²¹ his second administration ‘fought violence with violence’ (Lessa 2013:33). Under the tutelage of the Minister for Social Welfare José López Rega, the paramilitary death squad the *Alianza Anti-Comunista Argentina* (or Triple A) was instructed to eradicate subversive elements including leftist intellectuals, guerrillas, politicians and priests. ‘29 killings were blamed on the Triple A’ in one month alone (Hedges 2011:211). ‘[T]he army joined the police in the crackdown on the guerrillas, and a state of siege was imposed’ (Lessa 2013:33). In February and then September 1975, the security forces were authorised under the democratic decrees of *Operación Independencia* to ‘annihilate’ subversive elements wherever they should be found, beginning in Tucumán and then extending to Argentina as a whole. They did so largely through the use of a new technique. That technique was forced disappearance. It is the victims of these disappearances that are remembered in the Park of Memory.

Forced disappearances were not invented by the military *junta* that came to power in 1976. As a technique of repression and *state* terrorism they were nothing new; nor were they altogether unexpected among Argentinians (Graham-Yooll 2006). What was monstrously new about the use of forced disappearances by the military apparatus, both before it entered government in the guise of the *Triple A* and *Operación Independencia* and during it under the *Proceso Nacional*, was their scale and systematic nature (Crenzel 2008). The country was subdivided into zones. In each zone, military and security personnel worked together in *grupos de tarea* to abduct persons suspected of links with subversion. From there the victims would be taken to one of 498 clandestine detention centres including the *Escuela Mecánica de la Armada Argentina* (ESMA), *El Olimpo* or the *Campo de Mayo*, where they would be confined in small cells, tortured and killed. The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (or CONADEP from its Spanish acronym), found evidence of the forced disappearance of 8,960

²⁰ The military would argue subsequently that in order to be defeated, the terrorists needed never again to reach prison, from where an amnesty would be given and they would be freed. See Reato (2012).

²¹ The *Montoneros* assassinated former Interior Minister Arturo Mor Roig in July 1974, the ERP executed Colonel Argentino del Valle Larrabure after torturing him for a year in August 1975 (Cox 2010:93)

persons (1984:20). This figure was later revised to 14,000²² and then 7,010²³ (see chapter nine). Human rights groups have claimed since the repression that the true figure is 30,000.

el parque de la memoria

El Parque de la Memoria is a thirty-five-acre landscape of memory located on the north-eastern fringe of Buenos Aires along the *costanera norte* (see Figures 3, 4 and 5). It is bordered by the *río de la plata* on one side and the decrepit buildings of the *Ciudad Universitaria* on the other. To get there from the city centre you have to negotiate a series of buses in a journey that takes about an hour. The park includes the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, a sculpture garden and an exhibition centre, the Sala PAyS. It is not yet finished. Once finished it will host a total of eighteen memorial sculptures. The memorials remember through the medium of modern art the *desaparecidos* and other victims who were assassinated by state security forces in the period leading up to and culminating in the military dictatorship of 1976 to 1983, beginning with the *Cordobazo* of 1969. The design for the park (including its monument) and its memorials were subject to two separate competitions. The former was won by Alberto Varas and his team of architects. Varas' monument consists of four discontinuous walls, on which have been individually inscribed on Patagonian porphyry the names of each of the victims. The victims have been identified through the truth commission (CONADEP) as well as subsequent judicial processes. At present, the monument is dedicated to nearly ten thousand victims, though there is space on the four walls for thirty thousand in all. The seventeen winning designs for the memorials were chosen from more than six hundred entries that were submitted by artists around the globe, in addition to six artists who were invited in person to tender their proposals. So far, nine memorials have been completed.

Work began on the site in 1998. Its foundation stone was laid and the entrance plaza opened in 2001. It was not until the presidency of Néstor Kirchner in 2007 that the monument was finally unveiled – work was suspended for two years as a result of the default – followed by the rest of the park in 2009 (see chapter five). The original plans for the site have been modified. Monuments to the victims of the 1994 AMIA bombing and the Righteous Among the Nations were originally to be included but will now be constructed elsewhere in Buenos Aires. The Sala PAyS exhibition space was inaugurated in 2010. This is where Macri and Obama gave a short press conference. The idea for an exhibition space came after the park's design was submitted.

²² Interview with Ceferino Reato.

²³ Avruj dijo que hubo 7010 desaparecidos, *La Nación*, 8 November 2016



Figure 3. Argentina. The white box shows the location of its capital city, Buenos Aires (see figure 4). Image courtesy of Google Maps.

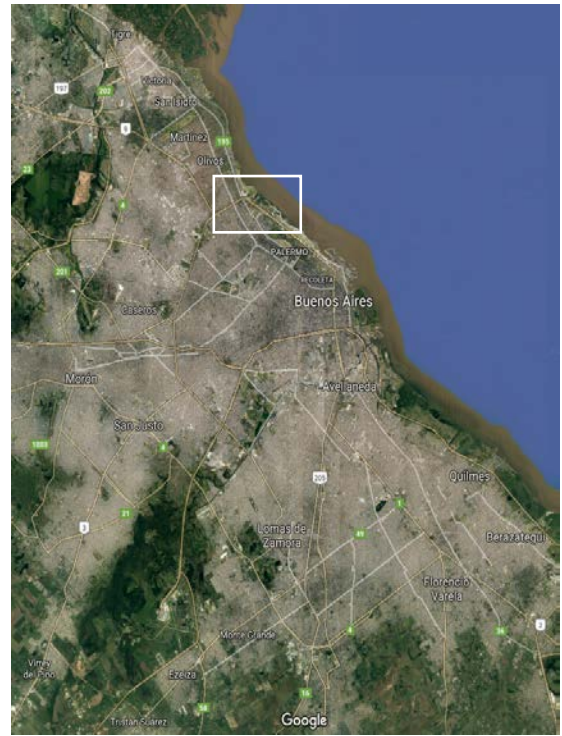


Figure 4. Buenos Aires. The white box denotes the location of the Memory Park (see figure 5). Image courtesy of Google Maps.



Figure 5. The *Parque de la Memoria* (headed “Memoria Park”) is clearly visible to the north-east of Buenos Aires (as shown by the white box). The site marked “*Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos*” in the north-west is the former clandestine detention centre, ESMA, now a Space of Memory and Human Rights. The airfield to the south-east is the *Aeroparque Internacional Jorge Newbery*. Some of the ‘death flights’ took off from here during the dictatorship in which *desaparecidos* were thrown into the river. Image courtesy of Google Maps.

The name of the Sala PAYS was the inspiration of Madre de Plaza de Mayo Vera Jarach (see chapters five and six). As an acronym for the refrain used by human rights organisations during the dictatorship – *¡Presentes, Ahora y Siempre!* – the name is also a play on the Spanish word for country, *país*. The Sala PAYS (*sala* means simply room) is host to regular temporary exhibitions, creative performances and practices of memory. I consider some of these practices in chapters seven and nine.

With its memorials of modern art and performative practices of memory, the *Parque de la Memoria* is emblematic of a shift. It is a new type of memorial for a new type of memory. Memorials are not what they used to be. They are changing. They are changing in form. There are more contemporary, abstract sculptures to rival the traditional neoclassical landmarks that dot our national capitals, boulevards and squares. There are new forms represented in new media altogether, including museums of memory,²⁴ memorial parks (including but not limited to this one)²⁵ and memorial arboretums,²⁶ modern art in memorial parks²⁷ and even parks of (“dead”) memorials.^{28 29} As a result the relationship between memorials and place is changing. Many new memorials welcome you into their space and into their embrace, where you are free to think through memories both personal and public in your own way. The relationship between memorials and time is also being altered. As temporary interventions in time and space, many new and performative memorials are there one minute, and gone the next. Germany celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall by releasing eight thousand balloons into the night sky in November 2014.³⁰ The names of 1,900 victims of the violence in Colombia were etched onto pieces of cotton which were then sown together in the central square of Bogotá in October 2016.³¹ The United Kingdom marked the centenary of the start of World War I by filling the moat of the Tower of London with 888,246 ceramic poppies; each poppy remembering a British or Colonial soldier who lost his life in the war.³² Bosnia invoked the twentieth anniversary of the Bosnia War and siege of Sarajevo in April 2012 by

²⁴ See, for example, the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Santiago de Chile; Museo de la Memoria, Rosario; Lugar de la Memoria, Lima, Perú; Museo Memoria y Tolerancia, Mexico City; Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación, Bogotá, Colombia; or the Museo de la Memoria, Montevideo, Uruguay.

²⁵ See, for example, the Parque de la Memoria de Sartaguda, in Navarra, Spain.

²⁶ See, for example, the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, UK.

²⁷ See for example the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

²⁸ See, for example, Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary.

²⁹ Not to mention TV documentaries, films, theatrical productions, social protests, trials and truth commissions. See chapter seven.

³⁰ Berlin Wall; Thousands of balloons released to mark fall, *BBC*, 14 November 2014.

³¹ Las dudas que levantó la obra de Doris Salcedo en la Plaza de Bolívar, *VICE*, correct as at 23 November 2017; Sumando ausencias, *Centro de Memoria Histórica*, correct as at 23 November 2017; ‘Sumando ausencias,’ el tributo de la artista Doris Salcedo a las víctimas del conflicto, *Radio Nacional*, 11 October 2016.

³² Poppies in the Moat, Royal British Legion, correct as at 23 November 2017.

corralling 11,541 red chairs through the city's central boulevard. Each chair marked the life lost of a person from Sarajevo in the conflict.³³ When names are etched in cotton or porphyry, and balloons are released; when bright red chairs or poppies flood the streets or landmarks of a city and a nation, our attention is captivated with the same magnitude that our frameworks for memory and memorials appear to be unsettled (see chapter seven).

But if memorials are changing then so too is the kind of memory that they are helping to stimulate, animate – and regulate. As a new kind of memorial and an interpretive prism, the park has the potential to tell us something about the extraordinary and complex nature of memory in Argentina. About the way this memory is fluid, but not random. Innovative, yet not necessarily spontaneous. Structured, but not determined. Depoliticised, yet radically political. Indeed, there is a paradox to memory in Argentina. The more that landscapes of memory turn to memorials as media that are open, inclusive and 'audacious' (see chapter five) in allowing the visitor the chance to construct their own meaning through memory of the recent violent past, the more this memory appears to be structured in some way. The more that landscapes of memory turn to the use of large-scale spectacles of collective memory using modern art, monumental sculpture or performative practices (see chapter six), the more this spectacular memory seems to turn on the individuality of the collective. The more that the park appears to be a neutral and non-political venue for remembering the disappeared (see chapter nine), the more it also seems to mask an invisible and very political hand in the way it goes about this memory. In sum, the more that memorials as frames of memory are given to elicit a dynamic, decentred and fluid reckoning with the recent violent past, the more this memory seems to tend towards fewer, predominant interpretations of this violence.

My interest in this thesis lies in trying to pick through paradoxes such as these. Others have written about former clandestine detention centres (see chapter two). They have traced the traces that supposedly lie within or limn their hallowed halls and sacred walls and attics in a recrudescing glow of absence-presence. They've walked through the former ESMA, a stone's throw from the *Parque* in northern Buenos Aires (see figure 5), and felt the weight of the embodied memories of the disappeared as spectres, embodied presences or hauntings. This is an important scholarship. It is not my intention to follow it here. Just as I don't think you can go to Auschwitz-Birkenau and learn everything you need to know or feel in your body about the Holocaust, so too I don't believe it suffices to walk through the landscapes of horror in Argentina to know what happened in the violence of the 1970s and 80s, and what this means

³³ Bosnia remembers: empty chairs laid out in Sarajevo in memory of 11,541 killed 20 years after bloody conflict began, *Daily Mail*, 6 April 2012.

for Argentine society in the period since then. My interest is in those memorials that have been constructed as a means of trying to understand and construct a relationship with the recent violent past. For construction means choice. Societies have a choice about how to respond.³⁴ I think the giving over of central Berlin to a memorial that is as hauntingly beautiful and beautifully haunting can tell us as much – if not more – than the gas chambers at Birkenau. I think something important is going on when memory is taken out into the streets in Córdoba, Sarajevo, Berlin and London, and not left to dwell for “death tourists” to unpick in Buenos Aires, Srebrenica, Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Somme. I think the *Parque de la Memoria* can tell us as much – if not more, and if not something different – about the disappearances than can the *Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada Argentina*. Let’s tarry with the memorials as invitations in modern art for its visitors to make sense by making memory of the past, touch and count the names on the monumental walls, witness statesmen such as Barack Obama as they are paraded as ‘tourists of history’ (Sturken 2007) and watch amused, bemused, confused, as an android shape carves its memory spurts into the memory field via the exhibition space in the *Parque*.

If we do this then we can explore the way that the construction and re-construction of the disappeared in collective memory in Argentina is not random nor determined but *regulated and framed*. We can trace not the spectres and hauntings but the discourses and logics that help to give definition to this memory across very different and often eclectic frames within an expanded memory field. We can begin to decipher the politics of transition that this politics of collective memory makes possible, and perhaps impossible too. We may even be able to unpick some of the paradoxes of the memory of the disappeared in Argentina.

The research questions that animate this thesis are therefore as follows:

1. What role does the Memory Park play in the wider politics of transition in Argentina?
2. How is the politics of transition as a response to the political violence of the 1970s and ‘80s shaped, informed and mediated by a politics of memory as this situates in and traverses the park?
3. How is the memory of the disappeared in Argentina regulated and framed?

³⁴ This is not to suggest that the violence was not traumatic for many relatives and members of society.

the thesis that follows

In this thesis, I understand collective (or cultural) memory to operate as a field of memory, meaning and representability. My aim is to reconstruct this expanded field of memory in order to trace the logics and discourses of memory through which meaning is attributed to the disappearances and the parameters of the politics of transition are delineated as a response. I understand memorials to function as frames for the memory of violence (cf. Butler 2010, see chapter four). Using the park of memory as a prism, I am able to decipher the complex ways that the disappeared have come to be constructed and re-constructed in Argentine collective memory. I am able to decipher the politics of transition as this politics has been historically informed, shaped and moderated by this politics of memory of the recent violent past.

By enacting a cultural biography of the different ways that the disappeared have been constructed in memory across forms of representation, practice and testimony (see chapter three), I wish to show how the collective memory of the disappeared is heavily and historically regulated and framed. In particular, my aim will be to demonstrate how the collective memory of the disappeared has been constructed over time and space according to what I will want to call two political logics of memory. One of the claims that I shall want to make in this thesis is that this logic is a social logic. The disappeared have been constructed and re-constructed in the field of memory through the delimitation of its frames and the reconfiguration of its meaning as one of two subjects. That they have been constructed in this way, I shall want to suggest, relates not to the logic of the human rights actors who have done so much as 'memory entrepreneurs' to delimit these frames, reconfigure this field and produce the subject that is to be remembered. Rather, my central argument is that they have been constructed in this way to regulate and secure the affective or political response of the wider Argentine public. If the memory of the disappeared is open and yet structured, dynamic but moderated, regulated and framed, then this is because it has been configured and re-configured over time and space according to *the logic of a society that recognises some persons as humans – and thus worthy of being remembered – and others not* (see chapter ten).

The thesis is divided into ten chapters across three parts. In the first part, I elaborate the theoretical and methodological foundations that underpin the investigation. In chapter two, I situate my research in the literature. I show how the understanding of the park can be situated at the interstices of the literatures of transitional justice and memory studies, as an overlap that engages with a relatively new and exciting interest in the way that places and spaces of memory can be used to decipher the politics of transition of post-conflict societies such as

Argentine emerging from violence and authoritarianism. This does not reach a settled conclusion. Rather, the literature understands the Argentine transition as what we might call both an exemplary model and model exemplar. In chapter three, I outline the methodology that informs my investigation and the collection of data. Here, I attempt to navigate a middle path between competing methodologies in discourse analysis and Foucauldian genealogy on the one hand and selected approaches from memory studies on the other. Drawing on both Andreas Huyssen's (2003) notion of a global culture of memory and James E. Young's (1993) idea of the importance of the biography of a memorial, I elaborate the instrument of the *cultural biography* as a variation of the two. This can also be seen as a variation on the Foucauldian genealogy. In chapter four, I explain what I understand by the frames, field and logics of memory. As part of this chapter, which sets out the theoretical approach of the thesis as a whole, I introduce the concept of the *political logic of memory*. This will become central to the thesis as a whole. The notion of a political logic of memory allows me to understand how the memory of the disappeared as it is re-configured across various frames of memory including trials, the truth commission, social protests, demonstrations, memorials and other interventions tends towards two logics as the means to sustain and underpin two very different ways of doing politics in the enduring absences of the disappeared.

In the second section, I proceed to elaborate the cultural biography of the disappeared in Argentine collective memory. In chapters five to nine, I consider in detail how the disappeared have come to be constructed within this field through the way they (and the violence they were caught up in) have been framed across diverse forms of cultural representation, testimony and practice. By elaborating the field through its cultural biography, my purpose is to locate the discourses and logics of collective memory through which the disappeared have come to be remembered and their disappearances understood. In chapter five, I enter the field of memory. Here, I use the 'crisis' over the park's future to work through discourses about the politics of memory, anti-politics of memory or politics of anti-memory. Through the study of six frames of the memory of violence, including the *siluetazos*, CONADEP truth commission and the trials of 1983 to 1985, I illustrate in chapter six how human rights groups struggled to remember the disappeared and produce them in this memory as 'persons-as-such' (Edkins 2011) with a name and a face uniquely their own or as 30,000 revolutionary figures for a future-past social justice. They therefore sought to remember them according to two political logics of memory as grievable or un-grievable lives. Through a study of a further six frames of memory, this time as the memorials in the park, I show in chapter seven how the field of memory constitutes with its frames and logics the contours in which visitors situate

themselves and which they use as stimuli to construct a relationship with the violent recent past.

In chapter eight, I conduct a discourse analysis of my interviews with six relatives of the disappeared. Each of these relatives played a key part as 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003) to the prosecution of the struggle for truth and justice in Argentina. Through a study of these interviews, I demonstrate how the memory of the disappeared is underpinned and undermined by a lacuna within both logics as to whom the disappeared really were. Through narratives of quotidian humanity or narratives of revolutionary activity the disappeared can be remembered as deeply human or political militants, but they cannot, it seems, be remembered as both. This threatens to impede the mourning of the disappeared by their relatives and kin. In chapter nine, I argue for an interpretation of the park as a symbolic cemetery of the innocents. What makes possible their mourning, I argue, not only on the part of their families but by other visitors who take part and by society as a whole, is their representation through their names on the monumental walls. By depoliticising their memory, it is this representation that makes it possible for interpellated visitors in wider Argentine society to recognise and thus remember those who were forcibly disappeared. As a political depoliticisation, the monument and its attendant memorials makes possible their being remembered by a greater constituency than would otherwise be the case. But in doing so, it threatens to collapse the idea that this violence might be learned from and thus might "never again" take place.

In part three, and chapter ten, I conclude the thesis. Drawing together the threads of memory, mourning, politics, violence, and loss that emerge throughout the thesis, I argue that the park of memory functions as a prism through which the discourses and logics of memory in which the disappeared have been historically shaped and socially constructed can be made intelligible and understood. Taking stock of the central argument of the thesis, I show how the administrations of Raúl Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner can be appreciated as the high watermarks of the twin politics logics that I have elaborated. I conclude by arguing that the memory of the disappeared has been regulated and framed not in conjunction with the logics of the human rights actors who did so much to prosecute the struggle for truth, justice and memory in Argentina but the logic of society. It is the unwillingness of the wider Argentine public to recognise and thus remember as human those who took part in an armed struggle, I suggest, which helps to explain the construction of the disappeared as humans but not activists, or activists but not humans. This has lasting implications for Argentine society and politics that continue to this day.

spaces of memory

spaces for memory

a literature review

'the field of transitional justice has widened and deepened'

Christine Bell, Colm Campbell, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

'memory, it is safe to say, is not what it used to be.'

Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, Pieter Vermuelen

Since the early 1990s, scholars have studied the social, political and legal responses to mass atrocity including forced disappearances in post-conflict theatres around the world. Writing from a range of theoretical standpoints and disciplines and coming together in a new field of transitional justice, their research has suggested that socio-legal and political demands following periods of political repression coalesce around three pillars: truth, justice and memory. More recent work has unpacked these goals and opened them up to closer scrutiny such that questions are being asked as to whether these social goods are obtainable or even desirable. There has also been a greater attempt to understand what these mean to those affected within their particular social, historical and discursive contexts. A separate but related field of memory studies emerged during much the same period. Drawing from equally varied disciplinary, theoretical and methodological viewpoints, scholars have studied the growing importance of memory to our understanding of our everyday lives. As part of this, they have shown how memory is important in helping us to understand what kind of politics is possible in societies undergoing transformative socio-economic and political change. Key to this scholarship is its attention to sites of memory. This includes a growing analysis of the *Parque de la Memoria*. There is now an increasing scholarship on what the park is, or should be, and what it should do.

Though transitional justice and memory studies exhibit a shared interest in memory, sites of memory and the politics of memory and human rights, there has not always been a concerted dialogue between the two fields. Some contributors in transitional justice have actively elided an interest in the practices and places of memory, believing memorialisation to be a "soft" secondary pursuit tangential to the hard graft of truth and justice (Collins 2010:99). Others interpret memorialisation narrowly as a form of symbolic reparation. Scholars in memory studies charge that sites of memory help us to remember the future (Huysen 2003), as a future of democracy, solidarity, human rights and a rejection of violence. In doing so, however, they often write from a level above or below the state as the actor that must often try to bring about (with others) a transformation in these social norms. There is no coherent framework in

the literature for thinking through the relevance of places of memory to the politics of transition, and to what form of politics is possible in societies that continue to try and come to terms with the enduring legacies of the forced disappearance of people and other systematic and massive human rights violations.

In this chapter, I situate my research within the current literature. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, I consider how transitional justice has developed over time as a body of knowledge and field of theory and practice. Here, I trace two developments that I see as important to its deepening and maturing as a field. These are the shift from contributions based upon a positivist philosophy of knowledge to a post-positivist, critical, or interpretivist philosophy, and the shift in the level of analysis from the global to the local. In the second part, I trace the development of memory studies as an emerging field. Following Bond et al. (2017), I sketch this development as a shift to a trans-national and trans-medial body of theory and practice. In both sections I survey the existing scholarship on the *Parque de la Memoria*. In the final part, I argue for an interpretation of the park that situates at the interstices of these two fields. Building on the work of Alexandra Barahona de Brito (2010, 2001) and others, in particular, I suggest that by situating my research in this interface I will be able to locate a conceptual space from where to look again and more critically at the politics of memory in Argentina, as a politics that underpins, shapes and informs its politics of transition.

a sub-field, a field, a non-field

Transitional justice may be a field of enquiry, a sub-field of enquiry (Arthur 2009) or neither (Bell 2009). It ought to fall within the jurisdiction of law or political science, and contribute to theory or practice, or both. It may study transitions from mass atrocity, (internal or international) conflict, apartheid, communism or authoritarianism. Entertain insights from anthropology, sociology or criminology. Set its microscope to the global south, or the world entire. Its origins may be dated to the botched Bolivian truth commission of 1982, the (first and second) French restorations of 1814 and 1815 or even the Athenian transition of 403BC (Elster 2004). I have always thought it intellectually invigorating to work within a field (sub-, non- or otherwise) in which few can agree. Such disagreements are a sign of health, not decadence. Little more than twenty years on from the conferences in which the apparent similarities and differences between the Argentine and Greek transitions to democracy were debated (Arthur 2009, Kritz 1995), there is now a rich and fluent scholarship that explores the various ways in which individuals, communities or nations in transition attempt to deal with a violent past. To pick up the latest copy of the International Journal of Transitional Justice for example is to be invited to survey anything from the non-linear formations of time and memory in Uganda (Igreja 2012) to the use of kaleidoscope forms of memory in Canada (James

2012). To receive the latest correspondence from Human Rights Watch is to be asked to take a stand on everything from the plight of refugees in Syria to indigenous groups in Guatemala. From our privileged position atop the ruins of the Berlin Wall or US Presidencies conceived in the heady days of claims about 'the end of History' (Fukuyama 1989) we gaze upon a post-Cold War world that evidences everything but. Karl Marx (1845) once wrote: 'philosophers, they have the world, only interpreted differently.' Marx's maxim could increasingly be applied here as well. If transitional justice is still 'in transition' (Bell, Campbell and Ni Aoláin 2004) then it has matured.

It is important that we keep in mind that transitional justice is both a field of theory *and* practice. Priscilla Hayner writes of a desire for truth springing up from a range of contexts across the globe as if it were 'a universal good, a universal desire' (2011:195). This is the liberal fantasy; truth erupting, surging, bursting its shackles until it cannot be held down any longer. I have rather more sympathy with those who interpret the expansion of the field through the lens of structuration theory. Reading Hayner's own work, what one is struck by is the revolving cast in this global theatre. An interchange of norms and ideas, certainly, but also of personnel. The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) go to Paraguay to help with exhumations. Paraguay's Truth Commission is assisted with funding from Switzerland. German funding enables the construction of a memorial museum in Perú. Perú and South Africa send advisors to shape the Truth Commission in Greensboro, and to run the commissions in Mauritius and the Solomon Islands. Bolivia's commission influences Argentina's;¹ Argentina's shapes that of Uruguay and Chile (Crenzel 2011:4); Chile, that of El Salvador. These two in turn then shape that of Guatemala. And Guatemala too, asks the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team for help with exhumations. Transitional justice can sometimes read like a Russian Caravan, bartering and exchanging its wares at each repose before trundling off into the distance. Hayner regularly describes truth commissions that she herself went to advise on, and she sprinkles her book liberally with the insights of 'experts' from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty and the United Nations throughout. Transitional justice is both theory and practice; but the two are intricately linked, not separate domains.

As a body of knowledge and practice, then, transitional justice has developed in a particular way over time and space. Our attention can be drawn here to two developments. Firstly, there has been a noticeable shift in the literature in terms of the way social goods such as truth and justice are valued and understood. This is indexed in the literature by the inflection of earlier work underpinned by normative assumptions and a positivist philosophy of knowledge with that of a more interpretivist and critical slant. Much of the early scholarship in the emerging

¹ This is disputed. See Nino, C. (1991).

field of transitional justice came from two disciplines, law and political science, and much of this work shared a normative approach. Truth, justice, memory and reconciliation were seen as intrinsically desirable ideals – capable of engendering reconciliation or social reconstruction and preventing conflict in the future – although they may have been defined and conceived differently. In the legal sphere, there was a debate as to what justice meant, although this was largely played out within the discipline’s existing knowledge architectures and restricted to a discussion on the relative merits of retributive or restorative justice (see for instance Quinn 2009). Ruti Teitel’s (2000) analysis stood out as an attempt to move beyond this binary framework as she made the case for a more constructivist interpretation of the field as it began to emerge. Martha Minow (1998) sought to navigate an alternative path between vengeance and forgiveness. In contributions from political science, a shared meta-theoretical endeavour to bridge the gap between theory and practice and ‘learn lessons’ (Quinn 2009:363 in Goodhart 2009) such that these lessons could then be passed on elsewhere appeared to privilege contributions that drew upon a positivist philosophy of knowledge. Scholars saw it their shared endeavour to build up a body of usable knowledge ‘useful to practitioners and scholars alike’ (Hayner 2011:xvi). Transitional theatres across the globe were distilled first into three historical waves (Huntington 1991 in Kritz 1995) and then into a series of explanatory variables according to which it was thought possible to explain why post-authoritarian regimes had addressed previous periods of atrocity or repression (including forced disappearance) in the ways they had (see for example Elster 2004, Kritz 1995). These factors ranged from civil-military relations to the emotional state of key actors. There was particular interest in delineating the political constraints that were thought to impinge upon decision-making in transitional settings (Zalaquett 1989). The assumption was that transitional settings were sites of observable and objective phenomena that could be seen, described and compared.²

Much of the early literature on transitional justice was refreshingly broad in terms of its historical and geographical scope. Patricia Hayner (2011) studied five truth commissions in detail across three continents, with additional material on many more, including that of Argentina. Neil Kritz’s (1995) text served as something of an early encyclopaedia for the field. Both went into rich description. By broadening his ambit as far as the Athenian and French restorations, Jon Elster showed how ‘democratic transitional justice is as old as democracy itself’ (2004:3) and yet how transitional justice need not always be thought to involve transitions to democracy at all. Perhaps as a corollary of their breadth, such contributions made a case for the broadest possible horizons for transitional justice. Elster’s inclusion of East Central Europe and Minow’s consideration of US internment of Japanese Americans tilted the

² I owe this last point to Peter Manning.

field to include other methods than the ubiquitous truth commission or trial such as purges, exile and the (re)adjudication of status, which in the case of the latter and post-war France, Belgium and Denmark included 'national indignation' and the confiscating of civil and political rights. Such interventions encouraged cross-fertilisation and the comparison of what was going on within or between cases across the three waves. The positivist parsing of transitional processes into a series of explanatory variables could also be a weakness as well as strength. Such accounts were vulnerable to generalisation and arbitrariness in their selection of variables.³ Some factors were under-theorised, others oversimplified. In one section in Elster's text, for instance, the 'crimes committed by regime opponents as well as by regime agents' is offered up as a factor only to be subsequently ignored. This is vital to the understanding of Argentina's transition, as we shall see. Some authors were guilty at times of trying to make what were often very complex issues in transitional theatres "fit" the variables they had chosen to explain these settings. The regime in El Salvador 'was not technically a military one' but the situation was said by Chandra Lehka Sriram to be 'analogous' so that it met her explanatory factor of civil-military relations (2004:78,91).

Writing in 2007, Bell, Campbell and Ní Aoláin noted that 'the field of transitional justice has widened and deepened' (2007:87). It is, they said, 'not the domain of lawyers alone' and no longer probes solely 'accountability concerns.' From very different vantage points, Christine Bell (2009) and Geoff Dancy (2010) sketch the broadening of the field along remarkably similar contours. Both observe how research is beginning to interrogate whether transitional justice actually 'works' – that is, whether it 'delivers on the political goals to which it lays claim' (Bell 2009:10, for which, see Payne et al. 2008, Olsen et al. 2010a, Olsen et al. 2010b, Olsen et al. 2010c). Both also note the way transitional justice is opening up to critical – or 'interpretivist' – interventions and a growing feminist critique; although while Dancy subsumes the latter within the former, Bell rather uncharitably collects critical approaches within a conspiracy to prove transitional justice as somehow 'dangerous or duplicitous,' (2009:12) despite having noted their diverse ideological and disciplinary origins. Bell's interjection is a clear if nostalgic attempt to re-secure legal domination of the field. In characterising the 'large and growing mass of rich, context-specific studies' as 'pushing back against such attempts at generalisation,' Dancy authors the emergence of interpretivist approaches in relation to a positivist progenitor (2010:365). Whereas positivist work shared an epistemological belief that the social world could be 'divvied up' into observable units or variables which could then be studied and compared across contexts, interpretivist logic sees different units such as two truth commissions as 'hardly ever alike,' leading to an interest in casting light 'on the way

³ Hayner (2011) does not explain why she chose the five theatres that she did, for example.

people understand themselves (subjectivity), the way they share understandings (intersubjectivity) and the way disparate understandings of the same symbols often collide.’ Interpretivist scholars, he argued, ‘share a desire to ignore or repulse grand theories about the ability of justice efforts to ‘work.’ Indeed, ‘to determine if they ‘work,’ one must first theorize who they serve and document the way mechanisms are understood in their given historical and discursive contexts’ (2010:365). What we might call the interpretivist aperture within transitional justice has led to a number of fruitful avenues of enquiry, one of the most captivating of which has been the attempt by scholars to problematise the cluster of normative assumptions that governed earlier (theoretical and practical) interventions in the field. The notion of there being a single, official and all-encompassing truth conceived in each transitional setting has come under scrutiny from various epistemological and ontological angles, such that there is growing scepticism in the field about the potential of truth to carry the various burdens that were previously being asked of it (Leebaw 2008, Daly 2008, Shaw 2007, Boesten 2010, Garcia-Godos 2008, Dube 2011, Zolkos 2008, French 2009). In studies on Germany, Canada and Guatemala, respectively, for example McAdams (2011), James (2012) and Isaacs (2010) make a collective case for bringing the ‘politics of truth’ (Isaacs 2010:252) and truth-telling back in. Inspired by this work, I subject the truth-claims relating to the number of victims of the violence in Argentina to greater scrutiny in chapters seven and nine.

How far we should read the growing appeal of critical-interpretivist work in the field as a response to the limitations of positivist approaches and how far as a natural outgrowth of its increasing interdisciplinarity is a moot point. The interpretivist aperture within transitional justice, with its interest in the study of context-specific discourses and practices, has been empowered by the engagement with the field of a number of anthropologists such that we may soon be able to talk of an anthropological ‘turn’ within transitional justice. This is indexed by the emergence of a series of edited volumes (Hinton 2011, McEvoy and McGregor 2008, Shaw and Waldorf 2010) as well as a range of empirically-rigorous, context-specific studies (Wagner 2008, Miller 2010, 2011, 2012, Drexler 2011). As a result, and secondly, the growing purchase of anthropological thinking and methodologies within transitional justice has brought with it a recalibration in the level of analysis: from an interest in universal discourses and practices to that of their reproduction ‘from below’ (McEvoy and McGregor 2008) or ‘on the ground’ (Dancy 2010) within what have been variously termed ‘localised’ (Shaw and Waldorf 2010), ‘quotidian’ (Eastmond and Selimovic 2012) or ‘everyday’ (Riaño-Alcalá and Baines 2011) contexts. This has led to an interest in ‘justice in the vernacular’ (Hinton 2011) and a ‘thicker’ form of justice (McEvoy 2008). If the former speaks to transitional justice’s post-*gacaca* interest in indigenous law, ritual and other (re-invented) socio-cultural practices then the

notion of vernacularisation, Hinton explains, speaks to ‘the meaning and form of transitional justice idioms [as these] are mediated, appropriated, translated, modified, ignored or even rejected in everyday social practice’ (2011:12). And just as ‘justice is always enmeshed with locality,’ (2011:17) so too is power. Thus scholars are also mapping out the power geometries that pattern transitional justice processes on the ground (McGregor 2008, McEvoy and McGregor 2008, Stanley 2008). Writing at the head of a special issue of a journal dedicated to the topic, Pilar Riaño-Alcalá and Erin Baines argued that ‘a localised standpoint ... [brings] imaginations to the temporality, space, silences and contingency of everyday justice practices and processes’ (2012:393). In its shift to the local, transitional justice is carving out a viewpoint which lays bare its earlier universalist knowledge/power hierarchies and legalist orthodoxies in favour of an interest in ‘deeper, unexplored and ambiguous locational spaces’ with their potential for ‘communicative action’ (Habermas in McEvoy 2008) and ‘for things to be otherwise’ (Riaño-Alcalá et al. 2012:387).

In the former ESMA in Buenos Aires, there are three giant granite pillars on which are written the words *Verdad*, *Memoria* and *Justicia*. The study of memory has been a pillar of the study of transitional justice. Memory is often considered ‘fundamental’ to the way that post-conflict societies recover from periods of atrocity, repression or war (Hamber et al. 2010:399). A number of truth commissions have recommended the erection of memorials to commemorate the victims of state-sponsored violence, including those of Chile, South Africa and Perú (2010:399). Yet, scholars have not yet established a coherent framework for the importance of memorials in societies undergoing a transition to democracy. As a result, ‘the current framework transitional scholars and practitioners use for memorialisation is limited’ (Hamber 2010:398). One reason for this is that memorialisation appears to be seen in some quarters as the ‘soft’ work to be accomplished until the hard graft of truth, justice or reconciliation is ready to be completed. This is particularly the case in Chile. Cath Collins (2010) for example excoriates Michelle Bachelet’s (first) presidency on the basis that she was ‘more comfortable acting in “softer” policy areas (including, in her case, memorialisation)’ (2010:99). Antonia García Castro understands the calls for memory in 1990s Chile as a ‘palliative’ given that ‘while it was not possible to formally establish the truth, that is while there was not yet justice, ... the capacity to keep alive the memory of the disappeared ... was at least a guarantee of uniting third parties around the interests of the relatives (2011:97, my translation). Where truth and justice were not possible in Chile for various reasons, memory was taken to stand in as a substitute.

A growing body of work is beginning to address this oversight. In the overlap between transitional justice’s ‘movement to the everyday’ (Riaño-Alcalá and Baines 2011:433) and its

increasingly critical-interpretivist outlook can be found a cluster of work that has begun to explore spaces, rituals and practices of memory. In East Timor for example, Lia Kent illustrates how residents have enacted a circle of stones to 'mark the spot where Indonesian military and East Timorese militia brought the hacked and mutilated bodies of those who had been killed to be burned' (2011:441). Each of the stones 'is inscribed with the name of a loved one.' The use of murals to memorialise acts of violence in Northern Ireland is well-documented (Brown 2012). In Bojayá, Colombia, the 'material trace' of an empty, pockmarked church is said to 'store' the memory of events of 2002 when FARC rebels herded three hundred residents into the church and exploded a gas cylinder (Riaño-Alcalá and Baines 2011:427). Juan Diego Prieto (2012) and Marita Eastmond and Johanna Mannergren Selimovic (2012) appear to interpret space as a similar container within which the processes of truth, justice and reconciliation play themselves out. Typically analyses such as these focus upon the imposition of meaning onto the landscape, attempts at resistance and how the landscape may engender particular social memories. The use of places of memory as a means of helping victims' relatives or the wider communities to frame their demands and attribute meaning to the past has been studied. A particularly interesting body of work has also shed light on the way that some relatives or communities turn to material, symbolic or discursive bodies in order to re-materialise in some way the disappeared as the disembodied dead (Robins 2012a, 2012b, Dwyer 2011, Viaene, Aronson 2011, Gandsman 2012, Simić and Daly 2011). In Ari Edward Gandsman's study of the restitution of the nietos in Argentine, for example, Claudia Victoria is able to come to terms with her 'horrible story' only once she locates it 'within a larger narrative of recent Argentine history' (2012:436).

Yet, the study within transitional justice of sites of memory remains limited. In some of the most persuasive accounts of the Argentine transition sites of memory are included as an after-thought. In others, they are omitted altogether. Those studies that have looked in detail at sites of memory in general and the park in detail have restricted their analysis to a rather rigid dichotomy. In a study of former clandestine detention centres in Buenos Aires, Estela Schindel (2012) for example contrasts the politics that the conversion of these sites make possible with the violence that characterised the regime. In doing so, Schindel replaces the ontological uncertainty of the disappeared with her own epistemological security and the binaries of absence/presence, darkness/light and the unspoken/spoken. Thus, the opening of a clandestine detention centre in Argentina she argues 'has made it possible to talk about what was silenced, bring to light what was hidden, explain what was wrapped in fog and confusion and put into words what could not be named.'

Two further studies approach the *Parque de la Memoria* in a similar way. Vincent Druliolle (2011) erects a false dichotomy between what he calls ‘micro’ and ‘monumental’ memory projects. Resisting this distinction, Druliolle makes the case for seeing these two facets as ‘complementary’ rather than contested endeavours (2011:18). Through an ethnographic encounter with the park and other sites, Druliolle attempts to show the importance that ‘memory-makers’ in Buenos Aires attach to having something physical, yet dynamic, through which to remember the disappeared. He argues that the importance lies ‘not so much in the place itself’ as the ‘place-making’; that is, in the work that goes into recovering former sites of detention or the lives of victims who are to be remembered on memorial plaques (2011:25).⁴ In her own study of the park, Nancy Gates-Madsen (2011) elaborates a distinction between the ‘ideologically pure’, ‘lofty’ and ‘sacred’ goals of memory against its encroachment by the ‘inevitable’ and ‘mundane’ interjections of marketing and politics (2011:151). Situating her study within the dichotomy between commemoration/commodification and the sacred/profane she argues that the park’s locating next to the river as the ‘nonexistent tomb’ (Brotsky in Gates-Madsen 2011:159) is a form of marketing designed to create a more sacred aura around the site. This is contrasted with what she sees as a more ‘local, spontaneous call to memory’ at *El Club Atlético* in Buenos Aires.⁵ Gates-Madsen’s study is written in the context of a volume that interprets memory as a ‘market’ in which ‘entrepreneurs’ compete to secure ‘profit’ as this is understood in its etymological root as progress; in this case, as a form of progress that is measured by its success in defeating ‘competition’ and securing a market for its interpretation of the past (Bilbija and Payne 2011). She fails to clarify why this space for remembrance is ‘much-needed’ (2011:155) or why the memory it seeks is laudable, lofty and ideologically ‘pure’.

If there are limitations in some of the interpretations of the park then there is also an absence of interpretation. Lorena Balardini’s (2017) comprehensive summary of Argentina’s transition to democracy includes the park as a footnote under a section on symbolic reparations for example. Francesca Lessa’s (2013) equally impressive analysis does the same. Some of the most persuasive work on the Argentine transition does not mention the park at all. Emilio Crenzel’s (2010) outstanding edited collection on *los Desaparecidos en la Argentina: Memorias, representaciones e ideas* (1983-2008) includes a study of the representation of the disappeared in everything from film and the truth commission report to theatrical performance, schoolbooks and literature. It does not include a study of their representation in

⁴ This is a clear echo of James Young’s argument about the importance of the debates surrounding a memorial and not the memorial itself. See below.

⁵ Here, she cites Silvia Tandeciarz: ‘The Atlético speaks in more subdued tones [than the Parque de la Memoria] as if the voices of the disappeared were finding their way out of a tomb to vie for interpretive power’ (in Gates-Madsen 2011:163).

the built environment. As such, it omits a study of the memories, representations and ideas that circulate in the park of memory.

a trans(itioning) field

As debates and conferences were taking place elsewhere inside and outside the academy, prompted by the extraordinary waves in transitions to liberal democracy from societies emerging from the shadow of military or authoritarian rule, another scholarly field was taking shape, this time around the core concern of memory.⁶ As with transitional justice, the interdisciplinary engagement around questions of collective memory was stimulated by what was going on around it. On the cusp of the millennium, as technological and social changes accelerated under the umbrella of globalisation, there appeared to be a growing interest around the world in looking not forwards to the future but at what we had left behind (Huysen 2003, Nora 1992). This fascination with forms of remembering was decentred, with 'personal blogs, family history websites and memorial websites on the internet' (Mitsztal 2010:25). The increasing turn to memory also drew support from the political moment of the day. On the one hand, it dovetailed into a burgeoning interest in human rights as a form of giving content to a left-liberal politics which, having seen its legitimacy to speak of the future questioned, began to re-energise itself this time around the utopia of the past (Moyn 2012). On the other, the politics of memory segued into a 'politics of regret' (Olick 2007). The 1990s would come to be dubbed the Age of Apology (Gibney and Howard-Hassmann 2009) as one by one representatives of 'sorry states' (Lind 2008) queued up to make amends and ask for forgiveness for mass egregious human rights violations committed against their own or other peoples under various types of rule including colonialism (Barkan and Karn 2006, Thompson 2002, Tavuchis 1991, Nobles 2008).⁷ Finally, the interest in the past drew strong impetus from the construction of a series of extraordinary memorials or memorial museums.⁸ On the cusp of the new millennium, societies were looking for guidance on these tumultuous changes and what was to come by looking anew at the past.

Interest in memory has reached such a magnitude that some have referred to the present condition as a 'memory boom' (Huysen 2003, Winter in Bell et al. 2006). That this memory boom is the child of many fathers in technological change, politics, and the culture wars that have coloured the post-colonial and pre-millennial moment as an age of apology and regret

⁶ These two fields are not mutually exclusive, and many scholars have contributed to both. See for example, the work of Estela Schindel (2012, 2014).

⁷ This political retrospect was energised by a swathe of anniversaries taking place. These included the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1995, and in Latin America the twentieth anniversaries of the start of military rule in 1993 in Chile and Uruguay, and 1996 in Argentina.

⁸ These included the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, the US Holocaust Museum in 1993 and the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (unveiled in 2005, the plans for which were announced in 1989).

did not prevent its coalescence into early debates that were defined by disciplinary gatekeeping. Much of early memory studies was circumscribed by controversies about the respective benefits of memory against forgetting, memory versus mourning, or memory versus history. Such early debates are resonant of those about the relative merits of truth versus justice, reconciliation versus retribution and memory versus the need to reconcile and forget that characterised early enquiry in transitional justice. As memory studies as an interdisciplinary paradigm has broadened, as a field of both theory and practice, so too have scholars begun to move past such binaries, often seeing in their productive re-alignment, exchange and dialogue the vocabulary we need to locate if we are to tease out the cultural, social, aesthetic and political configurations of our age in a more incisive key (Young 2016, Mitztal 2010, Zehfuss in Bell et. al. 2006, Huyssen 2016).

I should be clear when I talk of memory in this section that I am talking of one particular type of memory. This is collective memory. Collective memory is of a different order to other phenomena including personal memory. Anne Whitehead (2009) distinguishes between four types of memory, which we might characterise (at the risk of caricature) as classical, personal, involuntary and collective. Whitehead shows persuasively how the four are not discrete and distinct but rather intersect and interweave over time in fascinating ways. Though memory is increasingly understood as social, for example, it depends on the individual whose actions and activities bring it into being. '[T]here is a strong affiliation between memory and place' in the four realms (Whitehead 2009:10, see below). There is also a fluid debate in memory studies as to whether involuntary, or traumatic, memory or experience can be transmitted either socially or generationally to other social or biological groups. This has given way to research on 'post-memory' and 'prosthetic memory' (Hirsch 2012, Landsberg 2004, see also Edkins 2003). 'The emphasis on epochal shifts therefore risks oversimplification, while a temporal or linear account of memory is overly suggestive of notions of progress and development' (Whitehead 2009:9). My interest in this thesis is restricted to the collective memory of the recent period of violence in Argentina. Though it draws on the personal testimony of some witnesses, it does so with an interest of how these testimonies fold into and help to elaborate, the wider social field of memory in which they situate (see chapter eight).

There is a strong normativity to memory studies. At least three claims are regularly made. These are not separate and distinct but again tie into each other. Firstly, memory is seen as constitutive to identity. As Barbara Mitztal (2010) writes beautifully, memory 'is the experience mediated by representation of the past that enacts and gives substance to the group's identity.' As the 'central medium through which meanings and identities are constituted, memory is seen as the essential condition of a meaningful and rich civil society.'

Secondly, and related, memory is thus understood as a transformative process. An understanding of a society's past is seen as an important way of bringing about social change. This might include the transition to a society that respects the rule of law, a human-rights respecting polity, or a liberal democracy, or a society that is reconciled to a difficult and violent past (see below). Thirdly, and related, an investment in memory is understood as a means to prevent the repetition of past violence in the future. 'It is a fairly common assumption' writes Duncan Bell 'that certain harrowing events, including genocide, war, terrorism, civil and ethnic strife and radical regime transitions, generate serious and often catastrophic challenges to communal self-understandings, and that the 'memory' of such 'traumas' play a significant and sometimes elemental role in shaping subsequent political perceptions, affiliations and action' (2006:5, ellipses in original). In post-war Europe as well as Latin America following their respective waves of war, terrorism and institutionalised state violence this was captured at its most emblematic in the refrain "never again", or *nunca más*. We will encounter this idea repeatedly in this thesis (see especially chapters nine and ten).

The popularisation of memory as a field in its own right owed much to the work of Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs had published *the Social Frameworks of Memory* as early as 1925 in his native France. This was followed by the posthumous publishing of *the Collective Memory* in 1950 (Halbwachs was sent by the Gestapo to Buchenwald where he died in 1945, having tried to come to the aid of his wife's Jewish family). It was not until 1980 and 1992 that these were translated and made available to an English readership as *The Collective Memory* and *On Collective Memory* respectively (Whitehead 2009). As Whitehead notes, the translation of Halbwachs' work 'precipitated a scholarly boom' (2009:123). So precipitous was this scholarly boom in fact, that there is a volume dedicated almost entirely to debunking its importance (Olick et al. 2011). Other work was also seminal in the development of the field. Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, published across three volumes from 1984 to 1992 and translated as *Realms of Memory*, reached a rapid though not uncritical popularity. Marita Sturken's (1991) paper on the VVM as '*a wall, a screen, an image*' helped to introduce the subject to an American readership. These were joined by James E. Young's *Texture of Memory* (1993), Andreas Huyssen's *Twilight Memories* (1995) and Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995). In time each of these writers would follow up these contributions with additional material that developed their respective lines of enquiry (Young 2000, Huyssen 2003, Winter and Sivan 2008).

These were not necessarily convergent lines of enquiry. What separated the texts was a keen insistence on what collective memory was, or should be, and thus what it was that this emergent field had to do with (and what it did not). Maurice Halbwachs (1992) had coined the

term collective memory as the memory that is shared and socially constructed within the family, workplace or religious grouping. These groupings bring cohesiveness, he argued, to memory and are made more cohesive in return. Halbwachs' insight was nationalised by James E. Young (1993). Young insists on seeing the people who visit the Holocaust sites of memory he painstakingly documents as evidence instead of what he calls '*collected memories*' (1993, emphasis added). For him, although the Holocaust that is being remembered is a tragedy that is shared, the visitors each approach it from separate and national standpoints, meaning that the memory that is forged at such sites is a collected phenomenon that can then be studied and compared. Andreas Huyssen (2003) did much to liberate the early study of collective memory. Huyssen showed how this memory is mediated across various cultural forms including television, the internet, literature, film and 'the city as text'. Steve Stern (2006, 2010) would do the same in a study this time of the collective memory of Pinochet's military rule in Chile. This was taken up by others such as Jan Assmann (1995, 2001) and his wife Aleida (2012). Jan Assmann inflected Halbwachs' work by putting forward a distinction that has become popular between communicative memory – memory that is directly shared, activated and transmitted between social groups – and cultural memory, as the memory that is mediated in cultural objects and which helps it to outlive the generational limits of the communicative nature. In doing so, Assmann addressed Paul Connerton's criticism of Halbwachs' scholarship as failing to explain how this memory endured and was passed on. In time, these would be joined by a plethora of other conceptual frameworks, including Connerton's notion of social memory (1989), collective memories (Arfuch 2014)⁹ and regimes of memory (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003).

Though there are important differences between such scholars, there are also notable overlaps and shared research concerns that pattern this still-relatively young field. In a recent volume, Lucy Bond et al. (2017) suggested that we can bring these concerns together through an understanding of memory as a trans-cultural, trans-disciplinary, trans-medial and trans-generational phenomenon. Building on Bond et al.'s assertion, we can trace two developments that have been important to the study and understanding of collective memory. Firstly, the shift to an understanding of memory as transcultural, trans-national and trans-medial – as a shift that maps the global-local tension in transitional justice – has been coupled with an increasing sensitivity to the way that memory is not a container but a constellation that mediates an extraordinary range of cultural phenomena; and whose meaning and significance must then be activated, interpreted, co-constituted and explored. 'Memory, it is safe to say, is not what it used to be', Bond et al. wrote (2017:1). It is 'presently conceptualized as something

⁹ Interview with Leonor Arfuch, 21 July 2014.

that does not stay put but circulates, migrates, travels; it is more and more perceived as a process, a work that is continually in progress, rather than a reified object' (Ibid.). Indeed, memories are now seen largely as constructions. Memory 'reconstructs past experiences in such a way as to make them meaningful for the present' (Miszta 2010:28). They 'do not simply recall past events and emotions associated with those experiences but also confer meaning to what is being remembered in the present ... The past does not simply exist in memory, but it must be articulated' (Lessa 2013:17).

If memory is now understood to be a construction then it is a social construction, for the articulation and activation of memory via its various media and 'traces' occurs within a social sphere. This is not a natural or inevitable process (cf. Halbwachs 1952). Rather, the increasing fluidity of memory across time, space and media and its de-coupling from its privileged vantage point vis-à-vis the nation-state (Bell 2006) has led to a greater competition between groups in terms of how to configure and reconfigure their understanding of the shared past. This is particularly the case with a shared and egregious past of violence. 'In any given moment and place, it is impossible to find *one* memory, or a single vision and interpretation of the past shared throughout society' (Jelin 2003:xviii). Groups thus struggle as 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003) or as part of 'mnemonic communities' (Barahona de Brito 2010:362) to achieve legitimacy for their chosen interpretation of the past and its significance and meaning (Lessa 2013). This struggle results in a heterogeneous memory landscape. Not only might some memories remain 'latent' for a period before encountering the political conditions and social frameworks optimal for their activation, but some memories may not get through at all. This produces a palimpsestic and thick memory landscape of memories, silences, erasures and voids (Jelin 2003, Huyssen 2003, Aguilar 2002, Sturken 1997, 2007).

Secondly, there has been increased sensitivity in memory studies to the importance of place in the articulation, co-construction and stimulation of collective memory. In part, this can be read as a response to the marketing of memory as global, and transcultural. For Susannah Radstone (2011), 'developments [which] encourage us to perceive of cultural memory as a process rather than a site ... also direct us to attend to those processes of encountering, negotiation, reading, viewing, and spectatorship through which memories are, if you like, brought down to earth' (2011:110-111). For those such as Radstone then, the shift towards an understanding of memory as a global or 'transcultural' phenomenon has brought with it a reaction in the insistence on 'the *locatedness* of engagements with memories on the move, rather than with their non-location' (2011:111), and an insistence on building theory 'from the ground up.' 'A theory that works in one location may not work elsewhere' (2011:118), Radstone argues. The task for memory studies is therefore to combine 'an attentiveness to the *locatedness* of

memory with an awareness of memory's potential to wander but also to remain fixed in its place' (2011:114, emphasis in original). Writing at the head of a special issue of the journal *Memory Studies* 'designed to inscribe the materiality and social life of objects into the discourse about memory' (2016:107), Andreas Huyssen sought to square the circle by calling for renewed interest in memory's genealogies. 'Once we understand the relation of object and subject in such a reciprocal and dialectical way, any talk about the ontology or essence of things, one of the big temptations in this discourse of an allegedly new materialism, becomes irrelevant' he argued. 'At stake is genealogy, not ontology ...' I draw on this insight throughout the thesis, as I work towards a *cultural biography* of the memory of the disappeared in cultural frames as a variation on the instrument of a genealogy (see chapter three).

Huyssen's work is further important for the way that it stands at the head of a growing scholarship that has analysed the *Parque de la Memoria*. Six texts are worth exploring in this respect. In his early work on *Memory Sites in an Expanded Field*, Huyssen (2003) himself made a case for interpreting the politics of memory that crystallise at the park through the lens of an 'expanded field' of a global culture of memory 'motor[ised]' by the commemoration of the Holocaust (2003:99). This contribution was one of the first detailed studies in the English language of the *Parque de la Memoria*.¹⁰ The notion of a field was a play on the physical landscape as well as the discursive constellations that help to inflect the site's layers of meaning. Thus, Huyssen interprets the aesthetic and political discourses of memory that circulate at the park as localised, creative re-appropriations and transformations of the global discourses that he argues have emanated from the way we remember the Shoah. The influences of Huyssen's reading were clearly in evidence in Jens Andermann's (2012b) *Expanded Fields: Postdictatorship and the Landscape*. Andermann juxtaposed the emotional and political possibilities of a Deleuzian 'place whatsoever' (2012:181) effected through contemporary poetry and cinema in contrast to the attempts being made at gardens of memory – including the Park of Memory – to inscribe memory in place. For him, 'the expanded field is essentially nothing but this displacement of memory from monumental place to a place whatsoever; its potential is for a radical politics not of reconciliation but of uprooting, perambulation and dissent.' The notion of an expanded field of collective memory is formative to my understanding in this thesis (see especially chapters four and seven).

Andermann has been one of the leading thinkers in the recent critical turn towards Latin American places of memory. His essay *Placing Latin American memory: Sites and the politics of*

¹⁰ Early appraisals of the park in the Spanish language included Tappatá de Valdez, P. (eds.) *El Parque de la Memoria en Buenos Aires*, in Jelin, E. and Langland, V. (2003) *Monumentos, memoriales, y marcas territoriales*. Madrid: Siglo XXI ediciones; Vezzetti, H. (2005) *Memoriales del terrorismo de Estado de Buenos Aires: El Parque de la Memoria*, *Espacios 33*, pp.10-18; and Silvestri, G. (2013) *El Arte en los Límites de la Representación*, *Bifurcaciones: revista de estudios culturales urbanos*, spring 2013 edition.

mourning appeared at the head of another special issue of *Memory Studies* in 2015. Here, he drew on the work of Huyssen and Yi-Fu Tuan to locate their importance within the deepening of a globalised 'post-industrial finance capitalism' that, rather than rendering space obsolete, has seen spaces of memory become '*critical interruptions*', pauses and counterpoints to the spatio-temporal hyperflow, embedded as they are in networks of the local and the global, the specific and the irreducible, the 'singular and interlocked' (2015:3-4, emphasis in original). The similarities here to the debates going on in transitional justice are clear. Among the contributions to this volume were a number of studies on spaces of memory in Argentina (Conte 2015, da Silva Catela 2015). These included an article from Katherine Hite (2015). Hite borrowed from performance studies and the LaCaprian notion of 'empathetic unsettlement' to think through her visit with a group of US students to three sites including the *Parque de la Memoria*. Thus, she read Claudia Fontes' sculpture of Pablo Miguez as 'embody[ing] empathetic unsettling, the reaching for yet not being able to grasp someone both familiar and unfamiliar' (2015:43). Though she wished to see this and other memorials as opening up 'the possibility of this unsettling' to visitors who might then 'retain the unsettlement, and to push the implications' (2015:46), her students alluded to memories that were deeply felt but which did not appear to give way onto a progressive politics of solidarity or cross-cultural reflections on the US as a 'society of deep denial' (2015:46). I consider Fontes' sculpture in a different light in chapters seven and nine.

Three other studies of the Memory Park are worth mentioning here. Reading the park through a Derridean rather than Deleuzian or LaCaprian lens, Vikki Bell and Mario di Paolantonio (2009) argued for space to be made in the configuration of a *nomos* for the ghosts of the past. Such a *nomos* would engage with places of memory such as the *Parque de la Memoria* as well as *ESMA* in order to shift the unsatisfied (and never satisfied) concern for justice outside of the law to place it where it belongs, with the judicial demands, desires and commitments of the social body. The park, they argued, 'opens up a site of rumination in which, through the contemplation of what happened, justice itself although never present – "not yet or never" (Derrida 2002:243) – *is there* (2009:162, italics in original).' The park also featured as part of Paul Williams' (2007) 'world tour' of memorial museums. Williams' spatial scope and enthusiasm for the various places he visited on this tour was impressive, though the book has been criticised for its factual errors (Sion 2015). A more constructive criticism would be that his study shares many of the pitfalls of its genre in the emerging field of 'dark' or 'death tourism.' Studies in this area are poorly theorised and often assume what it is that they ought to be demonstrating (see for example Logan and Reeves 2009 or Lennon and Foley 2010). A notable exception is Brigitte Sion's work. Analysing the Memory Park alongside the Berlin Memorial to

the Murdered Jews of Europe as examples of what she calls death, thana- and architectourism, Sion (2015) borrows from the scholarship on performance studies to think critically about the idea of the park as a site for embodied memory. I consider the implications of her argument in chapter nine, where I make a case for interpreting the park as a form of symbolic cemetery.

transitional justice and memory studies in dialogue

In October 2014, human rights scholar Kathryn Sikkink gave an interview to an Argentine newspaper in which she argued that the 'model' for how a country should prosecute those responsible for past violence was not South Africa, but Argentina. 'The Argentine case is really important,' she said, 'because it combines many transitional devices, such as a truth commission, trials, economic compensations, memorials. South Africa lacks many of them.'¹¹ In a recent contribution to *Transitional Justice in Latin America* (2016), Lorena Balardini described Argentina as the 'undisputed regional protagonist of transitional justice over the past 30 years' (2016:50). Emilio Crenzel writes of Argentina as a 'paradigm of transitional justice policies' (2011:4). Katherine Hite goes further still. 'Few countries have confronted how to come to terms with their atrocious pasts with such depth of debate and such scope and sophistication regarding representations of that past as Argentina,' Hite argued (2015:38). 'Twenty-first century Argentine is both a world model and major leader.' And yet, whilst scholars such as these operating from a more positivist paradigm have described Argentina's transition as the *exemplary model* to be followed, others writing from a more critical standpoint have pointed to the difficulties Argentina continues to face in locating a space or place for its transitional politics and thus shepherding this politics within or beyond a 'haunted nomos' (Bell and Di Paolantonio 2009), global culture of memory (Huysen 2003), global form of solidarity (Hite 2015), or 'place whatsoever' (Andermann 2015). The suggestion here is not one of progress – over and beyond critical junctures (Lessa 2013, Sikkink 2011) – but of stasis. Indeed, to read such contributions together is to get a sense that Argentina has come the furthest in advancing – whilst looking back – without really having "advanced" anywhere at all. Argentina may be the exemplary model as much as the *model exemplar*.

Is there another way in which we might read the Argentine transition to democracy using (studies on) sites of memory to help us? The work of a number of Latin scholars suggests that transitional justice and memory studies might be put to productive dialogue. Together, Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen González-Enríquez and Paloma Aguilar's (2001) *Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, Barahona de Brito's (2010) *Transitional Justice and Memory: Exploring Perspectives*, Aguilar's (2002) *Memory and*

¹¹ 'The model is Argentina, not South Africa,' *Buenos Aires Herald*, 14 October 2014.

Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy, Elizabeth Jelin's (2003) *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* and Francesca Lessa's (2013) *Memory and Transitional Justice in Argentina and Uruguay: Against Impunity* suggest that by combining insights from the two fields we can locate a framework through which to build a more incisive interpretation of Argentina's transition. This would be based on an understanding of the way that human rights activists and other 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003) have prosecuted their struggle for truth and justice using memory and landscapes of memory to shape, inflect and underpin the politics of transition.

As a dialogue between the two fields, the work of these scholars helps me to harness a shift in how memory is understood to function in the academy, from a concern with memorialisation as a form of symbolic reparation (Quinn 2009, de Greiff 2006, Balardini 2016), physical marker or container of the past (Prieto 2012, Eastmond and Selimovic 2012) to a process (Jelin 2003) or *medium* that helps to shape and inflect the parameters of the politics of truth and justice that are possible in a post-conflict society. Indeed, understood in this way memory-making can be seen as greater than – and not reducible to – the policies of truth and justice as transitional policies which the politics of memory (Barahona de Brito 2010) or labors of memory (Jelin 2003) might nonetheless help to inscribe and underpin. The politics of memory, Alexandra Barahona de Brito writes nicely, is 'an aspect of a broader process of social memory-making ... in which societies continually engage' and of which the 'processes of 'transitional justice' are only a small part' (2010:360-361). 'Collective remembrances can be instruments to legitimate discourse, create loyalties and justify political options. What and how societies choose to remember and forget largely determines their future options. To the extent that this is true, *all politics [of transition] can be said to be underlain by social memory-making*' (2010:361, emphasis added). '[I]nterpretations of the relationship between past and present not only shape contemporary identities,' Duncan Bell adds poignantly, 'for in so doing *they help to frame the horizon of the future*' (2006:3, emphasis added). 'With careful scholarship ... notions of social memory can be powerful in diagnosing and dissecting a number of key features in contemporary political life' (2006:29).

Cath Collins has argued that we need to move on now to consider *post*-transitional justice (2010). In order to make this argument, Collins was forced to jettison the study of Argentina, seeing it as too messy.¹² We can reject this thesis – and reject it on both counts – but to do so we need to situate our work at the interstices of transitional justice and memory and harness a new understanding of what memory is, and might how memory might function. This holds that

¹² Collins (2010:ix) thanked her colleagues at CELS for helping her 'to see why [she] might never understand Argentina,' and thus chose to compare Chile with El Salvador instead.

memory is not an object but a process; not a reified marker on the landscape but a contested, fluid and social configuration. The challenge as I see it now is to engage with sites of memory as lenses through which to unpick, unravel and decipher the politics of transition that the politics and broader social memory help to shape, underpin and inflect. The way that I propose to do this is to use the *Parque de la Memoria* as a prism through which to look again and more critically at the ways that the disappeared have been represented, remembered and recognised in Argentina as a (non-post) transitional society today. This way, we might even be able 'to understand Argentina' as an exemplary model and a model exemplar; a society of extraordinary diversity, fluidity and depth in its political possibilities in relation to its both its future and its past.

reconstructing the field to trace the discourses and logics of memory

a cultural biography

'powerful resonances open up a horizon that permits us to read the Argentinean case in the larger context of a now international culture of memory'
Andreas Huyssen

'In what might be called "biographies" of Holocaust memorial sites, I hope to reinvigorate otherwise amnesiac stone settings with a record of their own lives in the public mind'
James E. Young

The research interests that underpin this thesis are long in the making. My interest in memorials, the disappeared and Latin American politics each began at a particular point. As these interests have developed, they have grown more intertwined. My curiosity in Latin America for example stems from an undergraduate module on the continent's history and politics that I took as part of a degree in Geography. My interest in memorialisation can be traced to a newspaper article from around the same time in 2003, when it was announced that a memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe would be constructed in Berlin. Though I tried, and failed, to study that memorial as part of my degree (it was not yet built in time for my dissertation) a curiosity for landscapes of memory had been stimulated that has never really abated. I first visited the Memory Park as I passed through Argentina following a year's teaching in Perú in 2006, and would use every subsequent period of annual leave to visit memorials to atrocity or political violence, taking in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Shoah memorials in Paris, Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam, Tuol Sleng in Cambodia, New Delhi's India Gate, the memorial to the famine in Dublin and others along the way. On the same trip through Latin America I became interested whilst in Chile in the subject of the disappeared. I took a postgraduate degree, this time in International Relations, where I was introduced to the new field of transitional justice. My aim in pursuing a doctorate was to try and find a way of thinking through these interests – Latin American politics, landscapes of memory and the disappeared – together.

I had originally intended to write a thesis about the disappeared in Chile. My aim was to investigate how relatives there had attempted to come to terms with the enduring absence of victims who had been forcibly disappeared as a result of General Pinochet's dictatorship of 1973 to 1990. Having flown to Santiago to begin my fieldwork in September 2013 it became clear that restrictions on the number of possible research participants meant that such a piece

of research would not be viable. The Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos, or Group of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared, is an extraordinary organisation that has played a key role denouncing the human rights violations of Pinochet's regime. As soon as I met the AFDD I learned that its membership is now sadly depleted. This led me to re-consider the aims and methods of my research mid-way through the thesis. After a period of reflection I decided that my research interests could best be furthered by translating my research to Argentina. Not only that, but I decided to use this as an opportunity to tease out my interest in landscapes of memory more explicitly. I focused my research on the Park of Memory. I approached the park as a lens through which to work through the wider issues around truth and justice, politics, memory and mourning that I continued to find so interesting. In doing so, I discovered a way of developing these interests in a new way, in what would hopefully prove to be an original contribution, without succumbing to the temptations of writing a world-tour (cf. Williams 2007), a death-tourist exposé (cf. Logan and Reeves 2009, Lennon and Foley 2010) or a cultural-aesthetic critique (see chapter two).

In this chapter, I outline the methodology that guided my approach. I proceed in three parts. Firstly, I situate my study within the interdisciplinary literature on discourse analysis. As part of this, I illustrate how my study borrows but also departs in important ways from, Michel Foucault's genealogical approach as a variation to the study of discourse as this was pioneered in his later scholarship (1991). In the second part I consider James E. Young (1993) and Andreas Huyssen's (2003) methodologies in order to locate in their synthesis a revised genealogical approach re-conceptualised as a *cultural biography* of the collective memory of the disappeared. In part three, I explain how I intend to carry out a cultural biography in this thesis by using qualitative research methods to study the way the collective memory of the disappeared has been framed through twelve cultural and historical interventions.

my approach to genealogy as discourse analysis

In this thesis I use the Memory Park as a prism to critically analyse the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentina. I understand collective memory to mean the contested and dynamic process through which meaning is attributed to the recent past and a project for a future politics is delineated (see chapter two). I understand memorials to function as frames for the memory of violence (cf. Butler 2010, see chapter four). That is, as frames that do not passively mediate the past or provide a universally-shared interpretation of it but which actively intervene in the construction of this memory. I am interested in the way that this memory is constructed and moderated as part of an expanded field of memory; the contours of which human rights groups can be understood to reconfigure in order to shape what this past, and the future politics, might mean for others. An interest in the way that such groups

have struggled as part of a dynamic process to attribute meaning to the disappearances within a wider cultural field whose contours of meaning they situate within and help to re-adjust lends itself to a discourse analytical approach.

What is meant by discourse and discourse analysis? According to Margaret Wetherall et al. (2012): 'Discourse analysis is concerned with the meanings that events and experiences hold for social actors. It offers new methods and techniques for the social researcher interested in meaning-making.' (Wetherall et al. 2012:1). For James Paul Gee and Michael Handford, 'Discourse analysis is the study of language in use. It is the study of the meanings we give language and the actions we carry out when we use language in specific contexts' (2012:1). 'Discourse researchers typically work with 'texts'' (Wetherall et al. 2012:3). But they must also go beyond this. 'In an important sense ... social practice is discursive, it is organized by human values, by representations of human needs and by human aesthetics – by the history of human meaning-making' (2012:4).

For discourse analysts, language is constitutive. Whereas realist scholars might see language as a neutral window onto the social world discourse analysts operating from a social constructivist perspective see language as helping to bring that social world into being. 'Discourse builds objects, worlds, minds and social relations. It doesn't just reflect them' (2012:16). This has implications for the nature and understanding of truth and truth claims. 'In discourse research, decisions about the truth and falsity of descriptions are typically suspended. Discourse analysts are much more interested in studying *the process of construction* itself, how 'truths' emerge, how social realities and identities are built and the consequences of these, rather than what 'really happened'' (Ibid., emphasis added). This subtends to questions about contestation and power. 'Social scientists who study discourse have been interested in how people, groups and institutions mobilize meanings. How have some interpretations become dominant and whose interests do they serve?' (Wetherall 2012:25). In relation to the collective memory of the disappeared, as the contested social process through which actors have struggled to legitimise different interpretations of what the past violence might mean, this invites us to consider how it is that this memory has coalesced around certain claims as it has come to be constructed. What were the conditions that made it possible for example for the truth-claim that there were 30,000 *desaparecidos* to emerge and take hold in wider Argentine society, particularly once this was rejected by an independent truth commission, the CONADEP? Through what media used by which actors as the means of channelling what bodies of knowledge did it become possible to think of there being not 9,000 disappeared, as this commission concluded, but more than three times that figure? I consider this claim in detail in chapter seven.

There is no single approach to discourse analysis. Rather, '[d]iscourse analysis is understood in a range of different ways across the social sciences' (Potter 1996:607). There is no accepted division for any discourse analytical canon. There is not even an accepted view as to what discourse analysis is or should be; whether it is a method or a paradigm for example (Hammersley 2003), or whether it should confine itself to a standardised repertoire of component analyses or become a 'fully-fledged analytic position' (Potter 1996:607). Partly this reflects disciplinary nuances (Gee 2011). As discourse analysis has grown more popular in the social sciences, scholars have begun to chart divergent lines of enquiry. As such, 'discourse analysis can be seen as a contested disciplinary terrain where a range of different theoretical notions and analytic practices compete' (1996:608). Broadly speaking, however, we can distinguish between descriptive and critical discourse analysis (Gee 2011), explanatory and normative (Fairclough 2012), and discourse analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Hammersley 2003). These can be contrasted in turn with a radical approach to discourse as this was pioneered by Michel Foucault (1991).

In a pair of articles designed to police the borders of psychology as a discipline as much as contribute to our understanding of the possible methodological approaches to the study of discourse Derek Hook (2001, 2005) takes aim at the kind of discourse analysis pursued by Margaret Wetherall and Jonathan Potter (1996, 2012). Hook contrasts this approach with the genealogical studies of Michel Foucault. Through a close reading of the *Order of Discourse* (1980) and *Nietzsche, genealogy, history* (1977a), he argues (2001, 2005) that the 'various methodological injunctions offered by Foucault for the critical study of discourse can be better accommodated within the ambit of genealogy than within an informal set of discourse analysis procedures' (2005:4). Hook criticises Potter and Wetherall's work for its lack of attention to the material, institutional and social practices that co-constitute discourse as a nexus of power and knowledge. He argues with Foucault that it is this alliance with power and knowledge that allows discourse to regulate the type of truth-claims that are made available to us within each and make unthinkable and impossible other systems of thought and subject-formations outside of them. Hook's approach reads like something of an ideal type-like study, in which the study of 'reading, textuality or signification' is counter-posed within discourse analysis to the study of 'materiality, conditions of possibility, [and] historical circumstance' which drive the genealogical approach of Foucault (2001:30). Yet it is a useful entry into the literature on Foucault's genealogical approach as a variation of discourse analysis as this was developed in the latter half of his scholarship. Rather than a concern with the relations of meaning and

meaning-making, then, Foucauldian discourse analysis¹ privileges an analysis of *the relations of power* (Hook 2001). This is a very different notion of power to that which animates contemporary critical discourse analysis (see for example van Dijk 1985, 1993, Fairclough 2012, Gee 2011, Gee and Handford 2012, Billig 2008).

As with discourse analysis, so too 'there exists no strictly Foucauldian method of analysing discourse' (Hook 2007:1). If the former speaks to a divergent range of aims and techniques that are unwilling to coalesce around a synthesis, the lack of a clearly-defined method in the latter gestures rather to its epistemological and philosophical principles. Scholars agree that Foucault's approach is more of a method, a technique and *a way of critique* than a body of work that could be distilled and applied as a heuristic device to a chosen research setting. Foucault saw theory as a toolbox 'of more or less useful instruments' which allowed him to work on specific problems and further 'certain inquiries' (Garland 2014:366). He 'insisted on not following any certain methodology to do that' and was 'against all closed types of methodologies' (Tamboukou 1999:201), arguing that these would restrict the 'analytic possibilities of his approach' (Nicholls 2008:1). As such, Maria Tamboukou puts it nicely when she describes Foucault's genealogy as a 'set of methodological strategies for research' (1999:211). As a "doing" rather than a "thing" and a way of working through a clearly-defined problem in a specific localised context there are thus 'no set rules or procedures for conducting Foucauldian-inspired [sic] analyses of discourse' (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine 2008:92). There are however a number of common facets to Foucault's approach. I identify five such commonalities from the literature on Foucault's genealogical approach as a variation of discourse analysis. These are not clearly-bounded but slide into one another. Let us consider these in turn.

Firstly, Foucault seeks to situate discourse within its power/knowledge apparatuses and their regimes of truth. Maria Tamboukou writes that 'genealogy is concerned with the processes, procedures and apparatuses by which truth and knowledge are produced, in what Foucault calls the discursive regime of the modern era' (1999:202). This involves asking 'which kinds of practices tied to which kinds of external conditions determine the different knowledges in which we ourselves figure.' That is to say, under what historically-articulated conditions, and according to what matrices of truth and systems of knowledge as these are constructed in accordance with a range of strategies, tactics, techniques and operations is it possible to make truthful statements; 'statements ... which make some form of truth-claim ... and which are ratified by knowledge' (Nicholls 2008:3)? Key to the genealogical approach is the 'analysis of

¹ Like Nicholls (2004), I use this term mindful of its contradictions in this introductory exploration, as a means of comparison and a way of tying the literature together.

the different discursive and non-discursive ways in which the subject emerges in history' (Tamboukou 1999:203). What are the discursive *and non-discursive* (material, institutional and social) practices or elements that come together at a particular historical conjuncture of forces with their tactics, micro-physics and strategies of power to make it possible to think of a particular subject within a knowledge and power matrix in a particular way (and not others)? For Derek Hook (2001, 2005), this necessitates driving the discursive through the non-discursive as part of any genealogical analysis.

Secondly, Foucault moves away from hermeneutics. He rejects the assumption that there can be an interpretive search for hidden meaning, as a meaning that is kept somehow "below" layers of discourse in the signified and which can be emancipated and brought to light by the discerning researcher through the patient study of the signifier. He warns against searching for the 'vast unlimited discourse' which is repressed by 'systems of rarefaction ... and which we have the task of raising up by restoring the power of speech to it' (Foucault 1981a:67 in Hook 2007:25). For Foucault, hermeneutics is void given that a different reading will produce a different interpretation each time. Indeed, interpretation will only ever lead to further interpretation (Foucault in Shiner 1982). Not only that, but the study of meaning threatens to limit itself to the effluents of discourse itself and not the analysis of its discursive and non-discursive composition as a power/knowledge apparatus (Hook 2001, 2005). This makes Garland's assertion of using genealogical inquiry to uncover 'hidden conflicts and contexts' problematic (2014:365). Genealogy is 'gray, meticulous and patiently documentary' (Foucault in Rabinow 1986:76). It depends on 'a vast accumulation of source material' as Nietzsche's 'cyclopean monuments.' It uses a 'wide range of texts, spread over a broad horizon, made up of different textual materials, from a diversity of sources' (Nicholls 2008:8). Such material is sought 'in the most unpromising places' and 'outside of any monotonous finality' (Foucault in Rabinow 1986:76). Working from the bottom up, and remaining on the surface – resisting the temptation to go deeper – the genealogist must weave together 'the nexus of the power relations, the historical and cultural conditions, and the practices under scrutiny by drawing new lines and making interconnections among the different points of his constructed diagrams' (Tamboukou 1999:215).

Thirdly, then, genealogy assumes an alternative rationale of what history is, does, or should do. There are three parts to this. Foucault is dismissive of origins, trajectory, and continuity of meaning over time. He thus analyses *descent* rather than origin, and the *surface of emergence* rather than the depth of meaning. This is intended to arrest what Foucault sees, after Nietzsche, as the errors of traditional history in finalism (where the historian reads backwards to locate the causal source of a present condition in the past) and presentism (where the

historian seeks to understand the past in light of the present) (Tamboukou 1999:209). To read the progression of an object backwards through a linear history runs the risk of the researcher projecting his/her own values onto the object, casting them in a 'smooth trajectory of development' and giving events a 'false unity' (McNay 1992). Taken together, this adds up to a rejection of the assumption governing traditional history that 'one can trace ideas or institutions back to a sort of founding era or moment when their essential meaning was first revealed. The historian can then follow the continuous development – either as progress or "fall" – away from the original and essential meaning' (Shiner 1982:387). In contrast to traditional historiography, 'effective history' is a history of the present, which involves "diagnosing" a current situation by working out its genealogy and turning this history upon the present order of things. 'Instead of criticising the past in terms of the present, Foucauldian histories criticise the present by reflecting upon the ways the discursive and institutional practices of the past still affect the constitution of the present' (Tamboukou 1999:205). The genealogist's task is to trace the 'numberless beginnings' (Nicholls 2008:7) of an event in order to 'map discourse, to trace its outline and its relations of force across a variety of discursive forms and objects' (Hook in Nicholls 2008:8, emphasis added).

Fourthly, genealogy displaces the subject of study. The genealogist rejects the subject as the creator or 'author' of history to show how the subject is formed instead by power/knowledge matrices. Genealogy rejects both the idea of the transcendental subject and the point of continuity in history. It is not the subject that effects discourse but discourse that furnishes the subject. The genealogist of the natural sciences for example need concern herself not with their founders or the internal evolution of concepts and theories but rather the 'implicit rules which governed them – rules for the formation of objects and concepts, for the selection of theoretical strategies, for positioning the subject' (Shiner 1982:388). The genealogist of the moralising of the working classes in 19th France needs to understand this process of moralisation *not as the conscious invention of the bourgeoisie* but as the confluence of a variety of tactics, 'each operating in its own domain with its own aims,' (1982:391, emphasis added) and each with its 'numberless beginnings' that came together to form something of a strategy in the historical accident of the moment.

Finally, scholars are consistent in subscribing to the Foucauldian method of genealogy as a technique of political intervention and critique. Larry Shiner puts it well when he says that Foucault's '*theory is practice*' (1982:383, emphasis in original). Genealogy is an action. It is a political action. Its purpose is not to locate or bring about another, different truth within a new knowledge but to subvert the existing ways in which discursive power/knowledge nexuses have circumscribed the 'regime of truth' and thus what it is possible to think, act and say in

relation to a subject and a truth (and consequently what it is not possible to think or say, as being outside discourse). This means that genealogical enquiry can be thought of as an 'anti-method' (Shiner 1982) or a 'counter-memory' (Tamboukou 1999:203). 'His method is an anti-method in the sense that it seeks to free us from the illusion that an apolitical method is possible' (Shiner 1982:386). It is a counter-memory in that it is designed to help subjects 'recreate the historical and practical conditions of their present existence' and open up other 'possibilities for life, by separating us from the 'contingency that has made us what we are'' (Mahon 1992:122 in Tamboukou 1999:203). 'Genealogy provides a microanalysis of power relations' (1999:205). It makes itself available as an instrument of subversive critique within specific, localised contexts; arming the sociologist in the penetration of the discourses of society, the psychiatrist in the unravelling of the discourses of psychiatry and so on. It is within these localised, specified interventions that 'Foucault raises the question of freedom, not as a normative category, but as a 'real' situation of being, our possibility of questioning ourselves and modifying the politics of our existence' (Rajchman 1985 in Tamboukou 1999:211).

Foucault's genealogy is an incisive methodological technique with which to critically confront and systematically analyse the 'problem' of the construction of Argentine collective memory within its specified, localised context. As a *theory as practice* (Shiner 1982) rather than a *theory of practice* (cf. Bourdieu [1972]) it teases out nicely the importance of the non-discursive, historically-informed and material conditions that are co-constitutive through strategies and tactics of institutional intervention, social structures and forms of practice to the production and regulation of discourse within a historical conjuncture. Crucially, it provides us with a way of understanding how institutional interventions and practices construct the subject of discourse. In my own study, this draws our attention to the way institutional interventions and practices of memory, truth and justice help to produce the *desaparecido* as the subject that is to be remembered. However, Foucault's approach is based on discursive power/knowledge structures that are all-encompassing. As a result, it downplays the importance of the historically-informed forces of meaning that I am interested in exploring in this thesis. And it provides no conceptual space for the attribution of any agency to individual actors acting socially within each power/knowledge nexus to reconfigure the forces of the field in which they situate, by reconfiguring the mechanisms through which the ontological subjects come into being. Thus, it cannot explain outside of the notion of the instantiation of a power/knowledge apparatus with its correlative regime of truth and will to knowledge how the subject is created within and through this memory. As a result, it cannot tell us how the construction of the *desaparecido* as an ontological subject in and through memory is regulated as it is constructed and reconstructed not according to a will to knowledge in a discursive

matrix-machine nor the logic of the actors involved but rather *according to the logic of a society* that distinguishes between whom is worthy of being considered human, and thus remembered and/or mourned, and whom is not. To place a greater slant on collective memory as a constitutive and constructed force-field of meaning – not power – I must turn to the literature on memory studies.

my approach as a cultural biography

Since the cultural turn in social science there has been an interest in memorials as ‘texts’ which might be ‘read’ and deciphered as part of what are sometimes called ‘maps of meaning’ (Jackson 1989). This has elicited insights from a range of disciplines and fields including (new) cultural geography, cultural studies, cultural history, and memory studies (see chapter two). Such insights have been notably broad in terms of their methodological, theoretical and epistemological sweep. Typically, however, analyses focus on the imposition of meaning upon the landscape, attempts at re-signification, and the social and political contestation that results when patterns of meaning are contested, subverted, converted, or even ignored. Memorials are rarely studied in isolation in such work. Rather, they form part of a broader spectrum or constellation that includes contributions from cultural media in television, theatre and film, social protest, everyday activism and performance. This has given rise to a fertile literature on embodiment, affect, movement, dance, play and ways of writing the landscape. The extension of literary metaphors continues to hold strong (though not unopposed²) purchase in this literature. Thus, scholars have sought to ‘read’ and re-construct through a consideration of the discourses and representations of memory the meaning of a memorial ‘text’ within its ‘biography’ or wider ‘intertextual’ field, and thus reconstruct its pattern of meaning within the broader cultural constellation of which it forms part. Such fields of meaning are never settled, reified or complete but open, fluid, and contested realms in which the meaning of the past that as activated through an engagement of the memory-maker with the landscape is subject to constant conflict, engagement and struggle.

Two of the most persuasive accounts in this scholarship come from cultural historian James E. Young and cultural studies scholar Andreas Huyssen. In *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (2003) Huyssen sought to situate the recent ‘memory boom’ as part of the contemporary cultural moment in modernity. Through a shift to the operative scale of the city as medium, Huyssen was able to draw together both theory and method in the critical concept of the ‘city as text’ whose writings and re-writings offer themselves up to be read.

² Jay Winter (1995) opposed the aesthetic critique and tried to return to an appraisal of sites as first and foremost sites of mourning. Nigel Thrift (2007) sought to privilege affect as part of a non-representational theory. John Wylie (2007) attempted to craft a more embodied relationship between landscape and the self.

That memory and temporality have ‘invaded spaces and media that seemed among the most stable including cities, monuments, architecture and sculpture’ (2003:7) he wrote, has resulted in the city becoming akin to a palimpsest whose ‘traces of the past, erasures, losses and heterotopias’ combine in the social imaginary and are there to be decoded by the discerning visitor-researcher. Urban spaces, as Sigmund Freud noted, cannot possibly sustain more than one signifier in the same space and time at one – but the urban social imaginary can. As researchers, citizens, or visitors, we are invited to read these palimpsests ‘historically, intertextually, constructively and deconstructively at the same time’ to gain ‘an understanding of urban spaces as lived spaces that shape collective imaginaries’ (2003:7).³

Huysen’s book included a chapter specifically on the Memory Park, which I shall want to consider in detail as part of chapters four and seven. But it is worth considering his take on the park briefly here too, for what it promises as an alternative methodological approach to that of Michel Foucault to the study of discourse and discourses of memory that help to constitute the cultural field within which the park and its visitors are said to situate. Huysen’s study focused on the notion of the park as situating within an ‘expanded field’ of reference (2003:97). His notion of a field was a play after Krauss on its topographic and aesthetic dimensions which see it combine sculpture, landscape, architecture and design. It also operated along other registers, including the geographical, discursive and political. Situating the park in the ‘in-between space’ that conjoins the local and global and the legal and commemorative domains allowed him to articulate a critical ‘reading’ of its meaning as one that is situated at the interstices of a ‘localised’ struggle for justice and memory that takes its discursive, political and cultural contours from the post-1980s ‘global culture of memory’ of the Holocaust (2003:95). Indeed, this ‘global culture of memory’ was understood as both the prism and impulse behind the remembrance of the disappeared at the park. ‘The politics of Holocaust commemoration (what to remember, how to remember, when to remember), so prominent in the global media has functioned like a motor energizing the discourses of memory elsewhere’ (2003:99). To read the meaning of the discourse about the disappeared therefore was to read ‘between the lines’ of two contemporary icons in this expanded field in the Berlin Jewish Museum and Vietnam Veterans Memorial, from which it is said to take its discursive and cultural bearings. ‘[T]he powerful resonances open up a horizon that permits us to read the Argentinean case in the larger context of a now international culture of memory and its translation into building, memorial sites, and monuments’ (2003:105).

³ This speaks to Marita Sturken’s (2007) notion of memorials as ‘technologies’ of memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a ‘screen.’ For Sturken, memories and forgettings in the form of absences are mutually ‘tangled’ and entwined as they are produced within cultural objects, images or representations, including memorials.

If for Andreas Huyssen the Holocaust has functioned as the 'motor' for an 'international culture of memory', for James E Young it is perhaps the other way around. In *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (1993), Young elucidated a different notion of the collective memory of the Holocaust. This was not collective but rather an aggregate of 'collected' memories (see chapter two). Public memory for Young is always public national memory. The bearers of these memories might come together in a shared space and time as a 'textured' embrace, but their memories of the same, shared and traumatic event would be, and remain, unique. The American national memory of the Holocaust is different to that of the Israelis, for example, which is different to that of Germans or Poles. 'Each answers to a different constituency; each reflects different kinds of meaning in memory' (1993:349).

Young shared Huyssen's sensitivity to the ossification of memory in the memorial landscape. Stung by Robert Musil's invective that there is nothing so invisible in the world as a monument and goaded by Nietzsche's call for them to be done away with altogether, he attempted to breathe life back into the memorials he studied through the memory of their own 'biographies' (1993:ix). The best memorial to a traumatic past he wrote, at least in Germany, might not be a single installation at all but 'the never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end' (1993:21).⁴ The heuristic device of a biography was thus intended to 'reinvigorate' the monument (1993:14). 'In what might be called "biographies" of Holocaust memorial sites,' his hope he wrote was to 'reinvigorate otherwise amnesiac stone settings with a record of their own lives in the public mind, with our memory of their past, present, and future' (1993:ix). Through the memory of how each memorial had come into being it was believed that a 'genuine activity of memory' could be stimulated on the part of those who visited it. By '[vivifying]' each memorial and exposing to public view the panoply of social, political and aesthetic debates that accompanied its creation (1993:15), it was hoped that their naturalisation and ossification in the landscape could be avoided and their potential as markers for social and political change re-invested. To do otherwise, to remark passively on the aesthetic contours of a memorial and leave unexplored an awareness of the way each memorial shaped (and was shaped in turn by) public reception, Young argued, would be tantamount to not really remembering at all.

Writing from different and perhaps opposite angles, Huyssen and Young's work has had a formative influence on the way memorials have come to be understood in cultural studies. Whether they sanctioned a form of collective (or collected) memory that was the aggregate of national actors coming together in a shared space or the 'creative appropriation' in content and design of a global and cultural discursive field, they each tacked the social memory of a

⁴ Young was writing here before the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe was completed.

society to the Holocaust as an international phenomenon. In doing so, they pointed to two competing ways of using memorials to make sense of the complex cultural constellation of memories, discourses, power and meanings that encircle them both at their origins and their subsequent modes of inscription and re-inscription, interpretation and re-interpretation. However, both approaches have their limitations. Young's refusal to bring the visitors who come together in the 'textures' of their 'collected memories' across the threshold of a transformative and shared (if always contested and never-to-be-complete) collective memory circumscribes the power of the public debates and the sites themselves in which he set such store. Huyssen's notion of an expanded field fails to take into account the importance in the cultural writings and re-writings of the social imaginary of *national* actors acting in *concrete historical and material* interventions, and it places too much weight on the inflection of this collective memory in relation to processes that operate across space as opposed to time. In sum, it places too much emphasis on the claim that the genesis for the cultural, discursive and aesthetic discourses that circulate in and through the memorials that I shall want to study in the park emanate from the 'motor' of the Shoah as the instigator of a 'global culture of memory' within which they take both their bearings and their cues.

What I should like to do in this thesis then is to marry these two approaches together. By synthesising Huyssen's notion of a '*global culture of memory*' and Young's '*biography*' as heuristic devices I am able to arrive at an alternative theoretical-methodological tool with which to direct my study of Argentina's memory of the disappeared. This is a cultural biography of the disappeared in the field of collective memory. The cultural biography is also a variation on the Foucauldian genealogy. By cultural biography, I take to mean the study of the way the meaning of the disappearances has historically been configured and re-configured across forms of representation, practice and testimony within an expanded field of memory, as a field whose cultural and discursive contours of meaning are inflected across *both space and time*. I think Andreas Huyssen is right that visitors to the Park of Memory attempt to make sense of their relationship to the recent violent past by "reading" the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism between the discursive and aesthetic lines that extend across space to the Berlin Museum and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. But I also suspect that many of them "read" and attempt to form a relationship with this past by attributing meaning and constructing a memory in between the cultural and political contours that extend over time within a national genealogy too; and thus within the lines that extend to the concrete material interventions of human rights actors over time and space. By reconstructing this field of memory as a field of meaning using a cultural biography we can trace the discourses and logics through which the disappeared have come to be remembered

in Argentine collective memory. In doing so, we can come to a better understanding of how this memory is regulated, moderated and framed.

a cultural biography of the disappeared in argentine collective memory

In order to chart this cultural biography, I propose to study the cultural frames of memory that pattern and help to constitute this field. In this thesis, I consider twelve such frames. The twelve cultural frames include six memorials from the *Parque de la Memoria*. They also include a further six cultural frames that were institutional interventions, social protests or material practices by members of the human rights community and others in Argentina. These latter interventions were chosen because they had something to do with the way that meaning would (come to) be attributed through the construction or re-construction of the ontological subjects of the disappeared in collective memory.⁵ I understand these twelve frames after Judith Butler (2005, 2010) as frames for the memory of violence, to which I will have more to say in the next chapter. What I would like to do now is to explain the criteria that informed the selection of these frames as variables, and the qualitative methods that I used to study them. I will then reflect by way of a short conclusion on the ethical concerns that were important to consider in the collection of data on these twelve variables using these methods as the basis for my research.

The twelve cultural frames were selected through a broadly grounded approach to theory as this was developed by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser and Strauss in Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). This is an iterative approach that is neither fully inductive nor deductive but which proceeds on the basis of a constant dialogue between theory and the empirical collection of data. Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson understand this as a process in which 'ideas are used to make sense of data and data are used to change our ideas' (2007:159). The selection of the six interventions as cultural frames developed as my reading developed, my exploration of the park continued, and my understanding of the topic grew. Data on the twelve frames was collected using qualitative methods. The main source of data were secondary data and the theoretical and empirical studies of other researchers. It also included secondary interviews. This was complimented by the collection of primary data in the form of semi-structured interviews as well as some archival work.⁶

⁵ This is not to argue that their representation in this memory was the primary function of these groups, which was instead to secure the truth and justice for what had happened to them. See chapter six.

⁶ The use of such orthodox qualitative methods is consistent with an epistemological outlook that sees these methods as able both to generate information about the phenomenon under study and to act as a window onto the participants' perspectives, discursive practices and broader cultural codes that help to guide their motives for social behaviour (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

My first task was to select the memorials that I would use as the frames that locate (or have at one point been located) in the *Parque de la Memoria*. When it is complete, the Memory Park will host a total of eighteen memorials as installations in modern art through which visitors are invited to remember the forced disappearances of the 1970s and '80s. This is in addition to the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism. At the time of writing, nine of these had been erected in the park. In addition to the permanent sculptures, the *Sala PAYS* has also hosted a total of nineteen 'expositions' of memory. These are temporary and often contemporary exhibitions, performances or practices of memory that last anything from two to six months. This gives a total of thirty-eight memorials as cultural frames – broadly defined to include both sculptures and practices of memory in the park – that were possible for me to select as the basis of this study. Of these thirty-eight, thirteen were available for me to analyse first-hand during the period of my fieldwork, which lasted between January and September 2014. This included the monument, eight sculpture-installations, and three expositions. These three exhibitions were *Aquella Mañana fue como si recuperara si no la felicidad, sí la energía, una energía que se parecía mucho al humor, un humor que se parecía mucho a la memoria* (hereafter "*aquella mañana*"), Carlos Trilnick's *Proyecto Archivos del Terror: Apuntes sobre el Plan Cóndor*, and Fernando Goin's *Línea de Tiempo*.⁷

In order to study these cultural frames, as the basis for charting the cultural biography and reconstructing the expanded field of memory of the disappeared, a selection had to be made to reduce this number to a manageable research sample. A total of six frames were selected. This included the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism. The six frames were as follows:

1. Roberto Aizenberg's *Sin Título*
2. Claudia Fontes' *Reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Míguez*
3. Nicolás Guagnini's *30,000*
4. Luis Camnitzer's *Memorial*
5. Alberto Varas et al.'s *Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado*
6. Inés Katzenstein y Javier Villa's "*Aquella mañana*"

The six memorials were chosen according to two main criteria: relevance and representability. Firstly, the installations or expositions were chosen if they functioned as *frames for the memory of violence*. That is, they were selected if it was felt that they spoke to my research questions by delimiting the representation of the violence of the 1970s and '80s in such a way that they helped to reconfigure the field of meaning and construct the subject that was being remembered. This was a criterion that was informed by my reading of Judith Butler's work (see chapter four). This was a subjective exercise. No objective guidelines were drawn up according

⁷ This excludes a further two exhibitions that were not the main exhibitions in the *Sala PAYS*: *Colectivo Guias: Prisioneros de la ciencia* and *Fotolibros de Derechos Humanos* but which occupied only a side chamber of the main exhibition space.

to which frames would then be selected or deselected as variables. I ignored for example León Ferrari's overly-abstract installation *a los derechos humanos* given that it did not appear to gesture to anything beyond itself, and thus could not form part of my attempt to reconstruct the wider reference frame of Argentine collective memory as a field of meaning. In restricting my sample to the memorials that had to do with the attribution of (some form of) meaning to the recent past, I also excluded expositions that were designed for more pedagogical purposes. These included Goin's *Línea de Tiempo* as a timeline of events from the repression. The use of this criterion means that the study is subject to selection bias.⁸

Secondly, I restricted my observations whenever possible to installations that I was able to witness first-hand. This meant omitting from my study Leo Vinci's *Presencia*, for example, as one of the nine remaining permanent installations that are yet to be built. It also meant discarding Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Figuras Caminando*, as a clear invocation of the first criterion. It meant omitting contributions from Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar, whose *Estudios sobre la felicidad* would subsequently take place from November 2014 to March 2015, as well as the Chilean *arpilleras* that were hosted at the *Sala PAYS* from September to November 2013 (ironically when I was still in Chile). However, I did elect to consider Luis Camnitzer's *Memorial*. *Memorial* had been hosted from March to June 2011. As a result, it was not a memorial which I had witnessed first-hand. *Memorial* was selected because it spoke to me strongly of the first criterion for selection, and I felt I was able to come to an understanding of its situating within the field as a single visual representation that could be studied through its reproduction on the internet in a way that I could not do with regards to the more performative interpretations that I had missed or would miss once my period of fieldwork was concluded.

Not all permanent installations or memory sculptures were included in my analysis. I did not study Dennis Openheim's *Monumento al Escape*, Norberto Gómez's *Torres de la Memoria* and William Tucker's *Victoria* for example. Although for reasons of parsimony I did not attempt to incorporate these into my main analysis, I do reflect on these at various parts in the thesis as I attempt to navigate my way around and build my understanding of the park (see chapters six and seven). Other expositions were important in helping me to reconstruct the field in other ways. Through their representation in the park, *Pancartas de Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (July to August 2012) and *El Siluetazo* (May to June 2013) helped me to appreciate the importance of the *pancartas* (as well as other instruments of political and social activism) and the *siluetazo* (as a unique form of social protest) in helping to construct and re-construct the memory of the disappeared. These two interventions then formed two of the remaining six frames of memory (see chapter six).

⁸ I owe this point to Dr. Par Engstrom

The six frames that I chose to complete my cultural biography were as follows:

1. Instruments of political and social activism
2. Truth Commission (CONADEP)
3. *Siluetazo*
4. 'Horror Show' of exhumations
5. Trial of the Juntas
6. The *escraches*

These six cultural frames were chosen as part of my cultural biography in line with my ongoing reading of the park and my understanding of the cultural field of collective memory. They were selected according to the same criteria: their relevance to my research questions and representability. That is, they were chosen if it was felt that they had delimited the reality and meaning of the recent past violence and helped to construct the subject of the *desaparecido* in some way. Again, this selection involved selection bias. No objective criteria were established to filter the choice of possible cultural frames from a wider sample. For reasons of parsimony, and to reduce the sample size to twelve frames to make it manageable, I did not select the theatrical performance, *antígona furiosa*, for example, although it satisfied the two criteria. Nor did I select the *baldosas por la memoria*, the mosaics to the individual disappeared that are inserted into the pavements next to the places where they lived, worked or studied, even though these would again have met the twin criteria (see chapter ten).

As institutional interventions or material and social practices of memory, truth and justice each of these acts took place before or during the dictatorship or in the early transition to democracy between 1983 and 1985. These six cultural frames were studied mainly through secondary data and the scholarship of others (see chapter six). This analysis was complemented by primary research. The main sources of primary research were semi-structured interviews and some small-scale archival research. In a period of fieldwork that lasted twelve months and which took place from September 2013 to September 2014, I carried out a total of thirty-four interviews with research participants across the two research settings of Chile and Argentina. Participants were chosen according to purposive and gradual sampling. My purpose in selecting candidates for interview was to maximise the relevance of their contributions rather than their representativeness. A total of twenty interviews were conducted with research participants who had an interest in the *Parque de la Memoria* in some form once I had taken the decision to transfer my research to Argentina in January 2014. This interest was broadly defined. It included speaking with people who had a stake in the running, administration or advocacy of the park for example. It also included those who might be defined as 'deviant cases' (Flick 2009:121). Some interviewees were chosen on the basis of having previously expressed some form of criticism of the site. Other participants were chosen

who had played a direct role in the construction and delimitation of one of the frames. This included one person who had taken part in CONADEP for example and been instrumental in its work. Gaskell (2000:42) refers to these groups together as 'natural groups' or 'candidate milieus.' Such participants collectively meet the criteria for what are called *élite* interviews. Interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured dialogues. A topic guide was generated to conduct the interview, but the exchange was allowed to deviate according to its natural rhythm. Interviews lasted between one and two hours in duration. They were conducted in the medium of Spanish, with one exception. They were each carried out face-to-face, again with one exception. In each case, the interviewee was allowed to select the time and location of the interview so as to put them most at ease. This led to conversations in such locations as the offices of the Buenos Aires city government, the Sala PAyS, the Casa de la Madres or the headquarters of the Madres Asociación, as well as over coffee or breakfast in a café or the home of the participant. All interviews were recorded using a standard recording device, and transcribed using the services of an Argentine agency, under conditions of anonymity, for which a fee was paid.

To complement the collection of primary data through interviews I conducted three small phases of archival research. No attempt was made to conduct the kind of systematic, 'gray' and meticulous study of the relevant archives according to the principles and techniques of a Foucauldian genealogy. Rather, the purpose of primary data collection was to collect data that would allow me to map the cultural biography and trace the discourses and logics through the reconstructed field of the collective memory of the disappeared. The corpus varied according to each archive. Firstly, I consulted the library of Memoria Abierta. Memoria Abierta is an umbrella organisation of six human rights organisations based in the former ESMA in northern Buenos Aires (see chapter one). At Memoria Abierta I was given permission to access a series of recorded interviews with Madres de Plaza de Mayo. The interviews are in the form of semi-structured exchanges that were recorded on videotape in the 1990s. The interviewees include important members or former members of the Madres including María Adela Gard de Antokoletz. Many of the interviewees are no longer alive. The videos are available for anyone to access in exchange for a small fee, but cannot be recorded or taken away. They must therefore be transcribed using extensive note-taking in the library. Over a period of five visits to the library I watched a total of twelve interviews with Madres. These interviews complemented my first-hand interviews. Though I was not able to include these as part of my discourse analysis (see chapter eight), given that I was not able to transcribe the interviews and study them closely, they did inform my understanding of the subject in other ways. Part of

María Adela Gard de Antokoletz's interview for example helped me to understand the importance of the river to the park's location (see chapter seven).

Secondly, I solicited the archives of the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, or CELS, where I consulted newspaper cuttings from 1975 onwards relating to the disappearances of people. Since these could also not be withdrawn, I took photographs of the articles that I judged to be relevant to my investigation. I then arranged for these to be printed so that they could be studied in more detail. I was therefore required to select the material that would form the corpus from the relevant archive. This formed the second selection, after their selection by the original archivist according to criteria that I was not party to. This is an example of archival sedimentation. The authenticity and credibility of these documents was validated like the videos by their being included as part of the collection of this august institution. The sources that I selected were chosen according to the same two criteria that guided my other work, that is, according to their relevance and representability rather than their representativeness. Over a period of three visits to the archive I collected more than five hundred sources. These sources included extracts of the newspaper adverts that were used by the Madres, Familiares and other human rights groups as forms of political activism during the height of their struggle (see chapter six). Finally, to compliment my archival research I would collect together a range of documents and material artefacts over the course of my fieldwork. These ranged from blog posts and newspaper articles to a copy of the comments book that is housed in the Sala PAYS that I was given permission to photocopy. They also included various paraphernalia from my visits to human rights museums and cultural centres, including the Haroldo Conti cultural centre of memory in the former ESMA and the Museum of Memory in Rosario. I reflect on my discussion with the director of the latter, and my audience with the director of the former, as part of chapter seven.

My fieldwork benefitted from four episodes that were fertile in terms of the generation of data. As discussed in chapter one, a dispute erupted shortly after I moved to Buenos Aires in January 2014 relating to the pay and conditions of staff at the park. This yielded an array of documentary sources. These ranged from newspaper articles and interviews given by staff or human rights activists to local television networks and *youtube* to commentaries that expressed criticism of some form (see chapter five). In many cases, I was able to follow these up through first-hand interviews with some of the key participants. I arranged to meet Claudio Avruj, for example, who as the official responsible at the city government for the decision to halt the pay increases to the staff is now the Minister for Human Rights following Argentina's general election of October 2015. During my last week in Buenos Aires I took part in a commemoration at the prestigious *Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires* to mark the identification

by the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) of the remains of Lila Epelbaum (see chapter ten). Lila was one of three children of Madre de Plaza de Mayo Reneé Epelbaum to have been disappeared by the military junta. The commemoration was attended by other Madres from the Línea Fundadora branch as well as human rights activists, including former Buenos Aires Herald journalist Bob Cox. As a result, I was able to arrange a meeting with Cox, whose role during the repression I continue to find so inspiring. This discussion helped me to make sense of the early violence of the repression. Lastly, I was fortunate during my fieldwork to attend a two-day colloquium on Spaces of Memory, organised by Cecilia Sosa and the universities of East London and Tres de Febrero in March 2014. Present at the event were respected academics in memory and cultural studies including Cecilia Sosa, Jens Andermann, Silke Arnold-de Simini and Carl Lavery, who not only spoke on topics relating to their own interests but who took a moment to reflect on their impressions of the Memory Park as well. Many of these participants had signed the January 2014 petition in favour of the park.

fiddling while the world burns

In the end, whether this research fulfils Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) manifesto for a vulnerable and interpretive scholarship or Hammersley and Atkinson's obloquy of 'fiddling whilst the world burns' (2007:17) cannot be known. My hope is that at the very least it will have done those who took part no harm. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the course of this research. My methodology was subject to approval by the LSE's Ethics Committee and the same committee was notified once I took the decision to change the setting and focus of my research. Each participant who took part via a formal interview was asked for their informed consent beforehand and given an information sheet that set out clearly, in Spanish, the objectives and funding arrangements that guided my investigation. In this document, I explained that what we were about to discuss was sensitive and could even be traumatic for the participant. I also explained that as I was not trained in these situations I would refer them to a relevant organisation where they could receive professional help should they need it. In the same document I explained that I would not be able to offer the participants any financial recompense nor further any political aims they may have had through any form of advocacy. In doing so, I made it clear that my purpose was not to further any political motives that I might have had. I also explained that they should feel able to withdraw their participation at any point in the research, without needing to provide an explanation, and that as soon as it was complete they would be welcome to ask for a summary of my findings in their own language. All participants were offered the chance to contribute anonymously, though none elected to do so, and indeed all were happy for their contribution to be included as part of this research.

the field, frames and political logics of memory

a theoretical framework

'how should even local, regional, or national
memories be secured, structured, and represented?'

Andreas Huyssen

'if war is to be opposed, we have to understand how
popular consent to war is cultivated and maintained'

Judith Butler

Speaking at an academic conference in Buenos Aires in March 2014 the director of a museum in Córdoba spoke of the difficulties of getting ordinary Argentines to engage with the memory of the political violence of the 1970s and 80s. Asked what she did to address this lack of interest, Ludmila da Silva Catela replied that she took the memory of the violence into the street. Every Tuesday, da Silva Catela and her colleagues would line the walkways, alleyways and boulevards of Argentina's second city with images and narratives of the *desaparecidos*. 'If you are not going to come to the museum,' she said, 'then the museum will have to come to you!'

The notion of collective memory emerged in Sociology within a Durkheimian milieu. As a result, it was tied at its inception to the notion of social solidarity, and conceived as an organic and holistic phenomenon. Central to Maurice Halbwachs' ([1925]) formulation was the idea that we remember within the frameworks of social groups, such as religion, class or the family (see chapter two). These frameworks provide definition to our memories and cohesiveness to such groups and society as a whole. This idea is no longer tenable. As da Silva Catela's remarks make clear, collective memory does not function in this way in many societies today. There is something else going on here as well. Da Silva Catela's comments reveal not only the pluralism of interpretations about the shared but contested recent violent past. They attest to the difficulties some human rights groups experience as 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003:33) in getting others to reckon with this past. For many of these ordinary Argentines, such interpellations may be unbidden and reach them unwelcome. This aspect has yet to be properly worked through. Recent scholarship in memory studies has problematised many of the early assumptions that underpinned collective memory (see chapter two). Yet, there remains conceptual space for the critical engagement of the relationships between memory, mourning and politics. We lack a conceptual architecture with which to analyse and understand how the potential for a violent recent past to be taken up and remembered by a wider society is linked, and even regulated, by the way this memory is framed.

In this chapter, I wish to outline the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. My aim is to work towards a theory of collective memory as operating within an expanded field of representability. To do so, I propose to select from the existing scholarship on the politics of memory and to read this alongside the work of a critical social theorist whose ideas are seldom broached in this field. Borrowing from Judith Butler's work on the *Frames of War* (2006 [2004]) and reading this in conversation with Andreas Huyssen's (2003) and Jenny Edkins' (2003) scholarship on expanded discursive fields and the politics of the missing respectively, I want to suggest that the notion of collective memory as an expanded field in which the *frames of the memory of violence* operate alongside norms of recognition towards particular logics of memory provides us with a new and penetrative vocabulary for thinking through the memory of the disappeared in Argentina. In particular, I want to suggest that it offers me a way to think again and more critically about what happens in a post-conflict society when groups compete to represent and regulate the memory of the recent violence in such a way as to secure wider support and legitimacy for their chosen interpretation of the past as a means of delineating the parameters of the political future.

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of the political logic of memory. This idea will become central to the broader thesis as I go on to navigate the construction of collective memory of the forced disappearances of the 1970s and 80s among Argentinians today, using the *Parque de la Memoria* as a prism to guide me. By *political logic of memory*, I take to mean the set of internal organising principles that govern the set of representations, discourses and practices through which meaning is attributed to the recent violent past and a project for a future politics is delineated. The concept of a logic, and a political logic, calls attention to the way that the collective memory of a society, although dynamic, contested and plural, is not a random constellation. Rather, beginning in this chapter and throughout this thesis, I hope to show how the construction and re-construction, configuration and re-configuration of collective memory in Argentina is organised according to two political logics that inform and underpin what are often exhilaratingly novel and innovative cultural, social and political interventions among human rights actors operating within this field as to how the past might be read, re-read, written, re-written, represented and thus remembered. The central claim that I shall want to make is that Argentine collective memory has a cultural biography in which it operates according to two political logics of memory. And that these logics can be understood as regulating the memory of the disappeared not in accordance with the logic of the human rights actors but that of society.

I proceed in four stages. Firstly, I introduce the work of Judith Butler on *Frames of War* (2006, 2010) as frames that operate in a symbiotic relationship with what she calls 'norms of

recognition' within an overall 'field of representability'. Critically appraising Butler's theory on the grievability of lives, I show how the idea of the frames of the memory of violence provides a penetrative vocabulary for thinking through the complex relationship(s) between memory, mourning and politics in a post-conflict society such as Argentina. I deepen the notion of memory as situating within a visual and discursive field by turning to Andreas Huyssen's (2003) work in part two. In part three, I consider Jenny Edkins' (2011) argument that there are two ways of doing politics when persons go missing, and use this as the basis to tease out the importance of the concept of the political logic of memory. I conclude by trying to bring the field, frames and political logics of memory back together.

frames of (the memory of) violence

I find it useful to think through the relations between memory, mourning and politics using Judith Butler's work on the grievability of life. In *Precarious Life* (2006 [2004]) and *Frames of War* (2010 [2009]), Judith Butler elaborates a notion of grievability as the differential in affective and political responses on the part of one society to the suffering and loss of life that takes place in another. Butler shows nicely how this response is not automatic but rather is mediated by the cultural frames and according to the cultural norms through which the loss of life is viewed and understood. We mourn some persons as their lives are extinguished as *grievable lives*. That is, as lives that *will have been recognised* as being lived in accordance with norms that define what it means to be human. We do not mourn the lives of others as these lives are lost, for we do not recognise these through the visual and discursive representations with which we are 'conscripted' or 'interpellated' to be lives lived according to these norms. These are *ungrievable lives*. Crucially, Butler is able to show how the relationship between violence and mourning is not only mediated, but regulated too. As a result, the way that a conflict will be represented has implications for a state's ability to prosecute or deepen its waging of war. In work on the Middle East she shows persuasively for instance how the United States government represented the victims of its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in such a way as to produce them as particular subjects – human shields or homophobic Islamic others – *thereby forestalling an ethical response and political form of resistance* to its waging of war back home. Rather than being the great leveller, war is revealed here to both depend upon and perpetuate an epistemological graduation or 'differential' in vulnerability, precariousness and grievability. The likelihood that a racial or ethnic group's lives will be mourned is constitutive to how and whether this conflict can take place. But this likelihood can also be manipulated, and this response regulated, by certain forms of intervention, including through torture as a performative (re)instantiation of the subject.

Butler's concept of the grievability of life is complex and nuanced. It operates on multiple different registers. These include the ontological and epistemological, critical and normative, and spatial and temporal. In drawing attention to the way that a powerful state is able to moderate the affective and political response of a society to violence, as the violence it commits overseas, Butler outlines a framework in which the epistemic framing process is implicated in the ontologies of the self. The production of the subject is thus not (only) to be understood as the result of a socially-meaningful, culturally-inscribed and institutionally-informed process of subjectivation but as a social process that might derive from the epistemological intervention from a higher power in the field of conflict. Identities that appear pre-given, and prior to contract, may therefore need to be re-thought as the result of a performative and epistemological process that (helps to) bring these subjects into being. This insight is used as the basis for a normative as well as critical impulse. That is, as the condition of possibility for a form of politics that does not exist but which might be enacted. For Butler, the awareness that comes from mourning (as well as anger, violence and rage) that we are each of us bound and conditioned by our shared social ontological condition as beings who are constituted in-and-of social relations in a state of precariousness might be used as the means not for renewed conflict – as conflict that is intended to re-secure the illusion of the bounded self – but rather as the basis for a more ethical response towards the other living in a heightened state of precariousness. This would form part of an ethical regime of non-violence and a radically egalitarian and democratic rethinking of politics. Such a form of co-existence would not amount to a 'principle' but a 'practice' and action. What this would mean in practice is a politics of resistance. Here, Butler's thinking comes full circle. Though *Precarious Life* (2006) lacked an awareness of how such a process might operate over time, the enacting of violence is understood in *Frames of War* (2010) to require the working of the weakness in the iterations of the norm. This is a return to an interpretive key that unlocked Butler's earlier work on gender. That the 'normative production of the subject is an iterative process – [and] the norm is repeated' (2010:168) means that the citational iterations and reiterations of the norm or norms within the field is also the site for their productive and progressive re-direction.

I wish to use Judith Butler's theory on grievability as the theoretical foundation for this thesis. In particular, I want to borrow the critical concepts of the field of representability, norms of recognition and frames of war and use these as the basis for a revised theoretical position on memory that will allow me to interrogate the multiple constellations in which the disappeared have come to be represented, recognised and remembered in Argentine society. This will entail 'focusing on cultural modes of regulating affective and ethical dispositions through a selective and differential framing of violence' (2010:1), or in this case on the selective and

differential framing of *the memory of violence*. I like to think of this in a clumsy way as turning Butler's frames "around", by using these frames to understand not the march (and potential for resistance) to American war in the contemporary Middle East but the memory of war and violence in 1970s Argentina among Argentinians today. Once they are re-positioned as frames that operate over time rather than space, my sense is that Butler's frames of (the memory of) violence have something important to say about the complex ways in which the ontology of the subject of the *desaparecido* has been produced and the affective and political responses of a wider public moderated as a result of the way Argentine's collective memory has been historically constructed and re-constructed within a visual and discursive cultural field. Before I outline what such a conceptualisation might look like in more detail, it is worth saying a little bit about the limitations of such an approach.

There are four main limitations in translating Butler's work to a study of the construction of meaning in memory of the disappeared. Let me take each of these in turn. Firstly, it is not always clear in Butler's schema where we are going, or indeed, the direction of travel in which we're proceeding. The argument that mourning can bring with it (if we allow it to) the philosophical rumination that we are not neatly bounded and pre-constituted subjects prior to social contract but always-already beside ourselves – indeed outside ourselves – is given to suggest that mourning can act as a moment for reflection and transformation. It can 'lead to a normative reorientation for politics' (2004:28). In this way, she writes beautifully, there might be 'something to be gained from grieving, from tarrying with grief' (2006:30). What would such a 'normative reorientation' brought about by this tarrying look like? Here, Butler's liberal cosmopolitanism sets the bar simultaneously too low and too high. Too low because she does not define what she means by egalitarianism, non-violence and a radically democratic form of politics. Too high because she does not provide us with a path to reach (or reconcile) such goals. A responsible response to violence is taken at one point in *Precarious Life* to suggest 'the taking stock of our world, and participating in its social transformation in such a way that non-violent, cooperative, egalitarian international relations remain the guiding ideal' (2006:17). In which case, what would such egalitarian international relations look like? Is this an egalitarianism based on our shared ontological precariousness? Is non-violence therefore the absence of conflict? That is, a positive trait as the absence of the negative? Or can it be the active, positive embrace of non-violent norms? (And how would states defend against genocide in the absence of all conflict?) Is this an egalitarianism for states, or persons within those states? Finally, is this the same thing as 'taking responsibility for the global conditions of justice' (2006:17) or working towards a 'radical democratic politics' (2010:32) and 'political culture' (2006:40), or is it something (radically) different?

Part of the difficulty here, and secondly, is that Butler appears to draw too cleanly from Dr Freud the dialectical tension between melancholia and mourning. This holds that melancholia is 'the repudiation of mourning' (2006:29). This puts us in something of a bind. To wit: are these the only two conditions that frame the social response to death: the mourning of loss or the disavowal and delay of mourning, before we accept their revision in the progressive re-working of mourning as the third? Some of the groups that we will encounter in Argentina obfuscate the former without appearing to show signs of the latter. If mourning can be a productive force by imparting the insight that we are social beings, socially constituted as vulnerable to and dependent upon one another (though we experience this state in varying, politically-moderated levels of vulnerability and precariousness) then what would it mean to actively *dispel the invitation to mourn*? Is violence the (only) disavowal available outside these twin responses? Or, is there a possibility for folding out this mourning process and responding to the 'touch' of violence (2006:29) not with further violence, but not in mourning either? Butler doesn't tell us. In which case, in the absence of a clearly-defined ethico-egalitarian and juridico-democratic state to which we (as a "we") are transcending, the danger exists that the parameters of the future politics may be unduly adumbrated.

Thirdly, a further difficulty is that Butler is agnostic about causation. Though she discusses this point at length in *Precarious Life* (2006), she doesn't come to a conclusion. The crux of the issue is this: is it the epistemological deconstitution of the subject that takes place across the frames which precedes the ontological disarticulation of the subject as part of a political collapse in the norms and material infrastructures that ought to nourish and constitute the human? Or is it the other way round? Put slightly differently: are some subjects constituted as *ungrievable lives* through the filtered and framed gaze of the (usually 'First World') subject-observer because they are seen to be unnurtured by any cultural, political or institutional scaffold? Or, is the lack of social nourishment that leads to some lives (seen to be) being lived in an exacerbated state of precariousness a precursor to their neglect by the (Western) other? This question is worth pursuing because it has implications for the role of violence within the symbiotic cycle. Butler writes: 'It is one thing to argue that first, on the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, at this level, and that this level then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization that is already at work in the culture. It is another thing to say that discourse itself effects violence through omission' (2006:34). It may be that we don't need to try and parse these two elements from one another, so intertwined are the epistemological framing and ontological dematerialisation of the human in securing the dehumanisation of the subject

that sets in train the violence that is both its handmaiden and confirmation. And indeed 'It would be difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether the "regard" – or the failure of "regard" – leads to the "material reality" or whether the material reality leads to the failure of regard, since it would seem that both happen at once and that such perceptual categories are essential to the crafting of material reality ...' (2010:25). But we might not be ready to consider how to combat this violent cycle through the progressive re-orientations and iterative re-circulations of the frames and norms until we don't at least try.

Finally, Butler rarely defines what she means by norms of recognition or fields of representability. This subtends into a more important question as to how power operates within this field. The ontological foundation for this analysis is the human. It is at the level of the human that international relations, violence and the constitution and deconstitution of the subject that are the pre-conditions for and reproduction of violence are said to organise. Butler travels quite liberally along the spectrum that opens up between the human and what she calls the 'human community.' This is the source of a little confusion, because the dialectic between the ontological subject as the subject that is constituted on the one hand and the subject that holds the power to constitute it (or deconstitute it) through the regulation of the epistemological frames within the discursive field on the other threatens to collapse. 'Nations are not the same as individual psyches,' she writes, 'but both can be described as "subjects," albeit of a different order. When the United States acts, it establishes a conception of what it means to act as an American, *establishes a norm by which that subject might be known*' (2006:41: emphasis added). In this reading, it seems to be the state – and the American state in particular – that holds the power to establish these norms through the way it frames the reality and instantiates the subject it mediates within the visual and discursive field. In the Iraq War for example, war photography and embedded journalism are understood to participate in the framing of the conflict as part of the perpetuation of the dominant norms of recognition of the US government. The state here therefore becomes the threshold that regulates and indeed threatens to retard the transformative potentiality of the human to realise itself through mourning in the human community as part of a radically egalitarian democratic politics that would transcend the state itself. Such a formulation is potent in helping us to appreciate the configurations of American state symbolic power in producing the subject and reality of its past-future wars in the Middle East. But they tell us little about how such discursive forms of power might operate in a field of representability where the state's power to affect change and change affect may have collapsed as a result of its moral and military failures and loss of legitimacy, and thus where its ability to delimit the frames and moderate the norms may be significantly reduced. In cases such as these, it may not be the state that holds the discursive

power to 'establish' the norms that govern what it means for a person or persons to be counted as human. It may be the norms, or logics, of society. I shall put to one side for the moment, then, the providence of these norms of recognition, and return to these at a later point (see chapter ten).

Butler's theory on the grievability of life moves us on immeasurably in our attempt to locate a conceptual vocabulary with which to look again and more critically at the way Argentines have constructed and reconstructed a shared but highly-contested memory of the disappeared and their disappearances in the political violence of the 1970s and 80s. The concept of the frames of the memory of violence, as frames that operate alongside norms of recognition within an overall field of representability, provides us with a conceptual device to work through the complex relationship between memory and mourning in post-conflict societies. Yet, Butler is not always clear as to what she means by norms of recognition or fields of representability. She does not elaborate what the future political state might look like as part of a radically new and liberal democratic politics, and how a society might get there as it transitions (through mourning) to leave this violence behind. And, she appears to understand the form of discursive power that operates within this framework narrowly as state power. In order to consider how the representation of violence functions within a wider cultural field to delimit or underwrite the type of politics that is possible in a politics of transition, I propose to turn to the work of Andreas Huyssen and Jenny Edkins respectively.

(expanded) fields of memory

In *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (2003), as we have already noted in chapters two and three, Andreas Huyssen takes stock of the recent 'memory boom' in Western political culture. The intensification since the 1970s of modern media of representation including literature, photography, film and the internet, coupled with an 'explosion of historical scholarship and an ever more voracious museal culture' (2003:1), has created what some have termed a 'surfeit of memory' and others, a public obsession with it (2003:17). The attempt by societies in the West to pull the past into the present has reached such a degree that neither can any longer be experienced as a stable reality.

Huyssen's thesis is that 'the turn toward memory' taking place across the globe today is 'subliminally energized by the desire to anchor ourselves in a world characterized by an increasing instability of time and the fracturing of lived space' (2003:18). He puts to one side the strident debates about the relative merits of memory and history, memory and forgetting. For him, the increasing turn to the past can only be properly understood by situating it within its historical and geographical moment. Huyssen argues that the surfeit of memory should be

understood therefore as a response to the radical transformations taking place in our spatio-temporal sensibilities and 'structures of feeling, experience and perception' (2003:24). These have been brought about by the speeding up and spreading out of patterns of production, consumption and representation whose cultural and economic artefacts threaten to reproduce themselves to oblivion. Temporal boundaries, he writes, 'have weakened just as the experiential dimension of space has shrunk as a result of modern means of transportation and communication' (2003:1). Thus, 'Memory and memorialization together are called upon to provide a bulwark against obsolescence and disappearance, to counter our deep anxiety about the speed of change and the ever-shrinking horizons of time and space' (2003:23). No longer able to imagine the future, the paradox is that individuals and societies in the global north are increasingly seeking to shore up these structural sensibilities and imagine an alternative way of thinking and acting in the social and political world by *(re)imagining the past*.

Huyssen's central argument is that the global instigator and 'motor' energising the elevated cultural turn towards memory in the North Atlantic has been the memory of the Holocaust. Although the culture wars bequeathed a search for 'other traditions and the traditions of "others"' (2003:12), it was the memory discourses of the Holocaust as these emerged in Europe and the United States in the 1980s that 'accelerated' the turn towards the past as the cultural repository for an imagined alternative political future built atop the ruins of modernity's failed teleologies. Since then, this discourse is said to have extended across space and become globalised, to the point that it is now possible to talk of a 'global culture of memory', with its 'various subplots, geographies, and sectorings' (2003:1). I mention this here because one of these subplots, it was argued, was the turn in the 1980s and '90s towards memory among post-conflict societies. This included Argentina. Folded in to the subliminal desire to 'anchor' themselves in the hypertropic world of collapsed, unstable and accelerated time-space flows, then, were ever more prosaic debates and discourses that have to do with 'the unprecedented task of securing the legitimacy and future of their emergent polity by finding ways to commemorate and adjudicate past wrongs' (2003:16). These debates were nonetheless channelled through the prism of the Shoah, which has since lost its 'quality as index of the specific historical event and [begun] to function as metaphor' (2003:14), or trope. What results is a tension between the local and the global as the operative sites of and for this globalised culture of memory. National post-conflict configurations have folded into the memory of the Holocaust as motor to create a global culture whose 'new constellations ... beg to be analysed case by case' (2003:14).¹

¹ Huyssen nonetheless awards the final arbitration in this creative tension to localised discourses. '[A]lthough memory discourses appear to be global in one register, at their core they remain tied to the histories of specific

The conceptual key that ties this 'global culture of memory' together is the notion of the expanded field. It is also this concept, once read alongside Judith Butler's notion of the 'field of representability', that secures the promise of Huyssen's work for this thesis. As already noted, *Present Pasts* includes a chapter dedicated to the *Parque de la Memoria*. In this chapter, Huyssen situates the park within what he calls an 'expanded field' of reference (2003:97). His notion of an expanded field is a play on its topography as well as its discursive and political contours. In situating the park in the 'in-between space' that opens up between the local and global, the legal and commemorative domains, he articulates a critical interpretation of its meaning as being located within the interstices of a 'localised' struggle for justice and memory that takes its discursive, political and cultural contours from the 'global culture of memory' of the Shoah. 'Holocaust discourse functions like an international prism that helps focus the local discourse about the desaparecidos in both its legal and commemorative aspects' (2003:98). In an expanded discursive field, the park's localised cultural, political and aesthetic discourses are inflected by global practices, images and tropes, as practices and representations which they are understood to '[productively inscribe]' (2003:98) and '[translate]', 'creatively [appropriate]' and actively '[transform]' in return (2003:105).

I shall want to return to Huyssen's reading of the park in more detail in chapter seven, where I will have the space to critically explore his argument that the monument encodes the absence of the disappeared and takes its lead as a cultural re-appropriation of two contemporary memorials, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Berlin Jewish Museum. What I would like to do at this point is to think through what the notion of collective memory as an expanded field of memory might look like, with a view to integrating this as part of the conceptual frame with which to go on and explore in this thesis how the disappeared have come to be remembered over time in Argentine collective memory. The notion of collective memory as situating within an expanded field, as a visual and discursive cultural field and a field of representability, lends itself persuasively to my study in three key ways.

Firstly, the concept of the field has the potential to function as the discursive matrix that ties together the construction and successive re-constructions, re-iterations and re-configurations of memory over space and time. Indeed, the field is the conceptual scaffold that holds the two components of this framework together. The field as the memory formation constituted by institutional interventions, social action and political activism is *the same field* into which other persons and groups (in the same or subsequent periods) are then socialised as they attempt to

nations and states' (2003:16). 'Whatever the differences may be between postwar Germany and South Africa, Argentina or Chile, the *political* site of memory practices is still national, not post-national or global ... one must always ask whether and how the trope [of Holocaust memory] enhances or hinders local memory practices and struggles' (emphasis in original).

(re)construct the memory of the past that is being remembered within its contours using the frames and norms of the field to guide them (see chapters six and seven). To read this more directly with Butler's notion of a field of representability, the field can be understood as the discursive and cultural matrix within which the interpellation process unfolds and takes place. This includes the primary interpellation that is the cultural relay of the original violence through the viewfinders of the media as this violence unfolds. It is also the second and *nth* interpellations, as these are constituted through the *frames of the memory of violence* once these frames are "turned around." This process is an iterative process (Butler 2010), that involves citational iterations of the norms. But it is important to remember that the field is structured the way it is as a result of the very *material* interventions of human rights actors acting in particular ways, towards particular goals, in relation to what I shall shortly want to call particular political logics of memory. If subsequent actors are socialised within this field of collective memory then it is because of the patient and ardent actions of social actors acting before them and since to construct and re-construct the meaning in memory of the disappeared by configuring and re-configuring the field and frames of memory in particular ways.

Secondly, a theoretical approach based around the concept of a field provides me with the opportunity to integrate places of memory alongside other instruments, media and practices, and thus to bring together components that sometimes remain artificially separate within studies on transitional justice. Memorials and places of memory are understood in this reading as *frames for the memory of violence* which operate alongside other frames (as well as norms of recognition) within an expanded field of representability. These frames might be as diverse as film, social theatre or artistic interventions. They may also include political institutions and interventions, as I shall go on to illustrate in chapter six. These frames combine to create a field of meaning in interesting ways. Huyssen has a tendency towards literary metaphors but many of his points about the 'intertextuality' of a memorial's meaning within this field are still relevant read alongside the idea of the reality of the past being mediated and framed. His methodological innovation of the 'city as text' and palimpsest for example points productively to the ruptures, voids, 'erasures, losses and heterotopias' (2003:7) that paradoxically fill these in-between spaces with meaning despite – or perhaps because of – their inscription as absences in the cultural landscape. In so doing, it speaks directly to Judith Butler's idea that the frame cannot successfully capture all significations or permutations of the reality that it attempts to filter but must leave a remnant behind that 'limns' the frame at its margins. Huyssen's suggestion that we "read" the urban palimpsests 'historically, intertextually, constructively and deconstructively at the same time' (2003:7) for what they tell us about the

shared social imaginary also points to the way that the meaning of a memorial as one such memory “text” will rarely inhere in a single stand-alone installation, but rather must be deconstructed (or re-constructed) ‘intertextually’ within its expanded field. The contours of this field relate to the way that memories, discourses and meanings of the past have come to be progressively and palimpsestically written, erased, re-written, (re-erased) and thus represented in and through a society’s collective memory over both space and time.

Finally, the critical concept of an expanded field of memory cautions us against separating the aesthetics of a memorial from its politics. At stake in the *Memory Park*, Andreas Huyssen wrote, is ‘the power of a commemorative site to keep the story alive as opposed to entombing it in the realm of the unspoken, of a past that is made to disappear yet once again’ (2003:101). Huyssen for his part didn’t come down one way or the other on how successful he thought the park in this endeavour. Writing in 2003, it was too early perhaps for him to say how the Argentine people would make use of their new memorial space. Across the book as a whole, however, he was ambivalent about the potential for the turn towards memory to secure the kind of political and social goals that were being invested in it. Though some societies had managed to channel the debates about how to remember the past into broader concerns with human rights, democratisation and ‘to expanding and strengthening the public spheres of civil society’ (2003:27), he also noted the appearance across the cultural panorama of memories that seemed ‘mostly chaotic, fragmentary and free-floating’ (2003:28). Securing the past, he warned, was no substitute for securing the future. ‘Whether this kind of memory work will result in some new code of international ethics’ he wrote, in a nod to Butler’s liberal egalitarianism, ‘remains questionable’ (2003:94). But the task now was for these societies to *remember the future*, and locate the cultural means through memory that would allow them to re-order their ‘structures of feeling and perception’ in such a way that could help them to ‘live in extended forms of temporality and ... secure a space, however permeable, from which to speak and act’ (2003:25). Huyssen’s work is a reminder that the configuration of collective memory has as much to do with the parameters of the future politics as those of the past.

political logics (of memory)

So far I have navigated the work of Judith Butler on the grievability of life and Andreas Huyssen on the global culture of memory. Reading these in conversation, I have suggested that the idea of collective memory as operating within and across an expanded visual and discursive cultural field provides me with a conceptual vocabulary for thinking through what happens when groups in a society compete to filter, mediate and frame the reality of the recent violent past in order to secure an interpellation and recognition of their chosen reading of this past among a wider social public. I haven’t said enough yet about how I think this process of regulating the

reality of the represented past and what this past might mean to a society in the present is linked to the kind of politics that might then be possible as a response to this violence. Both Butler and Huyssen look forward to a liberal politics of egalitarianism and respect for human rights, as a politics that might be achieved through social mourning or memory. We can tease out the importance of memory's links to the parameters of a future politics by considering Jenny Edkins' (2011) work on the politics of the missing.

Edkins argues that when people go missing two competing political alternatives frame the social and institutional response to their disappearances. Whilst a government will be concerned as a police state, sovereign state or biopolitical state (terms she borrows from Jacques Ranciere, Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault respectively) to bring about order and control by identifying the disappeared as a population of people, without remainder, and thus move on, the relatives will look to locate and restore the missing person as a 'unique [and] irreplaceable' person (2011:viii) who is missing as part of a nexus of relations. Edkins refers to the latter beautifully in *Missing: persons and politics* (2011) as the search to restore the 'politics of the person-as-such.' This is juxtaposed to the 'politics that misses the person' of the police state (2011:xiii), and which identifies the missing 'person as object'. Thus, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks for instance, the United States government's propagation of the memory of the people who went missing as 'heroes' whose lives merited swift revenge in the form of military intervention in the Middle East is contrasted to the insistence of family members that they be remembered as persons; that is, for *who* they were rather than *what* they were. To the government's 'police logic' the relatives can be understood to have responded with a 'political logic' (2011:11). Evidence for this includes the missing persons' posters that rose up to adorn the walls, buildings and railings of the city in the aftermath of the attacks and which lingered long after the attacks were over and their fate was known. For the relatives, the posters were more than just memorials. They were the means for articulating the missing as 'persons-as-such' whose 'grievable' lives were unique and deserving of being properly mourned as the means for the articulation of a different kind of politics to their discursive appropriation in the service of war. That relatives have sought from the First and Second World Wars through to the atrocities of the 21st century to 'challenge' the police logic that seeks to embody the missing as heroes who sacrificed their lives for a greater cause means that what results as two competing ways of doing politics when persons disappear.

I would like to borrow from Jenny Edkins the conceptual formula of the 'politics of missing persons' and 'politics that misses the person' (2011:2) and to use this to deepen my understanding of the construction, re-construction and regulation of the disappeared in the wider field of Argentine collective memory as part of the cultural biography which follows.

Before I do so I should like to revise it slightly. My concern here is not that this framework lacks explanatory potential. I was reminded of the brilliance of Edkins' argument in the aftermath of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. In France, just as she might have predicted, onlookers rose to challenge then-President Francois Hollande's appropriation of the victims in the service of war by taking to *twitter* and *facebook* to ask for information about their friends' and neighbours' whereabouts. Thus, they channelled the symbols of peace and the Eiffel Tower in the iconography that secreted itself along the boulevards and squares as a means of demanding a different form of politics as the response to their deaths (as deaths that is that were first experienced as disappearances). Rather, my concern is that by building up the 'biopolitical state' and the relatives in so rigid and homogenous an opposition we threaten to lose sight both of the internal nuances within the same movement and the rich conceptual pickings that result when these groups, and these two forms of doing politics, collapse and collide into each other, cross-fertilising and cross-pollinating along the way.

Let me give two examples. The first has to do with the identification of the body or bodily remains of a person following their disappearance. The body of knowledge that governs this procedure is codified as forensics, or forensic anthropology. Forensics can be understood as the operationalisation of political jurisdiction into a population's biological lives (Agamben 2005). Rules laid down by INTERPOL and the Geneva conventions stipulate that the visual recognition of a missing person's face is insufficient as the means of identifying this person. However, as both Butler and Edkins attest, what makes a person's going missing so injurious to their kin is the shared social ontology that unites two (or more) persons together and which is revealed most forcefully at the moment of loss. This is Butler's "I" that is revealed to be constituted at the juncture of the "we", and which does not revert to the discreet "I" when someone is lost but continues to be mourned as a partially constituted "we." The body of knowledge that comprises forensics does not recognise this form of facial recognition given that it can result in error. Instead, it privileges a recognition based on science. For a (police) state to recognise the death – perhaps following the disappearance – of someone, and certify this person as dead therefore it must fit its scientifically-defined criteria as evidenced by genetics, DNA, teeth and the chemistry of blood groups (2011:121).

What is fascinating here is that these knowledge systems do not restore the individuality of the person as an "I." They represent the "we" in a different guise. This is because until data-chips are invented and inserted as means of identification into the human body no-one is identified in-and-of-themselves as a discrete entity. Rather, we are identified through a relation. Indeed, we are identified in most cases *as a relation*. We are identified when an ante-mortem profile is united with a post-mortem profile. And we are identified when DNA reveals a match: including

as a match between (at least) two persons. It is true that you can be identified as an “I” through your own DNA so long as you have ante-mortem data. You can be identified as a person through the DNA on your toothbrush, for example, albeit therefore as a person whose existence is constituted over time and revealed once an ante- and post-mortem profile come together. If you do not have this, however, then the only way you can be identified via DNA as a particular person – that is, as a ‘unique, irreplaceable’ *person-as-such* (Edkins 2011:viii) – according to this *police logic* is when your relatives submit their DNA too *as relations*. This is worth pondering. You can be identified in this (forensic) body of knowledge too as a (genetical) “we.” Facial recognition is banned in the scientifico-legal field of forensics as unreliable. Facial recognition is used by mourners to enable the mourning of a person as a *recognisable* and *grievable* life that was lived and is or should be mourned as an expression of a shared social ontological existence once it has been lost, perhaps in response to a terrorist atrocity in New York or Paris for example. And, as with facial recognition, scientific recognition as a different form of recognition constituted within and through a rival body of knowledge also turns on the recognition of someone in their shared, relational existence and being. The state uses a rival epistemology in scientifico-legal knowledge to intrude into the biological lives of the persons it seeks out to classify as dead-and-not-disappeared, but it does so operating on the shared ontological understanding that when all else fails this person is formed in their individuality by their existence in a shared grouping or nexus. In a field of relations, *as relations*. In both bodies of knowledge, the one the state turns to in its ‘police’ logic and relatives turn to in their ‘political logic’ and insistence on the ‘person as such,’ the person is revealed and *recognised* in their relationality: as a “we” and not an “I.” The two logics thus intersect in interesting ways.

Let me give a second example. This involves the delay that families experience when their relatives go missing. Edkins admonishes the metropolitan police (state) in London for waiting up to a week before notifying families of the deaths of their relatives following the 7/7 terrorist atrocity. Family members she quotes from say the wait was unjustifiable. This is used as justification for a comparative critique of the divergent responses to the atrocity among family members and the state, and an explication of the ‘challenge’ that the one represents to the other. However, it is interesting to note why this delay comes about. The delay owes to the concern of the authorities to identify the suspected perpetrators of the terrorist act.

Importantly, it also owes to their concern to keep the perpetrators separate from the victims. In maintaining this separation, are the authorities seeking (only) to restore order and control? Ironically, it may be that they are responding to the wishes of the relatives themselves. This is because in the shadow of atrocity there is usually an insistence among relatives for the remains of their dead (as the previously missing) to be kept apart from those who perpetrated

the atrocity. Edkins herself admits that this is what happened after 9/11 (2011:96) as well as 7/7 where the inquests were held separately as a result of 'pressure from families' (2011:100). This also explained the concern of the states in post-war Europe to prevent suspected Nazis from escaping justice, and worse, by doing so using the identities of their Jewish victims. The same thing happened after a German suicide pilot murdered those travelling with him on a flight from Barcelona to Dusseldorf in March 2015. In this case, the pilot's remains were kept separate from those of other victims during the identification process at the behest of the relatives of victims (his family were even kept apart from the mourning community). What we might be dealing with here then, are not so much two mutually exclusive ways of doing politics as the cross-fertilisation of these logics in rather fascinating ways.

Though some families may indeed want to 'challenge' the discursive parsing of their missing dead by a state as "heroes", what others are doing when they enforce a second, separate logic and the politics of the 'person as such' is directing this personhood through a competing discursive categorisation. They are *re-discursivising* the missing as "victims", in counter-defiance of them as "perpetrators." To get to this personhood you first have to travel the path of victimhood and constitute them as victims; or at least as non-perpetrators. Edkins includes Marie Fatayi-Williams' impassioned speech demanding to know what happened to her son Anthony as an insistence that he 'is not just a statistic, an unidentified victim of a terrorist bomb' but 'a person who is missed, someone with relatives, friends ...' (2011:XX). But of course he is not that, at least not yet. He cannot be. He cannot be an 'unidentified victim' until he is an *identified victim*, which is to say, an *identified non-perpetrator*. We can know Anthony, we can 'recognise' him, to bring Edkins back together with Butler again, as a person whose personhood was conjugated in a network of human and social relations (and a "we") only once this rival preliminary categorisation is complete as *a rival form of organisation and control*. We can know Anthony Fatayi-Williams as a 'person as such' only once we know he was a victim and not perpetrator of the violence. It is this form of discursive ordering, I would suggest, that explains the delay in the identification process that is taken to be so injurious to the memory of the 'person as such.'² In contrast to Edkins' schema, the pre-organisation of persons into victims and perpetrators is a form of categorising persons on the basis of *what* the missing persons are as well as *who* they are. Ironically, though, this categorisation appears to be carried out by representatives of the police state on behalf of – and often at the behest of – the victims' relatives, as it was in London, New York and Dusseldorf. The two sides of the binary thus cross-pollute to the extent that they end up sharing the logic of one another. In

² This also perhaps explains the discrepancy between the responses among fellow passengers compared to the authorities. Having witnessed what happened, the passengers were already able to *recognise* them as victims and as grievable lives; lives that is that were deserving of being grieved and assisted into their meaningful deaths.

doing so, they remind us to be open to the interesting ways that these logics spill into each other, as well as the ways that each logic may conceal internal nuances or inconsistencies within itself.

This has direct implications for my own study. In *Missing: persons and politics* (2011), Edkins includes a chapter dedicated to the disappeared in Argentina. In this chapter, the search among the families of the disappeared to find out what happened to their missing children is understood within the binary framework of the relatives versus the biopolitical/police state. Thus, the struggle of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo to locate their missing children and pursue 'a politics of the missing person as such' as a response to their disappearances is scripted as a struggle between these relatives (despite their schism) and the police state (despite the partition of the transition to democracy) in which the former 'challenges' the resolve of the latter to 'objectify and instrumentalise' (2011:2) the *desaparecidos* and parcel them away neatly as a population of the dead. There is much to commend this reading. It is also problematic, however, for it ignores the way that the social, cultural and political response of relatives and others to the disappearances in Argentina has not been a single, homogenous or consistent challenge to a police state but rather a dynamic, uncertain and contested process in which different groups have operationalised different frames as part of concrete historical interventions over time and space in order to articulate and legitimise *not one but two competing, political responses*. These responses are suggestive of two different ways of remembering the disappeared in collective memory as the basis for two very different ways of doing politics in the enduring absences of their disappearances. What's more, these two responses were not neatly bounded. Sometimes they crossed over into each other, and sometimes they crossed the boundary with the state as well.

I would like to introduce here the notion of the *political logic of memory* as an important part of the conceptual apparatus along with the field and frames of memory around which I intend to organise my research in this thesis. By political logic of memory, I take to mean the set of internal organising principles that govern the set of representations, discourses and practices through which meaning is attributed to the recent violent past and a project for a future politics is delineated. My aim in what follows will be to try and show how the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentina is not a random constellation but rather has a cultural biography in which it has tended historically towards two political logics of memory which shape – and are shaped by – the material interventions of human rights actors as well as the understanding of the recent violence among Argentinians who situate within and are interpellated by, this memory in an expanded cultural and discursive field. In doing so, I hope to show how the memory of the disappeared within Argentine collective memory as it has

come to be constructed and re-constructed has been heavily and historically regulated and framed. The political logics of memory that I identify in this study are ideal types. As ideal types, they are not neatly bounded. Nor are they mutually exclusive. Rather, they collapse, collide and spill into each other, cross-fertilising and cross-contaminating along the way. The two logics do not map the two groups that would go on to become the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora and the Asociación following their split in the 1980s, though there are interesting overlaps with this schism. Nor do they reflect Edkins' relatives/state binary. As the relatives of the disappeared, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo will be shown to have operationalised some cultural frames in order to harness the power of the state and turn this power against itself. They will also be shown to work in unison with the transitional state whenever they think it is in their interests to do so, thus using the power of the state to underscore a particular interpretation of the reality of the past and the disappeared in memory and regulate the affective and political response of the wider public in order to shape the future politics of transition.

the field, frames and political logics of memory

In this thesis, I understand collective memory to operate as an expanded field of memory, meaning and representability. This cultural field is a discursive and visual field. It operates through the framing of the reality of the past via frames of the memory of violence. These frames include memorials, but they also include broader social and political interventions such as social demonstrations, theatrical productions and political and legal instruments. The field also operates in accordance with norms of recognition. These norms are not limited to those that might be established by the state in this constitutive process, including the American state. Rather they may reflect the shared social norms that pattern social reproduction and which shape who counts as human; that is, who can be recognised as living a life that will have been worthy of being remembered and mourned once it is extinguished. In the expanded field of collective memory, groups can be understood to struggle to shape and re-shape the frames of the memory of violence. In so doing, their aim is to delimit the reality of the past violence and produce the ontologies of the subject in such a way as to regulate the affective and political response of an interpellated wider public to their disappearances. By regulating this response they attempt to secure legitimacy for a chosen interpretive understanding of the disappeared as the means of underwriting the political future that is enacted in response to the disappearances. The interpellated cultural viewer who is 'conscripted' or 'solicited' (Butler 2005, 2010) by the images or narrative discourses of the disappeared as these are mediated, filtered *and framed* through the cultural viewfinders of the memorials and other media inside and outside the park are not automatons or tabula rasa who respond to these interpellations

in an automatic way. They situate themselves within this field, as a field of force and relations of meaning, and they use its contours, lines and vectors to guide them as they try and make sense of the recent violence using the frame as a medium and a guide. They calibrate the images they are interpellated by in accordance with their norms of recognition, and therefore in accordance with social norms that have to do with who counts as being recognised as human, and as grievable life.

If the frames of memory are not deterministic, however, then nor are they randomly organised. Just as CNN does not – because it cannot – stipulate the way that Americans view the Afghan or Iraqi lives that will have been destroyed as a result of US military action in the Middle East so too no ‘memory entrepreneur’ (Jelin 2003:33) or interest group can determine the way that the disappeared will be remembered through the way they are viewed in the cultural frames that together make up this eclectic cultural field. The representation of the disappeared in the frames of the memory of violence that make up the expanded memory field is subject to constant contestation. The field that comprises the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentine society is a fluid, uncertain and contested cultural matrix. Groups and individuals including the relatives must struggle to advance their chosen interpretation of the past violence as the means of remembering this past *and the future* (Huysen 2003). By reconfiguring the field and its meaning, they hope to regulate the affective and political response of the wider public. Contrary to Halbwachs ([1925]), the way that the subject is produced in and through this contested memory field may be constitutive to whether or not these persons will have been recognised and remembered at all.

whose park for whose memory? entering the field

'el parque sigue'
Taty Almeida

'el parque funciona muy bien'
Vera Jarach

'el parque sigue funcionando'
Claudio Avruj

In the southern hemisphere summer of 2014, as many Argentines prepared to make their annual jaunt to the south-east coast, a conflict erupted over the Park of Memory (see chapter one). Animating the annual negotiations over the pay and conditions of its staff were suggestions that the park might close. Letters of support were drafted. Staff took to the media and the barricades to protest. A petition was signed. Academics joined in the protest. Yet, for all the controversy surrounding the park's *'vaciamiento'* at that time, it was not always clear what it was that was at risk from being 'emptied out.' Employees warned that the failure to uplift their salaries in line with inflation would represent 'a step towards the professional emptying out of the institution and a step towards its closure.'¹ Executive Director Nora Hochbaum, suggested that the city government wanted to bring about the 'emptying of the activities that generate a greater social conscience' and 'convert the Parque de la Memoria into a plaza empty of content.'² Trade unionists said the city government was seeking 'the emptying out of the public politics of human rights.'³

As monument wars (Savage 2009) or memorial wars (Young 1993), debates over sites of memory are pregnant with meaning. Situating the latest struggle in its historical and geographical context, I will show in this chapter how the conflict over the memory park's staff was the latest in a long line of debates to have troubled the sites since its inception. Such debates, I shall argue, are not anodyne administrative quarrels but political positionings that index competing, sometimes convergent but often contested notions of what it means for the park to function as a public space. At stake in the debates over pay and conditions was a broader politics of collective memory that turned on a simple but complex question: If it is a Park of Memory, then what type of park is it, for what type of memory?

¹ "El cierre del Parque sería un delito contra la memoria," *Infojusnoticias*, 4 January 2014.

² *Ibid.*; Acusan a Macri de querer "convertir el Parque de la Memoria en una plaza vacía de contenido," *Telam*, 3 January 2014.

³ *Contra el vaciamiento en Derechos Humanos de la ciudad*, *Página 12*, 9 January 2014.

I proceed in three parts. I begin by outlining a brief history of the park. Here, I consider the role the park played in the politics of memory of Néstor Kirchner's administration. I then turn to the discourses that surrounded the park during the 'crisis' over its future in 2014. While some saw the decision by then-Mayor Mauricio Macri's city government as evidence of a politics of anti-memory, members of his own administration looked forward to an anti-politics of memory in Argentina. I conclude by reflecting on the importance of this memorial war. Cultural wars such as these, I argue, go to the heart of the politics of transition in Argentina. The struggle over their status as a public place tells us something important about the public politics that might be animated in and through places of memory such as the park.

the idea of the park

'The idea of the park,' according to Iván Wrobel, 'was that it would be a site of memory, a place to remember the victims of state terrorism.' As well as being in charge of monitoring the list of names on the monument to the victims, Iván was still in negotiations with the city administration as union representative for many of the park's staff when I went along to meet him and his colleague Cecilia Nisembaum in March that year. They hadn't been paid since January, and didn't expect to receive a salary until May.⁴

Today, the idea that there should be a physical space in which to remember the victims of state terrorism doesn't seem anything particularly special, he told me, in a country in which there are now '*un montón*' – a mountain – of them. In the capital city of Buenos Aires alone, there are at least five or six sites of memory, including Automotores Orletti, el Olimpo and ESMA, the former Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada Argentina converted into a place of memory in an act of public theatre by Néstor Kirchner in 2004. 'But at that moment, in '97 when the law was presented [for the creation of the park] none of the former clandestine detention centres had yet been recovered. So, in a sense, the proposal was to enact the first site of memory in [Argentina].

'In a context in which: the trials against military perpetrators were not going ahead, in which it wasn't a subject that was taught in schools; it wasn't a subject as present as it is today. So, the idea was that the park worked as an impulse to this, that it acted as a space where it was possible to ... put on the agenda something that wasn't spoken about.'

As with many other components in the long and arduous struggle to obtain truth, justice and memory for the crimes perpetrated by the last military junta in Argentina, the original idea for the creation of a park of memory was not state-led but came from human rights activists. Marcelo Brodsky lost his brother and closest friend during the dictatorship. Following the forced disappearances of Fernando Brodsky and Martín Bercovich at the ages of twenty two

⁴ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

and twenty one respectively, he went to live in exile in Spain where he trained as a photographer.⁵ Returning to Argentina, Brodsky helped to organise a ceremony at the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires in October 1996 along with the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Linea Fundadora and Argentine Historical and Social Memory Foundation to remember one hundred and five of its students who had been disappeared by the military. As part of the ceremony, he enlarged a photo of his school year group, “the class of 1967.” Brodsky sought out each of the people in the photo before annotating the image with details as to what had become of them. He tells of the experience in his book, *buena memoria* (2003) – good memory. Some had become physical therapists, others journalists. There were producers as well as semiologists, producing and then interpreting the meaning of signs. Some liked travelling, and had met their partners while abroad. A few had even stayed where they had travelled, perhaps having failed to settle when they returned. But some had been forcibly disappeared, their images in the photo crossed out with marker pen. In a poignant book, which includes poetry from well-known Argentine poet Juan Gelman, Brodsky inserted photos of the Colegio’s current students peering at the images of their predecessors from many years before, their faces superimposed, reaching across, blurring, mocking perhaps, time itself. He argued that the images represented ‘the transmission of experience from one generation to another,’ and the ‘way heroes live on in the collective memory of a people.’

Returning to the school a year later to witness the unveiling of a small bronze monument to its disappeared, the same amalgam of college alumni, relatives and human rights activists began to discuss how it was time to amplify what they had achieved in this setting on a wider scale.⁶ That evening, Madre de Plaza de Mayo Linea Fundadora Vera Jarach received a phone call from Marcelo Brodsky, who invited her to go to his studio. ‘I have an idea,’ he told her.⁷ It was there that the plan for the Parque de la Memoria was conceived. The proposal gained the immediate support of human rights organisations, before being put to the Buenos Aires city legislature in December 1997, where it was voted into law following a spirited public debate the following year. This obliged the city government to find a space to locate it. The local administration was at that point led by Radical Mayor Fernando de la Rúa who would enter the collective memory of many Argentines for a very different reason. When social protests swept the nation following its disastrous debt default in 2001 (see chapter one), de la Rúa is remembered as having escaped from the roof of the Casa Rosada and his Presidency in a helicopter.

⁵ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014.

⁶ Turno Mañana, *Página 12*, 28 July 2013.

⁷ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014.

In 1998, the place allocated by de la Rúa to host the park of memory was chosen to be next to the river that hugs its northern shore. Buenos Aires has historically had an ambivalent relationship with the *rio de la plata*. Its people are known fondly as *porteños* – people of the port – but the city is often said to have turned its back to the water.⁸ This would all change in 1995, when in a series of interviews former captain Adolfo Scilingo, admitted publicly that during the dictatorship the Argentine Navy had carried out so-called ‘death flights’ in which prisoners had been taken from clandestine centres of detention including ESMA before being drugged and unloaded while still alive into the river (Verbitsky 1995). The use of death flights had been documented before, including in the CONADEP report (2013 [1984]). Now it received official proof. It was the first time – of few incidences to date⁹ – that a member of the military had broken the blood pact of silence and provided concrete details of what happened to some of the victims. A spark was set off.¹⁰ Buenos Aires’ relationship with its river began to change. Adorning the inside covers of *buena memoria* is a photo taken by Marcelo Brodsky of the *rio de la plata*, its murky waters mesmerising, tainted, complicit. The first time he exhibited it in 1997 at the Teatro San Martín, people responded by throwing flowers onto the image.¹¹ If there was to be a park of memory then it was agreed at the initial meeting that it should be located next to the river into which many of the victims had been thrown. The land that it now occupies on the *costanera norte* is in fact land which has been reclaimed from the water.

The park then, would be a place to remember the disappeared alongside the river that was for many their final resting place. Crucially, it would also be a public space in which to remember them. But the idea of its being public meant different things to different stakeholders in the human rights community – and prevented others from taking part at all. To understand why, we need to recall the political context in which the debates over the construction of the park took place. In 1997, the so-called laws of impunity still reigned in Argentina. President Carlos Menem had pardoned those convicted of involvement in crimes relating to the period of military rule (including members of the terrorist left). Menem believed it was time the country looked forward, and unleashed a biblical parable to warn Argentines that they would turn into a pillar of salt if they continued to look backwards to the past. (His proposal to demolish ESMA and convert it into a green space of reconciliation was rejected).¹² Meanwhile, the laws of Obediencia Debida (Due Obedience) and Punto Final (Full Stop) of Menem’s predecessor Raúl

⁸ Rubén Chabobo. Espacios de Memoria en el Cono Sur, Coloquio Internacional, Centro Cultural Borges, 27 – 28 March 2014.

⁹ In December 2014, Ernesto “Nabo” Barreiro provided details as to the possible whereabouts of 2 victims who had passed through the Centro de Detención La Perla in Córdoba. See Judges, lawyers praise ‘significance’ of repressor Barreiro’s confession, *Buenos Aires Herald*, 11 December 2014. See also Payne, L. (2008).

¹⁰ Interview with María Gard de Antokoletz, courtesy of Memoria Abierta.

¹¹ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014.

¹² Levey, C. and Lessa, F., Landscapes of Memory: Argentina’s persistent struggles over the past, *Aljazeera*, 10 January 2014.

Alfonsín were still in force.¹³ These all-but-prevented relatives from securing further justice.¹⁴ Without a state to appeal to, many families and human rights groups took their claims for truth, justice and memory into more private realms. Memory secreted itself into the streets, a place Argentine politics curiously often resides. Human rights groups began marking the city's streets with the presence of former perpetrators and victims respectively through *escraches* (see chapter six)¹⁵ and *baldosas por la memoria*.¹⁶ By 1997 there were therefore several plaques to the disappeared dotted around the city: in plazas, in front of courts of law, at universities, or places of work – and now at the Colegio Nacional. 'But there wasn't a place for all [the names of the disappeared],' Vera Jarach recalled.¹⁷ For the first time a monument to the victims of state terrorism would collect together all the names of those who were disappeared or killed by the terrorist state in one place. Fellow Madre de Plaza de Mayo Taty Almeida, is convinced that this is why the ensuing debates over whether and how to construct a park were so fractious. It demanded so much energy, she noted, because 'it was the first time that something was going to be done for everyone.'¹⁸

Between the passing of the law and the inaugural acts of the park and monument in 2001 and 2007, the finer details of how the *Parque de la Memoria* ought to be built and run were the subject of intense disputes, including and especially within the ad hoc group set up to ensure the letter of the law was realised in practice. 'Everything was heavily debated,' Marcelo Brodsky confessed as we spoke in his studio not far from the site in northern Buenos Aires. 'It was a slow process that took many years, and everything that was decided had its own debate.'¹⁹ One of the most intractable, as Taty Almeida recalls, concerned the monument to the victims. When Brodsky and Jarach et al. had taken their idea for a public park with art installations to the human rights organisations, it was put together with a plan the latter had devised to construct a monument to the disappeared. The composite idea was to create 'a place, a place for everyone, a place with names, with a monument.'²⁰ There was disagreement however as to whose names should be included. This was a reflection of the convoluted spiral of violence into which Argentine society had descended in the 1960s, '70s and '80s (see chapter one). Although forced disappearances were systematised by the military following the

¹³ The Laws of *Punto Final* (Full Stop) and *Obediencia Debida* (Due Obedience) of December 1986 and June 1987 respectively are known in some quarters as the "laws of impunity."

¹⁴ Trials relating to crimes of rape, economic crimes or the theft of babies were not covered by the 'laws of impunity' and were allowed to proceed.

¹⁵ *Escraches* were public acts of vandalism and graffiti used by human rights activist to mark out the homes where former military personnel lived who had escaped justice.

¹⁶ *Baldosas por la memoria* are small mosaics of memory that mark the homes, schools or places of work where disappeared people once lived, worked or studied.

¹⁷ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014.

¹⁸ Interview with Tati Almeida, 12 August 2014.

¹⁹ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014.

²⁰ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014.

coup d'état of 24 March 1976, it was the previous Peronist government which authorised the armed forces to engage an incipient terrorism from the *Montoneros*, *ERP* and other armed terror groups and carry out the “annihilation” of subversive elements before the coup took place. The decision over what period to remember on the monument would therefore have a bearing on whom to remember, and who counted as a victim. Marcelo Brodsky remembers various dates having been considered, including 1955, 1966 and 1976; the frequency of dates a tragic reminder of the number of times the nation had slipped into violence or dictatorship. In the end, they settled on 1969; the year of the Rosariazo and Cordobazo, in which a previous military junta had resorted to violence to put down growing social unrest.

The decision to “back-date” the monument pleased Madres such as Taty Almeida whose children had been forcibly disappeared by paramilitaries before the formal takeover of power by the military had taken place. For her, it was ‘logical’.²¹ But the use of the *Cordobazo* as the ‘foundational event’²² is controversial. As is the broader discussion into which it folds as to who merits being recognised and remembered as a victim. As its names suggests, the monument was built to honour not only the disappeared but all ‘victims of state terrorism.’ This included those persons who were armed and may have died in confrontations with the state forces, as well as those who were not.²³ In echoes of the controversy in neighbouring Chile, where a second truth commission was set up to correct the oversights of the first, there is no space on the memorial for those who were disappeared and tortured but whom survived their ordeal. Nor is there room for those who were killed by agents other than (those sponsored by) the state. This has made the monument the target of criticism, and even vandalism. On the thirty-fifth anniversary of the military’s coup in March 2011, the wall of the Sala PAYS was spoiled with graffiti. In big, bold white and green letters this time were scrawled the words ‘30,000 sons of bitches’ and ‘leftists out.’²⁴

²¹ Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014.

²² Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014.

²³ Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014.

²⁴ Aparecieron pintadas intimidatorias en el Parque de la Memoria de Capital Federal, *Reporteplatense*, 26 March 2011.

See also Los desconocidos de siempre, *Página 12*, 26 March 2011.

the politics of memory

In November 2007, President Néstor Kirchner presided over the inauguration of the monument in the *Parque de la Memoria* (see Figure 6 on page 95). Reading the speech now, a whiff of nostalgia is discernible as well as defiance; Kirchner was at that point about to hand over power to what one newspaper amusingly called his senator-wife.²⁵ Tragically, he would die three years later from a heart attack (see chapter ten). In a valedictory speech at the inauguration, however, he spoke passionately to those he described as ‘Grandmothers, Mothers, brothers and sisters and children’ of the importance of justice and memory. Nothing could be built on the foundations of injustice or a lack of memory, he insisted. Argentina needed to ‘reawaken’ justice from its slumber, ‘whatever the cost.’ In this the *Parque de la Memoria* represented a ‘great advance.’ A ‘*memoria viva ... memoria vigente*,’²⁶ Kirchner said, would help to ensure that justice worked in Argentina.

Was there another notion of “public” underpinning the early efforts to create a physical space of memory for the disappeared? Another idea than the park as a public space that would stand in for and be accessible to all? Both Kirchner’s speech and some of the interviews I conducted with the *Parque*’s staff appeared to suggest so. More than a decade on, Iván Wrobel remembers the clamour for a public space as a means of propelling a public politics. ‘When the idea of the construction of the park was floated,’ he told me, ‘it wasn’t proposed as a space for the organisations but for a public park managed by the state.’ The former is a reference to the current state of affairs at ESMA, where the site and its buildings have been given over to different human rights organisations as a means of settling the debate over what to do with it. ‘Because what they were saying was that if it was the state that committed the crimes, then it was the state that had to repair them, the state that had to bring those responsible to justice, and the state that had to do something to remember them.’²⁷

As well as being intimately involved with the creation of the park, Marcelo Brodsky was party to the debates over what to do with ESMA. These included whether and how to turn it into a Museum of Memory. He has written thoughtfully about these memorial wars in another book, *memory under construction* (2005). Brodsky was present at the meeting with Néstor Kirchner where it was discussed what to do with the site. A fortnight later, Kirchner told the Abuelas’ Estela de Carlotto that the military were to be thrown out and ESMA given to human rights groups. By that point, the park had already been going for six years. ‘We were ahead of our time, we did it first’, Brodsky told me. ‘When [we came up with the idea for] the park, there

²⁵ Palabras del Presidente de la Nación Dr. Néstor Kirchner durante el acto de inauguración del monumento a las víctimas del terrorismo de estado, en el Parque de la Memoria, en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.

²⁶ “A live, watchful memory.”

²⁷ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

was nothing in ESMA apart from the military.’ Part of the reason for this was the medium of art. ‘Art always comes a bit earlier,’ he added intriguingly. ‘Because it was a project of art, of artists, it came first.’²⁸ Art could shepherd the park through the febrile politics of memory that marked its inception, but it could not yet steer ESMA and its casino de oficiales through the tortuous debates that encircled it. ‘It’s a place of debate, and the debate is still there. To the point that the museum hasn’t been able to be realised because there’s no consensus between human rights organisation A, B, C ...’ Brodsky described the situation perfectly and paradoxically: ‘ESMA is in a state of permanent transition until it finds an equilibrium, and that’s going to take some time.’ ‘The park is different,’ he said, ‘from the start we knew what we wanted to do and we did it.’

Allusions to the park as a state institution are thus misleading. It is true that the monument to the victims of state terrorism was unveiled by President Kirchner, and it later acquired the protection of being listed as a Historical National Monument.²⁹ But the *Parque de la Memoria* was a private initiative brought about through the impetus of human rights activists and the city legislature. It was designed to be run at arm’s length from government. What I think Iván Wrobel is referring to here is a different idea of what it means for the park to be thought of as a *public* space. For many on the political left today, as for Néstor Kirchner before them, the park is understood to function as an impulse to a public politics. Just as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo transposed their private anguish into public demands for truth and justice during the repression by funnelling these through the Plaza as the nation’s beating public square, so Wrobel and others narrate the origins of the park as a struggle to claim a public space so as to articulate a public politics. That is, as a way of determining the political agenda and putting on this agenda ‘something that wasn’t spoken about.’ Conceived within the political context of Menemismo, the park is re-signified in this interpretation as a propeller towards a public politics of memory and justice; a motor of active memory. More than ten years ago, Iván Wrobel told me, ‘there wasn’t a public politics of human rights that made reference to the subject, and the demands from human rights groups were that there existed this public politics.’ Whichever member of whichever human rights group you talk to about the park, he suggested, would agree with that. It was this notion of a public politics that trade unionists saw as coming under threat in the recent dispute.

²⁸ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014

²⁹ El Parque de la Memoria es patrimonio de todos, *Telam*, 17 January 2014. Italics added.



Figure 6: the Kirchners in the Parque. Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner are shown around the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism during its inauguration in 2007. Photo courtesy of the Parque de la Memoria, used without permission.



Figure 7: A memorial in Rosario to gay and lesbian people disappeared during the dictatorship. At the bottom can be seen the beginning of a row of railway lines. Photo courtesy of the author.

However, not all human rights groups were in favour of constructing a park and a monument to the victims. At the inaugural event to lay the foundation stone in 2001, members of the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo including Hebe de Bonafini could be heard angrily shouting their opposition from across the street. Taty Almeida was present that day. It was raining heavily, she remembered. Many Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora and Abuelas were in attendance, as well as the then-Mayor of Buenos Aires, Aníbal Ibarra. ‘Hebe [de Bonafini] was on the other side, swearing, saying all manner of things.’ The Asociación Madres were ‘totally, totally, totally against [the park’s construction].’³⁰ So too she admitted, were the HIJOS – Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio³¹ – whom as the children of the disappeared had by that time come of political age. HIJOS refused to take part because they wouldn’t co-operate with government, not even local government. At that point it was still something new for human rights groups to work alongside a public administration to pursue a memory project, Marcelo Brodsky recalled. As the conditions have changed – ‘now they *are* the government,’ he added dryly³² – so too has the HIJOS’ stance. Though they do not form part of the committee that runs it, the sons and daughters of the disappeared now visit and support the work of the *Parque*.³³

The position of the Asociación has not changed, however. ‘We are not in favour of these things,’ Mercedes Meroño told me, when I went to ask her about the park at the group’s command centre opposite the Argentine Congress. ‘We don’t want anything to do with it.’³⁴ In a sense, for members of the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo the *Parque de la Memoria* is *not public enough*. Madres de Plaza de Mayo from the Asociación line reject the individualisation that they see the monument with its list of names as representing. ‘This is something individual and everything individual is lost straight away,’ Meroño said. ‘We believe that a struggle only works if it is a struggle for everyone.’ The difference between these two positions is fundamental to an understanding of the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentina. At stake in the battles over good memory and vigilant memory were much bigger questions as to what kind of public politics this public memory should sustain and underpin. We will trace these two positions throughout the thesis that follows. Before we do so, let us return to the question of the debate over the pay and conditions of the park’s staff.

³⁰ Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014.

³¹ “Children for Identity and Justice and against Forgetting and Silence.” HIJOS is also a play on words for the Spanish word for children.

³² This was a reference to the administration of Néstor’s wife and successor, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who governed from 2007 to 2015.

³³ Interviews with Taty Almeida, Vera Jarach, Marcelo Brodsky.

³⁴ Interview with Mercedes Meroño, 4 August 2014.

the politics of anti-memory

Debates over the construction and running of the *Parque de la Memoria* have been a constant feature since its inception. These debates have spun on two axes, namely: what does it mean for the park to be a public space in which to remember the victims? And who is considered worthy of being a victim, and thus worthy of being remembered? So, what does this history pregnant with contestation have to do with the seemingly anodyne administrative debates over the future of the staff members who run the site? Put the other way around, what do the debates over staff pay and conditions tell us about the way the park is understood to work?

In Argentina, public sector workers are hired according to one of two types of contract. Those employed on permanent contracts, or what are called '*relaciones de dependencia*,' receive certain benefits. These include recompense for length of service or seniority (*antigüedad*), medical insurance (known in Spanish under the euphemism *obra social*) and retirement benefits (*jubilación*). Additional benefits sometimes accrue to those with a university degree.³⁵ Staff on permanent contracts are represented by unions who enter into committees (or *paritarias*) with the government each March to determine the annual uplift to salaries to account for inflation. Almost all the workers at the *Parque de la Memoria* however – 19 of its 21 members of staff – are paid as if they were 'freelance.'³⁶ Not only does this mean that they do not receive the same entitlements as those on permanent contracts, or the same job security,³⁷ it also implies that they must go it alone in negotiations with the local government every summer to secure their yearly increase. 'For us, we have to get it by ourselves; for workers on permanent contracts it is automatic,' one of the park's employees explained to me. 'And what happened this year [2014] was that we were told that we weren't going to receive a salary increase, that the increase was going to be 0 per cent.'³⁸

One newspaper in Argentina labelled the city government's decision the 'politics of anti-memory.'³⁹ Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum were clearly embittered by the experience. As one of the wealthiest parts of the country, Buenos Aires was a city with enough money swirling round to properly pay its staff they told me. If the government had decided not to award an increase to its freelance workers, then they must have simply allocated it somewhere else. In terms of its likely effect on the *Parque de la Memoria*, the decision not to award them a raise would lead to its 'emptying out,' Wrobel suggested. 'Because if they don't increase your salary, you have to resign and find other work.'

³⁵ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014; Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014.

³⁶ Cecilia Nisembaum. Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

³⁷ Temporary contracts last only for one year and must be renewed each December.

³⁸ Interview with Iván Wrobel.

³⁹ La política de la antimemoria, *Página 12*, 4 January 2014.

'There is a team here, more or less established, we know each other and we work well together ...and the truth is that if we start to resign one by one, the team will start to fall apart, and the park will lose a little bit of the possibility of achieving the initial objectives' that it was set up for.'⁴⁰

As we have noted, the principle objective for which the park was set up was to act as a public space in which to remember the victims of state terrorism. Another is to transmit the memory of what happened during the period of military rule to the next generation. For thirty thousand students each year, the park converts into an open-air classroom.⁴¹ Cristina Gómez is head of the Education team, based with Iván and Cecilia in the Sala PAyS. Gómez is a lawyer by training, with experience in international human rights law. At the time I went to meet her in April 2014 she was also finishing a postgraduate degree in education. Every year, the group that she leads comes together to decide on what they call the 'nucleus of priority' around which the guided tours and the wider educational work the park offers will be 'deepened.' Previous nuclei for instance have included a consideration of what constitutes state terrorism, or a crime against humanity, and why memory is important. There is no one set guided tour. Instead, the tours depend on the particular experiences that each group of visitors bring with them. Everyone comes to the park with a certain knowledge, an experience, a preconception or prejudice about the years of military rule, Cristina argued. She saw their role as guides as being to listen to and engage with what was said by the visitors themselves during the visits, rather than answering specific questions or delivering from a set script. It was a model that was designed to facilitate 'open dialogue.'⁴²

Cristina Gómez arranged for me to accompany a group of secondary school students as they were given a tour around the park. In August 2014, around twenty students travelled up from Mar del Plata to visit the *Parque* as well as ESMA and other city landmarks. I joined the group as they were shown around the site by Nacho, an eloquent and confident guide, in a visit that lasted just over half an hour. During the tour, I was impressed at the way Nacho invited the students to use the art installations as props to reflect on what had happened in Argentina during the time of the junta. One by one, each of the sculptures was engaged to stimulate a discussion about what had happened to the disappeared. Dennis Oppenheim's "Monument to Escape" for instance became an invitation to consider how the disappeared had been taken to clandestine detention centres where they had been tortured, whilst Roberto Aizenberg's "Sin Título" was used as a means to reflect on the Abuelas' efforts to re-unite themselves with the children of the disappeared born in captivity. The guided tours that are run at the park are not only aimed at schoolchildren. Sometimes the tours will have unintended effects. Most of the

⁴⁰ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

⁴¹ Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014.

⁴² Interview with Cristina Gómez, 25 April 2014.

guides are salaried staff members from the education team, but Madres and Abuelas will also take part. One Madre told me that when children go home they tell them about what they experienced. Often, they will then follow this up by taking their parents along with them so that they can experience it for themselves.⁴³ In Argentina some things appear to be the wrong way around. Asociación Madres like to say that their children gave birth to them.⁴⁴ Sometimes it is the children who take their parents to the park.

For the people who work there, the Parque de la Memoria works alongside other sites of memory as a space for the 'diffusion' of what happened during the military dictatorship to the next generation. 'The idea from the human rights organisations was always this idea of remembering *so that it doesn't happen again*, and in this sense it's important from our work with schools that the children go knowing what happened,' whether from their guided tours, their use of the database, or their interaction with the monument or the park's contemporary art.⁴⁵ The notion that memory serves as a bulwark that might prevent the events it commemorates from being repeated has achieved the status of a trope in Argentina. In both the comments book that is permanently housed in the Sala PAYS and the online petition set up during the dispute there were frequent incantations of the importance of remembering so that this might never happen again – '*nunca más*.'⁴⁶ In the petition set up by staff to elicit the public's support, three claims about how the park functioned were articulated. The park was essential, it was argued, because it represented the culmination of the struggle of human rights organisations; because it helped in the task of constructing a viable democracy in Argentina; and because it prevented these events from ever happening again.⁴⁷

Not all members of the human rights community are persuaded. In May 2014, I travelled to the nearby city of Rosario to meet the director of its Museum of Memory, Rubén Chabobo. Rosario, we might recall, is one of the two cities that lent the date of its unrest to the monument's timeline. On the side of buildings in the city can still be seen today the graffitied image of a girl carrying a large wooden plank to the barricades. The Museum of Memory in Rosario forms part of an informal tripartite alliance with Santiago's Museum of Memory and Human Rights and the *Parque de la Memoria*. The previous November, a joint gathering had been held at the latter to discuss issues pertinent to all three.⁴⁸ I was introduced to Rubén through a common friend at another conference, where I had been intrigued about his use of

⁴³ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014.

⁴⁴ Interview with Mercedes Meroño, 4 August 2014.

⁴⁵ Iván Wrobel. Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

⁴⁶ I am grateful to Cristina Gómez and the staff at the Parque de la Memoria for providing me with a photocopy of the comments book.

⁴⁷ NO al cierre del Parque de la Memoria, *Change.org*, correct as at 15 December 2014.

⁴⁸ Finalizó la 2da versión del Seminario Diálogos Trasandinos Chile-Argentina, *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, 2 November 2013.

the term 'Hollywood' to depict the growing turn towards creative and artistic practices in museums and places of memory.⁴⁹ The night before I left for Rosario, I had attended an act of homage to Juan Gelman at the *Centro Cultural de Memoria Haroldo Conti* in the former ESMA (see chapter ten).⁵⁰ The tribute had included excerpts of Gelman's poetry and performative interpretations of it through the mediums of music and dance.

For Rubén Chabobo, the idea that what took place won't happen again if we remember it is a false premise, unless it is accompanied by a deeper process of comprehension. Without being conscious of *why* something happened it is possible to repeat the same acts many times. Chabobo and I met in the museum of memory that he directs. The museum building had once been the headquarters of Leopoldo Galtieri, who as the leader of the fourth junta had taken Argentina to war with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands. Chabobo had recently returned from a visit to Chicago where he'd been to visit the Holocaust Museum. There, he recalled, they say '*nunca más campos de concentración ... as if Auschwitz had been the last concentration camp. Sachsenhausen on the outskirts of Berlin functioned as a concentration camp between '46 and '50 in Soviet hands; the [Americans] assembled concentration camps across the world in the 60s, 70s and 80s, and the latest is Guantánamo.*

'Fine, there are no Jews. But what are we talking about? What does *nunca más* mean? What happens is that *nunca más* ends up making invisible and masking the prolongation of this horror.'⁵¹

The effects that this form of collective memory was having in Argentina were clear. 'A people that remembers is one that can prevent its repetition? This is a lie, because nothing repeats itself in the same guise.' In Argentina, 'the politics of memory is a very strong politics, and every Argentine can talk to you about the horror that torture represents, etc. That there should never again be military [rule] we are all in agreement. But few will stop to consider that in our prisons there are people being tortured. There is no link between the past and the present.' For Chabobo, this link would only come via a process of 'conscience-building' through which we learn to unmask the continuation of the egregious past through its disguise in other forms. 'If [collective] memory doesn't provide you with insight and doesn't make you think "where at the moment is something similar happening, something similar taking place?" then this is an *insipid memory, a memory that doesn't serve for anything*,' he argued. And if it didn't serve a purpose? Well then it was just '*homenaje*' – a bit like the Conti's treatment of Juan Gelman. Or perhaps it was simulacra. Before I left Rosario, Rubén Chabobo took me to see a former clandestine concentration centre tucked away quietly in the heart of the city. To reach it we had to walk through the middle of a restaurant and pass a memorial to the disappeared

⁴⁹ Espacios de Memoria en el Cono Sur, Coloquio Internacional, Centro Cultural Borges, 27 – 28 March 2014.

⁵⁰ Homenaje a Juan Gelman, Centro Cultural de Memoria Haroldo Conti, 27 May 2014.

⁵¹ Ibid.

built in the form of a railway line (see Figure 7 on page 93. Unlike the Holocaust, the railways were never used to transit people to their deaths in Argentina). Once we got there, the centre was unlocked, unmanned, unused. We entered the cells in which some of the disappeared had once been held. The council reportedly could not decide what to do with the building.

The shift towards more creative and performative practices of memory is a shift pioneered by institutions in Argentina and elsewhere (see chapter one). Opposite the theatre in the Conti centre where the homage to Gelman had taken place is an exhibition space that houses regular artworks to do with Argentine's recent past. Exhibitions here will typically last for three months before being replaced. Director of the Conti, Eduardo Jozami, argues that creative and performative practices help visitors to articulate a '*memoria profunda*' – a deep memory – of the military dictatorship. Speaking at the same conference in which Chabobo and I had met, Jozami argued that Argentina had shown the importance of not leaving the memory of what had happened in the 1970s and '80s to academics, historians and those with a more 'philosophical perspective.' Though scholarship from Europe had pointed to the ineffability of representation in the shadow of the Holocaust and the impossibility of working through this memory other than by empathising with the victims, the strength of the route Argentina had taken lay in the way it had instituted a concept of memory that was open, inclusive and multi-dimensional. Jozami advocated for the idea of a specifically Argentine path in terms of the way it had come to terms as a nation with its violent past, and he tacked the use of contemporary art to this Argentine *sonderweg*. He recalled conversations he had had with Eduardo Luis Duhalde – whose own struggle for human rights during the dictatorship had also since earned him the state's shilling – in which they had discussed 'how difficult or how much more limited Argentina's knowledge of its recent history would be if it hadn't been for the films [they had] in [that] country, or the novels,' or the artistic interventions of Leon Ferrari and others. For Eduardo Jozami, such media had played a vital role in stimulating Argentinians to think through the past, and stimulating the ways in which they thought about the past. He believed strongly that 'art is not a decorative element, it is not there to aestheticise the narrative or illustrate the horror. It is an indispensable part, that is, a protagonist, of a dialogue that each of us have to have as participants in order to construct a deeper memory.' The more audacious it is, 'the more creative the art or literary work is, the more it contributes to [helping us] to imagine the multiple dimensions that a drama such as ESMA has, which cannot simply be related in a narrative, an investigation that tells you the number of disappeared or the mode in which they were tortured.' This was a clear broadside against the truth commission, CONADEP, and its investigative report, *Nunca Más* (see chapter six).

The danger with such performative and artistic practices of memory however is that they may sometimes miss their target if they are so abstract that they become unfathomable to those who use them in the park and elsewhere to try and work through their relationship with the recent violent past. Cecilia Nisembaum forms part of the team responsible for selecting the con/temporary art exhibitions at the *Sala PAYS*. She spoke to me honestly about some of the ‘risks’ involved.⁵² The greatest of these ‘is that someone comes here, sees the piece, and leaves without understanding what’s happening’ or feels excluded from understanding it. This has been the source of some of the most potent criticism the park of memory has faced. One artist I spoke to, who has worked extensively on projects relating to the memory of victims of atrocity in Argentina and exhibited her work around the world, confessed that although there were things she liked about the park she couldn’t form a relationship with it. To her the *Parque* and its artwork ‘didn’t say anything at all.’⁵³ Others have written of the park as an ‘imposing and barren wasteland,’ a ‘windswept photo-op plaza’ and ‘forgotten space in the city.’⁵⁴ The pioneer of the counter-monument movement in Germany, renowned artists Horst Hoheisel, likened it to a ‘cemetery of sculptures.’⁵⁵

Ironically, this is one reason staff give for their continued association with the park. At the height of the conflict over its future, the same newspaper that ran the headline about an anti-politics of memory carried an article written by the head of the Visual Arts team, Florencia Battiti.⁵⁶ Battiti compared the park’s staff as the ‘intangible heritage’ to the ‘tangible heritage’ of its sculptures and monument. The latter needed to be ‘activated’ by the actions and activities undertaken by the former, she wrote thoughtfully, if it was to generate reflection in the thousands of visitors that take part in the expositions, guided tours, seminars, talks and conferences that the staff help to put on. As the intangible heritage, the staff were the park’s major capital. They had chosen to work there to be part of a process for collective memory that was seen as fundamental to the work of constructing a democracy in Argentina. For her colleague Cecilia Nisembaum, this was why the threat of the park being hollowed out was so invidious. ‘If there stop being guided tours here and we stop having employees that transmit the project, what we want from the project, well then it would be an empty place where you go to drink *mate* and nothing else.’⁵⁷ That is, it would be just a public park. Not only the park, but Argentina’s democratic prospects would be threatened as a result.

⁵² Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014.

⁵³ Interview with Marga Steinwasser, 6 March 2014.

⁵⁴ Parque de la Memoria – Hall of Shame, Project for Public Spaces, Brian Davis, correct as at 2 March 2015.

⁵⁵ La polémica de los monumentos por la memoria, *Clarín*, 24 July 2004.

⁵⁶ Por la continuidad del Parque, *Página 12*, 14 January 2014.

⁵⁷ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014. *Mate* is a popular herb-based beverage shared between colleagues and friends in Argentina.

the anti-politics of memory

The protestors had long since departed from outside his office building just off the Plaza de Mayo in central Buenos Aires by the time I went to meet Claudio Avruj in March 2014. Avruj is now the Argentine Secretary of State for Human Rights, following Mauricio Macri's victory in the general election of December 2015. When we met he held the same position in the city government under Macri as mayor. He was also one of five additional members to those who represent human rights organisations that form the management committee overseeing the running of the park. It had been his responsibility to tell its staff that there would be no salary increase for that year.

Avruj appeared hurt by what he described as the 'conflict' that had taken place, and told me that if the decision had been his he would have awarded the staff an increase that would have at least compensated for Argentina's soaring rate of inflation. What's more, he would have made sure that they were awarded permanent contracts, with the same rights as other public workers in the city. But he was clear that those who had come out in support of the park and against the threat of what they portrayed as its possible closure had been duped by staff playing politics with the issue. Avruj smelled '*mala fe*' – bad faith. Of the three departments he managed in the secretariat, each of which had been told that there was likely to be no increase in their pay that year, 'the only one to enter into conflict was the park.'⁵⁸

In the heat of the dispute, a group of academics from universities around the world had written an open letter to Avruj and Macri in support of the workers.⁵⁹ Signatories included Andreas Huyssen at Columbia, Jens Andermann at Zurich University and Pilar Calveiro at the Benemérita Universidad de Puebla in Mexico. As specialists in the comparative study of cultural politics, the memory of victims of atrocity and the systematic violation of human rights, they wrote, they were attuned to the ways that the commemoration and 'public vindication' of victims is continually under threat of intimidation. These threats included 'political and media defamation' as well as physical aggression or damage to the memorials. The *Parque de la Memoria* was a 'place won by Buenos Aires civil society and studied with interest and admiration by the international academic world,' they argued. Macri and Avruj were guilty of 'intimidation and harassment.' In my interview with Cecilia and Iván they had expressed their delight at this unprecedented show of support, which they said was unsolicited. Marcelo Brodsky later admitted that it had come in response to emails that were sent asking for support.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014.

⁵⁹ Con el respaldo de la academia, *Página 12*, 18 January 2014.

⁶⁰ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014.

'The first thing I understood was that [the campaign by the park's staff] was a political campaign,' Claudio Avruj concluded. The second was that the academics, as well as Executive Director Nora Hochbaum, had been badly misled. He dismissed as an 'invention' the claim by staff that they had been told to find another job if they disagreed with the decision not to grant them a raise. 'That was never said.' Instead, when they were informed that their contracts would continue but without an increase in salary 'the trade unionists used it as politics' and started speaking of the emptying out of the park. Avruj declined to comment publicly during the height of the storm, so as not to give the claims credibility, though he was forced to climb down at one point and issue a tweet denying the park would close.⁶¹ He was insistent. 'The park was always going to continue ... Firstly, because it is constituted by law, secondly [because] the government has permanent contracts' that could be bid for, and thirdly, because the negotiations hadn't yet finished. Only the week before the dispute erupted he had helped to inaugurate a new artistic production in the Sala PAyS, and work was ongoing to install public toilets at the site, both of which proved it was there to stay. Over the next two years there were plans to install the remaining sculptures that had been commissioned. 'The park continues to function,' Avruj said defiantly, and he was enthusiastic about its future.

Partway through our interview we were interrupted when Avruj had to answer a telephone call. 'It's the boss,' he whispered, before leaving the room to take the call. I wondered whether he meant Mauricio Macri, who as a candidate at that point in the general election had caused a stir when he declared that if he became President the era of 'paid jobs' in human rights would come to an end.⁶² Avruj picked up the baton in a subsequent interview with a national newspaper. A future PRO government would work for 'reconciliation' and 'dialogue between victims and perpetrators,' he wrote, in which groups other than those of human rights organisations such as the Madres and Abuelas would have a voice and a stake in the debate. Victims of the terrorist left would be brought into the fold in this dialogue as well as victims of state terrorism. Can we read in this an implicit criticism of the *Parque de la Memoria*, with its monument to the victims of state terrorism alone? Either way, reconciliation was certainly a bold choice of term given its unpopularity since the time of Carlos Menem. 'Little and nothing' did the PRO's position on human rights have to do with the politics of memory of the Kirchner era, the newspaper accurately summarised.⁶³

Claudio Avruj is looking forward to the day when Argentines are ready to live together in a shared democratic polity, and sees collective memory and the *Parque de la Memoria* as having

⁶¹ El conflicto por el Parque de la Memoria, *Página 12*, 9 January 2014.

⁶² Mauricio Macri: "Conmigo se acaban los los curros en derechos humanos," *La Nación*, 8 December 2014

⁶³ El plan de Pro en DD.HH apuesta a la reconciliación, *La Nación*, 14 December 2014

an instrumental role to play. For him, the 'knot' of collective memory is its ability to make us think again about the past 'with questions that make us uncomfortable.' By fostering critical reflection rather than remembrance, memory has the potential to fortify democracy and project us into the future. Yet, two things were necessary before he thought Argentina was ready to reach this stage. Firstly, it required time. Avruj had recently returned from a visit to the Basque Country where he'd been informed about a roundtable the regional government had organised along with former paramilitaries, relatives of the victims of terrorist attacks, survivors and former ETA terrorists who had repented. He held this up as a model of what was possible. But it requires time, he said. Only after 30 or 40 years had the Basques found themselves able to talk about their experiences. Secondly, for collective memory to fortify Argentine democracy it required a political space and institutional context in which such dialogue was possible. That wouldn't come in Argentina while it still had a government that manipulated the subject of memory politically, he argued, referring to the administration of Néstor Kirchner's wife and successor, Cristina. Nor did he think it possible while Hebe de Bonafini and Estela Carlotto were still in charge of the Asociación Madres and Abuelas respectively. If PRO were in government, they would choose a different path to revenge. Together, time and politics would produce a space in which it was possible for Argentines to question what had happened in their shared recent past, and build a democracy together in which disagreement was a sign of a different opinion and not a cultural war. 'Time is going to play its part ... it's going to modify the structure, so there's going to be another way of looking at and thinking about [these] things.' So too would the *Parque de la Memoria*, with its art installations that prompted reflection and provoked us to think and re-think the events of the violent past. 'Society is advancing slowly to this healthy exercise of memory: not political, a natural exercise ... stripped of ideology.' Avruj is patiently awaiting the days of a 'healthy' memory; an anti-politics of memory perhaps.

In September 2014, as I prepared to leave the one site via a trip to the other, the *Economist* penned a strongly-worded critique of the Parque de la Memoria and Santiago's Museum of Memory and Human Rights. 'Memory is not history,' its Latin American correspondent wrote defiantly.⁶⁴ According to the respected British weekly, these sites were guilty of 're-writing' history by ignoring it and presenting an oversimplified version of the past in its stead. The region's penchant for 'historical memory' promoted memories that were 'incomplete.' In this, its correspondent may have been influenced by an earlier opinion piece from cultural critic Tzvetan Todorov. In December 2010, Todorov had travelled to the Parque de la Memoria and ESMA at the invitation of a Spanish newspaper. He wrote of the risks of a '*memoria*

⁶⁴ Memory is not history, *Economist*, 13 September 2014.

*incompleta.*⁶⁵ Todorov's criticism was more injurious given that he had used the lexicon of truth and justice so carefully guarded by the human rights community in which to write it. Neither the Park nor ESMA could be said to be working towards truth, he argued, given that each 'omits entire parcels of the History' of the period. Nor could they claim to stand for justice if by this we understand a process that doesn't restrict itself to the courts but which takes into account the broader context in which particular events unfold. For this to be achieved a society needs to know its History. Only History, Todorov suggested, 'which unlike collective memory does not hold a political objective (or if it does is bad History),' could free Argentines from the Manichean illusion in which collective memory had them imprisoned.

whose park for whose memory?

In his book, *Monument Wars* (2009), Kirk Savage documents the transformation of the Washington Mall from a 'sylvan' landscape into a public space befitting of a powerful modern nation. How to enact a patriotic centrepiece for a new national project – a republican democracy – without falling into the trap of Imperialist-Monarchist grandiloquence and iconoclasm? From the earliest debates over how to mark the life and work of George Washington through to the Civil and modern Wars that threatened to sever the national project, Savage illustrates how the Mall has served as a microcosm for the nation entire. Power has weaved its way through the site, holding the nation and the Mall in creative tension. As the young nation expanded through Manifest Destiny, the Louisiana Purchase, successive wars and the slaughter of Indians, this new power needed to be represented in the space of a 'universal and timeless' Mall (2009:191). When in the sunset of the Civil War the national project itself had to be rescued, it was the Mall that was called upon to project a story of national salvation and unity. As with all such memorial projects, this meant that some participants would inevitably be excluded. Key among these were African Americans. Having fought in the Civil War, America's former slaves were failed by Reconstruction. Through foreign wars and then cultural wars they would have to struggle to earn their place on the Mall and the nation. Through such 'monument wars' Savage shows how the Mall has become 'a highly charged space of collective introspection, political strife and yearning for change' (2009:20).

Interestingly, the Parque de la Memoria has not been re-appropriated in exactly the same way. Though the park has lived through an extraordinary flux in Argentine politics and culture during its relatively short lifetime, these politics have largely played themselves out elsewhere. It is true that the park has been vandalised on occasion, and there are those that see in the

⁶⁵ Los riesgos de una memoria incompleta, La Nación, 8 December 2010. The article was originally published in El País. The use History with a capital "H" is Todorov's.

present dispute a similar form of intimidation. However, no large-scale public demonstrations have taken place here as they have done on the Washington National Mall. Unlike the Plaza de Mayo and ESMA, the *Parque de la Memoria* is not a focal point along the annual march on the 24 March to commemorate the military's *coup d'état*, even during the visit of Barack Obama to the site (see chapter nine). Nor were the struggles to define the nation's response to its debt default in 2001 diverted there, but to plazas elsewhere (Lobo in Crenzel et al. 2010). The banners that screamed in the summer sun of the park's "emptying out" were the accompaniment to a public demonstration that took place not there, but elsewhere.

'The park continues', it 'works well' and 'continues to work,' I was told by stakeholders, each of whom had played an important role in the way that it was conceived or continues to be run. How does it work? Paul Williams (2007) concluded from his epic pilgrimage that places of memory are intended to remember, to educate and to illuminate. The Park is understood to do all these things by those who work there. And because these aims sometimes run into each other, or into budgetary restraint, this may create conflict. But this is only half the story. By situating the 'conflict' over staff pay and conditions in its broader context, I have shown in this chapter how the crisis over its future was never only an administrative quarrel over which resources to allocate where. Instead, it was a political struggle. Tied into competing aspirations for a 'good memory' or a 'healthy memory', a 'vigilant,' 'deep' or 'insipid' memory as these circulate around the park are assumptions about what sort of role the park might play in a public politics of memory as a politics of the state. Though it might not always be the physical home to them, the park can be seen to situate at the epicentre of political as well as cultural debates that encircle and overspill it. One visitor wrote in the comments book that the *Parque* represented a '*faro*' – a lighthouse. I rather like that. But the debates that it radiates are not necessarily its own; instead, like a prism it helps to refract, sharpen and put into focus a flurry of meanings, memories and discourses that often emanate from elsewhere. Political debates and discourses run through the park, as well as within it. In this chapter, I have examined three of these discourses in detail. In the next two chapters, I shall use the park as a prism to tease out other discourses and political logics of memory too.

los desaparecidos as (un)grievable lives

a cultural biography of the
representation of the disappeared

'So many people died and disappeared. That's truly awful.
From my point of view, I wanted them not to have been
nameless and faceless.'
Jean Coleman

'*La figura del desaparecido es muy fuerte*'
Elbio Ferrario

In the *Parque de la Memoria* there is a memorial in the form of a contemporary art installation that I particularly like. To get to it, you have to pass through the wall of names that comprise the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism. The installation hugs the top of the hill. At the beginning it is not even clear that it is a memorial at all, but a series of wooden pikes that have been pierced into the ground at regular intervals. Only when you approach it from a certain angle do you notice the appearance of a face. The face, etched in black, is composed across the white wooden poles. It is imperfectly composed; its features are not seamless but jar a little, the poles not quite producing a perfect fit, a perfect smoothness to the image. The image's lack of wholeness lets the background seep into focus. Through some of the poles you can see the river plate behind, framing as well as interrupting the scene. Still, you get the impression of the face, and the representation of a person. It is the face of a man. The man's hair, all in black, is waspish and slightly unkempt. He appears to be wearing a tie, and a strict black line downwards is suggestive of a shirt collar, but the tie is bedraggled. His eyes are sad, and his mouth pulls this sadness downwards across his face. And then you walk around the memorial. As you do so, the face fades. It flickers at first, before disappearing again. So that all that you see now as you resume your journey back through the wall of names to the river down the slope on the opposite side is a series of poles all lined up in perfect order once more. It's as if the image had never happened, the man's face had never (re)appeared, never been conjured in our mind's eye. Who is this person with whom we struggle so? We presume it is someone who was disappeared in the park that calls us to remember the disappeared. But the name of the sculpture doesn't tell us. The name of the memorial is *30,000*. What does 30,000 have to do with (the memory of) this man's face?

In order to understand the politics of transition in Argentina, we need to understand the way that this politics is shaped and underpinned by a politics of memory. We can use the park of memory as a prism to refine the complex cultural constellations and reconstruct the expanded field of memory through which human rights organisations have sought to delineate the memory of the recent past violence and the parameters of this future politics. This means that

we need to go beyond trying to interpret the memorials of the park in isolation and seek to insert them in their temporally and spatially-inflected field of meaning (see chapter four). In this chapter, I propose to (re)construct the first part of a cultural biography of the representation of the disappeared in the cultural frames of memory (see chapter three). This is intended as the first part of a conversation between the different ways the disappeared are represented in the memorials in the park and the ways that they have been represented and reconstructed over time in a diverse range of cultural, political and social frames since the disappearances began. This will be followed by a study of the way they are represented in the park in the next chapter.

My argument in this chapter is that the representation of the disappeared in Argentine collective memory has operated historically according to two logics, as a means of advancing two competing ways of doing politics in the wake of the enduring absences of the disappeared. I call these the *political logics of memory*. By a political logic of memory I take to mean the set of internal organising principles that govern the set of representations, discourses and practices through which meaning is attributed to the recent violent past and a project for a future politics is delineated. On the one hand, I will demonstrate how human rights groups have sought to delineate the frames of the memory of violence and reconfigure the field in order to construct the disappeared in collective memory as unique and irreplaceable persons, and *grievable lives*. In doing so, they have sought to elicit a moral and ethical response in mourning to the disappearances among a wider interpellated Argentine public. On the other hand, I will show how human rights groups – including potentially the same or different actors using the same or different frames – have fought to re-configure the frames of collective memory in such a way as to re-construct the disappeared as an anonymous and homogenous population of nameless and faceless figures. In representing the disappeared as *ungrievable lives*, these actors have sought to forestall the possibility of a social grieving and hold open instead the possibility of a politics of grievance.

I proceed in three parts. In the first two sections, I select from three frames each to show how the disappeared were represented by human rights activists as ‘persons-as-such’ (Edkins 2011) with a name, a face and an identity uniquely their own, or a population of nameless and faceless figures. I conclude in the third part by comparing the representation of the disappeared as persons and figures, victims and martyrs, seeing these as emblematic of two political logics of memory within the same struggle to achieve truth and justice for the disappeared in which memory can be seen to have played a crucial role.

the disappeared as persons with names and faces

In the period immediately following the forced disappearances of persons suspected of having links to communism, subversion or terrorism, the relatives (who would become in large part the Madres de Plaza de Mayo) of those who had gone missing (who would become the *desaparecidos*) sought to find out the truth of what had happened to them. They demanded to know where their children were being held, whether they were alive or dead, and to know what crimes they were accused of. If they were suspected of having committed a crime, they asked that they be tried and sentenced in a court of law. Otherwise they asked that they be set free. The nuances of this part of the early struggle of the Madres and other human rights groups are clearly discernible in a petition that they published in *La Prensa* newspaper on 28 September 1977. This advert can still be found today in the archives of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, or CELS, in Buenos Aires (Figure 8). Three months later, the Madres issued a second petition, this time in *La Nación*, to coincide with the International Day of Human Rights (Figure 9). Under the heading “SÓLO PEDIMOS LA VERDAD”¹ can be seen listed one-by-one the names and surnames of two hundred and thirty-six of the mothers.² Above the list of names in the main text of the advertisement the relatives demand to know whether their children are alive or dead, ‘¿Y DÓNDE ESTÁN?’³ And they ask: ‘¿Cuándo se publicarán las listas completas de DETENIDOS?’⁴ To fund the advertisement, they went door-to-door collecting thousands of small coins and contributions. Liberal leader Ricardo Balbín handed over a derisory cheque which was so small that it was saved for posterity rather than being cashed (Gorini 2006). When *La Nación* refused to accept the handwritten list of names, Madre de Plaza de Mayo Nora de Cortiñas took it to her husband in the Economic Ministry next door for it to be redacted in print, under the nose of Finance Minister José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz.⁵ A few days after the publication of this second advert, the early protagonist and inspiration among the mothers Azucena Villaflor de De Vincenti, was herself forcibly disappeared along with eleven others, including two other Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Unbeknown to the others, the bodies of the three Madres washed up on a beach the following week (they had been thrown alive from aeroplanes as part of the death flights). From there they were hastily buried by military personnel in unmarked graves in a nearby cemetery. They would not be identified until these graves were re-exhumed almost twenty years later.

¹ “We only ask for the truth” (my translation)

² If it were the Mothers’ names and not those of the *desaparecidos* this was only because the newspaper refused to publish the advert using the latter (Crenzel 2008:122).

³ “And where are they?” (my translation).

⁴ “When will a complete list of the Detained be published?” (my translation)

⁵ Interview with Nora de Cortiñas, 27 March 2014.

PREPSA - 28-9-77

ESPACIO DE PUBLICIDAD Nº 2

A LA JUNTA MILITAR DEL GOBIERNO DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS

Los Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos vemos nuestros hogares destrozados por la angustia y la incertidumbre al no saber dónde o cómo están nuestros seres queridos, hasta cuándo sufrirán detención sin causa o cuál será la pena para los acusados.

Somos partidarios del diálogo, estamos empeñados en lograr un país avanzado, próspero y feliz. Para que todas las familias puedan contribuir a realizar este objetivo necesitamos PAZ y la PAZ no es posible sin el amparo de la JUSTICIA.

Por ello, PETICIONAMOS:

- La búsqueda de los ciudadanos desaparecidos.
- La aparición de los ciudadanos detenidos.
- La liberación de los detenidos sin causa y/o proceso y/o la opción Constitucional para salir del país.
- El juzgamiento de acuerdo a la Constitución Nacional y las leyes de los que tuvieron causa y/o proceso.

(Parte pertinente del texto por el cual se solicitan adhesiones de Familiares y de la ciudadanía toda para ser entregado a los Autoridades Nacionales con motivo del DIA DE LA MADRE).

22

CONTINUACION DE LA PRESENTACION DIFUNDIRA EL 19/77 EN EL DIARIO "LA PRENSA" - SIGUEN LAS FIRMAS

<p>MARTA ISABEL BRAVO, L.C. 8107.079 OLGA F. DE AULTI, D.N.I. 5867.078 ANTONIA R. DEL VAL, C.I. 4187.778 GLADYS R. DE LOS DOM, L.C. 7329.029 SUSANA FERRERA COELHO, D.N.I. 4517.009 SERAFINA MADOE DE LAURIA, L.C. 8451.909 INES ELENA HOYANO DE PARRACINI, L.C. 1373.058 MARIA SALVOCCI DE PRAT, L.C. 6014.918 SOLEDAD DAVI DE CARPELLO, L.C. 9412.504 MARIA GORRETTI DE BOCCA, C.I. 4204.794 MARIA ESTER VENTURA, L.C. 1391.971 ELSA ESTHER AMBROSETTI DE SCARZELLI, L.C. 5981.714 ALBA LUCA GARCIA, D.N.I. 1426.594 SUSANA LEVITANA DE GOMEZ, D.N.I. 4257.028 MARTA FRANCO R., L.C. 5466.198 FREDERICO ACUNA, C.I. 3759.859 SUSANA M. REGALIAI, D.N.I. 5472.459 NELIDA DE GAULIANO, C.I. 5294.499 JULIA BAGLIANO, L.C. 4259.880 GLADI B. PEREZ DE ROSSELLI, C.I. 6771.449 VICENTA C. SAGONE, L.C. 1263.971 ANDREA G. DE OJETA, C.I. 3259.919 ANA KABANCHIK DE GATOVSKI, C.I. 7336.603 MARIA CRISTINA ALBONCINI DE BERRERA, C.I. 7319.797 IRIA VILLALBA DE FRANCONETTI, C.I. 1475.194 EMILIA TERPILA DELISO, D.N.I. 4237.771 VICTORIA LUISA HARTELO DE LEIVA, C.I. 1384.437 ANGELA VON DE SUITESS, L.C. 1793.969 OLGA B. DE HERNANDEZ, C.I. 1464.235 ROSINA A. DE BLASQUE, C.I. 4484.881 MARGARITA AIDA LOPEZ DE HOYANO, L.C. 1464.709 FRANCISCA G. DE SOUZA, L.C. 7269.737 LUCIA GECCHINI DE ZARACOGGI, L.C. 1239.264 ELENA T. DE PETTINA, L.C. 1249.191 ARTURO RUFFA, L.C. 7304.625 YOLANDA M. B. DE HARTELO, L.C. 1373.703 AIDA NATUCI DE SUAREZ, L.C. 1427.761 LUIS EGUIGURE PODESTA, L.C. 1427.771 OLGA ROTO, L.C. 5295.989 MECTOR PRIVERDA, L.C. 1364.891 EDUARDO MARIA RAPELLA, C.I. 5296.984 OLGA H. DE BARRIS, L.C. 7542.529 LILIANA MASER, L.C. 4381.397 ROBERTO FERNANDO LEITONIA, C.I. 2671.791 LAUDILINA ENCARNACION ROSAS, D.N.I. 1367.619 REPERANZA COLLADO, L.C. 8376.989 ROSA ANGELO MENA DE RESOLDO, C.I. 5891.352 EDITH MARIE DE GARCIA, L.C. 1394.644 FLORINDA ALONSO DE FERRADAS, C.I. 878.384 PERICA S. VON DE SCHMIDT, D.N.I. 6391.654 HAYDÉE HONORABLE DE PEREIRA, L.C. 4424.321 ARTURO MARGARITE, C.I. 4524.022 CARMEN GOTTZ, C.I. 4376.617 AIDA B. DE SCARIP, L.C. 1394.618 RINALDO ADDOLFO MEDINA, L.C. 1371.671 NATIE DOMAMA PITO, D.N.I. 1360.364 NELIDA INES SANTINI, C.I. 1242.444 CATALINA RUFFO, D.N.I. 5969.578 OLGA LOPEZ OSORNO DE BRANKE, L.C. 8392.849 JOSÉFA E. DE MELLING, L.C. 4377.847 IRMA BRENTE HONTANER DE LOPEZ, L.C. 1487.814 LILIA I. ANGLIM DE ROSE, C.I. 1260.899 YULIANA A. BRESCH DE BARRELLI, L.C. 1160.549 MIRIAM ALICIA MONTEDE DE PALCOMI, L.C. 1495.459 JACOB DAVID BRAUERMAN, L.C. 1346.551 CECILIA C. DE FUREL, L.C. 1160.491 CARLOS ENRIQUE ANTONIO HOGARINI, C.I. 4294.849 ELDA BELLI YON DE OTTERO, C.I. 5425.919 TROCENA DE JARAMILLO, C.I. 1244.659</p>	<p>MARIA DE ARIAS, L.C. 1819.999 MARIA VERONICA JARAMILLO, D.N.I. 13.631.165 EUGENIO PEREZ GEA, C.I. 4483.951 ANGELICA P. DE MATUYAMA, C.I. 1443.109 MARTHA S. DE SLAVKIN, C.I. 1364.981 ELCIRA F. DE DAMBROSIO, C.I. 2163.119 AGELA E. ARAEL, C.I. 1358.109 ALICIA LOPEZ, C.I. 2751.789 MARIA DE LOS ANGELES RIENCA, C.I. 4476.884 MIGUO DE LAS MERCEDES COLOMBO, L.C. 1294.999 LIBERATA ELENA SALVETTI DE COLOMBO, L.C. 4187.917 BEATRIZ R. DE PIENRO, L.C. 1325.115 MARTA MABEL CONALEZ BARRANTOS, L.C. 5984.678 TERESA RODRIGUEZ, L.C. 6494.044 RAUL MADRA, L.C. 6541.889 LEONOR TROXLER, L.C. 1249.269 BLANCA TROXLER DE CORIA, L.C. 3070.897 ANTONIO LABATE, C.I. 1488.899 INES LUGANO DE DOKRINI, C.I. 1468.833 JOSEFINA A. DE PONTOMI, C.I. 4084.844 DOLORES B. SARONI DE BABONOVICH, C.I. 1154.819 MARIA DE LAS MERCEDES A. DE GARONI, D.N.I. 5181.819 ANDREA IPHAN DE BAISSALO, L.C. 1489.772 SUSANA M. DE MOA, D.N.I. 1472.424 MELICA C. DE ZAYAS, L.C. 1419.316 ELIDA A. DE PIOZZA, C.I. 1494.417 DINA G. DE GRUTIER, L.C. 1903.416 ROSA AZOLINA DE GARCIA, L.C. 8318.187 JOSEFA NUJICA, C.I. 7303.949 MARIA B. VENTURO VILA DE BIENPOSTO, C.I. 4386.817 FRANCISCO MANGONE, L.C. 638.774 DALIANA VARELA, C.I. 2393.918 MARIA IRMA M. VON MARTINEZ, C.I. 1494.544 ELIA E. DE MIEDAN, L.C. 1248.817 ELVIRA G. DE MORTON, L.C. 4337.887 SALVADOR PITELLI, C.I. 1394.449 EULGADIO FONTELA, C.I. 1324.449 MIGUO THOMPSON, L.C. 1358.779 SUSANA B. OSSEL, D.N.I. 1342.447 JUST ANUALDI DE VALDUI, C.I. 1170.485 OSCAR ALBERTO LEONARDO, C.I. 1356.949 RAUL JOSE SANTIAGO, L.C. 1471.444 NEALY ANONO DE AVALO, D.N.I. 6385.911 CATALINA DEMASI DE BARTUCCI, C.I. 4332.779 RAJHONA FRANCISCA SALAZAR DE RAMIREZ, L.C. 1387.309 LUCIA C. BOLANDEZ, C.I. 1792.916 DOLORES M. DE SANTORO, L.C. 4443.551 REFA CORTES DE ACUNA, C.I. 1444.847 DANIEL GOICECHEA, C.I. 1468.499 CARMEN ESMALTO, C.I. 1358.779 SOFIA DE CARIA, D.N.I. 1361.991 NIEVES DA FONTE DE VALLETTI, C.I. 1471.449 ISOLINA CONCEPCION RODRIGUEZ, L.C. 1361.911 CLOTILDE AMANDA DE GONZALEZ, L.C. 4397.997 SITILIA RIVADENEYRA, L.C. 4814.787 LILIA GRACIELA PALAZO DE LOIS, C.I. 5422.547 DOXA E. DE DE CRISTOFARO, L.C. 1368.618 ROSA KRUMER DE CORREA, C.I. 1351.916 MATALDA PERERA DE PEREZ, C.I. 1669.618 CECILIA G. DE ALTMARCANI, C.I. 4377.847 TERESA LUGIERI DE GOVERNICHIL, L.C. 1781.881 MILIA GIRON DE FERNANDEZ, C.I. 7171.811 MILIA G. DE BARRIOS, L.C. 1393.911 JUANIA R. DE RANCIET, C.I. 3493.911 MARIA E. FERNANDEZ DE ESPUJOLAS, L.C. 4364.718 JOSFINA GARCIA DE NOIA, D.N.I. 6079.794 AIDA ROSA DE PARI, C.I. 1361.911 ELIQUEDA DEL PRANTO FLORES, L.C. 1644.811 MARI ANGELICA VERGARA DE ROZE, L.C. 1644.811 EUGENIA DEL PRANTO FLORES, L.C. 1644.811 MARIA CRIZ DE VALDUI, C.I. 4884.811 MIGUO ESTELA Y. DE DELGADO, L.C. 8711.411 ADA F. DE ARIAS, C.I. 1161.911</p>	<p>NORA MORALES DE CORTINAS, L.C. 8193.528 ANDREA LOPEZ DE AGUO, L.C. 1348.479 LUCIA R. DE OZZINHEIMER, C.I. 2102.349 VICENTA LOPEZ DE GARCIA, C.I. 1348.798 MAYY C. DE MISBURG, L.C. 4203.915 MARIA ALBA DE ANTONIETTI, D.N.I. 1346.427 EUGENIA V. DE SEVICENTI, L.C. 1163.893 CLARA B. BECOTICH DE MERRADA, L.C. 1379.919 MARTA C. DE GONZA, L.C. 1343.241 NELIDA F. DE ROSA, L.C. 6493.971 SUSANA DE SANTO DE GUANO, L.C. 1412.679 DIANA E. JUKAJO DE PI ROSA, L.C. 8164.885 DOXA CELESTINA RODRIGUEZ, L.C. 1379.509 ANA REBE VILLAR DEJATRE, L.C. 1392.916 MARTYRIANA RIVARONA DE QUIROGA, L.C. 6379.116 ANGELICA ROSA DE MIGNONE, L.C. 6481.911 SALVADORA GONZALEZ OLIVECO DE BRINALL, C.I. 7444.779 AURORA FIVERO DE VARIO, L.C. 4351.301 JUVANA WELER DE PARAGUAI, C.I. 7477.384 ROSA BURSTEIN, C.I. 4332.954 ELISA SCURA WILLENBERG, C.I. 1218.499 DOXA GIBONESTI, C.I. 1392.918 MARTA F. FERNANDEZ DE COLTUAU, C.I. 2536.187 MAYRE J. LUCIANO VERA DE SOTO, C.I. 2707.949 ELSA R. BENITEZ, D.N.I. 1462.486 PROSPERO J. DE GARRIGONI, C.I. 1393.959 PATRICIA LILIANA GARCIA, D.N.I. 1807.943 MARIA ESTER VIERTEZ DE PUOL, D.N.I. 4441.333 ASACIO LUIS SAN MARTIN, C.I. 1848.617 ALBA EUGENIA MARTINO DE PERNAS, D.N.I. 3348.637 GUILLELMINA LATERRADE DE VALERA, L.C. 1414.932 JOSEFA KAPLAN, L.C. 2894.389 EULIO JAIMS PERVA, L.C. 8378.559 VICIACION F. DE LOYOLA, L.C. 4371.724 DOMINGA DE BENEDICTO DE JANIK, C.I. 4302.498 MARIA ELENA DE CABELLO, L.C. 752.890 MARI ESTER SARICO, L.C. 1397.498 DULCIBELLO A. CABRERA, C.I. 1736.811 A. ESTHER JAUREGUI DE CABRERA, L.C. 6348.959 AURORA MOLINA PEACOCKBELL, L.C. 1774.489 CARMEN ALONSO DE PRIETO, C.I. 2102.912 JUDANA DE GHIRILLA, L.C. 6777.921 OLGA MURGA DE JONIC, C.I. 932.332 HAYDÉE DE MARATEA, L.C. 2562.139 MIRE P. DE MARCIA, L.C. 1374.679 LILIA FERNANDA CANDELA, D.N.I. 12702.979 ANGELICA C. DE BEVIC, L.C. 1463.974 MARIA C. A. DE ASSAD, C.I. 4135.477 VILMA S. DE GUTIERREZ, C.I. 679.879 TERESA E. DE COSTANA, C.I. 8073.899 MARIA MERCEDES CARO, L.C. 1378.899 CAROLINA E. CARO, L.C. 1378.899 BLANCA G. DE LOPEZ, L.C. 2391.918 LILIA KIBLSKY DE TAZULIE, C.I. 2191.731 LAURENIA A. DE RIVELLI, L.C. 1097.919 JOSÉ PASTOR DE BONAFINI, L.C. 319.839 ELICIA BARRER DE CHERRU, L.C. 1388.389 LILIA S. DE MEDRANO, L.C. 1371.914 ARHONA E. DE NIETO, D.N.I. 1348.914 MARIA B. DE ALVAREZ, C.I. 4895.834 CARMEN INQUEL ANGEL HEINZE, D.N.I. 1168.834 ADILIA LITUA MOREL, C.I. 1366.811 GUILLELMA SALAZAR, L.C. 1379.479 EMILIA E. DE LAGO, D.N.I. 1386.811 TADUEL G. DE ACCUCCINI, C.I. 1391.876 ANTONIA A. DE DINARCI, L.C. 1379.117 CARMEN A. DE SACCO, D.N.I. 849.911 ALICIA J. ARANA, L.C. 1811.428 LILIA RIVARONA DE CALDANO, L.C. 1392.317 MARTHA MAITZ DE BRAVERMAN, C.I. 1352.871</p>	<p>RENY VESENTINI, C.I. 2164.814 MELIA CONCEPCION DE VALO, L.C. 6464.818 LILIA ROSA PUZZO DE SUAREZ, L.C. 1371.014 LILIA PIAL DE CANEL, C.I. 1378.818 SANTA MARIA EMILIA E. FISCHER DE IRARGUREN, L.C. 1463.817 DOXA G. DE CASARICO, C.I. 4379.919 ELENA DE GERBILSKY, C.I. 1462.485 LILIA B. DE BARRERON, C.I. 1463.818 MARGARITA DE BARRERA, C.O. C. PROVINCIA 827.544 SUSANA LILIANA THOMPSON, L.C. 4643.709 LIVIA CAPALDO DE PONCE, C.I. 1481.818 REMO CARLOS BARRON, C.I. 1398.771 BEATRIZ R. VALINO, C.I. 4281.277 EVA L. S. DE BAAMONDE, C.I. 7484.709 YULIANA R. DE ARAHO, D.N.I. 1373.338 SANTIAGO E. DIAMBARA, L.C. 4775.244 ANA C. DE ARGON, C.I. 7165.959 OLGA N. DE JEJEL, L.C. 1372.891 LAURA BEATRIZ DOMARTE, C.I. 5492.509 FERNANDO MUSSO, D.N.I. 6348.277 OSORNO VINCIO MASTROGIACOMO, L.C. 6472.704 MORACIO FELIX BONZA, L.C. 8419.255 GONZALO VICI MASTROGIACOMO, L.C. 1444.509 ZELINDA DE MASTROGIACOMO, L.C. 6472.704 ANGELA VICENTA DE PAPA, C.I. 1464.678 PRIMITIVA BLANCA FORLUN, L.C. 1488.217 JOSE OSTRE, C.I. 1346.485 CRISTINA GOYCOECHA, C.I. 6295.488 MARGARITA DE CALDERO, L.C. 1399.937 PATILDA OLIVOS DE DITOFONO, D.N.I. 1488.334 JUVANA YUCOCOTTA DE SEGOA, L.C. 1383.209 ESTEFANA DE LA CRUZ E. DE WILLALA, L.C. 1464.819 ELIANA NAON DE WENNER, L.C. 1999.871 MARIA DEL CARMEN VELAZCO, L.C. 1393.134 DANIEL VICTOR SANTILLI, L.C. 7391.614 MARTA Y. DE BELLAGARBA, C.I. 4517.819 NOMI DAI DE GUASTAVINO, L.C. 1346.819 DANIEL VICTOR SANTILLI, L.C. 7391.614 MARTA Y. DE BELLAGARBA, C.I. 4517.819 ROSA VIVERO DE AGUINO, L.C. 6471.489 FANNY BRAUNSTEIN, C.I. 4378.189 FIBUIQUE LETUA, C.I. 2452.929 EVA HARDOEZ DE CASTILLO BARRIOS, L.C. 832.489 AURORA ALONSO DE ANDRETTI, C.I. 2181.979 ANGELICA GARCIA DE OVEJERO, L.C. 1432.646 TERESA TATOLI DEBASTIANO, C.I. 1371.348 DOLORES A. P. DE PRINELLA, C.I. 1392.839 MARTA O. DE VALDUI, C.I. 584.619 CATALINA C. DE LUONES, C.I. 1386.811 AURORA MOREL, L.C. 6471.489 SOFIA RENEE DE EPSTEIN, C.I. 4351.819 ANGELIA DEBATTI DE ALVIA, L.C. 1442.338 GRABIELA VAYDIE SOTO, C.I. 8783.385 PIRE F. WESTERKAMP, C.I. 1391.819 ANGELA M. DE WESTERKAMP, C.I. 1385.819 SIMON LAIBANOVICH, C.I. 919.979 SARA DE LAIBANOVICH, C.I. 895.544 AGENCIO L. GIMENEZ, C.I. 3408.444 ROBERTO PINAL, C.I. 1487.819 ELSA H. PINAL, C.I. 4291.318 EMMA L. LANZOSTA DE GASPARINI, D.N.I. R. 8481.919 JOSÉFA JARACIN, C.I. 1391.819 LUSTENIA GLADYS BARRERON, C.I. 1379.741 MARIA A. C. DE PRINEDA, L.C. 1391.899 JUAN CARLOS PUERTO, L.C. 1371.819 ILDA F. DE MUCCI, L.C. 481.498 MARIA J. B. DE GOMEZ, L.C. 1483.818 MARIA NUDEL DE BUNAPPE, C.I. 1357.819 LAURA BEATRIZ DOMARTE, D.N.I. 8481.819 JUAN CARLOS SIETO, C.I. 1388.109</p>
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Figure 8: A copy of the advertisement taken out by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and other human rights groups in La Prensa newspaper on 28 August 1977. Courtesy of CELS.

Examined from the light of today, the advertisements in *La Prensa* and *La Nación* are important in many ways. They stand as a testament to the determination of the mothers to find out the truth of what had happened to their missing children, as well as an incipient demand for justice to be carried out according to due process. They also appear to us today as one of the earliest forms of representation of the disappeared – although this was clearly not their purpose at the time – and thus of how the disappeared might be represented in order to prosecute the claims for truth and justice in a certain way. Three things strike me as compelling in this respect. Firstly, there is an insistence by the relatives to know the truth of what happened to *each* of the persons who had disappeared, whose mothers' individual names stand in as proxy for their missing children. Indeed, the idea of creating a list came from their parents' determination to ensure that none of the people missing would be forgotten.⁶ The Madres heard rumours that the military was planning to unveil a list of the names of two thousand *desaparecidos*. De Vincenti was insistent: 'The names and surnames should be included so that none of the children are missed out from the list' (Crenzel 2008:120, my translation). Secondly, the Madres enunciate their case in the two adverts on an ethical level. Ulises Gorini (2006) notes perceptibly the difference between these two adverts and another two issued previously by the *Liga de Derechos Humanos*⁷ and *Familiares*.⁸ The Madres articulate their demands in a 'basically moral and humane petition,' shorn of the overt political slant of the other adverts. In the petitions, they frame the disappearance of their children as an affront to moral and ethical – but not political – norms, and they do not make any reference to any political motivations which they or their children might have had nor to the political context in which both parties found themselves.⁹ Thirdly, the adverts mark an important shift from an individual to a collective form of activism. Prior to these, if the names and surnames of *desaparecidos* had appeared in the newspapers then it was because parents had taken out paid advertisements which mentioned only the name of their child. These adverts can also still be found in the CELS' archive, where they contextualise those published subsequently in *La Prensa* and *La Nación*.

I like to think of the missing persons' posters that pockmarked the city walls in New York or the *boulevards* in Paris as having in some small way their antecedents in the adverts Argentine parents took out as they sought information about the whereabouts of their missing children. However, as aggregates of individual *desaparecidos* the advertisements were complex forms of representation. By this point, many mothers had already had enough of other forms of

⁶ And would thus become what Edkins calls the 'doubly-disappeared' (Edkins 2011).

⁷ Argentine League of Human Rights

⁸ Relatives, which were usually relatives of Political Prisoners as well as the Detained-disappeared

⁹ Indeed, the Madres purposefully shied away from any contact with *Familiares*, fearing that as known communists they would be guilty by association of such political motives.

denunciation which they considered as bureaucratic. María del Rosario Cerruti recalled how ‘In the Assembly [of Human Rights, or APDH] and in the League [of Human Rights] and Familiares they filled us with little papers; a habeas corpus there, a denunciation there, and everything was very ordered and calm. It was something so strange [to us].’ (Gorini 2006:79). Cerruti preferred to remember her son Fernando as she chose to remember him, as a ‘person-as-such’ (Edkins 2011:14) perhaps, and not in the tyranny of order and categorisation that she saw as being embodied in the ‘*papelitos*.’ For many of the mothers these ‘little papers’ were even proving futile. When Cerruti went to give her deposition at a police station, she spent an hour telling them ‘who Fernando was, what he did, where he worked’ (Gorini 2006:80). When she returned the next day to sign the deposition it was nowhere to be found. The police had taken her statement before throwing it away.

The struggle to find out what had happened to the disappeared played itself out repeatedly through their proxy ontological materialisation in a list of names. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo and Familiares presented a joint list of 561 *desparecidos* to the Argentine “Congress” in October 1977, in what was the first mass mobilisation since the dictatorship began (Gorini 2006).¹⁰ Such domestic forms of protest however were largely inconsequential. The military regime locked down the ‘field of representability’ in Argentina by issuing strict controls over what could be published in the national news-frames, just as the United States government would do in its wars with Iraq and Afghanistan (Butler 2006, 2010). As a result, relatives and human rights groups developed international links with non-governmental organisations and foreign governments abroad. With courageous journalists or diplomats including Robert Cox, Jean-Pierre Bousquet, Tex Harris and Patricia Derian acting as conduits,¹¹ and the *papelitos* of habeas corpus or questionnaires operating as evidence, the APDH¹² for example funnelled denunciations of the disappearances up through an emerging international human rights architecture to its nodes in the UN, CIDH,¹³ the US, French, Italian and Spanish governments and the European Parliament. There, lists of the disappeared were compiled and pressure was exerted by these organisations on the military junta to do something about the plight of the disappeared back home. It was an ingenious feedback loop. When Junta President Jorge Rafael Videla went to Washington to witness the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty in September 1979, for example, he was greeted by US President Jimmy Carter who had a list of the

¹⁰ The Argentine Congress did not sit during the dictatorship, but was replaced by the *Consejo Asesoramiento Legislativo*, or Legislative Advisory Council, a decision-making body comprised of military personnel operating as a legislative façade.

¹¹ Robert Cox was the British-born editor of the English-language *Buenos Aires Herald*. Jean-Pierre Bousquet was a journalist with *l’Agence France Presse*. “Tex” Harris was a diplomat in the US Embassy. Patricia Derian was Jimmy Carter’s Under-Secretary of State for Human Rights, a post created by Carter.

¹² *Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos*, or Permanent Assembly for Human Rights. The APDH counted among its members Graciela Fernández Meijide, who went on to play an important role in CONADEP, and the first democratic president following the transition, Raúl Alfonsín.

¹³ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, or CIDH from its acronym in Spanish.

disappeared already to hand (Gorini 2006:114). Not only that, but Carter was able to draw on concrete examples by name, asking his counterpart what had happened to individual victims such as Jacobo Timerman. Carter secured a promise from Videla to allow for a deputation of the CIDH to visit Argentina in response for the lifting of economic and military sanctions that had been imposed by the US Congress. When Amnesty International issued a report following its own visits in 1976 and 1979, it included a list of the names of 2,673 *desaparecidos*, each of whom was recorded using their names, ID numbers, nationalities, ages, marital status and occupations (Gorini 2006:46). And when the CIDH undertook its visit in September 1979, it asked the Madres what they wanted from its inspection. Their reply was a list of names. The CIDH complied (Gorini 2006:340). On the completion of its work it issued a report that contained a list of 5,818 names of the disappeared (2006:354). Many of these names had been provided by the relatives themselves, through the *papelitos* of habeas corpus and the APDH's questionnaires, though their power had been substantially enhanced through their passage via this discursive feedback loop.

If the lists of names can be thought to have a genealogy, so too can the photographs of the persons who had disappeared. In the early years of their resistance, the mothers would often carry a photo of their missing son or daughter with them as they searched for news of their whereabouts at morgues, hospitals, mental institutions, prisons, military barracks and the offices of state. Some attempted to leave these photos with military officials in case they showed up. The officers refused to accept them, suggesting in a tasteless irony that they might get lost. When these mothers became the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, they attached these and other photos to their lapels, to accompany the writing of their child's name on their iconic headscarves.¹⁴ Many scholars have noted the destabilising of the boundary between the public and private that these photographs symbolise. Some Madres used photographs of their children in public that denote private occasions such as weddings, birthdays or graduations. Others subverted the public sphere and turned it against itself. By displaying photos that were taken to secure passports or driving licenses, the mothers made a mockery of the military state's denial that these persons existed. As with the list of names, there were not one series of photos, but many. Just as they populated their own lists of names,¹⁵ the military took their own photographs of the disappeared during their captivity. Some of these photos were secreted from ESMA by survivor Victor Basterra (Brodsky 2005) and have now entered the

¹⁴ Following their break-up in 1985/86 (the date of which is disputed), the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora* have since continued this practice. Members of the *Madres Asociación* have replaced the individual names of their own children with the words 'Aparición con Vida.' See below for more.

¹⁵ The military deny that they populated a list of names during the repression, though their use has been substantiated in the testimony of survivors. In 1983, Roberto Bignone is said to have issued a directive for the lists to be burned.

private memorabilia of families, where they intermingle with other photos of their missing children.

During the dictatorship, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and other human rights organisations such as the APDH turned to a variety of instruments to denounce the disappearances of their children and demand the truth and justice for what had happened to them. Some of these instruments were historical formulae for denouncing the disappearances of a person, such as *habeas corpus*. Others were innovative and new. Some were national, others international vehicles for making a claim. However, they each had one thing in common. The relatives almost always represented their missing children as irreplaceable persons, and ‘persons-as-such’ (Edkins 2011:11), each of whom had a name, a face and an identity uniquely their own.¹⁶ This was an emerging political logic of memory. This logic was designed to shape the struggle for truth and justice in such a way as to make the recognition of the persons who had been forcibly disappeared more likely *as persons*, and not political militants, among an interpellated public and thus secure empathy for their plight. This political logic of memory was forged during the dictatorship itself, starting with the earliest disappearances. It was crystallised and legitimised using state power, first via CONADEP, and then in the Trial of the Juntas.

The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (or CONADEP from its acronym in Spanish) was convened by President Raúl Alfonsín shortly after his inauguration in December 1983. In a persuasive study, Emilio Crenzel (2008)¹⁷ argues that the Argentine truth commission was scripted in ‘a humanitarian key which privileged the detailed narration of the abuses and their circumstances, the names of the material perpetrators and those of the disappeared; the latter presented as innocent and defenceless victims and classified according to their basic personal data’ (2008:182). In the main body of the final report, *Nunca Más*, for instance, he notes how the disappeared are presented according to their names, ages, sexes and professions, but how no mention is made of any political militancy they might have had. In the testimonials inserted into the text as a legitimisation of the truth of survivors or relatives, almost two-thirds ‘limit themselves to publishing their names,’ whilst a further sixteen per cent ‘describe [the disappeared] as “persons or human beings”’ (2008:110). This is also how the *desaparecidos* feature in the annex to the original version of CONADEP, where they appear as a list of names. The delimitation of the disappeared according to their ‘basic personal data’, Crenzel suggests, was a form of restoring ‘the humanity of the *desaparecidos*’ (2008:112) by

¹⁶ This was the case even in those media that aggregated their claims in order to magnify their denunciations, such as the newspaper adverts or the petition of 500 *habeas corpus* submitted to “Congress”, or the CAL, by the APDH.

¹⁷ Crenzel’s text, *la historia política del nunca más*, is in Spanish. Where citations appear, these have been translated. All translations are my own, unless stipulated.

restoring the '*nombres y apellidos*' – the names and surnames¹⁸ – of those whose existence had been reduced in the clandestine detention centres to that of a number.

Emilio Crenzel refers to the form of representation used by the commission as the scripting of the disappeared in a 'humanitarian narrative' and he takes particular care to situate this narrative in both space and time. Thus, he relates the representation of the disappeared as 'victims' according to their 'basic personal data' within a supra-national network of what he calls humanitarian norms, whilst illustrating how this 'narrative key' did not suddenly emerge following the transition to democracy but as a form of representation whose origins can be traced to the instruments relatives were using to denounce the disappearance of their loved ones during the dictatorship itself. He therefore traces the continuities as well as the changes in this form of representation. The paradox, Crenzel argues persuasively, was that during the repression a growing heterogeneity in the denunciation of disappearances was being met by a 'growing homogeneity' in the way the disappeared were being denounced as subjects (2008:44). On the one hand, this was due to the links being opened up between relatives and human rights groups in Argentina with INGOs and foreign governments, who 'demanded the factual description of the violations suffered and not the reference to any political motivations they may have had' (2008:49). On the other, it spoke to the type of information that mothers and Mothers were willing to give as relatives in the everyday context of the dictatorship as it continued to unfold.

Graciela Fernández Meijide was part of the team at the APDH that helped relatives to make their denunciations to international organisations.¹⁹ The military's innovation of forced disappearances as an instrument of systematic mass violence meant that such organisations were forced to make up their response as they went along. 'We were putting together a fairly basic type of questionnaire. When we saw that we needed more information, we added it' she told me.²⁰ However, these data 'never included the specific political militancy.

'No father was going to tell you "my son was a *Montonero*", because at that time that would have amounted to a death sentence. We were under a dictatorship that persecuted precisely the people from the guerrillas ... so they said "he was a student", "he was a worker, a professional", whatever it was ... they told us the profession.'

This helps to explain the bias in the CONADEP report towards categories such as student or worker, as categories which often overlap and which ignore the middle-class origins of many of the victims. It also reveals the importance of the relatives in shaping the process, and delineating the frame, by which the victims of forced disappearance were being constructed as

¹⁸ 'This is a literal translation. '*Nombres y apellidos*' (names and surnames) is a Spanish couplet. Its English counterpart tends to be 'names and faces.'

¹⁹ Fernández Meijide's own son Pablo, had been forcibly disappeared in October 1976.

²⁰ Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide, 8 August 2014.

Victims of Human Rights Violations with no political militancy or identity. The growing homogeneity in the way the disappeared were being produced as legal but not political subjects during the repression was a response to both push and pull factors as the process of political activism unfolded within a global discursive nexus. If the representation of the *desaparecidos* as persons with names, faces, ages, sexes and professions spoke in part to emerging international humanitarian – specifically human rights – norms that framed the violence as a discrete series of Human Rights Violations enacted by a Perpetrator upon a Victim, then this emerging political logic also spoke in part to the circumscribed information that relatives were willing to provide in the concrete and very dangerous political context of the time. It was as the result of both factors together, for example, that a standardised questionnaire was drawn up by the APDH and used by relatives to send their depositions to foreign governments and INGOs. This questionnaire limited the representation of the disappeared to their ‘basic personal data’ such as their names and occupations, and did not ask for – nor was it used by relatives to provide – any information on any political motivations or militancy which their disappeared children might have had. This data then formed the basis for the Inter-American Commission’s investigation and report.

When Madre de Plaza de Mayo Juana de Pargament was asked once by a police officer why she demonstrated in the weekly *ronda*, she told him: ‘Listen carefully: if you disappear today, tomorrow your mother will be walking with me arm-in-arm. There’s no doubt about that. Your mother is going to walk with me; everywhere I go, she’s going to go. And wherever she goes, I will go too. We’ll go arm-in-arm. Why? Because she’s missing a child.’ (Gorini 2006). De Pargament reveals here the human side to Crenzel’s humanitarianism. The *madres* founded the *Madres* in the biological relation to their missing children as the consecration of a family tie. The disappeared were socially constructed by relatives according to their names and ‘basic personal data’ as legal – but not political – subjects within the newly-emergent global discursive nexus of international human rights. But they were also produced as such a subject because this is how they were valued and *recognised* by their parents who searched for them: in the human relationship of mother and child, constructed through love and revealed in the instantiation of loss (Butler 2006). However, not any relationship would suffice. When Clara de Israel went with members of the human rights movement to meet Interior Minister General Alberto Harguindeguy, she was asked how many children she had. Replying five, she was told by the official that she was ‘lucky.’ ‘There are other mothers who are missing all their children,’ he told her, and in this he was tragically correct.²¹ There was something of *Antigone* in the

²¹ Renée Epelbaum would suffer the agony of having all three of her children – Claudio, Lila and Luis Marcelo Epelbaum – forcibly disappeared: Claudio and Lila in Uruguay where she had sent them in vain to try and find refuge and security following the disappearance of Luis. See chapter ten.

General's reply. Antigone after all insists on burying her brother because as a brother he could not be replaced – unlike a child. De Israel, however, was adamant. 'Yes. I'm lucky because you haven't yet kidnapped the rest of my children' she told Harguindeguy defiantly, 'but for me that's not enough. I want Teresa alive, because I may have five children *but I have only got one of each*' (Gorini 2006:224, emphasis added). For Clara de Israel, there was only one Teresa Israel. In Teresa, she demanded the return of the unique and irreplaceable person; the person-as-such.

The Trial of the Juntas entrenched the social construction in collective memory of the disappeared as legal but not political subjects and innocent victims of human rights violations. The trial was the literal as well as logical successor to the truth commission; the prosecution selected 711 cases from the evidence it was passed by CONADEP to be used as the corpus for their case. During the proceedings, which lasted from April to September 1985, judges heard testimony from more than five hundred relatives and survivors as witnesses. Testimony was moderated by the six judges of the *Corte de Apelaciones en lo Penal* to comply with international standards of jurisprudence and dispel accusations from the defendants that it was a show trial. This meant that the testimonies of violence given by the witnesses were stripped down of all opinion, including 'expressions that [reflected] political readings of the past' or the possible historical or political causes of the violence (Feld 2010). Adriano Calvo de Laborde, for example, was reprimanded by Judge Ledesma when she diverted from narrating the act of torture she witnessed whilst being held captive in a clandestine detention centre to interpret the act as part of a 'cold and calculated' policy that didn't accord with due obedience (2010:41).²² 'The judges also [tried] to contain the appearance of questions relating to the political ideas of witnesses or victims.' Emilio Massera's defence lawyer was admonished by Judge Arslanian when he asked witnesses what they thought of Hilario Fernández Long and Augusto Conte MacDonell's children being *Montoneros*; Long and Conte MacDonell were key members of the human rights movement, having formed part of CONADEP and CELS. As Claudia Feld has noted, 'having put to one side the possible political readings of events, erased from the witness testimonies the political filiation of victims and witnesses, and interpreted the violence in universal keys (as human rights violations and crimes committed) a "non-political" narration of the repression was being shaped.' That forced disappearance was not yet codified under international law as a crime against humanity meant that the prosecution was obliged to sentence the nine leaders of the three military juntas and seven leaders of the terrorist left according to the crimes of kidnapping, torture and extrajudicial execution already codified under Argentine law. The delineation of the judicial field as a 'field of representability'

²² Due Obedience is the name of a law introduced by Alfonsín to limit prosecutions of those who were following orders.

in line with national as well as international norms of jurisprudence embedded the representation of the disappeared in collective memory in accordance with a political logic of memory that produced the disappeared as persons with names and faces, as legal but not political subjects, and as victims of violations perpetrated by victimisers in a conflagration of political violence that was stripped of all historical context and political reference points.

On the first day of the trial, 22 April 1985, demonstrators lined the route leading to the court in Buenos Aires' *Tribunales* district carrying a banner on which was written: '*Juicio y Castigo para todos los responsables.*' (Longoni et al. 2010:138).²³ Human rights groups were opening up a front against the transitional government whose policy under Raúl Alfonsín was increasingly to seek accountability only for those at the top of the terrorist and military chains of command who had given the orders to kidnap, torture and kill. This would become known as the theory of the 'two demons' and Law of Due Obedience. What is less often noted is that nine thousand placards were unfurled as part of this demonstration, on which were written the names, ages and professions of each of the *desaparecidos* who had been identified by the truth commission. This was probably the first time that the names and faces of each of the *desaparecidos* had been seen in public in Argentina.²⁴ As one scholar notes, it was also one of the 'few times in which the human rights organisations would publicly use another figure for the disappeared' than 30,000 (Crenzel 2008:243). The placards had been produced in April 1983 by Santiago Mellibovsky and Matilde Saidler de Mellibovsky, of CELS and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo respectively (Longoni 2010:46). Through these portraits, beamed into their homes via their television screens, 'many more people could feel *interpellated* and "watched"' by the disappeared (Longoni 2010:47, emphasis added). So it was that the names and faces that began their genealogical lives in cultural representation on the lapels of the Madres or the pages of *habeas corpus* and the APDH questionnaires before being passed to American, UN, CIDH and European statesmen and back again received yet another inflection on their extraordinary journeys. The full list of the nine thousand names of the *desaparecidos* would not be seen again in public until their names were carved in stone on the Memory Park's Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism eighteen years later.

²³ Justice and punishment for all those responsible.

²⁴ CONADEP had contained a list of names but not the faces of the *desaparecidos*.

the disappeared as a population of nameless and faceless figures

As Argentina was transitioning to democracy in the southern hemisphere summer of 1983-84, media coverage was saturated with the grisly images of the exhumations of mass graves.

These graves were located in public cemeteries. The graves contained the bodies of *desaparecidos*. The bodies of the *desaparecidos* had been buried unnamed under the Latin inscription NN, or *Nomen Nescio*. The exhumations were carried out on the instructions of judges and human rights groups. Coverage of the exhumations was widespread, with some television networks reporting “live” from the scene (Feld 2010). As a result, a growing Argentine public was being ‘conscripted’ (Butler 2010) with the images and narratives of the disappeared through the cultural viewfinders of a sensationalist media in what commentators were dubbing a “horror show.”

The media dramatisation lacked an interpretive framework of the political violence capable of explaining the sudden appearance of these bodies in their unnamed mass graves. Instead, the “horror show” maintained through the way it was being framed in the media an artificial separation or ‘cleavage’ between ‘the figure of the NN [unnamed cadaver] and that of the *desaparecido*’ (Feld 2010:39). This cleavage was largely the result of two factors. Firstly, early practices of forensic anthropology were rudimentary – sometimes diggers were used – and identification techniques then in use ‘did not include the collection of data with which to compare the information obtained from the human remains’ (Cohen Salama 1992:88 in Feld 2010:30). Secondly, Argentine newspapers such as *Clarín* and *La Nación* ran the stories of the sudden “discovery” of the skeletal remains and the stories of family members continuing to demonstrate and search for their missing children as parallel narratives, with no discernible bridge between the two. Sometimes these stories would even appear in the same sections of the same newspapers, only apart, with no reference linking the two. As Claudia Feld suggests, whilst the media coverage of the exhumations foreground ‘the figure of the unnamed cadaver as a protagonist of information’ (2010:28), the focus on the cadavers in the news media and the failure to join these up with the individual identities of the disappeared ‘prolonged ... the deprivation of humanity’ and the ‘deprivation of death’ that was the hallmark of their disappearances by the military regime. The horror show worked to reproduce narratives of the disappearances and the disappeared that failed to engender a more critical coming to terms with the past on the part of the wider Argentine public. Newspapers often scripted the “appearance” of the disappeared in sensationalist narratives that fetishized the act of discovery itself in the antinomies of disappearance/reappearance, darkness/light and obscurity/revelation as a metaphor for burial/exhumation. Such metaphors fortified the social rejoinder of a public that was able to say as it looked on in horror that it had known nothing

about the disappearances until now that the truth was being exhumed, revealed and brought to light.²⁵

Claudia Feld (2010) argues that the presentation of the disappeared in the “horror show” spoke to a commercial and ‘spectacular’ logic that framed the disappeared in the mass exhumations as cadavers in order to generate a media show and sell newspapers. She concludes that ‘there didn’t appear to intervene other logics linked to the challenges of representation of the limit experiences; neither political logics that demarcated what was possible to say and not to say ... nor ethical logics that demarcated a modest limit with respect to what was possible to say and show’ (2010:40). I disagree. What is often missing from accounts on the “horror show” is the very political role played by human rights actors in regulating the borders of what it was possible to say and not say, show and not show. Soon after they began, some Madres de Plaza de Mayo refused to give their permission for the exhumations to take place. There were many reasons for this. In part, as we have noted, it was a reaction against the rudimentary techniques with which they were being carried out, where vital DNA evidence was being lost.²⁶ In part, it was also a reflection of the victims’ violent deaths, in which many bodies had been piled together in mass graves such that their remains were now contorted. (It was not always possible to secure the consent of all relatives to untangle and release the remains for exhumation and identification).

However, the refusal of some relatives to sanction continued exhumations also spoke to a growing shift in their politics as a shift in ‘the politics that misses the person’ (Edkins 2011:2). By withholding permission for the exhumations, these Madres de Plaza de Mayo (not all Madres refused the exhumations) were not only preventing the identification across the ‘cleavage’ of time and space of what were potentially their own children, and thus the match of the cadaver and the person-as-such, they were also helping to produce the subject of the *desparecido* according to a radically new set of ‘norms of recognisability’ (Butler 2010). The aim of *aparición con vida*, as this politics of the missing became known, was to prevent the transitional state from neatly parcelling up and packing away the issue of the disappeared in Argentine politics as a politics of the dead. By withholding consent, this group of Madres was seeking to prevent an affective and ethical response in social mourning from taking place. By regulating the images and narratives that were relayed through the media in the mediatised horror show, they were delineating the ‘field of representability’ (Butler 2010). And by delineating the field of representability, they were seeking to regulate what was possible to say and not say about the disappeared. We might argue that these Madres were attempting to

²⁵ The same response would greet the publication of the CONADEP report later the same year, in 1984.

²⁶ These concerns led them to seek the help of Claude Snow, who supervised the creation of a specialised team of forensic anthropologists that is now the subject of world renown.

represent the disappeared as deliberately *ungrievable* lives (Butler 2010). At the very point the images of the disappeared were finally '[conscripting]' a wider Argentina public (Butler 2010) as it sat captivated in front of its television screens, the disappeared were being represented by their own relatives in such a way as to make them *unrecognisable* as lives which, loved but now lost, were deserving of being mourned.

On 21 September 1983, the Plaza de Mayo in central Buenos Aires was converted into a giant open-air factory for the production of life-sized paper silhouettes (see Figure 10). As part of the Third March of Resistance, activists lined up for their outlines to be traced in pencil and painted in ink on a blank sheet of paper. These silhouettes were then pasted onto the façades of the surrounding buildings, monuments and walls. This included the walls of the Buenos Aires Cathedral and Ministerial buildings, before spilling out into the neighbouring streets (see Figure 11). The *siluetazo* mediated art and politics (Longoni et al. 2008). As an unusual social protest through which to advance the longstanding claims for the truth of what had happened to the disappeared to be established and those responsible for the disappearances to be held to account, it also coined a whole new way of representing the disappeared in collective memory. The paper silhouettes enveloped the political transition to democracy in Argentina; the original *siluetazo* of September 1983 – before CONADEP was signed into law – was succeeded by another in December that year as Raúl Alfonsín prepared to take office and another still in March 1984 as part of commemorations to mark the eighth anniversary of the *coup d'état*. On the threshold and then in the promised land of democracy, the *siluetazo* was emblematic of a new political formula and a new political logic of memory, through which the Argentine public was being asked to make sense of the recent mass political violence and the place in this violence accorded to the disappeared.

The idea for the *siluetazo* came from three artists, Rodolfo Aguerreberry, Julio Flores and Guillermo Kexel, who took their proposal to the Madres for it to be agreed a few days before the march was to take place. The plan was to 'produce 30,000 images of life-sized human figures ...' (Longoni et al. 2008:63). The original objectives behind the proposal are revealing. The *siluetazo*, the artists suggested, would 'demand the *aparición con vida*' of the disappeared; 'provide the mobilisation with another modality of expression; create a scene that was injurious to the government through its physical magnitude and renew the attention of the media as a result of its unusual nature.' It would also 'provide a cohesive effect' among the demonstrators. Already at its inception, the success of the protest was being measured by its potential to visualise the disappeared and conscript a wider public.



Figure 10: The Plaza de Mayo is converted into a giant open-air factory for the production of life-sized silhouettes in the *siluetazo*. Image courtesy of *Revista Haroldo*, used without permission.



Figure 11: People line up and lay down for their silhouette to be traced as a representation of the disappeared. Image courtesy of *Telam*, used without permission.

However, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo made two significant adjustments to the proposal as it stood. Firstly, they ruled out the individualisation of the *siluetas*. Aguerreberry et al.'s plan was for the 'personalisation of each of the silhouettes, with details of dress, physical characteristics, sex and age ... It was envisaged that a silhouette would be produced for every one of the disappeared.' However, the *Madres* asked the artists not to do this, arguing that the lists of the disappeared were incomplete. Secondly, they instructed the artists not to paste the silhouettes on the pavement but upright onto buildings, walls and façades.²⁷ This was to avoid any semantic confusion between the disappeared and the dead. When somebody dies in a public place it is customary for the police to trace an outline around their body in chalk to allow for the removal of their body to a morgue. This was an especially acute association for the Madres, given the military's embellishment of "armed confrontations" during the dictatorship. By altering the original proposal in this way, the mothers were subverting the military's performative constitution of the disappeared as terrorist subversives.²⁸ They were also making the military consummate the act of disappearance. At the completion of the 24-hour March of Resistance, it was the military and police (state) that was tasked with taking down the *siluetas* from the walls, trees and buildings. The military were disappearing the disappeared, themselves, all over again, only this time in public where they were seen to be disappearing these people.

The *siluetazo* mediated the realms of the individual and the collective in fascinating and complex ways. Through the use of the '*figura humana vacía*' (empty human figure) it was intended that 'each and every one' of the *desaparecidos* would be represented. There would be '*una figura por cada desaparecido*' (one figure for each *desaparecido*) although none would be named (Longoni et al. 2008:94). There would also be 30,000 figures in total to evoke the scale of the loss in the Argentine social imaginary. Each figure should be 'unique and unrepeatable', one of the artists wrote in striking echoes to Jenny Edkins' (2011) work, and yet also 'multiple and reproducible' (Flores in Longoni and Bruzzone 2008:95). They should be 'different but the same', given that 'all had suffered the same fate but they were not an anonymous mass' (Flores 2008:91). Individualised and yet not named; de-nominalised and yet not anonymous; a mass of unnamed figures but not an anonymous mass; different but the same. However, as the demonstration began something happened that subverted its circuit of meaning. Although the hierarchy of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo had given instructions that

²⁷ Interestingly, this correction is still seen as so important that it is reproduced by scholars such as Ana Longoni and Gustavo Bruzzone (2008:64) who cite the founding text showing the phrase 'pegados ~~en el piso~~, paredes, árboles, envolviendo monumentos y en todo lugar posible' ["Pasted on the ground, on walls, trees, around monuments and in every possible place"] with the phrase 'on the ground' clearly scrubbed out.

²⁸ The silhouettes were also the variation on a theme played out during the Falklands War, during which the Madres had argued that had their children been present they would have been fighting in the Falklands with the others. The suggestion now was that they would be here, in the plaza, and on this scale, had they not been forcibly disappeared.

the *siluetas* were to remain anonymous, many demonstrators began to ask activists as the event wore on to produce a silhouette for *their* father, mother, daughter or son, and not only that, but to include their name on its silhouette. ‘Do me one for my dad!’ activists were asked, and they obliged (Gorini 2006). What’s more, many of the Madres who until that point had been conducting their usual weekly *ronda* around the Plaza suddenly stepped out of line and asked for a silhouette to be produced for their child (see Figure 12). When demonstrators began to ask for names with which to adorn the silhouettes, it was the Madres whom they turned to for inspiration. The mothers corroborated the names being added against their lists (as lists that they had argued were incomplete). Santiago García Navarro writes marvellously that what ensued was ‘a space of opening, improvisation and kaleidoscopic heterogeneity’ (García Navarro in Longoni et al. 2008:15).

Eduardo Grüner (2008) has counterposed the photos of the disappeared that appear as part of the obituaries in Argentine newspaper *Página 12* and the chalk silhouettes that human rights activists continue to draw on the streets and squares of Argentinian cities (Grüner in Longoni et al. 2008:297). Writing in a similar mould, Ana Longoni has compared the use of photographs and silhouettes by activists during the dictatorship (Longoni in Crenzel et al. 2010). Whilst the latter situates the two media as ‘two great and insistent strategies of representing the disappeared, that can be contrasted using a series of oppositions’ (2010:63) including ‘the massive/the particular, the anonymous/the personal name, the demand for justice/the intimate remembrance,’ (2010:57,63) the former suggests that in both cases ‘the logic in play is that of a *restitution* of the image as a *substitution* of the “absent” body’ (2008:297, emphasis in original). Thus, while the ‘restitution’ of the name as a ‘substitution’ for the missing material body in the obituary aims at the ‘singularisation’ of ‘this or that *desaparecido/a* with their name and surname’ (2008:297), their ‘restitution’ in the chalk figure of the silhouette is understood by Grüner to symbolise a ‘universal-singular’:

‘each abstract figure of the silhouette, formally equivalent to all the others, represents a *desaparecido* and *all* the *desaparecidos*; not the singularity nor the universality ... they can be nonetheless mutually reduced, both flood their significance throwing an unspeakable remainder of meaning that must be constructed by the spectator ...’ (2008:297, emphasis in original).

Counter-posing the silhouette and the photograph in this way, Grüner teases out the importance that the public reception plays in the social re-construction of the meaning of the disappeared in collective memory. However, he arguably does not go far enough. The *siluetazo* was a powerfully new and innovative frame of memory. But we must not forget that as a new frame it was also the site of an extraordinarily powerful contest over its meaning. By regulating the representation of the disappeared through this medium, the leadership of the Madres attempted to delineate the ‘field of representability’ of Argentine collective memory. By

delineating the field of representability, they sought to produce the disappeared as a different ontological subject than a victim or 'person as such' and thus to regulate, and displace, the ethical and moral response of an increasingly-interpellated public. That Grüner is able to speak of a 'singular-universal' within what he collects together as the same 'logic in play' is only possible because the names of some *desaparecidos* were added to some of the *siluetas* in spite of clear instructions by the group's leadership not to do so (see Figure 12). If some of these silhouettes therefore appear with names – if they flicker along the spectra between the individual and the collective, the singular and universal, and the massive and the particular in the registers of collective memory – then this was only because the attempt by Hebe de Bonafini and the Madres' hierarchy to close down this 'field of representability' ultimately failed. This is not a 'universal-singular': it is a *universal singularised*. It is a homogeneity that was (kaleidoscopically) heterogenized. It is testament to the resistance among a significant section of relatives and others in the human rights community to consent to the(ir) disappeared being represented in the public sphere as an anonymous and homogenous population of nameless and faceless *figuras*, who were no longer to be thought of as irreplaceable but as interchangeable among themselves. What we are dealing with here, I would argue, are not two strategies within the same logic but the second of two different political logics of memory.



Figure 12: some participants in the *siluetazo* added the names of the disappeared to the silhouettes. Image courtesy of the Argentine Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, used without permission.



Figure 13: During the *Marcha de las Máscaras*, demonstrators accompanied the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* wearing masks. Hebe de Bonafini said the *desaparecidos* were 'present in each one of the young people that [was there] in solidarity with [their] pain.'

The *siluetazo* was an attempt by relatives within the same human rights community to re-configure the social construction of the disappeared in collective memory as a homogenous population of nameless and faceless figures. By figure, I am referring here to both meanings of the word as it operates in English (but not Spanish). That is, as a form, shape or outline on the one hand and as a number on the other.²⁹ The disappeared could be represented in the silhouettes as an aggregate of ‘unique and individual’ persons each with a name and an identity uniquely their own, as some relatives wished to remember them, and as how the *siluetazo* was originally planned. Or, they could be represented as a population of 30,000 nameless and faceless figures, each of whom was to be considered the same as all the others. They could not be both. This is because the Madres de Plaza de Mayo knew that the figure of 30,000 didn’t tally. It had been coined by human rights activist Emilio Mignone in conversation with María Adela Gard de Antokoletz in the early years of the dictatorship, at a time when it was impossible to know exactly how many had been forcibly disappeared.³⁰ Mignone and Antokoletz were both parents of *desaparecidos*. Mignone reportedly asked Antokoletz how many people had been disappeared in one town, and extrapolated the answer she gave to produce a figure of 30,000 for Argentina as a whole.³¹ Since then, this figure has become totemic in human rights discourse as a way of evoking the magnitude of the violence (see chapters one, seven and ten). In the *siluetazo*, I suspect that the singular is universalised – before the universal is re-singularised – because the Madres knew that the singular figures would not add up to an aggregate universal of 30,000. As a result, they displaced the individual, unique and irreplaceable person with an interchangeable figure, or rather with two figures: the figure-in-form of the silhouette as a (second) representation in form of the figure-in-number of the 30,000.

The *siluetazo* offers itself up to be inscribed in our cultural biography within the political framework of *aparición con vida*. Crucial to this was the claim by some Mothers to have socialised maternity.³² Some authors have elected to read the *siluetazo* rather literally in this respect. Thus the appearance – or what García Navarro (in Longoni et al. 2008) calls wonderfully the ‘dis-disappearance’ – of the disappeared in the silhouettes is decoded in some quarters as the physical *aparición (con vida)* of the *desaparecidos*. Others have emphasised the importance of the socialisation of the means of production that the ‘factory line’ symbolised, as demonstrators lined up to give of their own bodies so that the outlines of those of the disappeared could dis-disappear, re-materialise and become visible (Gorini 2006, Longoni

²⁹ These two meanings only work in English. In Spanish, the word for a figure-as-number becomes “*cifra*”, not “*figura*”.

³⁰ This is controversial, and there is no accepted genesis for the origin of the figure “30,000”, with different scholars tracing different origins.

³¹ Interview with María Adela Gard de Antokoletz, courtesy of Memoria Abieta.

³² Interview with Mercedes Meroño, 4 August 2014.

2008). I do not disagree with such interpretations, but I would also like to suggest that the process of 'socialisation' runs much deeper in the act of the *siluetazo*. Returning to Butler's idea of a shared social ontological precariousness, I would argue that the *siluetazo* marks a profound shift in the way the ontologies of the subject of the disappeared were being produced in collective memory. As members of the public lined up and lay down to give of their body as a substitute for that of the *desaparecido*, their outline drawn upon the page, the shared social ontologies of the disappeared widened from their constitution along the threshold of the family tie – as the relation between a parent and a child to which Juana de Pargament and Clara de Israel had alluded – to assume a broader shared existence along a radically new threshold. This threshold is the tie that binds the *desaparecido* with a wider community of people. This I think is what some commentators are getting at when they allude to the 'link' between the disappeared and the public as having been re-forged (Longoni et al. 2008). Butler's notion, after Hegel, of existence as a shared social ontological tie pertaining between more than two people and revealed in the moment of loss helps us to draw out the full power of this idea. In the *siluetazo*, the family relation gives way onto, and into, a social relation. Through this social relation the subjects of the disappeared come to exist in their shared social construction along the radically new threshold that ties together a broader group of people, each of whom are willing to invest a part of themselves through this act of memory to allow for the *desaparecido* to be constituted as a shared existence (if not a recognised existence) and a life (if not a grievable life).

In April 1985, as the same month in which the Trial of the Juntas began, thousands of young people turned up to demonstrate at the annual march to commemorate the anniversary of the Madres' resistance with their faces concealed behind plastic masks (see Figure 13). Hebe de Bonafini said that each masked demonstrator represented the 'thousands and thousands of children that were taken' from them. 'They are not their faces but they carry in the same burning heart those cherished loved ones that today we do not have but *whom are present in each one of the young* that is in solidarity with our pain. They took our own and they bequeathed to us thousands of children' (Longoni 2008:176, emphasis added). The masking of the demonstrator in the *Marcha de las Máscaras* of April 1985 completes the masking of the *desaparecido* in the *Marcha de la Resistencia* of September 1983. The process of *effacing the faces* of the *desaparecidos* that was begun through the *siluetazo* as a masking of their uniqueness and their irreplaceability is suddenly complete. Through the masking of the identity in the silhouette and the masking of the face in the *máscara*, the possibility is opened up for the politics and the lives of the disappeared to be transmuted onto the bodies and the politics – the body politic – of a new generation. The demonstrators share the 'burning hearts'

of the *desaparecidos*, whose political mantle they are now baptised to continue. But more than this, having given their bodies in the *siluetazo* so that the disappeared might disappear, become visualised, and re-materialise, they are asked now to take on and complete the lives of the disappeared along a shared, social and socialised ontological threshold, constructed in collective memory as the instantiation of the person in loss. It is not that a new “we” is created, as some have suggested (Jelin 2006). It is that the disappeared are re-constituted as a new “we”. This is slightly different. The disappeared come to exist *through their constituting as a subject along the threshold* that suspends them and connects them as bodies and non-bodies, politics and lives, with this new generation. The disappeared were never an “I”. They were forged along the relation that held between mother and child as a “we.” Now this “we” is extended along a social(ised) ontological threshold. The next generation is imparted – following this second *parto* – with the lives and the politics of the disappeared. ‘The impressive effect that we have with our children is not solely to look for a bunch of bones’, Bonafini argued, in the shadow of the horror show. ‘*Our children ... have become something else, they are in all that continue their political struggle*’ (Gorini 2006:272, emphasis added). The politics as well as the lives of the disappeared were re-constructed in this memory. These Madres began to argue that the disappeared had fought for social justice, equality, and even, democracy (see chapters eight and ten). The disappeared had given their lives to help others in the next generation. Now this generation was invited to take up the task.

In the 1990s, the two generations came together as one. The new biological generation of the *nietos*³³ were joined in the street demonstrations of the *escraches*³⁴ by the new social generation – now unmasked. As part of the *escraches*, Madres de Plaza de Mayo,³⁵ HIJOS³⁶ and other human rights activists marched to the homes of the perpetrators of the forced disappearances before daubing their homes in paint. These included the homes of the former leaders of the military *juntas* who had been pardoned and released by Alfonsín’s successor, Carlos Menem. By “outing” convicted perpetrators in this way, the demonstrators sought to call attention to their continuing presence in society. By “marking” the homes of convicted kidnappers, torturers and murderers using red paint, they were “marking” not the lives of potential victims as safe – as would happen many years later in Paris – but those of the perpetrators as under threat.

³³ The *nietos*, or grandchildren, were the children of the *desaparecidos* who had been born in captivity following their forced disappearances and brought up by families loyal to the military regime. As a result of the efforts of the *Abuelas*, or grandmothers, of the Plaza de Mayo, these children – now adults – are slowly being returned to their biological families and identities. In the 1990s they came together to form the organisation, HIJOS.

³⁴ *Escrache* is Argentine slang for “uncover”.

³⁵ These tended to be the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora.

³⁶ ‘Children for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence’.

As so often before in the struggle for human rights, activists turned to place as the medium through which to funnel their demands for truth, justice and memory in Argentina. The CONADEP truth commission had materialised the disappeared through the spaces of the clandestine detention centres. These spaces and places were able as the 'magnets' to pull together victims, perpetrators and perpetration in a single intelligible framework, in a way that the horror show was not. The Madres of course had channelled the power of the Plaza de Mayo, as the central square of Buenos Aires and the beating heart of the nation (Robben 2005). In the *escraches* it was the perpetrators' homes that became the foci through which the claims for truth and justice could be articulated and advanced. Once again, the *disappeared* were being visualised, materialised, dis-disappeared, and brought to life – and lives – as ontological subjects in collective memory through their *disappearers*. This time, however, their individual names and identities were being effaced. The names and faces of the *desaparecidos* in the *escraches* are displaced by those of the *desaparecedores*, in a reversal of the coda established by CONADEP.

The *escraches* were both symptom and cause of the failure of the human rights movement to critically interpellate a wider public in Argentina. The Madres, HIJOS and others in the human rights movement represented and constructed the subject of the *desaparecidos* through the *desaparecedores* in the *escraches* because their previous attempts to conscript the public with the images and narrative discourses of their *desaparición* had failed to elicit their recognition as persons whose lives were deserving of a different political and judicial response to that being articulated in the politics of transition by the government. Under the political framework of *aparición con vida*, first in the *siluetazo* and then the horror show, human rights groups had *masked, effaced and displaced the names and faces* of their disappeared relatives as they sought to re-configure the 'field of representability' and determine the contours of the politics that was possible in the democratic transition. The paradox was that the corollary of stubbornly keeping open the possibility of a politics of grievance that refused to consent to the packing away of the disappeared as the (presumed) dead was the discursive closing down of the disappeared in the field of memory to such a point that these persons could no longer be recognised at all. The unique and individual lives of the disappeared were displaced by the figure(s) of the 30,000 *desaparecidos* in both form and number. The failure to conscript a reluctant Argentine society left this society free to feign ignorance at the lives that had been destroyed as it continued to look the other way. Hebe de Bonafini argues that 'There is neither grief nor mourning in the Madres.' But de Bonafini and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Asociación who remain with her do not 'choose life' as they claim (2006:270). They play life and death against each other, in myriad and complex ways.

conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the first part of a cultural biography of the representation of the disappeared in the cultural frames of Argentine collective memory. I have shown how human rights actors shaped – and were shaped by – two logics as they attempted to remember and produce the disappeared in memory as ontological subjects. Their purpose in doing so was to try and regulate the contours of the ethical, affective and political responses among a wider interpellated public in the enduring absences of the disappearances. I have called these logics the political logics of memory. These political logics of memory are ideal types. They are dynamic and fluid realms, in constant flux and subject to constant contestation as a result of the struggle of actors in concrete historical, material and cultural interventions. They are not neatly bounded but collapse, collide and spill into one another. They are also not exhaustive of the range of interventions that were used.³⁷ As two political logics of memory, however, they formed the twin poles around which groups would mutually understand, make intelligible to others and try and advance their otherwise shared struggle for the truth and justice for what had happened to the disappeared to be actualised.

On the one hand, human rights actors mobilised social and political activism, the CONADEP truth commission and the Trial of the Juntas to write a reading of the disappeared in Argentine collective memory as what Jenny Edkins (2011:2) would call nicely ‘persons-as-such.’ Each of these persons had a name, a face and an identity uniquely their own. Each of these persons was to be remembered as having lived a life; a life that was lived and loved and which, now lost, was deserving of being mourned (Butler 2010). The disappeared were remembered according to this political logic as victims of human rights violations, legal but not political subjects, and *grievable lives*. On the other hand, other activists, although often part of the same movement, attempted to reconfigure this memory and produce the ontological subjects of the disappeared as a homogenous population of 30,000 nameless and faceless figures, whose politics and whose lives ought not to be grieved but rather shared and “socialised” onto the next generation in order for their struggle to continue as a politics of grievance. Intervening in the horror show, *siluetazo(s)* and *escraches*, these groups represented and produced the disappeared in collective memory as political but not individual subjects, as revolutionary martyrs for social justice, and *ungrievable* lives.

³⁷ This analysis can be complemented with the instruments and representations used as part of other important interventions in the human rights struggle. The *baldozas por la memoria* and ticker-tapes containing the faces of the disappeared that adorn the streets on the anniversary marches of the 24 March conform to the first political logic of memory. Theatrical productions such as *Antígona furiosa* and the silhouettes drawn on public squares in cities throughout Argentina conform to the second.

The two political logics of memory that I identify were not chronological. The one logic did not surpass and supplant the other in time. Rather, they ran parallel to each other. CONADEP was signed into law a few days after the second *siluetazo*, for example, and continued its work as the third *siluetazo* took place and mass exhumations continued apace in the so-called horror show. Not only that, but the two logics sometimes converged within the same instrument. What was fascinating about the *siluetazo*, to continue with this example, was the way that the two logics not only ran parallel but converged in the same cultural frame itself as relatives and activists vied to shape it and through it, the collective memory of the disappeared and the recent violent past, in a way that was consistent with advancing one of two ways of doing politics in the event of their enduring disappearances. Many Madres, to take another example, insisted on remembering their disappeared children as unique individuals, and yet still made sure to file denunciations using the standardised *papelitos* of *habeas corpus* and the APDH's questionnaire that they seemed to so dislike. The advantage of conceptualising the representation of the disappeared through the conceptual vehicle of the political logic of memory is that it provides us with the flexibility to consider the possibility that some human rights activists may have switched liberally between the two positions as part of the same struggle. It is perfectly possible that some Madres took part in each of the six interventions using each of the cultural frames that I have identified in this chapter. Or that others switched between different logics over time.

It is important to remember that the purpose of these groups in struggling to represent the disappeared in a particular way in and through collective memory was never to represent them *per se*. Rather, it was to represent them in such a way that it secured support for their cause, and to channel this support into a collective demand that one of two ways of doing politics be pursued in their absence. We are used to thinking of memory as an afterthought; a phenomenon of the second order that derives naturally after an event in the first. The cultural biography that I have begun to construct in this chapter shows that the way the disappeared would be constructed in memory was already being fought over during the dictatorship itself as these persons started to disappear (cf. Lessa 2013). Memory was a bridge between the past and the present. But more than this, it was the vehicle through which the juridico-political demands for truth and justice would go on to be shaped, underpinned, articulated and advanced. As such, it was the vehicle through which the public's recognition of the disappeared was increasingly regulated. The representation of the disappeared in memory was an intrinsic part of the struggle for the truth and justice for what had happened to them to be realised, and realised in one of two particular ways. In sum, every group or activist that mobilised such an instrument wanted to know who was responsible for the disappearances,

and to see those responsible brought to account. They simply disagreed over which form of representing the disappeared, and thus which form of politics, would best achieve this.

el Parque de la Memoria

in an expanded field

the representation of the disappeared
in the Park of Memory

'many name plaques will remain empty, nameless, thus commemorating the violent voiding of identity that was the torturers' explicit goal ...'

Andreas Huyssen

'there is an attempt to construct something magnificent, that impresses you as a result of its scale ... but these plaques are not inscribed. Those that are inscribed are in the centre'

Rúben Chabobo

The first time I visited the *Parque de la Memoria* I went the wrong way. This implies that there is a right way to navigate the landscape, and this would be misleading. Once you have extricated yourself from the traffic outside and negotiated the hole in the fence that marks the entrance you are free to explore the space in any way you choose. If you leave behind the portacabin that serves as a makeshift reception and head for the corner on the farthest right hand-side, you will come across the start of the *carteles de la memoria*. The *carteles* interpret the recent violent past through the medium of road traffic instructions. Follow the road signs as they hug the river's sinuous edge around to the right and you would eventually reach the Sala PAYS. If you head to the farthest corner on the left hand-side, however, as I did that first morning, your view is immediately dominated by Dennis Oppenheim's *Monumento al Escape*. After studying the three houses housed precariously on top of one another that make up this memorial, as well as the colourful graffiti that line their interior, curiosity then got the better of me. Rather than moving across to begin the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism at its beginning, as I perhaps ought, I clambered up the grassy verge and met it midway through its ruptured stelaes.

From this vantage point on top of the hill, you can begin to make out Nicolás Guagnini's artwork, *30,000*, with which we began chapter six. Your attention is also diverted by Norberto Gómez's monstrosity, *Torres de la Memoria*. This didn't look like a Tower of Memory to me (it didn't look like anything at all) so I continued my journey through the monument, reading the list of names along with other visitors, until our bodies had been safely channelled along the four ruptured walls and down the slope, past the "30,000" that is the face on the poles and the 30,000 spaces for names on the walls, to the river plate on the other hand-side. If you accept the park's invitation to meet the river and enter into its embrace via the small walkway, and move with the walkway as it bridges into the water, you are rewarded at the end of your

journey with an extraordinary sight. As you look out onto the river – the same body of water into which many of the disappeared were thrown – you see the statue of a small boy. The boy is not steady. He appears fragile and lost. Perched impossibly atop the water, the figure of the small boy undulates with the ebb and flow of the tide.

Memorials are not what they used to be. They are changing. They are changing in form. There are more contemporary, abstract sculptures to rival the neo-classical works that dot our national capitals and public squares. There are new forms represented in new media altogether, including museums of memory,¹ memorial parks (including but not limited to this one)² and arboretums,³ modern art in memorial parks⁴ and even parks of (“dead”) memorials.^{5 6} One result is that the relationship between memorials and place is changing. Many new memorials welcome you into their space and into their embrace, where you are free to think through memories both personal and public in your own way. The relationship between memorials and time is also being altered. As temporary interventions in time and space, many new and performative memorials are there one minute and gone the next.⁷ Memorials are changing. And yet, we come to study the new memorials much as we did the old. As (trainee) scholars of sociology, cultural geography, cultural history or cultural studies, we often try to understand these memorials in terms of their aesthetic or affective prowess; their form, shape or structure; or their discursive and cultural codings (Williams 2007, Huyssen 2003, Sturken 2007, Young 1993). We forget that this codification is a complex social and historical process that entails concrete groups struggling over the meaning of the recent past in concrete cultural, political and historical interventions over space and time.

My aim here is to put forward an alternative reading, based on a variation of an existing methodology. I assume in this chapter that memorials are not random prompts, according to which we are free to construct any memory we might wish. Nor are they pre-determined texts to be read and remembered as if by rote. Rather, I understand memorials and landscapes of memory as cultural frames of memory that are shaped by – and which help to shape in turn – a field of meaning (Huyssen 2003) as a field of representability (Butler 2006, 2010) (see chapter three). This field of meaning is spatially-inflected. As visitors to the park, we try and make sense of the violent past and attribute meaning to it by situating ourselves in an ‘expanded

¹ See, for example, the *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, Santiago de Chile; *Museo de la Memoria*, Rosario, Argentina; *Lugar de la Memoria*, Lima, Perú; *Museo Memoria y Tolerancia*, Mexico City; *Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación*, Bogota, Colombia; or the *Museo de la Memoria* (Museum of Memory), Montevideo, Uruguay.

² See, for example, the *Parque de la Memoria de Sartaguda*, in Navarra, Spain.

³ See, for example, the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, UK.

⁴ See for example the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

⁵ See, for example, Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary.

⁶ Not to mention TV documentaries, films, theatrical productions, social protests, trials and truth commissions. See chapter five.

⁷ See, for example, the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the Siege of Sarajevo; the commemoration of one hundred years since the beginning of the First World War at the Tower of London, United Kingdom; or the commemoration in Berlin of the fall of the Berlin Wall. See also chapter one for an earlier discussion.

field' of meaning and a 'global culture of memory' (Huysen 2003). We do so by situating ourselves within a field of meaning that is temporally-inflected, too. My argument in this chapter then, is that when a visitor stands before a memorial in the Memory Park, and uses this memorial as a 'vehicle' (Jelin 2003), 'technology' (Sturken 2007) or 'frame' (Butler 2010) to (re)construct her memories and understand and attribute meaning to the recent violent past, she does so immersed in a dynamic and expanded field of meaning that is both spatially and temporally-inflected, as a field of force whose historical, cultural and political contours have been socially constructed over time and space. As visitors to the park, we are interpellated with images, discourses, narratives and representations of the past through the frame of a memorial. We do not react to this medium as if in a vacuum; we activate, negotiate and co-construct a response, building our memories around the memorial by drawing upon the contours of an expanded field. This is not a unified field. Rather, it is a contested field. Its contours are also the contours of power, and these contours attempt to "pull" the visitor in different directions, towards different interpretations of the past.

This chapter forms the second part of a conversation between the way the disappeared are represented in collective memory and the way this memory circulates in and through the park. Key to this chapter is the idea of the political logic of memory. In chapter six, I showed how the collective memory of the disappeared has a cultural biography in which it tends towards two political logics of memory which shape, and are shaped by, the historical interventions of human rights actors. In this chapter I will deepen this cultural biography by demonstrating how these twin political logics form the two poles around which visitors organise the constellations of meaning, discourses and memory that intersperse in and through the park in the expanded field in which they are immersed, and which they use to 'activate' the memorials and attribute meaning to the recent violent past and the disappeared. The chapter is divided into three parts. In each of these parts I consider a pair of memorials from the park. These include the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism in part three. Four of the six memorials are permanent installations. Two were temporary installations performed through the media of contemporary art and drama in the Sala PAyS which took place in 2011 and 2014 (see chapter three). I conclude by reflecting on the importance of political logics of memory in helping visitors to stabilise, though not suture, their 'symbolic worlds of meaning' (Verdery 1999) within an 'expanded field of representability' (Butler 2010).

memorials to the disappeared in the park of memory

Sin Título and 30,000

If you ignore the temptation to veer to the left and clamber up the grassy mound or to drift to the right and wander the river's sinuous borderlands, you are met as you enter the *Parque de la Memoria* by a curious sculpture. The sculpture, cast in bronze, is comprised of three forms. The three forms are not perfectly uniform. Though they are of equal heights, they are of different sizes. Though they share a platform, they do not touch at any point. They each stand erect but do not stand neatly in a line. Instead, they overlap and straddle each other. There is the hint of flirtation in the kink between two of these forms, whose lack of symmetry troubles us slightly. As visitors, we gaze at the memorial but the memorial does not gaze back; though each of the three figures faces towards the front, they are too tall to meet our inspection. So then we look up. And as we do so, we see jigsaw-like circles jut out from the top of each frame. The circles are suggestive of heads. This suggestion now defines the piece. Quickly, we run our glance back down the figures, which we see now as the outlines of three bodies. The three bodies are not whole however. They are hollow. From our initial vantage point looking directly at the installation, we can see directly through the bodies onto the *río de la plata* behind. Again, the river refuses its setting in the background. It rushes forwards, inserting itself insidiously in the memorial's form. It collapses the distinctions between ground and water, the human and the natural worlds. The three hollow figures try to frame the water, but the river gushes forward, spilling into the bodies, into the landscape, into the frame. It refuses to let the bodies rest. The water threatens the bodies' bodily security.

The memorial is Roberto Aizenberg's *Sin Título* (*Untitled*, see Figure 14). On a blustery day in August 2014, as the southern hemisphere winter prepared to give way into spring, I was given permission to accompany a group of schoolchildren being shown around the park by a guide (see chapter five). The tour guide used Aizenberg's memorial thoughtfully as a vehicle to open up a discussion about who the disappeared were, or might have been, and what the memorial might mean. One girl raised her hand courageously and offered the idea that a slant in one of the figures was suggestive of pregnancy. From the rest of the group there was only a steely silence, as they gazed, slightly dazed and perplexed at the bronzed frames. To the schoolchildren, the memorial seemed to speak of the *desaparecidos* as empty figures and hollow forms; redundant props for a memory they couldn't together re-construct. The memorial seemed in danger of conveying the disappeared as bare life (Agamben 1995), denied a voice, and denied a politics of their own (Edkins 2011).



Figure 14: *Sin Título*, by Roberto Aizenberg.



Figure 15: Aizenberg's *Sin Título* seen from the opposite direction. Seen in conjunction with Williams Tucker's *Victoria*, the figures are now suggestive of *siluetas*, or silhouettes.

The schoolchildren carried on their way that day, but on another occasion I returned to the sculpture. This time, I saw something different. I glanced anew at the memorial and saw something new in return. Perhaps that is part of the point? This time, as I moved around the three bodies – inserting my own body as a bulwark against the insidious river – I began to read this cultural writing on the city as text not in relation to the (memory) texture of the river (Young 1993) but the intertextuality of a neighbouring memorial (Huysen 2003). If you look through the three hollow figures of Aizenberg’s memorial from this position, in the other direction, it is possible to see William Tucker’s abstract installation, *Victoria*. Few stop to consider this piece seriously. Tucker’s frame pulls too far away from any recognisable notion of *Victory* for us to make much sense of it; its material and symbolic clasps float too freely – ‘like a floating signifier’ (Huysen 2003:99) – to simulacra. However, if you view it as a memorial that pulls away from its own outline on the floor then it is possible to get a different sense of Tucker’s artwork. And if you view this process through the fragmentary frames created by the three bronze figures – using one frame as a window onto the next – then it is possible to get a different sense still (see Figure 15). From this approach, I saw Aizenberg’s piece as the outlines of three figures which had been sketched before being peeled away and pulled up from the floor. I saw the outlines of figures traced in pencil and re-traced on paper in paint and the outlines of these figures suddenly cast in bronze together, in my mind’s eye, as silhouettes.

In the guidebook to the *Parque de la Memoria* (and this guidebook is issued to visiting researchers but not visiting schoolchildren) Florencia Battiti and Cristina Rossi understand the ‘three geometric volumes’ of *Sin Título* as ‘the silhouettes of three torsos in space’ (2010:106, emphasis added). ‘The contours of this group portrait’, they write, ‘enclose the void that points to the bodies’ absence at the same time that it marks their indelible presence’ (2010:106, emphasis added). My own sense is that *Sin Título* offers itself up to the interpellated visitor as a memory frame whose meaning is most invigoratingly worked through when it is deciphered within the support structure and according to the reference points of an expanded field of meaning, whose cultural lines and historical ‘contours’ situate within a genealogy of collective memory. I do not mean to suggest that there is one “correct” way to read the memorial. What I would like to suggest however is that the meaning of the recent violent past and the place in this past of the disappeared is activated and socially re-constructed powerfully once this past is read through its mediation in the memorial as part of a “text” whose meaning has a historical, political and cultural *biography*. That is, once this memorial is read as the latest cultural writing on the creative palimpsest of a shared social imaginary that has been continually written on, re-written on, erased, re-written and re-configured in concrete interventions by human rights actors and others over time.

David Harvey once wrote that the communards memorial cannot be seen in Paris' Père Lachaise from the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur (2006 [1979]). Or perhaps it was the other way round? From the vantage point on top of the hill overlooking Nicolás Guagnini's *30,000*, it is possible still for us to make out Aizenberg's *Sin Título* in the distance. The two memorials form a conversation within the park as a landscape of memory. It is a conversation across fragmentary frames between a face and three figures of the disappeared. There are many different ways to approach *30,000*, both literally and figuratively (see Figure 16). You can reach the memorial from the Monument's fold midway through its four-lined rupture. You can reach it from the other side, too, in a gradual ascent from the river. Or you can find it by shortcutting the monument and clambering up the slope of the hill as I did that first morning. I like to think when I approach Guagnini's piece, for think I am encouraged to do, that it represents the difficulties of remembering. The perfidy of memory perhaps. Like the wooden poles of the artwork, when we come together to remember someone we see how difficult it is to broach that person in all their personhood as a perfect whole (Edkins 2011). We can approach the task of trying to remember them, trying to piece them back together in our collective memories from various different angles. Each angle will bring something slightly different. A different perspective perhaps. But none will bring the person back in their fullness. We each add something but the composite isn't enough. It's as if the sculpture is there to help us as well as taunt us. To remind us that memory is never complete, never resolved, never whole in its form or representation. Guagnini's memorial is in this way cast in a state of creative tension with Aizenberg's. The man we remember with Guagnini refuses our memory. He straddles the past and present, absence and presence; in a flash, as we move our memories around him and try and find a different perspective with which to capture and conjure him back up, the person who was there a second ago – I'm sure he was there a second ago – is lost again, and gone (see Figure 17). The sadness in the man's face keeps pulling us back to him. He asks to be completed, for us to complete him, for his hair to be tidied and the lines of his jacket to be aligned and put back in their proper place. For his tie to be done up properly, if a tie is what it is. And yet this man, this image, also refuses the possibility of this at the same time. Try as we might, there is no point in attempting to console this person, to offer a tissue to dry the eyes that look as if they are about to shed a tear, or tell him that everything's going to be alright. What would be the point in that? Everything is not going to be alright. So the face resists its re-composition. And it jars with the scene in the background. Like Aizenberg's memorial, this one cannot keep the river out of its arrangement. The water inserts itself covetously in its form. Man and river together. The human and natural worlds intermixed, '[en]tangled' (Sturken 2007) and mutually intertwined.



Figure 16: 30,000 by Nicolás Guagnini.



Figure 17: 30,000 by Nicolás Guagnini. Seen from a different direction, the representation of the face of the *desaparecido* seems to disappear again.

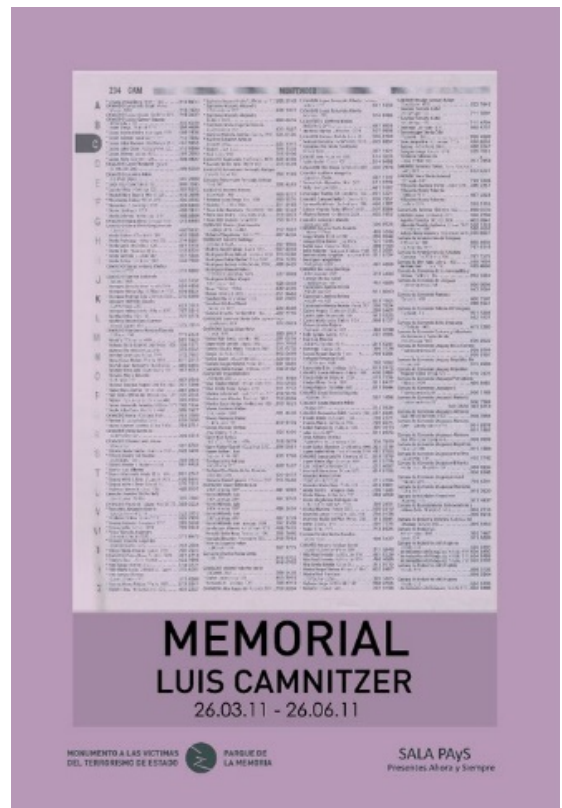


Figure 18: *Memorial* by Luis Camnitzer. The memorial replicates a phone directory in which the names of *desaparecidos* have been (re)inserted.

Sin Título and *30,000* draw an important part of their meaning from their geographical situating in the Memory Park next to the river into which many of the disappeared were thrown following their kidnap and torture in nearby ESMA. As visitors to the park, we are interpellated through the memorials as frames of memory with the images and narrative discourses of the disappeared (Butler 2010). As we stand in the park as a landscape of memory and ponder the memorials, we do so situated within an expanded field of memory. We use the contours and lines of this expanded discursive field to make sense of the memorial, to guide the complex constellations of meaning and memories that swirl around and through them, and thus make some kind of sense of the recent violent past. Guagnini and Aizenberg's public artworks remind us that whilst this field of meaning is discursive, these discourses are always shot through with non-discursive, the historical, and the material references. *Sin Título* and *30,000* would mean something very different were they not to paint their portraits of the past within the overall composition created by their situating next to the river, whose water gushes in to unsteady their semantic worlds. While the contours and lines that comprise the field of meaning are symbolic – while they 'cannot be seen'⁸ – these resonate with the cultural and political actions of human rights activists whose concrete interventions in the past helped to give them shape, structure and meaning. That the geometric poles of Guagnini and the geometric figures of Aizenberg make sense to us only within a shared intersubjective field of meaning also helps to rescue them from any associations with bare life. To see the faces and the figures of the disappeared through their cultural biography in a shared social imaginary is to appreciate how they cannot but be invested with some kind of meaning.

Yet, the two memorials tend towards two competing ways of organising this memory and the politics that such a memory might inform and underpin. The face that we are asked to reconstruct with Guagnini acts as an emotional pull on an ethico-juridical level for us to recognise the *desaparecidos* as persons with lives; lives that were lived, and loved, and which, now lost, are deserving of being properly mourned. The face of this man reminds us of the faces of all those *desaparecidos* on the placards of the Madres or the photographs on their lapels (see chapter six); as faces which can still be seen in many demonstrations today. The assemblages in our mind's eye and our social imaginaries of Aizenberg's figures carved in bronze and those etched in a different time and space on paper speak to us not of the need for social grieving but a politics of grievance in which the perpetrators might be punished. The irony perhaps is that both memorials paint their competing politics of the missing despite – or because – they displace the personhood of the persons who were disappeared. Guagnini doesn't tell us the name of the man with whose memory we struggle so. The man's identity is

⁸ Interview with Ruben Chabobo, 28 May 2014

subsumed instead within the anonymous mass of the 30,000.⁹ Aizenberg's artwork was conceived in (the) relation to three children of a previous partner, Matilde Herrera, who were forcibly disappeared in 1976 and 1977. By the time the memorial was inaugurated, the names and the grievable lives of Martín, José and Valeria Herrera¹⁰ have been effaced and displaced on the memorial, which appears to us instead *Sin Título*. Untitled, Without Title. Unnamed, denied names.

"aquella mañana" and memorial

There were pockets of laughter from the congregation when the elderly lady finally caught on. She gave a gasp of breath and clutched her chest as if in shock, before smiling and moving away to join the rest. Around thirty of us had gathered one morning in February 2014 to witness the latest performance of a memorial to the disappeared enacted through the medium of drama in the Sala PAYS. The memorial by Osías Yanov was part of a compilation of work by students at the University of Buenos Aires and curated by Inés Katzenstein and Javier Villa entitled *aquella mañana fue como si recuperara, si no la felicidad, sí la energía, una energía que se parecía mucho al humor, un humor que se parecía mucho a la memoria* (hereafter "*aquella mañana*"). As I entered the exhibition space of the Sala, the only things I could make out at first were a giant metal frame, a Kalashnikov that had been broken up and sunk into a concrete base and an amalgamation of pictures on the far-right corner of the room. The frame was not unlike that of a children's playground. The pictures suggested that the children had already been and gone. One month after the furore over the park's possible closure, I wondered privately to myself whether its rumoured "emptying out" had already begun (see chapter one). Suddenly, what seemed like a human form appeared and nestled quietly at the foot of the iron frame. Without any of us appearing to notice, a figure dressed head-to-toe in a black bodysuit had emerged and implicated himself in the scene. As the last person to catch on, the lady wrapped in her thoughts joined the others as we huddled together in the suggestion of a semi-circle around the memory-piece.

At first the spectral figure did nothing but sit motionless and dumb (see Figure 19). All of a sudden, it got up and moved position. The man-figure (anatomy suggested it was a man beneath the bodysuit) moved to the edge of the frame; frame as architecture and frame as scene. It perched its android form delicately on top of that of the metal undergirding, until it lay horizontally, and precariously, atop the bottom rung (see Figure 20). Sometimes, the figure would lose its balance, and put its hands out to steady itself. For the most part, however, it lay quiet and still. A few of us took the opportunity to move around the composition, moving our

⁹ The image is in fact Guagnini's father. See Gates-Madsen in Bilbija, K. and Payne, L. (2011).

¹⁰ Valeria Herrera was also pregnant at the time she was disappeared, thus the figure and the name of her child is missing too.

memories around the memorial scene, trying to re-construct and (re)assemble some kind of meaning in relation to the disappeared we were being asked to remember using the memorial as a frame. Hovering around each other, we jostled to get a better angle with which to calibrate this strange human-like figure and make some kind of sense of the scene. If I look back at the photographs I took from the event (see Figures 19, 20 and 25), I can see the intertwining frames of figure and architecture, figure and scene, body and sculpture, collapse and collide into one another. I like to look back at the perplexed faces of the visitors in the background, some watching on pensively, others in conversation; some crouched against a wall, others erect, arms folded, minds folded, as they gaze upon the scene. In one of the photos, a man can be seen holding his child high above him on his shoulders; two generations gazing together as one. Gazing together through this frame into a past that between them, and through them, and through others, is theirs, is shared. If I watch the videos I took from the event, I can spot families and friends tight in conversation, trying to scramble together something to take away with them from the day. In the recording, you see the figure suddenly stand up and move across the room to a mat on the floor in the left-hand corner. There it composes itself, before writing its composition through a series of bodily movements in the air. The movements are repetitive. They do not change, but repeat themselves, one after the other, as if forced. It's as if an external force is acting on the body that stands before us. Or the memory of an external force, as a force which once asked this body or those it represents to move and contort itself in this way, painfully, repeatedly, repetitively, slowly and without pause.

In the accompanying notes to the performance, the curators explain that the title "*aquella mañana*" comes from a line in Roberto Bolaño's poem, *Sensini*. The poem describes the sensation of a state of emotion that is suddenly altered to resemble if not happiness, then something that seemed like energy, an energy that seemed something like humour, a humour than reminds Bolaño of memory. It's not clear what brings about this alteration in the poet's (structure of) feeling. 'We don't know what happened,' Katzenstein and Villa explain, 'only that in a particular moment a vitally important event was produced: the recuperation of energy. And that this new sensation, which seemed to stretch forwards, towards the future, seemed a little something like memory' (2014, my translation). Sofía Dourron reads the performance as turning on a concept of 'memory, like energy, as one that is in constant movement, as something that traverses the past, but also projects itself towards the future.'¹¹ The Benjaminesque paradox of looking backwards in order to be propelled forwards – whilst looking back – is central to the piece. I would argue that their choice of artists is suggestive of

¹¹ Los recuerdos del porvenir, *Página 12*, 29 December 2013 (my translation).

another. Having specifically chosen younger artists who were born during or recently after the dictatorship with the intention of ‘escaping as much from expressionism as the political conceptualism that have dominated artistic languages on the recent military dictatorship,’¹² the curators instead lay bare the stubbornness of the discursive lines and cultural contours in (between) which the artists’ political conceptualisations have been shaped, and helped to shape in return. Having been born during or after the dictatorship, the next generation is exposed as having been born into its cultural sequelae. For it is very difficult, if not impossible, I would suggest, to read the writing and re-writing on the Sala PAYS that is the body’s contorted scripture without conjuring in the shared social imaginary the reference point of the *siluetazo*.

It has been suggested that the performance ought to be read as an artistic essay on ‘post-memory, the memory of the next generation to that which lived through the last military dictatorship, in which the memories are not direct and which are to be found ineluctably “mediated” by those of the previous generation.’¹³ Perhaps without meaning to, the artists whose work Javier Villa and Inés Katzenstein curate demonstrate rather the enduring power of the cultural and political mediations that run through the genealogy of memory into which they have been socialised as young Argentinians. This generation is not suddenly free from these influences; they too are situated between these stubborn lineages and in between the lines of this discursive field of meaning, as an expanded field whose contours and forces they continue to be defined by – and help to re-define in turn – even as they propose to construct a new relationship with the shared recent past as a past they did not encounter first-hand. Indeed, the artists expose the power within this field not of the original disappearances perhaps but the discourses of the disappearances as these have been re-configured since then.¹⁴ That the performance invites us as interpellated viewers to ruminate on the relationship between ‘the unique and the multiple’ (2014:5) is not, after all, an invitation towards a radical new reading of the past but a re-(t)imulation via a radically new medium of the original problematique posed by the *siluetazo* many years previously. The various projects are indeed in ‘diálogo’ with ‘pre-existing images’, as they say, but they do not necessarily move us past such images. As such, they do not ‘mobilise a change in perception as to how we are affected today by the tragic history of the country.’

¹² Aquella mañana ..., Parque de la Memoria/Buenos Aires Ciudad leaflet, December 2013-February 2014

¹³ Aquella mañana ..., Parque de la Memoria/Buenos Aires Ciudad publication, December 2013-February 2014

¹⁴ I owe this point to Professor Chetan Bhatt.

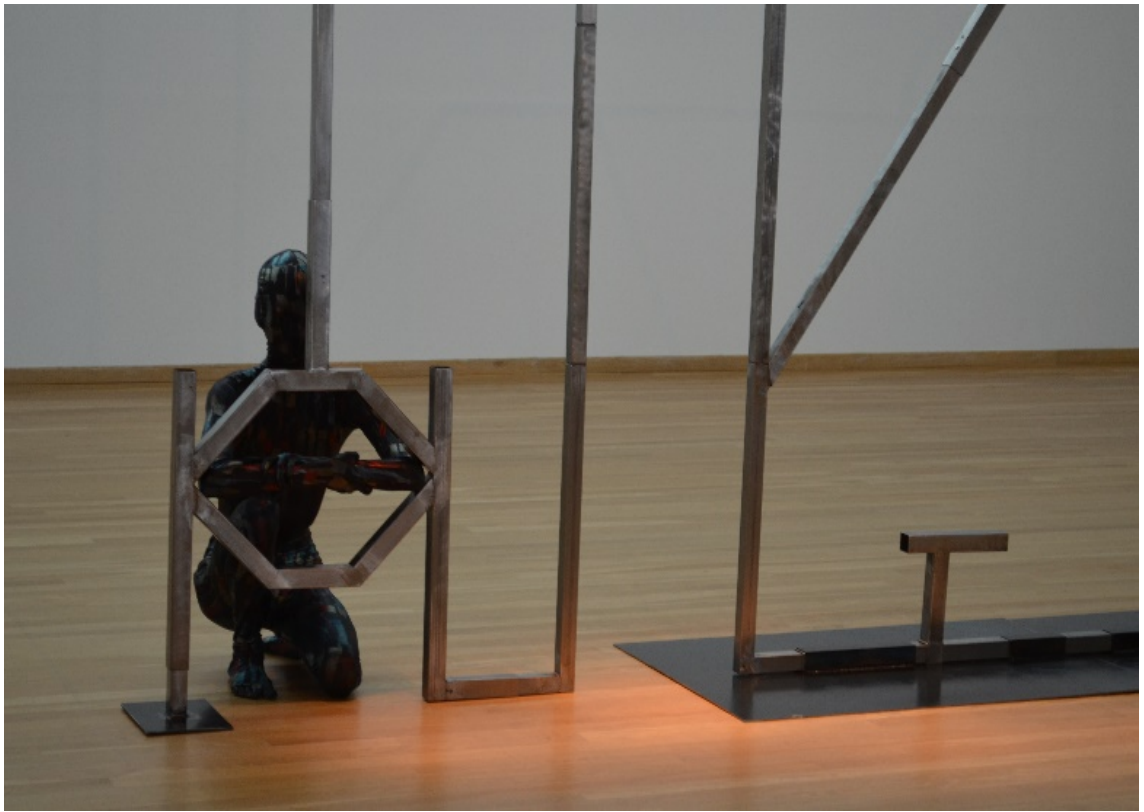


Figure 19: "*aquella mañana*", by Osías Yanov and curated by Inés Katzenstein and Javier Villa.



Figure 20: Interpellated by the figure of the *desaparecido*, two generations attempt to build an interpretation of the recent violent past as a past that between them, and through them, and others, is shared.

The Sala PAyS was the site of a very different memory-piece three years earlier when it hosted Luis Camnitzer's *Memorial* (see Figure 18). 'Can the pages of a telephone book convert into a place of memory?'¹⁵ Camnitzer's work asked, as it decorated the walls with the enlarged extracts of the Montevideo telephone directory. Included in the directory were the names of people who had been forcibly disappeared during the dictatorship in neighbouring Uruguay. In a nice review, Florencia Battiti reads this memorial 'between the lines' of art and politics. Many of these lines are already familiar to us, even allowing for the dislocation from Argentina to Uruguay's disappeared. For Battiti, Camnitzer's *Memorial* spoke powerfully as a list of names in conversation with the names that adorn the Monument to the Victims outside. I would suggest that through this they also spoke to the many ways in which the Madres and other human rights groups struggled to compile lists of the disappeared as a bulwark against the military *junta's* denial, too (see chapter six). Through the inclusion of these names in the phonebook, we come to appreciate once more the insistence of their relatives that these people *existed* and that they would be here – taking their place among the others in these everyday social registers – had they not been forcibly disappeared by the military.¹⁶

The representation of the disappeared through the medium of an enlarged phonebook entry can be read within our cultural biography as a radical re-articulation of the longstanding claims by relatives for the truth and justice of what happened to their children to be prosecuted. The inclusion of the lists as a list of names in a phonebook represents a re-signification of the list of names as a circuit and currency of death.¹⁷ Leonor Arfuch is a Professor of Sociology in Buenos Aires who spent the tumultuous years of the 1960s in the Communist Youth. She is convinced that she only escaped being disappeared by the military because she didn't own a telephone. As a result, her name did not feature in the diaries of colleagues that were used by the military to re-populate the subversive cells.¹⁸ Florencia Battiti concludes that the list of names asks to be read between the lines of art and politics as 'a denunciation of the lack of justice for the disappearances on the part of the [Uruguayan] state.'¹⁹ Justice, she argued, is 'always the best form of memory.' To which she may have added that memorials are a critical lens in helping to tease out the intimate links between the two in a politics of transition as a politics shaped and underscored by a politics of memory.

¹⁵ '¿Pueden las páginas de una guía telefónica convertirse en un lugar de memoria?' *El arte y la política entre líneas*, *Página 12*, 29 March 2011.

¹⁶ The link may be literal as well as logical between the two registers. The Argentine and Uruguayan militaries worked together under the umbrella of *Operación Cóndor*. Uruguayan victims were sometimes transited to Argentinian camps, particularly *Automotores Orletti*, in Buenos Aires. It is possible therefore that some of the names populating the two lists – Monument and Memorial – may have been the same.

¹⁷ I owe this point to Professor Chetan Bhatt.

¹⁸ Interview with Leonor Arfuch, 21 July 2014.

¹⁹ *El arte y la política entre líneas*, *Página 12*, 29 March 2011.

"Aquella mañana" and *Memorial* were interventions in time through space and interventions in space through time. They were there one minute and gone the next. As such, they subverted the claims to monumentality that we traditionally associate with monuments and memorials. Camnitzer and Katzenstein et al.'s are bold examples of the recent turn towards contemporary and performative art and drama in the service of a more performative type of politics. The politics of the missing that they seek to propel however is not the same. Rather, they tend towards divergent political aims in terms of how the disappeared they remember should be recognised and remembered by Argentine society. Can the pages of a phonebook convert into a place of memory? Luis Camnitzer's *Memorial* suggests that they can. Do the performances of *"aquella mañana"* 'activate peripheral and antidogmatic memories ... without disregarding the past and without forgetting to look forward,' as Inés Katzenstein and Javier Villa claim? I fear they do the opposite. As the *figura humana vacía* carves his movements in space, and time, or contorts his body to conform to the space and time of his surroundings, the endless repetition of the act is evocative of the 'acting out' of trauma as opposed to its critical 'working through.' As Elizabeth Jelin (2003) wrote, the latter will only come with the discovery of a framework in which memory can be 'activated' in such a way that those doing the 'labours' of remembering are able to come to terms with what happened, achieve a critical distance with the past and thus move beyond it to turn and face the future with confidence. Though the medium of dance and drama is new, the continued use of the silhouetted figure as a vehicle with which to engage and activate the social memory of the disappeared leaves us wanting. As visitors to this memorial, we are unable to calibrate the images of the disappeared with which we are interpellated through the contorted memory frames of figure, architecture and scene. Through these frames we lack the frame(work) of memory that would allow us to *recognise* the persons who disappeared as persons; persons who are deserving following the torture it seems we are being asked to remember of being mourned now that their lives have been lost. Or of being remembered how each of us might want to remember them (Edkins 2011). Dourron writes beautifully that in Yanov's piece the 'body becomes the monument and the monument becomes the body.' Yet, the figure-as-silhouette fails to bridge the gap as medium between the visitor and the *desaparecido*. Any ethico-juridical claim that might have been made falls between this chasm. When the body-monument of the figure falls quietly away, drifting back from whence it came, and the frame – or screen (Sturken 1992) – is pulled from between them, the interpellated visitor ultimately cannot *recognise* through this performance who it is they are being asked to remember. We are not propelled backwards into the future, with Walter Benjamin. Rather, we turn to face it squarely as we leave the Sala PAYS, unanchored and unnourished in the past.

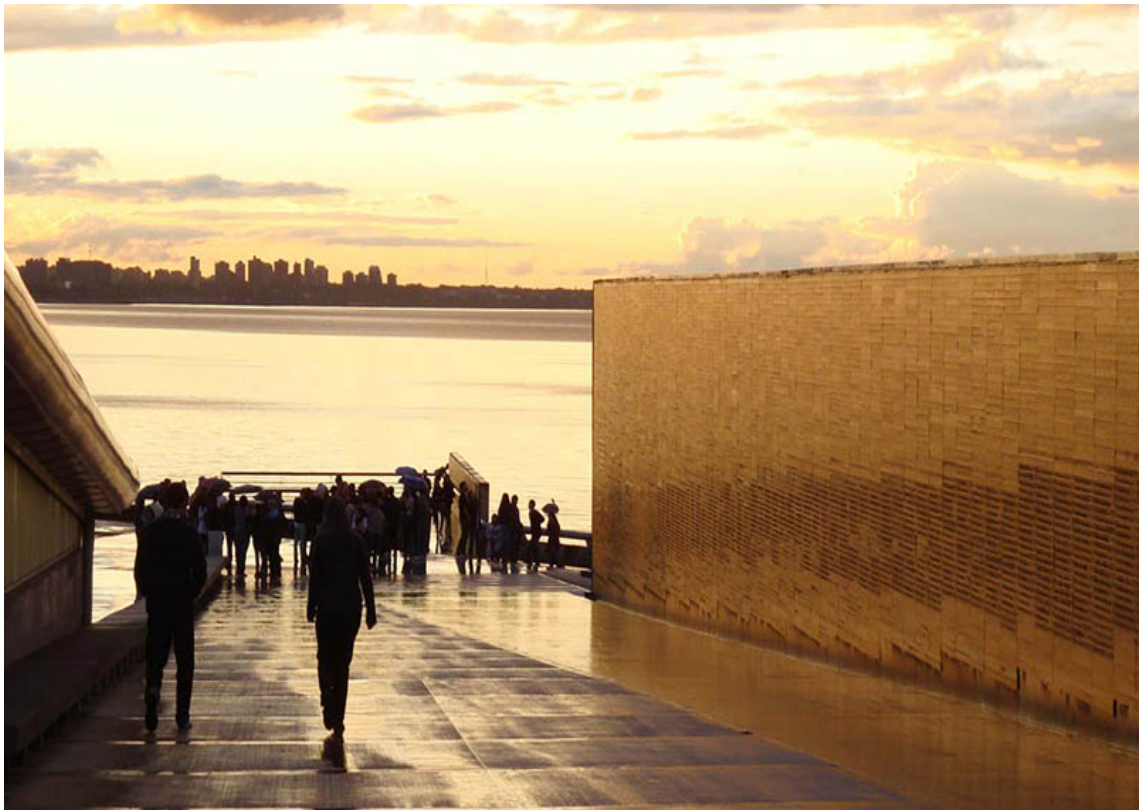


Figure 21: Visitors approach the river, down the slope from Guagnini's 30,000 on the crest of the hill. The fourth and final wall comprising the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism is on their right, the Sala PAyS their left. In front can be seen the walkway that protrudes into the river, where Claudia Fontes' *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez* can be viewed (see Figure 22). Image courtesy of Marcelo Brodsky: used without permission.



Figure 22: the *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez*, as seen from the walkway.

the monument and the *reconstrucción del retrato de pablo míquez*

The four walls that comprise the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism are not perfectly smooth. The plaques on which the names of the individual *desaparecidos* and *asesinados* are written protrude from the exterior walls. Visitors can often be seen running their hands along the reliefs, like a blind person reading braille. If you glance at the list of names in a particular light, from a particular angle, different shades and hues become visible. Some of the plaques have been added more recently than others. Others have been taken away, perhaps to be restored, leaving gaps in the narrative created by the names. Those plaques that were inscribed less recently have a slightly worn tint to them; marked by both time and the sun, they appear heavier in their memories than the newer additions, which shine in an improbable turquoise in their porphyry. The effect of the additions and subtractions is to create a textured memorial “text” (Young 1993, Huyssen 2003). As we move our bodies through the passageway of the past created by the four ruptured stelae, we “read” the Monument for what it might tell us about the shared recent past. Architecture does indeed ‘[become] script’ (Huyssen 2003:107). But this script is not intended as the final word on the recent violent past. It is not a finished text that is ready now to be read out and rehearsed in our memories as if by rote. Rather, the Monument is designed to be a living memorial. When the names of previously-unknown *desaparecidos* or *asesinados* emerge and have been verified by an independent team working at the park, these names are then inscribed on the monumental wall, and their stories inscribed into the national narrative. Through the malleable frame of the Monument, the significance of the recent past is in this way written and re-written, erased, re-written again and re-configured. Not all re-writings are equally welcome. Some have scrawled messages to loved ones in graffiti on the monument’s last heroic push before it lets go and eases itself into the river. On the thirty-fifth anniversary of the military *coup* the walls of the Sala PAyS opposite were daubed with the words ‘*fuera zurdos*’ and ‘*30,000 hijos de puta*’ (see chapter five). These re-writings have since been written out.

Andreas Huyssen argues that the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism inscribes the absence of the disappeared within itself as a reminder of their absent presence in the social imaginary. Reading the Monument between the lines of Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin and Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, Huyssen saw the ‘voids or absences’ of the ‘*thirty thousand or so*’ *desaparecidos* as being ‘marked on those name plaques that still remain empty’ (2003:97; 107, emphasis added):

‘There will be thirty thousand name plaques, and they will be sequenced alphabetically and by year. Many name plaques will remain empty, *nameless, thus commemorating the violent voiding of identity* that was the torturers’ explicit goal and that always preceded disappearance. No doubt, more names will have to be added in years to come as the documentation of the state terror expands.’ (2003:103, emphasis added).

In this reading, the absent disappeared are understood to be present in Argentine collective memory through their inscription as both a name *or the absence of a name* on the monumental wall. Like the void of Libeskind's Museum that encases the absence of the Jews within German culture, the disappeared that are named and those that remain '*nameless*' point in their mutual '[entanglement]' (Sturken 2007) upon the walls to their imbrication in collective memory as an enforced absence that lingers and endures. As the antithesis to the Vietnamese in Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, this monument is adjudged to write those who are still thought to be missing (back) into the national narrative. I would like to put forward a different reading. I wonder whether, in reading the monument between the lines of the spatially-inflected prism of a 'global culture of memory' that extends from Washington to Berlin, Huyssen's symbolic registers float a little too freely from their moorings as discourses that have been socially constructed through the political and cultural interventions of human rights activists in Argentina over space *and time*. Rubén Chabobo's idea of a mask can help us here. When Chabobo visits the park and looks up at the Monument, his first impression, he told me, is awe. His second is that 'something is deceiving [him].

'Because this immense wall has thirty thousand flagstones, and the official figure of our dead and disappeared – which is not going to change very much – does not go above nine thousand. There is an attempt to construct something magnificent, that impresses you as a result of its scale when you see it from afar ... but in reality, these plaques are not inscribed. Those that are inscribed are in the centre. For me, this makes me uneasy.'²⁰

Fewer than ten thousand of the thirty thousand plaques that comprise the monument have been inscribed with the name of a person who was disappeared or assassinated as part of the violence that engulfed Argentina between 1969 and 1983.²¹ Though the monument is designed to be a living memorial, only a handful of names have been added since its inception. For Chabobo, the 30,000 name plaques that form the Monument will never be filled. 'It's not going to reach [30,000]', he told me. 'Fortunately, it's [never] going to reach [that figure].'

The plaques that remain '*empty [and] nameless*' do not therefore denote the 'missing missing' or the 'doubly disappeared' (Edkins 2011), as some would have it. Contra Huyssen, they do not entwine in their mutual imbrications the presence of the disappeared as continued enforced absences in the Argentine social imaginary. Rather, the gap that separates the nine thousand name plaques that have been poignantly and individually filled in with the names of those who disappeared (or died) and the remainder of the 30,000 plaques that are still to be inscribed is *the gulf that separates the two political logics of memory* that I articulated as part of my cultural biography in chapter six. It is the gap that marks the injunction of the Madres' under the leadership of Hebe de Bonafini for the *siluetas* not to be consecrated with a name in the

²⁰ Interview with Rubén Chabobo, 28 May 2014

²¹ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisembaum, 18 March 2014

siluetazo and those Madres and others who disobeyed her. The gap between the 9,000 names and the 30,000 figure(s) is the chasm that marks the distance in politics between the memory of the disappeared as *ungrievable* as opposed to *grievable* lives. More than anywhere else perhaps, what we see and might understand through the frames of this vast monumental screen is the tussle of these twin political logics of memory as the enduring struggle of human rights activists to put forward two very different ways of remembering those who were disappeared as a means of advancing two very different ways of doing politics in the wake of their disappearances. Marita Sturken (2007) wrote of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that the elliptical listing of names of the American dead from the centre towards the right and back again to the centre from the left helped to close the circle of the nation and heal the wounds of its past. The Memorial became more than a script. It became a chapter on the Mall in the storybook of the American nation. In refusing to close this circle, the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism exposes in its ruptured form the impossibility of the Argentine nation coming together again around it, as a sign of the refusal of the country to come together around the collective memory of the disappeared. In another situation, four walls might be used to shelter visitors underneath a structure. In the Memory Park, these four walls repel each other and project stubbornly outwards. They refuse to come together to protect us with their memory, with a memory that is shared.

The Monument to the Victims guides us back not towards itself, then, but to Claudia Fontes' *Reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez*, where many tourists choose to complete their visit to the park. Along our way down the slope, as our bodies are channelled by the fourth monumental wall (see Figure 21), we leave behind the Sala PAyS where we encountered the artistic interventions of Camnitzer and Katzenstein et al. Those memorials were temporary, but in the far corner of the Sala there are two computers which remain throughout the year. The computers form part of a space that is intended to one day become a library, though the books are few and the library is, like many things in Argentine memory, yet to materialise. Visitors to the Sala are encouraged to use the computers to access a database of the disappeared.²² The *base de datos* contains information about each person who was forcibly disappeared (or assassinated or summarily executed²³) by the military (or paramilitaries) and whose name features on the Monument outside. It is said that visitors to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington take away etchings in crayon of the names of their loved ones. As visitors to the park, we can trace the disappeared person from their name on the wall through memory to the markers of identity that helped to constitute them as persons in their shared

²² This information is also now available on the internet. See basededatos.parquedelamemoria.org.ar

²³ The category of summary execution was invented by the Kirchner government and its victims added to the lists of victims as part of the process of the re-drafting of the introduction to CONADEP in 2006. See chapter ten.

social ontological existence before they were disappeared. Through the database we can “match” the *desaparecido*, in a framework of memory, with small details of something of what their lives might have meant to those who loved them. Much of this information would be recognisable to Emilio Crenzel and Graciela Fernández Meijide, though it includes a note on the person’s previous militancy, if she had one. Unlike the narratives of the *Asociación*, this militancy is not socialised in sepia print (see chapter eight) but stays rooted to the individual who espoused it. The database tells you who was a member of the *Montoneros*, for example, or the *ERP-PRT*. It is up to you then what you do with it. Up to you to follow these glimmers of personhood to their realisation in the narratives and stories of activism that might be pieced back together again elsewhere; though always fluidly, and never fully, never completely.

One of the names included in the database is that of Pablo Míguez. As we leave behind the Sala PAYS and approach the river alongside the final monumental screen as it gives way and gives itself to the water, we reach a walkway that invites us into the river’s embrace. Standing on this wooden jetty it is possible now for us to glimpse Claudia Fontes’ figure of Miguez floating out to sea (see Figure 22). The bronze sculpture perches atop the water. It composes its memory along the water’s edge. In this intricate window of time and space collapsing into each other, and yet somehow holding together, Fontes presents us with an image of the disappeared that is both achingly beautiful and terrible. As a visitor, you are free of course to look upon Fontes’ artwork in any way you choose. There is no one correct way to appreciate the piece. As with the memorials that lead us up to it, I would argue that the artwork operates most powerfully as a window onto the recent violent past once its meaning is activated and calibrated within an expanded field of representability, as a field that is both temporally- and spatially-defined. Yet, the memorial also unsteadies the contours that come together to constitute this field. Perched impossibly atop the water, the *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Míguez* walks the wafer-thin edge between the twin political logics of memory, threatening to collapse them as the poles around which we try to collect our bearings and make some kind of sense of the recent past and recent future. As a memorial to a unique and irreplaceable *desaparecido*, to Pablo Miguez, the sculpture interpellates us with an image of the disappeared as a person-as-such. (Edkins 2011). To glimpse the memorial figure at a particular time of day, however, is to catch the dance of the sun on the water as it creates a wonderful silhouette.

In the *reconstruction of the portrait of Pablo Miguez*, we confront as we did with Nicolás Guagnini’s *30,000* the impossibility of re-membering, re-constructing and rescuing the person and the life we are invited to piece back together, even and especially in memory. Try as we might, we cannot save Pablo Míguez. His body is too far out for us to reach him. Seagulls perch

mockingly on top of the child's head or nestle on one of the four buoys that are set to steady it in the swirling eddies of memory. And anyway, Míguez's face is turned away from us as he gazes out to sea. Emmanuel Levinas wrote that the affective pull of the face is no less intense if the body is turned from us (Levinas in Butler 2006). Despite – or perhaps because – the face of this small boy is facing out to sea, we feel the force of an injunction to remember him, and recognise him, as a boy, though small, who lived a life, though short, which, now lost, is deserving of being mourned. We feel through this ethical memory-charge the injunction too to seek a form of truth and justice in the lingering of his loss. Unlike Yanov's figure-silhouette, dancing its torture spurts in the Sala PAyS, the figure of Míguez asks us to go forward with him, to face the future with confidence, anchored if not in the water then in the ethico-political nourishment of the past. Claudia Fontes' Míguez appears to us not as the Angel of History but of Memory, who walks us along – if not across – the impossible thresholds and 'entanglements' of the biological and the political worlds, ground and water, life and politics, and life and death.

conclusion

Outside, the memory-face pulls us and then pushes us away, helps us and then taunts us by helping us as we try and build a memory around the image of the person, who is not a person anyway but a number. Inside, the list of names contains within itself a trick, for some of the names that are present lead only to the absence of a person on the other line in a telephone call that will not be answered but whose listing in a phonebook is rather an inclusive exclusion in a circuit of death, and disappearance (Agamben 1995). Outside, the sun creates a wonderful silhouette by dancing on the water beside the figure before flickering in its brilliant light to create hues of turquoise and grey on the empty plaques next to the inscribed names on the four monumental walls. Inside, the body creates its own silhouette, painting its memory in the sky of a Sala PAyS that offers no resistance but whose empty space seems to haunt the movements, repetitive and forced, of the figure-silhouette (see Figures 23 to 26). In the park, visitors situate within an expanded field of memory and look to this field to steady the 'structures of feeling' (Williams in Huyssen 2003) and 'symbolic worlds of meaning' (Verdery 1999) that were torn asunder by the recent violence, only to be pushed and pulled in two different directions simultaneously. They look to find meaning in their memories only to be guided by the memorials as frames of the memory of violence along but not across the thresholds that would offer their suture. The park of memory inscribes the central tension that runs through the heart of the way the *desaparecidos* are remembered and recognised, or not, in Argentine collective memory. It does not resolve this tension but holds it maddeningly, uncertainly, unnervingly and beautifully wide open.

The expanded field of memory that underpins, shapes and regulates the politics of transition in Argentina is a field of force, and a field of power. The nameless-name plaques that shine in their turquoise or grey do not make present a pure absence, or a (second) disappearance. Their emptiness is the emptiness of the signifier. Their absence is an absence that has had to be carefully and purposefully *constructed*. This absence is paradoxically full with the work that has gone into it. The young Argentineans that carve their memory spurts in the repetitive movements of the *silueta* do not re-imagine the possibilities of a 'post-memory' in Argentina and with it the parameters of a radically new politics. They emerge within the cultural contours of a field of memory as an expanded field of representability whose lines, and whose contours, precede them. These contours are not defined and concluded, once and for all. They are not resolved, and unmalleable. They are moulded and re-moulded in relation to the way human rights activists as 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003) have configured and re-configured the frames of memory through which the disappeared have come to be recognised or not recognised – misrecognised (Taylor 1997) or *masked* (Chabobo 2014) – to the interpellated visitors who situate within these contours of meaning and who use them to steady their interpretations of the past. In doing so, they try to remember the future (Huysen 2003). When they enter the park memory entrepreneurs and memory-makers enter into a cultural memory therefore whose *lines and political logics of memory* have already been deeply and powerfully crystallised and shaped, as a result of the cultural and historical interventions of those actors acting before them, and acting still. The lines that form the contours of this expanded field in-between which memory-makers attempt to organise their relationship to the recent violent past may not speak to the disappeared so much as the way the disappeared have been constructed and re-constructed in memory by collective-memory makers since then.



Figure 23: Nicolás Guagnini's *30,000* helps us and taunts us as we try and make sense of the recent violence of the disappearances by building a memory around the memorial as a medium, and frame.



Figure 24: the dance of the sun on the sea creates a wonderful silhouette-figure of Pablo Miguez in Claudia Fontes' *reconstrucción* as it bobs and weaves in memory with the pulse of the tide.



Figure 25: Visitors situated in an expanded field of representability try to move their memories around Yanov's silhouette-figure in Katzenstein et al.'s production in order to construct an interpretation of the recent violent past.

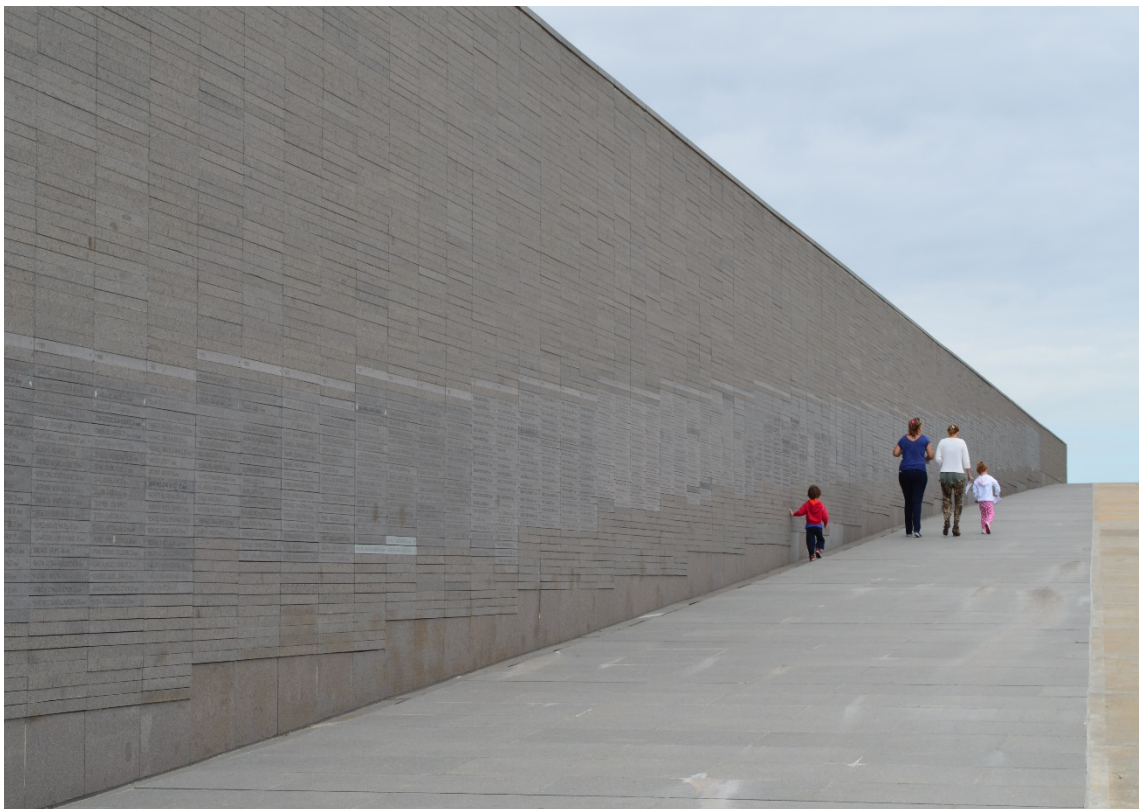


Figure 26: the nameless names and empty spaces on the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism as a screen inscribe the emptiness of some frameworks of memory and not the memory of the disappeared themselves.

bearing witness, proving fact, unmourning the undead

a discourse analysis of relatives' testimony

'me decía "usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí," me decía, ¿cómo, cómo?'. Dice "usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí, yo no le he vivido nunca más."

Mirta Acuña de Baravalle

'Pero me lo dicen los compañeros de él: "Estate por segura lo orgulloso que tiene que estar Alejandro."'

Taty Almeida

When a microphone is thrust in front of Vera Jarach and the Madre de Plaza de Mayo is invited to say a few words, she says that her story does not begin in 1976 but in 1939. She is the mother of a *desaparecida*. Her daughter Franca was abducted by Argentine state security forces in June 1976 at the age of eighteen and never heard from again. She is also the granddaughter of someone who disappeared. Her grandfather sought safe passage from Italy in a bid to escape Mussolini's racial purity laws. He was betrayed and perished at Auschwitz. And so the names of her daughter and grandfather appear on two separate memorials on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Vera goes to see the names of her relatives on both memorials. Seeing the names, she says, is proof that her daughter and grandfather once existed. They are '*constancia de lo que fue su vida.*' They are proof of life.

Collective memory and memories are not only constructed and re-constructed in cultural representation (see chapter six) or practice (see chapter nine). They are also made, re-made, re-constructed, and re-configured through the testimonies of those who experienced the violence that is being remembered. A generous literature has opened up in transitional justice that considers the part that testimony plays in the politics of memory, mourning and human rights (Lundy and McGovern 2007, Crenzel 2008, Riaño-Alcalá and Baines 2011, Crosby and Brinton Lykes 2011, Naidu 2012, Conte 2015). One of the most persuasive accounts is Leigh A. Payne's (2008) study of the testimonies of former perpetrators. In *Unsettling Accounts* (2008), Payne is able to show how the public testimonies of former perpetrators in four post-conflict theatres including Argentina institutes a debate in which their narrative of the past is taken on, 'challenged' (2008:39) and debated by human rights activists, survivors and relatives in a 'contentious co-existence' that is conducive to democratic processes and norms. Confessions, Payne argued, can thus be understood as performative, not only in the way that actors will carefully script these acts of confession on the public stage but also in the way that these confessions "do" work: by inculcating a democratic struggle over 'interpretations of the past and their meanings for contemporary democratic practice' (2008:35) and moving participants into the democratic centre from the extremes. Francesca Lessa interprets instances such as

these as 'critical junctures' (2013) that give way onto a struggle between memory entrepreneurs to secure social legitimisation and legitimacy for narrative social constructions of the past and their translating into transitional policies. Adolfo Scilingo's confession to having taken part in death flights – crucial to the development of the Memory Park (see chapter five) – is thus understood by both authors to have brought about a re-energising of the democratic (though contentious) struggle in Argentina as to how the recent violent past should be interpreted and what it should mean for the country's transition to democracy.

However, actors do not have equal power to construct, or intervene in the construction of, the meaning of the recent violent past. Rather, actors enter into this struggle from particular positions and positionalities. Pierre Bourdieu's work helps us here. That 'the ensuing political drama transcends personal stakes in the past and shapes the meaning of the past for contemporary political life' (2008:15) downplays the way that actors in what we might tentatively describe as this "game" may be thought after Bourdieu to have different "stakes" or capital and different actualities to play these stakes in relation to what appears very much like a 'field of relations' and a field of force (1977 [1972], 1992, 2007). Leigh A. Payne herself reflects on the power geometries at play, particularly in terms of what these mean in relation to the act of giving an apology, and she notes how actors in this struggle are not operating in a political vacuum. One currency in this field is legitimacy. Legitimacy is never fought over, constructed and reconstructed in this struggle from scratch, in a void. That Argentina was not a "pacted" transition, but one which resulted from the regime's spectacular moral and political collapse in the Falklands War, means that the power of the military as the former perpetrators to speak and do – and in thus speaking and doing, to re-shape the significance of the recent violent past in Argentina – is significantly compromised. Ludmila da Silva Catela (2000) reminds us that legitimacy is tied to discourse, and that in this struggle, the legitimacy to speak and do, to erect the (limits of the) sayable and unsayable, the doable and undoable in relation to the past, rests not with the military – not even with the survivors (2000:73) – but with the *relatives* of the victims. To understand the way that the expanded field of collective memory has been framed and re-framed in Argentina, then, we ought to attend to the narratives of those who have the most power in this field of representability, as a (contentious and contested) field of force, to shape the way that narratives of the recent violent past are legitimised and come to be recognised as legitimate as an interpretation of that past by a wider public. This means attending to the testimonies of the relatives, and specifically, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo.

In this chapter, I conduct a discourse analysis of six interviews that I carried out with relatives of *desaparecidos* during my fieldwork in Argentina in 2014. Each of the six are mothers of men and women who were forcibly disappeared by Argentine state security forces between June

1975 and January 1978. Five of the six are Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Of these five, four represent the Línea Fundadora and one, the Asociación. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews in the Spanish language.¹ The six interviews have been chosen for the way that they speak to emerging themes in this thesis such as mourning, memory, precarity, embodiment and truth. However, I analyse the six texts inductively, thereby allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data rather than interpreting the interviews through a pre-existing theoretical lens. Three themes emerge in this analysis which I consider to be important. I consider these important in terms of the way they speak to the relationship that holds between a parent and a disappeared child. These three themes are sacrifice, redemption and denial. These are not exhaustive to the frameworks a parent might use to try and make sense of, and attribute meaning to, the disappearance of a child. Nor are they mutually exclusive. They intersect and overlap in interesting ways.

I wish to make two arguments in this chapter. Firstly, I want to argue that many relatives of the disappeared use linguistic and discursive techniques in order to address a fundamental ontological and epistemological precariousness that endures as a cultural legacy from the time of the original disappearances. In narrating events that situate in the context of two pervasive forms of denial, I will show how many relatives turn to reported speech, third-party affirmation and narratives of being-in-place in order to erect an architecture in language on which the events they narrate can (be seen to) *take place*. I will illustrate how relatives *bear witness in order to establish proof of fact and prove their accounts as factual in the act of bearing witness*. Secondly, I will argue that by remembering their disappeared children in this way, many relatives show signs of being unable to mourn their loss. Whether they seek to vindicate the quotidian humanity of the *desaparecido/a* or their sacrifice for the greater good, there is an absence of memories of everyday militancy. By erecting such a complex architecture of memory, many relatives reveal a lacuna to lie at the heart of their testimonies as to who their children really were.

I begin by looking at the discourses of sacrifice and redemption, before turning to consider the three linguistic and discursive techniques and the implications of relatives using such techniques to remember their disappeared child in the context of denial. I conclude by reflecting on the impact this form of remembering is having on the relatives' ability to mourn their disappeared (un)dead.

¹ All of the citations here appear in their English translation. All translations are my own. The original Spanish citations appear in the Annex, cross-referenced according to page numbers.

sacrifice

A discourse of sacrifice informs at least three of the six narratives. Here, the notion that the disappeared gave their own lives so that others might live or live the good life emerges as a powerful interpretive key through which meaning is attributed to their disappearances. This discourse is founded upon two contrasting pillars. On the one hand, the notion of the sacrifice of the *desaparecidos* is articulated as an abstract political argument. This is how it features for instance in the contributions of Nora de Cortiñas and Mercedes Meroño. On the other hand, it emerges through the use of concrete examples as allegory, as it does in my interview with Mirta Acuña de Baravalle. Let us consider each of these contributions in detail.

In her interview Nora de Cortiñas states clearly that the purpose of memory is to honour the sacrifices of those who fought on their behalf:

‘Memory is to honour those that are not here because they fought for us all, for us, for a different type of country, for an economic and social situation that benefits us all. So the young people of today take the fight for human rights, not starting from or returning to the past but starting from the [point that] there was a popular fight that was repressed and that they wish to safeguard this commitment, take it forward, so that this nefarious past that we had is not forgotten’ (p.12).

For Nora, the struggle for memory is subordinate to the struggle to find the truth and secure justice for what happened to those who disappeared, including her son:

‘Let’s say, do you know what? I’m more interested in the struggle for them, the demands for truth and justice of another kind, not going to lay a flower on a tomb, (...) The disappeared are like the dead without a grave, so when we ask for, I do not ask for the body of my son, I want them to tell me what happened with my son. I’m not going to say to a public servant: “I want the body of my son.” But there are people, relatives, that yes, do want this. They go and ask: “look, look in the grave for the body of my son” (p.9).

There are strong parallels in Nora’s discourse to that of Mercedes Meroño:

‘We’ve never given up our children as dead, because no-one ever assumed responsibility for that. They have to tell us who, how and when. Nor do we as mothers look for the bodies nowadays; we want to do what they did, which is what I was telling you about before: we are fighting for what they fought for, which to us seems the most important thing: we continue the fight that they undertook. That’s why there are so many young people that follow us, thinking what they thought. And we believe that the most important thing is to vindicate them as they were, and continue the struggle that they began’ (p.5).

Mercedes suggests that the mothers began to get a sense of who their children were as they came together as *Madres*:

‘Afterwards yes, we began to talk [among ourselves] and about what each one thought of how they were. We were learning about them. I’m going to tell you: there are more than 30,000, more than thirty thousand disappeared (...) They are all revolutionaries, we vindicate our children as revolutionaries, and ourselves also as revolutionaries, for which, we continue their example’ (p.4).

She continued:

‘To us, it seems that, given that we’ve never given up our children as dead, we believe that the best memory is to continue the fight and do what they wanted, so that there are no children that are hungry, which is what they fought for. That everyone has the right to what I told you before: that they see their parents work, that they can eat as a family, that they can go to school, that they have an

education, that they have the right as a human being to whatever a human being needs. That's what our children fought for, and this is what we continue' (p.9).

Interestingly, Nora and Mercedes represent the two different branches of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. The former is a member of the Línea Fundadora, the latter the Asociación. Here, they construct an almost identical argument.² This argument holds that the disappeared sacrificed their own lives fighting for a better nation for everyone to enjoy. Further, they believe that this struggle outlives their children and endures through its adoption by young people in Argentina today. This argument is a political argument. Both interviews frequently take the form and tone of political speeches. Note that Nora and Mercedes do not vindicate their own disappeared children, Carlos Cortiñas and Alicia Meroño respectively, neither of whom is mentioned by name during the interviews (save one exception when Mercedes introduces herself at the end). This is because Nora and Mercedes do not discriminate between the '30,000' (or 'more') disappeared of whom Carlos and Alicia are thought to be part, but rather choose to remember them as a homogenous, undifferentiated and heroic figure of figures. For the Asociación, these people were revolutionaries. The language used in these two interviews is rhetorical, often emotional, and both make sure to carefully implicate the listener in what they are saying. They deny us the positionality of an outsider looking in. Whilst Nora suggests that the disappeared 'fought for *us all*,' Mercedes invites us to imagine a nation in which every child has food on the table, can see their parents work and can go to school. Whom among us could possibly object to that?

In case any objection should nonetheless be forthcoming, both Madres take precautions to re-direct this to a conceptual place from where it might cause them less harm. By organising their argument around the antinomies of life/death, bodily remains/the absence of bodily remains and memory/truth and justice, they construct it as a binary argument in which one of only two positions is possible. These antinomies are mutually exclusive. They do not between them map out the full panoply of possible personal or social responses to the mass political violence of the forced disappearances. Rather, the three antinomies align along the same axis. They produce not a matrix of positionalities but a single choice. Consider for instance, how Nora expresses her ambivalence about finding the remains of her son:

'I do not ask for the body of my son,
I want them to tell me what happened with my son.
I'm not going to say to a public servant: "I want the body of my son."
But there are people, relatives, that yes, do want this.
They go and ask: "look, look in the grave for the body of my son."'

This is a passage of extraordinary rhetorical power. Through a clever use of implied speech, Nora is able to structure the four clauses that define the five sentences around the same

² I am not arguing that the Asociación and Línea Fundadora pursue identical arguments.

subject: 'my son.' As a result of the implied speech, it is not 'her son' or 'their son' for example, to which the duty of care would have been incumbent on that person as a duty owing to *their child*. There is a powerful syntax to this series. The repetition of Nora's own opinion in a series of three clauses builds a momentum that carries it into – and beyond – the objection of others, whose own juxtaposition then forms a pair around the same quotation, "the body of my son." The insertion of the single word "yes" – which is grammatically redundant – acts as the watershed in the sentence. More than this, it acts as the positive pole to the negative polar "no" which (in the Spanish if not the English) frames the range of possible responses.³ 'No voy a decir' must come up against 'sí, van a pedir', closing the circle in language and constructing these two positions as the only two which a person might reasonably take, which are also counter-opposite positions. In this reading, an interest in death, in memory and the search for the remains are seen to be symbiotic. If you are interested in the one, then you must also be interested in the other two, for they come as a triad. The struggle to find the remains becomes not only irrelevant but antithetical to the struggle to continue their ideals. You know who they are by means of what they fought for. If you know what they fought for, the argument holds, then you really shouldn't need to look for their bodily remains. Whether you accept them as dead (Nora) or not (Mercedes), the logical conclusion is that the best way a relative can remember the disappeared is to vindicate the same ideals that they embodied in life.

The irony is that it is not always clear what ideals the disappeared fought for in life in these passages. In the second extract, Mercedes employs no fewer than seven clauses:

'we want to do what they did, which is what I was telling you about before: we are fighting for what they fought for, which to us seems the most important thing: we continue the fight that they undertook. To not let our children down is to continue the fight that they did. That's why there are so many young people that follow us, thinking what they thought. And we believe that the most important thing is to vindicate them as they were, and continue the struggle that they began.' (emphasis added).

Again this is not only repetition. It is rhetoric. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo Asociación do what they did, fight for what they fought, continue what they started, continue the fight they fought, think what they thought, vindicate them as they were, and continue the struggle that their children began. Each of the seven clauses is founded on the action of the disappeared and yet none of these actions is rooted in concrete verbs, acts or places. Rather, the pairing of the two acts creates a circularity which through its repetition instantiates the one act as having taken place through its reciprocity with the other. That is, through the act of their repeating as mothers the acts of their children, Mercedes establishes as fact the original acts of their children. They fight, they fight for what their children fought, so their children must have

³ See the Annex for the original Spanish quotation.

fought (for this or that). They think, thus thought their children (this or that). It is their acts as Madres and not those of their children which become the foundational acts. We know this because it was only when they got together that they begin to (retrospectively) re-construct the militancy of their children as 'revolutionaries.' When Mercedes is later called to give a more explicit account of what it was that the disappeared supposedly fought for she turns to abstract nouns and norms. Specifically, she turns to the normative concepts of economic and social rights. The disappeared, she argues, fought for an end to hunger, poverty and want. Mercedes vindicates the sacrifice of the disappeared on behalf of the Madres Asociación as a sacrifice that she cannot express using direct nouns or actions.

This is not the case with Mirta Acuña de Baravalle. Unlike Nora and Mercedes, Mirta draws from concrete historical examples in order to substantiate the notion that her daughter gave her own life in trying to better that of others. Four examples are particularly illustrative in this respect. Three of the four have to do with a situation of injustice or inequity in which Mirta's daughter Ana María enlists the help of her mother to seek redress. For example, Mirta narrates at length the time that Ana brought home a young girl from school so that her mother could sew up her jacket. The girl was crying in the playground, saying that her parents would hit her if she returned home with it in this state. Ana was eight-years-old at the time. Mirta also recalls the time her daughter had asked to swap schools. Ana had seen two girls behaving equally badly at the nun's school she was attending, only one of whom was given any punishment. "You know what? I realised something," she told her mother, and her mother tells us. As their parents had come to collect them one day, a young Ana had seen the father of the girl who escaped punishment arrive in a large, expensive car. There is a humour to this passage that is endearing; the word for nuns (*'monjas'*) is repeated eleven times in as many lines. Yet we find in this section the ethical cornerstone that centres Ana's moral compass. It is the teaching of her mother. "*Las monjas no son lo que vos nos enseñaste*" she told her: the nuns at the school are 'not as you taught us.' (p.25). A third example sees Ana go to hospital and give up her own time to accompany a young boy. She did not know the child, Eugenio. She had seen him sitting upset and alone when visiting a member of her own family. Eugenio's parents lived too far away and could not afford to travel to see him. There is evident pride at this part in the interview as Mirta recalls how her daughter got up early every day but one to go and tend to the sick child:

'I say, "Ana, what's happened, are you not going today?" "No, I already told him that I wasn't going today, because today is your birthday and I'm going to dedicate it to you.'"

She returned the next day as usual. When Eugenio died, Ana took it upon herself to go and inform his parents. Eugenio was six when he died.

'It was an obsession of some kind, to reach out to people, alleviate their suffering, for us with Ana ... there was always someone who was in need of something, and well, we weren't going to say no, we're not interested, let them sort it out themselves, no, but for this she, for what I, what I know, because she knew ... always everywhere, well Ana, one day I meet a young lad there, he was coming from, we were coming from a march, the march of the 24 March, this was a long time ago, in a bus, it was two in the morning, in a bus, it was full, we were standing up, I was standing up – I'm telling you something that happened about thirty years ago – and I see a lad there in the aisle ask to go past, to get past, and he approaches me and he says to me "You're Ana's mum aren't you?" and I say to him "yes." There were others there, people there, but he, before he, he said to me "You don't know what Ana did for me," he said to me. "Pardon, pardon?" He says "*You don't know what Ana did for me*, and no one has ever done anything like that for me since.'" So he took his seat, and he said to me "every day I look through the lists to see if Ana's name is there" – because he worked in the Ministry, to ... – "but no, Ana doesn't appear, she doesn't appear, but I'm going to tell you." And he was with ... "*you don't know what Ana did for me*. Since I found out she was missing ..." and these things that they tell you. After that I had to get off, at that point it had gone three in the morning, and he continued and we were going to meet, to meet up, but afterwards I never saw him again. *I don't know what Ana must have done for him*. He says "*you don't know what Ana did for me*." And well, things like that that they tell you' (pp.27-28, ellipsis in original).

There are cultural codes in this passage that only those intimate with the recent history of Argentina might recognise but which Mirta helps to decipher for us. The march is the annual demonstration of the 24th March to mark the anniversary of the military *coup*. The lists the young man flicks through every day in his privileged position as a civil servant are the lists of the *desparecidos* maintained by the military state. These lists were reportedly ordered to be destroyed by the last military president of the junta, Reynaldo Bignone, six months before the military hand-over of power (Reato 2016). They have never materialised since. "*Aparecer*" is the discursive pair to "*desaparecer*" in the shared intersubjective understanding that acted as the grammar that patterned social interaction in the times that are being narrated. If someone wasn't there, if they did not 'appear' or were never seen again, the terrible – but shared – assumption was simply that they had disappeared. Note that Mirta isn't necessarily surprised not to meet this young man again. What he tells her however, leaves a lasting impression. Mirta narrates the same quotation from this unknown gentleman four times in her monologue. So important is it that it sometimes undercuts other emerging lines of thought in the passage. ('And he was with ... "*you don't know what Ana did for me*."') Though the context changes, and prefixes and suffixes are added, the phrase itself does not change but remains constant. On each of the occasions it is repeated word for word. When Mirta comes to reflect on it herself its syntax stays the same. '*Usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí*' becomes '*No sé que habrá hecho Ana por él*.' This is the fourth story to which Mirta turns in order to give a sense of who her daughter was. She does this through the use of examples as allegory. She does not even know how the last example ended. But she is not surprised. She is not surprised she didn't see this man again and she is not surprised her daughter helped him. That is the kind of person she was, so she assimilates this story with all the others. Each of the examples rests on an account of Ana's quotidian humanity. They are narratives of agency; a picture of

who she was is created through what she did for others. Yet they are narratives also of infancy. None of the narratives deals with her adult militancy. Ana María went on to become a member of the PRT-ERP.

At one point in her interview, Mirta describes education as the 'essence of a human being.' (p.14). There are echoes here of Hannah Arendt and Judith Butler. In this case, it is education and not citizenship or cultural norms that defines whether or not a person can qualify as a human being and avoid bare life. The power to provide education as well as work is seen as pertaining to the state. The state is perfunctory in this power. It could give to all – the verb *brindar* (to offer) is frequent here – but chooses not to. Often, it chooses not to because of its conservatism. This is simply the way things are; the uneducated poor are 'accustomed' to living like this (p.14). That the state withholds the possibilities for education and work means that it holds a veto over who is able to live with dignity and who is not. There are echoes here too of Elaine Scarry's work (1987 in Edkins 2011). Parents and the state have an obligation to provide us with material security, with human security: with a coat or a building for comfort, shelter and warmth. When Ana saw a fellow pupil's shelter threatened (by her own parents) she stepped in. When she saw a patient's shelter threatened (by the absence of his parents), she took it upon herself to administer this care. Mirta is making a similar argument here to Mercedes and Nora, only using different narrative means. All three remember the disappeared for *who* they were as a consequence of *what* they did for others (cf. Elkins 2011). The suggestion here is that this is not just *who* these people were when they were taken but *why* they were taken. When the state did not actualise its responsibility to provide education or work and move the urban poor out of a situation of suffering – of bare life (Agamben 1995) – it is the children of the Madres who are remembered as having stepped up and stepped in. They did so because they refused to accept that this is the way things are, or should be. They did so out of a sense of love. Their conviction in offering 'that small boy who they saw didn't have the strength to go on ... a little bit of love' (p.14) was that this was a 'human being, a human that was suffering.' But in doing so, they also knew the risks they were taking. This makes what these persons did for their mothers an act of sacrifice. Theirs was '*esa generación que dio su vida*' (Mirta, p.14). Theirs was 'the generation that gave their lives.'

redemption

A discourse of redemption underpins a further three of the six narratives. Narratives of redemption are often framed within the story of a journey. These journeys may be geographical or social in scope. Interestingly, they may also be contradictory. Taty Almeida and Graciela Fernández Mejjide describe how they found redemption for their missing children by placing themselves in, and removing themselves from, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Graciela and Vera Jarach narrate the story of the redemption of their son and daughter respectively through the odyssey of a journey that they once undertook to Europe, as a journey that would fundamentally alter the way each would conceive of the relationship they had with their child. There is not one discourse of redemption, but many different discourses. Sometimes, these discourses converge and overlap. Let us look at each of these three narratives in turn.

At the beginning of her interview, Taty recounts at length and unprompted her transition from someone who was socialised in an anti-Peronist military family to someone who found that she belonged with the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Her previous socialisation was such that she counted military personnel such as (Air Force Commander in Chief General and *junta* member Orlando Ramón) 'Agosti' among her everyday milieu. The key juncture in her transition between the two was her 'realisation' (p.3) that the military as well as the previous Peronist government were to blame for the disappearances of which her son Alejandro was a victim. Alejandro was forcibly disappeared before the *coup*, in June 1975, when responsibility was habitually placed on unwieldy paramilitaries such as the *Triple A*. The effect of having removed herself from this social milieu as it dawned on her that what had happened to her son did not fit her established anti-Peronist politics is so arresting to Taty as she recounts it here, that she looks to third parties to stabilise her transition. Four groups are important in this respect. Firstly, she borrows from a journalist who once asked her a question to give herself a crutch in memory and a right of reply:

'a journalist asks me how I had felt on the 24 March, the day of the coup. I tell him "Look, I'm going to answer with the mind of the Taty of before.'" (p.3).

Secondly, Taty recalls the assurances she was given from María Adela Gard de Antokoletz on the day she first approached the Madres:

'It was very difficult for me Daniel, to realise, or as I say "land". It was very difficult for me. I approached the Madres very late, eh? I knew that there was this group of women that was going to the plaza, but I said: "and who would they be, these women?" What's more, with all my curriculum, all military in the family, I said "Ah, they're going to think that I'm a spy." Do you understand? Until I decided, at the end of the eighties, eh? At the end of the eighties I went to the plaza, I went to the House of the Madres, which in those days we were in Uruguay Street, we were [still] all together. Only recently in '86 we separated from Bonafini, no? Well, until that point [we were] all together. I go with my daughter Fabiana, because I have three children Jorge, Alejandro and María Fabiana. Well, at that point I go with Fabiana to the House of the Madres and when we enter, we see a wall full of little photos, little photos, and I said "My God, I am not the only one." I was met by who for me is the Mother with a capital letter:

María Adela Gard de Antokoletz. A distinguished lady. She had white hair, I remember, a large woman, she was looking for, well, up to today a *desaparecido*, her lawyer son Daniel Antokoletz. And I remember that she assisted me, it was her that ... and so she said the only thing that was asked of a mother when she approached for the first time: "Who are you missing? Who are you missing?" Their politics, religion, anything else, didn't matter. It was "who are you missing?" Well, when I told María Adela everything, we spoke of everything about my life, everything, everything, I remember that I said to her: "Ah, María Adela, how stupid I have been, how stupid!" And she says to me: "Don't say that!" She says: "Look, my little daughter" – as she used to say, no – "Don't say that! Every mother approached when it was her time" (pp.3-4).

The language in this series is sometimes erratic. *Aterrizar* is normally used in the context of aeroplane landings; *currículo* to denote a person's formal education rather than social background. Taty's choice of language is not random however. It is used for particular effect. She uses language carefully for example to erect and reproduce group membership boundaries. These may be external or internal boundaries. When referring to the military she uses the Argentine derogatory slang, '*milicos*.' Whilst Hebe de Bonafini is referred to dismissively by her surname, María Adela Gard de Antokoletz is the *Madre con Mayúscula*: the Mother with a capital letter. The phrase '*¿A quién te falta a vos?*' (who are you missing?) is one of several that Taty repeats in this passage. '*Me costó mucho*' (it was difficult for me) and '*fines de los ochenta*' (the end of the eighties) form a pair, as do '*no digas eso*' and '*estúpida*.' The juxtaposition of the former in the closing couplet is intended to cancel the latter out: María Adela's insistence that she refrain from saying that – '*no digas eso*' – neutralises for Taty the possibility of her having been '*estúpida*' in approaching the *Madres* so late. In the final analysis, however, it is not a Madre de Plaza de Mayo or a journalist to whom Taty turns for approval. It is to her own disappeared son:

'For this I say that Alejandro, wherever he is above, [would be] dying of laughter .. I say now that he would have to be – I'm sure of it – dying of laughter. And he would say: "Look at what that gorilla of shit has converted into" (she laughs) and in good time, no? What do I know? These are things that one imagines. But it's what colleagues of his tell me: "You can be sure that Alejandro would be proud of you"' (p.4).

Not only does Taty look to Alejandro for understanding but she imagines him giving it to her. She tells me this in her interview in what amounts to implied "speech". If there is a tenderness and self-deprecation to the response, there is also perhaps a lingering doubt. The comfort that she imagines coming from her son is not quite enough. Taty requires her son's blessing to be conferred vicariously through the persons of his friends: "Be sure that Alejandro would be proud of you", they tell her. Taty crossed a social threshold when she joined the *Madres*. As a result, she feels out of place. She looks to language to restore a sense of belonging. She uses linguistic devices, first to split her own personhood in order to carve out a part of her (past self) that can be saved on the single linear, chronological plane that is her life and then to find solace from Alejandro that she made the right choice. She crossed the social threshold and she did so late. In the words of María Adela, Alejandro and Alejandro's friends, she finds the

comfort she needs that this is ok. She finds a sense of redemption at reconciling her son's politics with her own.

If Taty finds redemption by moving into the Madres' milieu, for Graciela Fernández Meijide it is the other way round. A key part in my interview with Graciela comes as she narrates a trip she once undertook to Europe. She travelled to Italy following her son Pablo's disappearance to speak to one of Pablo's friends. Whilst in Europe, she crossed over to England to help a colleague at Amnesty International verify that the accounts being given by a group of survivors from the ESMA detention centre were true. Though she does not mention the date of this trip, from the information she gives we can estimate that it must have been at some point between 1979 and 1980. We pick up the story here:

'I went to Europe to speak to a colleague of Pablo's and ask him if Pablo was a militant or not. He had managed to escape because when they kidnapped Pablo and the girls he was in Bariloche. As a result the mother of [the boy in] Bariloche put him straight in the Italian Embassy and they took him [to Italy]. He's still living [there], I forget his name, I stumbled into him in France last year in the Book Fair and I wrote to him' (p.18).

Graciela claims not to remember the name of Pablo's friend, despite retaining an almost-forensic capacity elsewhere in the interview to recall the names of those whose circumstances she has come across, and having stumbled into to him only last year. Note that the act of Pablo being kidnapped was enough for Pablo's friend to be saved. It is because Pablo is taken that his friend's mother whittles him away to safety in Italy. That Pablo died so that another might live could easily have converted into another narrative of sacrifice. Graciela describes however, having abrogated this position:

'The Madres have remained stuck in the heroification [of the disappeared] and whatever happens, ... they can't sustain a debate. There's no point arguing with them, it's not possible, it's not possible, and the few that remain, given that they have not undertaken an exercise of free thinking, they repeat like parrots, they continue repeating, but nor do I accuse them, because what happened to us is of the character of the inhumane. And you have to have a lot of internal fortitude to deal with this and leave this situation. *I didn't want the military to condemn me to being the mother of Pablo, I took myself out of this position*, it was very difficult, [but] if you stay in this position you end up, firstly, idolising the *desaparecido*, which is logical, always those that die are the good ones, they never fought, they are always fantastic, and afterwards, given that it is a political struggle, although not party political, [you end up] identifying yourself [with them]. So you hear Estela Carlotto, not at the moment but before, saying: "we fight for what our children fought for" and it's a lie, their children were revolutionaries, they didn't want democracy' (p.22, emphasis added).

So important is this idea to Graciela that she overrides my interruption and asks to be able to finish the point:

'It was [a] more institutional [approach], but also with a different perspective, which cost me a lot to understand. The witnesses, the Madres and others, confronted society, they said "well, if you're not with us then you're not good for anything." What the APDH did was to widen the coalition of support (...) you keep trying to build public opinion. Now, at the same time, those of us who were parents of the disappeared, and we were few in comparison, we went to the weekly *vueltas* as well with the Madres – I have my headscarf already written with the name and everything – [we did] both things. You did the personal confrontation but you understand that on its own it's not going to lead anywhere. So, we

organised a corpus with a view to getting justice, but be careful eh, it wasn't everyone, because even within the APDH there were people that didn't believe that there was going to be justice, never, for which they took part in gathering things together but that was it. Some of us bet that one day there was going to be justice (...) It was a fight with the military, but a more rational fight. Do you see? Where you use the tools you can use, that give you your intelligence and your capacity to bring things and people together. For that, when CONADEP was set up – and I wasn't invited by the government at first, the person who asks me to go is Monseñor De Nevares, who says to the Commission "listen, those of us here, we can't process all this information, we don't know how" and it was true; they had the best intentions but they weren't used to it (I spent ten hours with the testimonials and with the relatives every day) (...) – so he said "it's not going to happen like this" and he asked them, "do you want me to bring someone who can organise?" "Yes, please" everyone said – we were all friends – he called me by telephone and he said "come and find me at the Aeroparque [airport]" because he was travelling from Neuquén. I went in my car, I went to look for him, and he offered me [a position in CONADEP]. I spent two days trying to convince myself and at the end I accepted. I accepted because I realised that every effort had to be made to ensure that it was a success. What's more, I had promised myself that I was going to see them [the military] in prison, and that I was going to work for nothing less than to see them in prison. And in the end I was able to' (pp.23-24).

Graciela's contribution speaks of both the continuities and changes in the narrative discourses of the mothers of the disappeared. Like other mothers, she marks a point of inflection in her memories at which she was prompted to re-assess what the event of her son's disappearance meant to her. Unlike other mothers, she describes how she went to ask those who knew her son whether Pablo was a militant or not, rather than establishing this ex-post-facto in conversation with other mothers. When Jaime de Nevares offers her a position on behalf of CONADEP, Graciela describes having taken two days to give her reply. She accepted the post, she tells us, for two reasons. She wanted to see CONADEP work, and she had promised herself that she would one day see her son's killers in jail. She redeems her son through the justice that she eventually secures for him. So important is this to Graciela that it is the final oratorical sweep that closes the circle of her life in its conclusion: '*y al final se me dio.*' Like Taty, the transition was a difficult one; it 'cost' both a lot to understand. In contrast to Taty, Graciela believes that the justice she secured for her son was only possible because she took the decision to remove herself from a position that she was entitled to. This was the position of a mother in the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Graciela already had the headscarf etched with Pablo's name at home.

The story of a journey to Europe is fundamental to the way that Vera Jarach as well as Graciela Fernández Meijide understands and attributes meaning to the disappearance of her child. Vera recounts intimately a recent trip she has taken to Italy, as the country of her birth:

'I'll tell you something that [happened] recently to me, and which is very important to me, but whose importance lies in the measure it has encouraged me to change my speech a little bit. So, it happened that, you already know that I'm Italian, Jewish, [I came] to Argentina in 1939, I was 11 when, I had my eleventh birthday on the boat, the ship, when I came because of the fascist racial laws of Mussolini. So, I always, I [speak] of the two histories, because they put a microphone in front of me and I have to say a few things. And I say: "I have my grandfather who stayed in Italy and ended up in Auschwitz; there is no grave. And after a few years, my daughter the same, the same. The situation [is] completely different,

very far from my country of origin, but also, also in a concentration camp, and there is no grave here either; there cannot ever be a grave” (pp.13-14).

Vera travelled to Italy on the invitation of a cousin to visit the newly-inaugurated Holocaust museum in Milan. Whilst there, she noticed the name of her grandfather suddenly appear in lights on the memorial wall. His name was included as part of a convoy that was destined for Auschwitz:

‘It strikes me: there is the name of my grandfather. So, I [experienced] something strong there – there isn’t a word to translate it – in Italian we say *schianto*. It’s something like, an internal rupture. And I said: “Well, I’m going to change the way I remember” because, usually, I always start with that of here. And I say “No, I’m going to relate it in the proper line of time. I’m going to start from there.”’ (p.14).

Later in the interview, Vera tells us that she and her husband suggested to their daughter Franca, that she go into exile in Italy:

‘We knew that they [young people] could be in danger. So, each one [to their own], to us, to our daughter we began to say: “Why don’t we send you to Italy? Just for a while, you could study there?” No-one wanted to leave, no-one wanted to leave, but also, each to their own, many [people] went into exile, many people went into exile over there, many went into exile, of all ages. And well, they saved their lives, those that remained did not ... We would have loved our daughter to have gone to Italy, but she didn’t accept this, she didn’t want to. She was already by that stage a person, my daughter was already grown up, and she didn’t want to. Like so many other people she wanted to stay because this was a form of resistance’ (p.24).

The decision over whether to flee racial persecution and try and survive in exile or remain but risk losing their lives falls to three generations in four. There is a circularity not only in History – ‘History tells us that yes, it repeats itself’ (p.1) – but in Vera’s own personal history; a circularity that coils itself like a serpent around the helix of the family DNA. Her grandfather was ‘like so many others that didn’t want to come to Argentina because he said “nothing’s going to happen in Italy”’ (p.17). When he subsequently tried to secure passage to Switzerland he was betrayed and perished in Auschwitz. Her father hadn’t wanted to leave Italy: ‘when the racial laws started, he said “Nothing is ever going to happen in Italy.” My mother was the one that insisted; she insisted and she saved our lives.’ (p.26). The same decision then fell to Vera and her husband over their daughter, Franca. This time, Italy represented the place of safety, Argentina the place of persecution. But the story ends the same. Franca doesn’t break the chain. Franca, like her grandfather and great-grandfather before her, doesn’t want to leave. And those who do not leave ‘do not [save their lives].’

In many respects, Vera’s story is not just her own but the story of modernity. Of the long 20th Century. At least it is the story of the 20th Century Jew. Her father is wounded in the trenches of the First World War, her grandfather dies in Auschwitz in the Second World War and her daughter is forcibly disappeared when the Cold War is displaced to the Third World.⁴ Vera chooses to understand and attribute meaning to the story of her life through the symmetry of

⁴ Niall Ferguson developed this argument in a lecture he gave at an LSE IDEAS conference in November 2010.

the twin disappearances that mark its spatial and temporal parameters. She orientates what happened here (*'acá'*) in 1970s Argentina in relation to what happened there (*'allí'*) in 1930s Italy. This symmetry is not a neutral symmetry. The terrible paradox is that the story of what happened to her grandfather is held up by Vera as a mirror in order to relate the event of her daughter's disappearance as one that she finds difficult to express directly in words. Note for example the way that Vera tells us of her daughter's fate in the first excerpt. The act of her grandfather's ending up at Auschwitz is the central act. It is the only act that is narrated in concrete nouns, and the only act that takes place in a particular place. The remaining events and persons are then described in relation to it. Vera does not say that her daughter Franca was forcibly disappeared. She says only that the 'same thing' happened to her daughter: *'mi hija lo mismo, la misma.'* Nor does she appear able to tell us what happened to Franca directly in the second passage. Rather, she uses the pronoun *'lo de'* ('that of') to indicate that what happened 'here' (to her daughter) is analogous to what happened 'there' (to her grandfather). In the third extract, Vera uses direct reported speech to recount how she and her husband asked their daughter to leave for exile. 'Why don't we send you to Italy?' they implore her. It is not their daughter who replies. The reply is vehement, but it is not Franca's. It is that of nobody: *'nadie se quería ir, nadie se quería ir.'* The Spanish conditional that follows is anguished. It is laden with regret: 'we would have loved our daughter to have gone to Italy, but she didn't accept.' As the listener, it is our job to deduce Franca's fate. Vera weaves a complex architecture of language, and uses this architecture to signpost something that she finds difficult to say in words. She even uses this to indicate on whom she lays part of the blame. 'I'm never going to forgive the silence that there was at that time [in 1930s Italy],' she said, 'just as I don't forgive the silences that there are in other parts ...' (p.17).

The story of Vera's life is told as a parable. It is intended to instruct, to educate, to be learned from. 'Of all the objectives that all the human rights organisations we all fight for,' Vera had said to me at the start of her interview – the repetition of "all" in a series of three denoting an almost boundless realm of possibilities – memory is the most important. In memory lies the 'hope' – which can 'only ever be a hope' – that what happened in the past might never happen again (p.1). For Vera, memory 'Is the hope that it will happen, but I link it with the hope that our children had for a better world, which they also did not [live to] see this better world, but the, the path, the hope is there, and other generations continue with this hope; for me that's the message.' Is this a narrative of redemption? Or sacrifice? Perhaps it is neither? Perhaps it is both? Vera reads, and writes for others, the story of what happened to her daughter through the mirror of what happened to her grandfather in Italy. She does so in order to express what appears ineffable and to suggest blame where blame cannot easily be laid. In doing so, she is

afforded the opportunity of (re)imagining Argentina as the New Jerusalem. Argentina and not Italy becomes the new old New World that replaces the older one still: the 'Promised Land' and 'better world' to which her daughter is understood to have fought and for which she died fighting before she could reach. The symmetry of the twin disappearances as the one is understood through the other thus breaks with itself in order to collapse the circularity of the family genealogy. Italy is the country of her origin but it cannot be the promised land. The promised land is the higher state to which her daughter and others aspired here, in Argentina. This (re)reading of her past is not unproblematic. Vera objects to the misnomer Holocaust on account of its literal meaning. Its literal meaning was as a sacrificial burning before God. Yet, there are subtle undertones of sacrifice in her interpretation. Is the notion of a 'Promised Land' and its transubstantiation from a physical place to a future political state used then to prevent her from having to confront a more troubling association? At one point in our conversation, she says that her father 'would have been a tremendous witness for us. But he didn't speak.' (p.26). On behalf of whom or what then does Vera bear witness? On behalf of whom or what does she speak now that she speaks out in schools, in the ex-ESMA and the Park of Memory? Her grandfather didn't want to leave Italy; those that do not leave are not '[saved]'. Her father did not want to leave Italy; her mother made him. Vera's daughter did not want to leave for Italy. Is this because the 'promised land' was not 'there' but already 'here' in Argentina? Waiting to be found, waiting to be won? Vera's life was saved by her mother making the decision to leave. Her father didn't talk. Those that stay do not survive. Who does Vera blame for the disappearance of her daughter?

denial

In this chapter, I have conducted a discourse analysis of six interviews that I carried out with mothers of men and women who were forcibly disappeared between 1975 and 1978. I have shown how the six relatives draw predominantly from two discourses, sacrifice and redemption, as they try to make sense of the forced disappearance of their children. These discourses are not exhaustive to the range of ethico-moral frameworks that a parent might use to try and come to terms with the enforced and enduring loss of a child. Nor are they mutually exclusive. Some mothers appear to weave in and out of one and the other discourse as they attempt to convey what the disappearance of their son or daughter means to them. Others appear to read the disappearances through a combination of the two. There are undertones of other discourses that punctuate many of the contributions, including suffering, guilt, atonement and hope. There are absences of other discourses still that we might expect to encounter in interviews such as these, such as anger, forgiveness or reconciliation. The continuities and contrasts between the contributions are illuminating. Whereas Graciela

describes moving out of the Madres' struggle in order to secure justice for her son, Taty recalls having moved in the other direction. Vera refuses to countenance the sacrifice of her daughter; but sacrifice sustains the way that Mercedes, Nora and Mirta have come to terms with their loss. Vera's daughter Franca stays and does not survive; the disappearance of Pablo Fernández Meijide facilitates the survival of his friend. The one refuses the safety of exile in Italy, the other claims it swiftly and is saved. Graciela does not judge the survivors but makes, and keeps, a personal promise to her son. Vera seeks redemption in the universal story of catastrophe that has befallen humanity as a whole. She breaks the circularity of the family genealogy on the idea of a promised land, as a future political state. Mercedes established a circularity-in-narrative in order to construct a similar promised land and with it the idea that through their actions the ideals of their children live on. These ideals were re-constructed ex-post-facto among the mothers. Not so for Graciela, whose odyssey to Italy was intended as a means to discover what politics her son did indeed sign up to in life. I have suggested that two discourses are predominant as relatives try to come to terms with their children's disappearances. These discourses frame the responses, but not perfectly, and not exclusively. The converging contrasts and contrasting convergences reveal the internal landscapes of memory to be fluid, contested and unstable terrains.

In the final analysis, what underpins the range of responses might not be any shared discursive foundations so much as *their lack of epistemological foundations*. What is striking, I would like to suggest, is the shared intersubjective understanding among many relatives that the testimony they give must not only be freely given but consistently proven as well. I want to argue that there is a shared assumption among many mothers of the disappeared that in bearing witness they must establish proof of fact, and that they are only able to establish proof of fact in the act of bearing witness. In narrating the disappearances of these persons, the six mothers narrate events that situate in the context of two pervasive and pernicious forms of denial. In order to address the culturally-inscribed epistemic precarity brought about by this legacy of denial, I will now illustrate how many relatives turn to three linguistic and discursive techniques as techniques of witnessing in order to create an architecture in language on which the events that they bear witness to can take place and *be seen to take place*. These three techniques are direct reported speech, narratives of being-in-place and third-party affirmation. I begin by teasing out the importance to the relatives of the military's discourse of denial,⁵ before turning to consider together the three techniques. I conclude by reflecting on the effect this form of remembering is having on the relatives' ability to mourn their (un)dead.

⁵ The state of denial was not all-encompassing. The military needed some information about the disappearances to reach the public so as to retard possible resistance.

In their interviews, the six mothers narrate the disappearances of their children as taking place in the context of two forms of denial. Firstly, there was the denial by the military that the disappearances were taking place or that they were materially responsible for these crimes. This emerges time and again in testimony, often unprompted and through anecdote. The use of anecdote reveals the enduring sense of hurt among relatives at the '*cosas inusitadas ... cínicas y perversas*' that they were told by representatives of the military state (Mirta, p.2) as they continued to trundle from the 'hospitals, morgues, ministries' and back again to the hospitals in their frantic searches to find out what had happened to their missing children (Nora, p.2).⁶ One mother recalled how the military's puppet Cardinal Graselli told her not to worry, "'because your child has probably gone off with another little girl, another little woman over there, and they will be sauntering across Europe'" (Mirta, p.4). The most injurious response was that their children had gone to México to become prostitutes:

'I went once a month to the Casa Rosada [Presidential Palace] where there was an office of the Interior Ministry where there were officials that replied [to our enquiries]. And what did they tell us in the case of my daughter? Once they tell me: "Your daughter is a beautiful girl?" "Yes" [I replied]. "In that case, this is what happens. These girls are kidnapped and taken to other countries to become prostitutes." That was one answer. Another time I go and they say to me "Señora, don't worry so much, bear in mind that your daughter is on holiday," that's what they said. Or if not, they said "she will have left home. She's not here, she's not here. They've disappeared." And this word began to contain, more than a sense, it was a truth: they weren't there, but they were there' (Vera, p.31).

For Nora, as for Vera, the importance of the frightening new noun *desaparecido* lay in its ability to capture the sense that the missing had not gone off on their own accord but that what had happened to them was the responsibility of the state: '*porque no había desaparecido, se había esfumado o se había ido a otro país o se había ido con otra mujer o con otro hombre, no, no, era hecho político*' (Nora p.2).⁷ Nora's contribution here works on an intersubjective level. To someone unfamiliar with the military's repertoire of 'unusual, cynical and perverse' responses, the notion that they might have gone up in smoke or gone off with another woman might otherwise appear flippant or strange.

Secondly, the military refused to concede to the victims' families not only the truth of their material involvement but also, in most cases, their material remains.⁸ The sense of hurt and injustice at this second form of denial comes across strongly in the contributions from Vera and Taty. Denied the remains of their dead, Vera argued, the mothers of the disappeared were being denied the funeral rituals that had been used to close the chapter of a person's life since the beginning of time: '*cada... digamos, todo ser humano, toda cultura, desde que el mundo*

⁶ We note here the repetition of hospital in Nora's list of the places they went for information on their children.

⁷ 'Because they hadn't disappeared, they hadn't gone up in thin air or gone off to another country or gone off with another woman or another man. No, no, this was a political [act].'

⁸ This was not always the case. Some relatives were given what they were told were the remains of their child already sealed in a casket and told not to open the coffin. Others would find the bodily remains of their missing children after they had been found and identified in unmarked graves.

existe, toda cultura tiene ritos, ¿verdad? Uno de los ritos, es el final de la vida, con un funeral, con ritos fúnebres, y con... una tumba. Bueno, la mayoría no la tiene' (Vera, p.3).⁹ The denial of the cadavers to facilitate the burial of the dead placed the mothers of the disappeared not only outside time but outside language too, as Taty Almeida argued:

'The right that we have that they have not permitted us – they were even this cruel – [is that] we couldn't bury our children, we couldn't mourn them, do you understand? The pain becomes more profound, because to lose a child, in whatever circumstances, is a pain that doesn't have a name, you're, you're ... you're not going to find a name [for it]. For example, if you say, "she's a widow, he's a widow" then it's understood that it is because their spouse died, if you talk of orphans it's because their parents died. These are the words, but you're not going to find one, there is no word to describe what it is for a child to die. Such is the pain, but there it is, and we couldn't even look after our children, through illness, to the end, bury them, we couldn't even do that' (p.8).

For Taty and Vera Jarach, the fact of their children having been forcibly disappeared cannot be easily assimilated. It does not make sense. Their pain at having been denied the bodies of their children cannot be captured in the socio-cultural matrices of language or ritual that we have steadily built up as civilised societies to understand the social world around us, and the eschatological question especially. In the face of the disappearances, they look to language itself to steady the realms of meaning and 'structures of feeling' (Williams in Huysen 2003) that have been changed, perhaps irrevocably. It is not clear that language is able to bear the burden that is asked of it. Vera returned to her native Italian to try and locate the shock she felt at discovering that her grandfather, like her daughter, had once been disappeared from the face of the earth by a political regime. The pain she felt was visceral. There was 'no word to translate it' neatly into the Spanish she uses for everyday social discourse but was '*something like un desgarró interno.*' Taty elevates the funeral to the status of a '*derecho*' or right. She wishes her burden to be given a name like that of orphan or widow for it to denote the social position that she's been forced to assume. At the end of this passage, Taty even seems to satisfy her pain on the terminally ill, who at least are afforded the dignity of being helped by their relatives into their deaths.

Whilst language itself cannot gauge as a social architecture the evident pain that the mothers feel at having been denied first the truth and then the bodily remains of their missing children, many relatives turn to linguistic and discursive devices in order to dispel the epistemic insecurity over the fate of those who were 'there, but not there.' I argue that the relatives turn to three linguistic devices in order to ground their testimony and their memories on a more secure epistemic footing, and in doing so erect a foundation in the architecture of language on which their memories can (be seen to) take place. Firstly, many relatives show a strong tendency in their narrative recollections towards the use of reported speech. Many of the

⁹ 'Every ... let's say, every human being, every culture, since the world first existed, every culture has rituals, isn't that true? One of the rituals, is the end of life, with a funeral, with the funeral rites and with ... a grave. Well, the majority don't have one.'

mothers quote liberally from conversations they have had with third parties. Some recount whole conversations they once had with representatives of the military state. Others recall dialogues they had with their disappeared children. One mother recounts a conversation she imagines herself having had with her son after his disappearance. Whether direct, implied or imagined, the use of reported speech by relatives performs different functions. Some mothers use reported speech to vindicate their struggle. Mirta recounts at length a conversation she once had with a military colonel over the militancy of her daughter. To the colonel's suggestion that their children were in possession of 'dangerous ideas,' Mirta remembers replying by asking why the military didn't confront these ideas with better ideas still. The effect of recounting this conversation using direct speech is to situate this exchange as having taken place in the past. Through reported speech, it is established that the mothers met the full force of the military with the force of their arguments, as an argument about the right to a fair trial that has since been vindicated as morally right and good. Many mothers use reported speech to erect, enforce and reproduce group membership boundaries. In Vera and Graciela's judicious explications on why forced disappearance may have been instrumentalised as a technique of mass political violence, they use speech marks to mark a moral boundary beyond which they will not cross. Using implied rather than direct reported speech, they make it clear that whilst they may be able to situate the turn to forced disappearance in its political and geopolitical context, they neither endorse nor empathise with its use. (Vera, p.19, Graciela, p.4). The use of reported speech may denote an internal rather than an external boundary. Taty and Mirta cite Hebe de Bonafini to reveal their obvious hurt at her once declaring to the Madres that 'all the disappeared were now NN' (Mirta, p.18, see chapter six) and that if the survivors had survived then 'it will have been for something' (*'por algo será'*, Taty, p.12). Here, the associations of Hebe de Bonafini with the discourses of the military is intended to delegitimise her and the political mantras of the Asociación.

Frequently, the use of reported speech functions more powerfully as a result of what it does rather than what it says. Some of the reported conversations are ambiguous. Mirta never does discover what it was that her daughter did for the young gentlemen on the bus, the like of which no-one has ever done for him since. Taty's friends can do no more than she can in imagining Alejandro as being proud of her, yet still she looks to them to corroborate her path. Some of the conversations that are reported are mundane. In narrating the origins of the park of memory, Vera Jarach says that Marcelo Brodsky called her. 'And he says to me "Vera, can you come here tonight to my studio?" And I say "Yes". "Because I have an idea." I go ...' (p.5). As Graciela recalls the story of how she became a member of CONADEP, she remembers it through a conversation she had with Jaime de Nevares: '[H]e called me by telephone and he

said “come and find me at the Aeroparque”, because he was travelling from Neuquén. I went in my car, I went to look for him, and he offered me [a position]’ (p.3). Similar passages frame Mirta’s recollection of the first time she met Azucena Villaflor de De Vincenti in the Plaza de Mayo, as well as Taty’s encounter in the Casa de las Madres with María Adela Gard de Antokoletz. In each of these passages, the reported speech doesn’t really do anything. There is nothing of any intrinsic value here: “he says, I say, he says, I go,” “I go, I go with my daughter,” “he says, I say, I go.” Why then, is this speech included? Why do the mothers not paraphrase these exchanges, or leave them out entirely?

Though the events that they describe sometimes appear mundane, even banal, I would suggest that these reported exchanges are fundamental. Indeed, they are performative. That is, they can be seen to “do” work, much as Leigh Payne drew our attention to earlier on. Through the narration of conversations with third parties in direct speech and the placing of these events in geographical place, the mothers seek to ground these events epistemologically in time and space. In the architecture of language, they construct an epistemological scaffold where the events they describe can be realised and *seen to have thus been realised*. Graciela has a conversation with Jaime de Nevaes and she goes to the airport. She tells us she spoke to him, inserts quotations to prove that she spoke to him, and then tells us she went to the Aeroparque as further proof. Taty goes to the Casa de las Madres and *she tells us that she goes*. She tells us that she was there when she met María Adela Gard de Antokoletz, and tells us what was said, using quotations as proof. She even tells us what she saw when she was there, recalling María Adela’s appearance and the ‘little photos’ on the wall. Mirta is in the Plaza de Mayo when she sees Azucena Villaflor de De Vincenti take out her sewing in defiance of the military’s state of siege. We see in Mirta’s memory not only Azucena take this sewing out from her bag; we see Mirta seeing her, as it is narrated to us. Mirta is on the bus coming home from the annual march when she recalls what the young gentleman says to her; each time the quote stays the same. Vera speaks to a colonel in the Interior Ministry. She speaks to Marcelo Brodsky. She proves through the conversation she recounts to us that she spoke to him and she then goes to his studio in her memories to establish being-in-place. Through direct speech, third-party affirmation and narratives of being-in-place, the mothers erect an architecture in language on which to ground their memories. In grounding their memories epistemologically, they seek to dispel the military’s discourse of denial and carve an epistemic plane on which they are able to prove that the events they bear witness to did indeed take place. When language as a social architecture fails them, they construct an architecture using linguistic techniques to prove that what they bear witness to is faithful and true.

unmourning the (un)dead

The paradox is that by remembering their disappeared children in this way, these relatives risk not being able to mourn their (un)dead. To mourn requires that we know *who* the person is that we grieve for. The architectural edifice mounted by relatives reveals a lacuna at its heart as to *who* these people *really were*. The mothers often reconstruct *who* their children were in their memories on account of *what* their children did (cf. Edkins 2011). There is a notable failure to reconcile the memories of the quotidian humanity of their missing children with memories of their activism. Though we find evidence in the interviews of both, we do not find them together. They run parallel through the discourses of sacrifice, redemption and denial, but they do not meet; they do not converge among the many convergences as well as contrasts in the narrative recollections. Mirta uses allegory to tease out the humanity of her daughter, Ana María. Ana tends to the sick and the needy, and steps in where the state falls short. But Mirta's account falls short in its chronology. There is an absence of narratives about Ana's adult life and her militancy in the *PRT-ERP*. Ana is suspended in the pure and innocent state of her youth. Vera redeems her daughter Franca's humanity within the redemption of humanity as a whole. She does not – she cannot – tell us directly what Franca did, nor what was done to her. Rather, she constructs a mirror as a metaphor in her memories in order to be able to tell of what happened to her daughter in Argentina through what happened to her grandfather in Italy. Vera breaks the back of her family's circuitous genealogy on the ideal of a promised land and a future political state. Mercedes inscribes this same ideal through the circularity of her narrative account. Through the reciprocity of the one act and its repetition, the original act is founded, and grounded, itself. But these are never concrete actions. They are abstract ideals, just as they are in Nora's account. They lack the thick and sticky description that makes such acts of militancy real, that makes them believable. They lack the thick description that accompanies Mirta's memories of Ana, if only to infancy. Graciela decries the tendency of some mothers to 'parrot' such narratives (p.22). Yet, her own moral certitude may derive from knowing that her own son was innocent of any militancy; a state she discovers in Italy alongside the fate of his death. Like Graciela, Taty finds redemption by securing justice for her son. She finds redemption by harmonising her politics with those of her son. It is not clear what the politics of her son were. Taty is as proud of Alejandro for his membership of the *PRT-ERP* as for his studying for a degree in medicine at the time he was taken. She refers to the former euphemistically as his 'social commitment.' But there are no narratives of this commitment, this militancy. Though the relatives try to convey a sense of *who* their children were through what they did, they find it difficult to recount exactly what it was that they did, or what was done to them.

Thus, the disappeared can be human in their mothers' narratives. They can be activists in their mothers' narratives. They cannot, it seems, be both at the same time. Militancy and humanity do not here intertwine.¹⁰ This lacuna at the heart of the memories of the mothers of the disappeared is exposed through metonymic form: in the euphemisms and the allegories, the mirrors and the metaphors, the narrative circularities around which is coiled, or uncoiled, the founding of a shared political ideal. There is an absence of politics in these memories that is revealed, paradoxically, in the memories of the abstract political ideals that deny the sticky materiality of activism or those of a quotidian humanity that come only with youth. To appeal to a pure humanity, a quotidian form of humanity, a humaneness of and for humanity, is to appeal to an uncorrupted state, an innocent state. Is this the state to which human rights *only* then accrue? Must we pass through Edkins and Agamben to reach – and then reject – Arendt? Is to be a political activist to be human no more? In elaborating such a complex apparatus on which to dispel the culturally-inscribed epistemic insecurity and ground their memories, the mothers of the disappeared save their children from one military discourse only to lay them bare before another. In Argentina, it seems, to be (suspected of being) a terrorist is to be understood as someone to whom human rights no longer apply. Human rights are not then rights that accrue through the act of being human (Donnelly 2003:7) but through the *act of being proven human* as one which must be *constantly established, proven and performed*. In the last chapter, I argued that one group of mothers had organised the collective memory of its disappeared so as to deliberately foreclose the possibility of social grieving and construct instead a politics of grievance built on the enduring ideals of the (un)dead. In this chapter, we find not mourning's abnegation but its obfuscation. To mourn requires that we know who the person is that we grieve for. In choosing to remember who their children were by what they did, their relatives seek to prove what was done to them. But in choosing to remember them thus, they risk not remembering them as they really were at all.

¹⁰ I owe this point to Professor Chetan Bhatt.

el parque de la memoria as a symbolic cemetery of the innocents

embodied practices of memory and
mourning in the Memory Park

'After burial and commemoration, the disappeared no longer
exist in a powerfully liminal state.'
Zoë Crossland

'Suffering and losses are necessary but not sufficient conditions
for victimhood. Innocence is needed too.'
Antoine Prost

Following the terrorist attacks on the twin towers, the contorted dust and debris of Ground Zero was carted off to be unceremoniously dumped at the nearby Fresh Kills facility where it could be sorted. Bodily remains along with other personal artefacts were painstakingly sifted from the non-sentient debris and taken to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to be identified using forensics. Not all remains could be positively matched. There was post-mortem destruction of DNA from the heat, fire and water of the atrocity and the subsequent recovery operation. Those that could not be identified were stored next to the offices of the OCME and a makeshift chapel constructed. The purpose of the chapel was to provide family members with a space in which they could reflect and mourn their loss, and give those who didn't have anything to bury 'their mausoleum, their cemetery, their sacred space' (Edkins 2011:129). These remains were due to be transferred to the new 9/11 Memorial Museum. There is talk of a memorial being erected at Fresh Kills. As with the Park of Memory, the idea of a memorial to the victims is controversial. The mother of one victim, Diane Horning, was particularly upset with the idea that this memorial would act as a kind of symbolic cemetery. 'Only if my son is symbolically dead' would she accept such an idea, she said, 'but if he's really dead then I really want him buried' (2011:128).

In this chapter, I wish to make the case for the Park of Memory to be thought of as a symbolic cemetery. This idea is controversial to relatives of the victims. There are three parts to my argument. Firstly, the Memory Park provides a space in which family members and others are able to perform the affective and embodied memory of the *desaparecidos* as the disembodied dead (Sion 2015). The material bodies of visitors and the body of the monument stand in as a 'surrogate' (Sion 2015:74) for the missing bodies of the disappeared to allow the rituals of mourning and memory to take place. Indeed, the names etched on the monumental wall form a synecdoche that stands in symbolico-materially for the lives that were extinguished in such a way as to create suspicion as to whether they had been lived at all. The names are proof of life

for their families. Secondly, through the performance of rituals of memory and mourning in the park, family members can be thought to bring about what Diane Horning referred to as the symbolic deaths of the disappeared. By offering flowers or touching the name on the monument as if it were the headstone on a grave, relatives not only 'give body' (Sion 2015:74) but performatively "give death" to those whose forced disappearances had previously suspended them along the impossible ontological threshold and liminality of a living death. As a symbolic exchange between one who is left and one who is lost (Winter and Sivan 1999:38), such rituals instantiate the fluid – though no longer liminal – boundary between the living and the dead *in the act of transcending it*. Thirdly, if we can think of this as a kind of symbolic death, performed through rituals that take place in a symbolic cemetery, then it is a death performed and performatively enacted at a symbolic cemetery of the innocents. The performance of these rites by a broader constituency than merely the family members of the disappeared is conditional upon the construction of the innocence of the victims in the same cultural rituals and representations, without which social recognition as a means to social mourning would not take place (Winter 2014, Winter and Sivan 1999, Butler 2006, 2010). Though the events being remembered are often described as the loss of innocence of a nation (Sturken 2007), the representation of the disappeared through the vehicle of their names and faces on the monumental walls and other memorials is not innocent but rather a deliberate depoliticisation that makes their mourning possible.

My argument in this chapter then, as I look to close this thesis, is that the park's invitation to visitors to mourn the disappeared through its creative use of architecture and space is not an apolitical process but rather a powerful and paradoxical political depoliticisation that is designed to stimulate an affective response among an interpellated audience in order to keep politics at bay. Through the symbolically-charged practices of embodied memory and affective mourning, the disappeared as the disembodied dead are re-signified and socially re-constructed; de-discursivised from any notion of their being subversives or terrorists they are at the same time re-discursivised as innocent victims who are re-codified in collective memory *through these act of mourning* as persons who happened to be caught up in a violence they played no part in. The performing of mourning and innocence combine to strip the conflict of any political hues or historical complexity it may have had. By reconfiguring the disappeared to "fit" the existing frames of (the memory of) war and norms of recognisability (Butler 2006, 2010) rather than reconfiguring the frames and norms themselves, mourning works to keep everything as it finds it. In so doing, it makes it less likely that the violence that culminated in the disappearances might "never again" re-appear in its different guises in the future.

I proceed in three stages. I begin by surveying the range of social practices that situate in the park. I read these practices through Brigitte Sion's (2015) notion of affective architecture and embodied memory in order to arrive at an understanding of the monument and the somatic bodies of its visitors as 'surrogates' which stand in symbolically for the bodies of the disappeared in the mourning rituals they allow to take place. I deepen this interpretation slightly by considering the names on the monumental wall as a deeply humane response and form of synecdoche in the wake of the destruction of the bodies and lives of the disappeared. I then consider the idea of the park as a form of cemetery in more detail, borrowing from the scholarship on the history of death in order to problematize the rejections of key stakeholders. In the final section, I tease out the significance of the monumental naming of the disappeared. Drawing from Marita Sturken's (2007) work on the tourism of history, I show that the membrane between disembodiment and embodiment is politics. I argue that this membrane can only be negotiated and the circle of remembrance squared through the simultaneous performance of the innocence of victims in the performances of their memory and mourning. I support my reflections throughout with first-hand interviews with some of the key stakeholders in the Argentine human rights community, beginning with Madre de Plaza de Mayo Taty Almeida.

sites of (embodied) memory, sites of (affective) mourning

Taty Almeida remembers the day that the ashes of María Adela Gard de Antokoletz were scattered on the *rio de la plata* from the promontory in the *Parque de la Memoria*. 'It was very strong, very strong ... very emotional,' she told me. María Adela was the '*Madre con Mayúscula*,' the large distinguished lady with white hair who first received Taty as she approached the Casa de las Madres in the 1980s.¹ 'First a few words were spoken, and then flowers were thrown, no? We threw flowers as the ashes were scattered. [It was] very strong, very emotional, very emotional.' María Adela Gard de Antokoletz died at the age of ninety, having never found out what happened to her son. A lawyer by profession, Daniel Antokoletz was abducted by a military squadron in November 1976 and not heard from again. It is still not known to this day what became of him, though his passage through ESMA was taken to support the conclusion that he had been thrown from an aeroplane into the river. By arranging for her own ashes to be scattered in the same body of water, María Adela was seeking to reunite their bodily remains, beyond death, in his likely final resting place. 'What happens,' Taty explained, 'is that the Madres – and by saying Madres I mean [also] the Abuelas, I mean the families, I mean the Padres de la Plaza de Mayo – those that know that their children were in ESMA and that they were thrown into the sea, to the river, the water, many of them ask that

¹ Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014, p.4. See also chapter eight.

their ashes are thrown as well into the river. It's something symbolic. It hasn't just happened with the ashes of María Adela but many others, many others.'² The scattering of the ashes of another Madre was accompanied by the sound of the bagpipes, Taty recalled, as the traditional instrument of Galicia, her place of birth.

The scattering of ashes is one of a number of practices that take place in the park that have to do with the rituals of mourning, memory, the funeral or death. Wreathes of flowers, like ashes, are often thrown into the river, especially to mark the occasion of an anniversary or state visit. Sometimes individual flowers are affixed to particular names on the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, as they are at other sites of memory including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or the 9/11 Memorial in Washington D.C. and New York respectively. Usually red carnations or white roses, these flowers are taped next to the name of a loved one or slotted into the cracks between the individual plaques. The park was designed, if not for this purpose, then one very similar. In contrast to the memorial to Chile's *desaparecidos* that can be found in Santiago General Cemetery, for example, the plaques that comprise the monument to Argentina's disappeared and assassinated dead were designed to be of such a height that they could be approached, clearly read and *touched* by visitors, especially their relatives. 'It was one of the requests of the family members', someone who works at the park told me, that there would be something there for them to touch. Not only that, 'the relatives wished to be able to *touch the names* of their disappeared children.'³ The company tasked with producing the plaques had originally proposed to sink the names into the porphyry. 'The relatives said no: "we want them to be on the outside so that we can touch them."' Visitors to the park can often be seen reaching out to stroke the names as if they are reading braille. 'They see the name written [on the monument], they touch it and they get emotional.'

Brigitte Sion has written beautifully of these rituals as affective and embodied practices. Juxtaposing the *Parque de la Memoria* with the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Sion explicates the 'tension between the absent bodies of victims and the embodied practices of visitors as shaped by an architecture of absence' (2015:xiii). 'Affective architecture and embodied memory are essential to the efficacy of these memorials' she argues, 'which are in the first instance about feeling, rather than thinking.' Sion borrows from Edward Casey an interest in 'how we remember in and by and through the body' (2015:69). 'Both designs take the innovative path of affective architecture to generate embodied rather than cognitive experiences among visitors ... What visitors feel in their bodies contributes to their understanding and acknowledgement of the past' (2015:79). In Berlin, the sculpting of the

² Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014, p.17.

³ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisenbaum, 18 March 2014, p.21.

memorial landscape to resemble a cemetery with its 2,711 'tombstone'-like stelae (2015:25) invites the visitor to feel and perform through the somatic passage of their moving bodies and the affective presence of their memories the memory of those who were forcibly absented from this social landscape and the nation as a result of the Holocaust. 'Through walking, the living bodies of visitors may experience the memory of the victims, both by somatically experiencing a sense of disorientation, discomfort – maybe violence and danger – and by feeling in their own bodies the absence caused by the genocide. This memorial architecture engages them in both feeling the void and filling the void' (2015:71). In Buenos Aires, the monument and the sculptures 'activate various "somatic modes of attention"' (2015:79). Skirting the park as a 'harmonious site for mourning ... what visitors feel in their bodies contributes to their understanding and acknowledgement of the past.'

The idea that places of memory are also places for people to mourn their dead was earlier proposed by Jay Winter. In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (2014 [1995]), Winter used mourning as a prism to explore the way survivors of the First World War in Britain, France and Germany had sought to find a language in which to express their sense of loss and 'try to find some meaning' from the conflict (2014:8). Through a comparative cultural history, Winter was able to do three things. He revealed the surprising convergences in the cultural codes of mourning that the three societies turned to in an attempt to mediate their losses. He took apart the popular notion that modernist cultural interpretations had represented a clear rupture from more traditional forms, demonstrating how interpretations in poetry, film, art, sculpture and ritual had often amounted to the re-formulation of classical, religious and romantic iconography, ideals and images rather than their sudden replacement. These included the modest war memorial that can be found in every town and village throughout England and France. And he corrected a notable lacuna in the scholarship by which such memorials had been overlooked as sites of mourning in favour of the study of their political and aesthetic hues as sites of memory once the passing of the bereaved had left only the physical monuments in their wake. For Winter, mourning was the cultural means and 'language' a society turned to in order to transcend its grief, and this process could be best achieved through more traditional cultural re-interpretations than the sudden, angry and bombastic modernist modalities. Traditional modes of seeing the war 'provided a way of remembering which enabled the bereaved to live with their losses, and perhaps to leave them behind' in a way that modern memory with its melancholy sense of dislocation, fragmentation, paradox and irony did not. 'The strength of what may be termed 'traditional' forms in social and cultural life, in art, poetry and ritual,' he wrote, 'lay in their power to mediate bereavement' (2014:5) For this reason, sites of memory were always already sites of

mourning. '[H]owever powerful the aesthetic or political message they carried or attracted, these monuments had another meaning for the generation that passed through the trauma of the [First World] War. That meaning was as much existential as artistic or political ... War memorials were places where people grieved, both individually and collectively' (2014:79).

For Winter, the difficulty of a society in moving to a cultural assimilation of its war dead appeared to lay in the scale of their deaths. For him, war memorials mark today what they have always marked from the Acropolis to the Arc du Triomphe, which is 'the simple truth that people die in war, and in the Great War their number was legion' (2014:78). '[S]o many individuals had died,' he wrote, that for the architect designed with capturing the significance of the 'lost generation' in stone (2014:107), Sir Edwin Lutyens, a different language altogether was required. This different language was the universal and elemental grammar of the cenotaph, which 'as the tomb of no-one ... became the tomb of all who had died in the war' (2014:104); 'a permanent – the permanent – monument of mourning' (Winter and Sivan 1999:55). Having meticulously documented the social, economic and cultural imprints of a conflict in which as many as half of all victims' remains did not present themselves at its conclusion, however, Winter also gestured to a radically new interpretation. This would suggest that the difficulty of a society to locate in mourning a framework of memory through which to mediate and transcend their grief may have owed not (or not just) to the extraordinary *scale* of the losses but the *manner* in which so many of this 'lost generation' had died. Winter himself did not tease out this idea. Instead it was left to others such as Brigitte Sion. We can clearly see the importance of such an idea in Sion's appraisal of the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism:

'As a surrogate for absent bodily remains and graves, these granite plaques invite a physical contact between deceased and mourner, probably the first tangible encounter since the disappearance, and the closest gesture to a physical, sensual, motherly embrace, not between two skins, but between skin and stone, life and death. Touching the letters "gives body" to a dead person reduced to a name, and infuses a name with memory through the mediation of the living body.' (2015:74).

There is a lot going on in this passage which deserves to be unpacked. Three ideas seem to me to be pertinent. Firstly, Sion suggests that the corporeality of the monument or mourner can stand in as a 'surrogate' for the absent remains or in-existent grave of the *desaparecido* in the rituals of mourning and memory. Secondly, she understands this process to be one of a 'tangible encounter' and 'motherly embrace' in which the point of the ritual is to affect the physical intercourse of the missing and those that mourn them in order to instantiate the embodiment through memory of the disembodied dead. The texture of this embrace is no longer between two sentient bodies – 'two skins' – but a body and a monument, 'skin and stone, life and death.' Thirdly, this exchange is necessary to actualise in the mediation of

embodied memory the names of the disappeared, without which these names would remain inert as passive and reductive signifiers of what the disappeared had been reduced to.

Let us consider the first of these three points before moving on to study the other two in what remains of this chapter. The notion that a monument or mourner might stand in symbolically as a surrogate for a forcibly disappeared person denied the corporeality of their bodily remains or a headstone above their grave is a powerful one, and one that has assumed increasing scholarly attention in the field of transitional justice in recent years (see chapter two). Lia Kent (2011) and Simon Robins (2012a) have highlighted for example the substitution of a stone for the missing body to allow for the performance of funeral rites in East Timor. Leslie Dwyer (2011) reads in the bodily movements of a group of survivors who appropriated a memorial space in Bali to perform aerobics the daily rebuttal to a regime that had wanted them dead. Elsewhere, Marita Sturken (2007) has written of the sanctification of the dust of 9/11 from Fresh Kills into memorial urns which were then presented to the families of the victims. In cases such as these, the materiality of the missing's remains or their gravesites is understood to be powerful not (just) because of their materiality *per se*, I would suggest, but because they help to create a space where the rituals of mourning can *take place*. This is, after all, why the cenotaph was able to stand in so powerfully and symbolically for the war dead in Britain after Ypres, Passchendaele and the Somme. It is also why a symbolic substitute is sought in cultures ranging from the pre-modern such as East Timor, where such rituals are seen as the grammar that patterns social life, to the late modern, including New York, where as we noted earlier a makeshift chapel was constructed around remains that could not be identified. The monument or memorial is the totem around which the transformative social practices of mourning can proceed and without which a society is thrown out of kilter (Durkheim 2008 [1912]). As Katherine Verdery (1999) has argued, these are the (contested) processes that encircle the body through which a society attempts in the face of the extraordinary upheaval brought about by political violence to 're-configure its symbolic worlds of meaning.' The difference between the 'political lives of dead bodies' that Verdery studied in post-Soviet Russia to those that follow forced disappearances in Latin America and elsewhere is of course that a surrogate body is used in the latter to stand in for the absent bodily remains in order to allow for such rituals to take place around it.

What this scholarship fails to take into account is the significance of *the use of the names* as the commemorative vehicle to substitute for the missing person. I shall want to argue later on that the representation of the disappeared through the instrument of their names and faces is a powerfully political device. But first, I want to demonstrate how it is also a deeply humane response by relatives to the vagaries of a political death in which the body of the victim does

not present itself. The importance of the surrogate object, artefact or body in standing in symbolically for the absent materiality of the remains or grave might not only be thought to derive from its facilitating the practices of memory and mourning. There is evidence that the importance of the name on the monument in standing in symbolically for the missing person speaks to a deep need among many family members to prove in light of the perpetrators' extraordinary lengths to the contrary that their loved ones previously existed (see chapter eight). Here, we are reminded of the contribution of Madre de Plaza de Mayo Vera Jarach:

'the most important [thing about the park] is the monument ... because there are the names. The names of thousands of persons that don't have a grave. So, every ... let's say, every human being, every culture, [from the beginning of time], every culture has its own rituals, isn't that right? One of the rituals [comes] at the end of one's life, with the funeral, with the funeral rites, and with ... a tomb. Well, the majority don't have one. Afterwards we're going to talk of the work of the anthropologists; sometimes remains are rescued. But, what is a tomb? A tomb is a place where the person who lived has proof of what was their life. Or rather, there is a date, sometimes there is an epitaph, and this indicates the presence of someone who existed, something that the dictatorship wanted to erase. Or rather, it wanted to, to not only disappear the persons physically, but [do so] as if they never existed, they are not here. So, to have a monument with the names, it's not a ... of course, it's not a cemetery. We don't want it to become a cemetery. It's a cenotaph. It's what they call a cenotaph ... In Buenos Aires, for example, there is another cenotaph in the plaza San Martín, which is for the dead of the Falklands [War]. The names are there, and well, that is important.'⁴

The language Vera uses in this section is of a register we would not naturally associate with death. At least not with natural death. It is the lexicon of atrocity; the language of mass political deaths, and disappearances. The military junta attempted not only to kill the victims nor even to 'disappear the persons physically' but to 'erase' their 'presence' such that doubt would be sewn among their relatives as to whether these persons had ever been 'there' and 'existed' at all. In order to dispel this existential doubt, I showed in chapter eight how some family members have turned to linguistic and discursive devices to prove that the acts they narrate once took place. Here, we can appreciate further how some family members have responded to the cultural legacies of this denial by searching for physical markers to stand in symbolically and materially for their children: not only as a surrogate, but a synecdoche. The monument thus becomes more than the means to the socio-cultural rites of mourning as memory, as a memory that might allow them to possibly move on. It becomes '*constancia de lo que fue la persona en vida.*' It becomes proof of life. In the absence of physical markers such as their remains, the monument with its carefully choreographed names stands in defiantly to testify to the previous existence of the persons behind these names. Note how Vera conjoins the monument in her understanding with an assessment of the progress of anthropologists in finding the remains of the victims. Taty Almeida appears to make the same association. Taty asks her God not to call her until such time as she has found the remains of her son, Alejandro. 'I want to touch them, at least touch his remains, and I have hope. I have hope that it's going to be this way because the anthropologists are working very well,' she told me. 'I don't lose

⁴ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014, p.3. Please see the annex for the original Spanish quotation.

hope, I don't lose it, I don't lose it.'⁵ Did the name of her son on the monument wall suffice (unless and) until this was possible? "I want to touch *the name* of my son, I want to touch it" Taty is reported to have said of the monument before it was constructed (Sion 2015:74, emphasis added).

In Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Jews who were brutally murdered and their bodies destroyed in the crematoria are remembered metonymically through the bundles of their hair or the suitcases they left behind with their names written on them. As some of the only remnants that were left when their bodies were destroyed, these artefacts stand in symbolically and materially for the lives that were extinguished. As an existential and humane response to the (almost) complete obliteration of the body as the cipher for the attempted annihilation of their existence, relatives in Argentina have turned not to the names on suitcases with which to remember the lives of those they lost, whilst proving that these lives once existed, but to the simple and defiant synecdoche of the name upon the monumental wall. I argue that the names on the Monument wall can be seen to stand in symbolico-materially for the lives that were meant to have been annihilated in such a way as to erase all traces of their previous existence. In so doing, they allow for the rituals of mourning to take place, unless or until such a time that their bodily remains may be found. It is here that the importance of the relatives in having something to touch can be understood, along with their insistence that this something be the *names* of their missing children. Surrogate and synecdoche, so pertinent is the association that family members will often use the names on the wall as a metonym for their missing children. The park is the most important site they argue, and the monument the most important memorial in the park, 'because the names are there.'⁶

[a cemetery, a symbolic cemetery](#)

The Remembrance Park was not supposed to substitute for a cemetery. The task group designed with converting the proposal from law into a beautiful landscaped sculpture park were insistent that it should not become one. Many relatives said they didn't want one – and still don't. These include Madres such as Vera Jarach for whom the practices that take place there merit its monument being thought of as a cenotaph and not the park a cemetery. The irony, however, is that these family members and other visitors have themselves helped to re-codify the park's field of meaning through the different ways they have accepted its invitation to enter into and make use of its space as a public place (see also chapter five). Through the movements of their bodies in the performances of memory and mourning, or their offering up of objects in ritual exchange, they have helped to alter the way the space is understood and

⁵ Interview with Taty Almeida, 12 August 2014, p.7.

⁶ Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014, p.3.

has come to be explored by others. The tension between the way the park is used by visitors and the way it is understood is founded on the traditional idea of a cemetery as the depository for the material remains of the dead. Once this idea is reformulated, this tension can be resolved and the relationship between the park as a place of memory and a form of cemetery more creatively thought through. In this section, I want to move towards an understanding of the park as a symbolic cemetery. Two ideas are key to this understanding. Firstly, I will illustrate how the notion of a cemetery as a place exclusively of death that is employed by many stakeholders to keep any comparisons at bay does not hold. Secondly, I will show how the performing of rituals and practices of mourning can not only be thought to 'give body' to the disappeared but to symbolically and performatively "give death" to them as well.

'The relatives [of the disappeared] never had anywhere to go,' Iván Wrobel recalled. 'They never had a cemetery to go to and remember them. Yet always, explicitly, the idea was that the park would not be a cemetery, but a memorial, a place for everyone, [in which] anyone could remember, anyone could visit, that it wouldn't be for them to visit one name in particular.'⁷ I met Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisenbaum shortly after the controversy over the future of the park erupted in the summer of 2014 (see chapters one and five). Wrobel is responsible for monitoring the list of names on the Monument to the Victims. Nisenbaum helps to co-ordinate the range of artistic and creative performances that take place. 'Human rights organisations,' Iván continued:

'didn't want the park to become a substitute for a cemetery, but rather as something that would serve as a memorial; more than anything they were thinking about this. That is, they weren't thinking about coming to see a name in particular, but thinking of it [as somewhere] to remember a collective process. Or they proposed for instance that instead of coming to place a flower next to the name, they would throw them into the river. But the reality is that, with the quotidian use as well, there are people that come and see the name for the first time in their lives. They see the name written [on the monument], they touch it and they get emotional ... and they leave the flower there.'

'It is not the intention, it wasn't thought of as a cemetery, but rather as a place of memory and remembrance', Cecilia said. But 'yes, it happens.'⁸ What she called perceptively the 'ritual question' happens spontaneously. Nor was it originally anticipated that a group of skateboarders would come every day at four o'clock to use the opening plaza as if it were a skate ramp, 'or that people would come and put flowers next to the name' rather than throwing them into the river. But 'there are people that had the necessity to do so. A decision was taken not to throw out the skaters, or to prevent these people from leaving flowers.'⁹ Wrobel and Nisenbaum's comments reveal some of the wonderfully paradoxical ways that meaning in the space is invented and re-invented, shaped and re-shaped through the ordinary, everyday ways that visitors interact and perform with the space as a public place. The

⁷ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisenbaum, 18 March 2014, p. 21.

⁸ Cecilia Nisenbaum, *Ibid.*, p.22.

⁹ Iván Wrobel. *Ibid.*, p.22.

monument remembers its victims individually, yet together as a collective group. It was meant to help its visitors to remember the victims collectively, yet is used by relatives individually to mourn their own. The park was intended to provide a public space for remembrance and recreation, yet is re-socialised by those who would use it to mourn. It was designed to provide a public space for recreation, yet is sullied by those who skateboard up its ramps or clamber on its monumental walls and sculptures. 'The use that the place is being given is something one cannot really foresee,' Wrobel concluded thoughtfully.



Figure 27: A decision was taken not to throw out the skateboarders that skate on the opening plaza, though they have been asked out of respect not to skate next to the Monument.

That some visitors have taken the opportunity to re-configure the constellation of meanings that are socially constructed at the park through the quotidian movement of their material bodies or their performing of symbolic rituals is not always looked upon so generously by those who run it. Others have sought to shore up the semantic boundaries and return the space to something more in keeping perhaps with its original purpose. Marcelo Brodsky confessed to having tried to persuade the skaters to move to an alternative location. 'We cannot throw them out ... There is another place for them to go and skate. We would prefer it if the skaters went somewhere else because they break the park.'¹⁰ He admitted that the

¹⁰ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014, p.17.

skaters 'don't take much notice.' As a compromise, they have been asked out of 'respect'¹¹ to skate away from the Monument. Before the park was inaugurated a group of squatters had to be evicted from the land it now occupies.¹² And as with squatters and skateboarders, so too the scattering of ashes is seen by Brodsky as being out of place. 'It has happened, outside of the programme of the park, that some families have decided to scatter the ashes of their relatives ... Seeing as it is a public park, people can go and throw whatever they like, but this does not form part of the programme of the park.' To throw flowers into the river seemed '*bárbaro*' to Marcelo Brodsky – brilliant – but the idea that some people would arrange for their ashes to be scattered on the same river wasn't something he claimed to find 'particularly interesting.'¹³ 'For those of us who came up with the idea, the ashes didn't have anything to do with it. The initiative was to do with the memory of the victims of the dictatorship. Now, afterwards, a lot of human rights activists have left it written in their wills that they wish their remains to be scattered there when they die. Well, very well, let the ashes be scattered there, as the last will and testament says. And of course the park permits it.' This is not entirely accurate. Writing before the park's inauguration, Brodsky (2001) had said he hoped it would become a space for people to express their right to memory *and to grief*.¹⁴

For Brodsky, Wrobel and Nisenbaum, as well as for Vera Jarach, the idea that the park might function as a substitute for a cemetery as a result of the way visitors have explored the space to perform such rituals is a moot point given the absence of the material bodies of the disappeared. 'It is not a cemetery, *it doesn't have the bodies*, so in this sense, there is a social function to the park,' Iván Wrobel said.¹⁵ Marcelo Brodsky argued:

[Though] it permits a process of mourning or of elaboration, it is not a cemetery, not at all. It is an active place, open, where people come to sip *mate* at the weekend, to roam around on bicycles, it doesn't become a cemetery. It's a public monument that remembers victims for the relatives of the disappeared, which is the only place where you can find the name. But at the same time, it's a public park, where there is movement of young people, movement, music, life, activities, football, bicycles, that is, in an open space, a place, a public space in the city. And that's how we see it, we don't want a cemetery, we're not interested in a cemetery, we want a place of life in memory [...] A tomb contains the body, they contain the bodies, for a start, which is a substantial difference. This is a monument, that is, it remembers, through the name, an absent [person], who is not there, who doesn't have a body. So, the absence of the body is absolutely and radically different to a cemetery. The body isn't there, there is no body there [in the park], only the typography of the name, let's say, if we understand it [like this], the lettering is called the typographical body. But there's no human body.'

What is fascinating is the way that both supporters and opponents of the park turn to the antinomies of the body/absence of a body and life/death to frame their contrasting positions. I have already noted in chapters five and eight how the Madres Asociación construct their

¹¹ Cecilia Nisenbaum. Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisenbaum, 18 March 2014, p.8.

¹² Interview with Vera Jarach, 17 May 2014.

¹³ Interview with Marcelo Brodsky, 14 August 2014, p.16.

¹⁴ Brodsky (2001), Genesis y evolución de una idea, *Ramona: Revista de artes visuales* (9-10), pp.6-7.

¹⁵ Interview with Iván Wrobel and Cecilia Nisenbaum, 18 March 2014, p.3, emphasis added.

opposition to the park on the basis of their interpretation of it as a place for memory, death and mourning which they take to be antithetical in a dichotomous framework to the ontological pairs of truth and justice, life, and living memory. Marcelo Brodsky and others can be seen to marshal a similar understanding in order to defend the park and reject the same idea of it as a place for the rituals of mourning. Thus, a cemetery must hold the physical body of the dead, they argue, which the park evidently does not. Rather, the park is a place for movement (*movimiento*) and life (*de vida*). Indeed, for 'life in memory' and a bodily movement which may begin on one (material) end of the spectrum with cycling, football and *mate* but which will only amount on the (symbolic) other to the embodiment of the disappeared in the typography of their names on the monumental walls. By discursively framing the park as a place of life, memory and bodily movement, Brodsky betrays his assumption of cemeteries as places exclusively of death and mourning as well as an underlying sensitivity that the quotidian and non-quotidian rituals that take place at the park (ashes have to be arranged to be scattered in wills and flowers have to be bought and brought along) have called into question its original functions as these were intended by human rights organisations.

And yet, cemeteries have not always been places exclusively to do with death, the dead and mourning. In the early modern period it was common for many people in England and France to visit cemeteries in order to engage in recreational activities. As Philippe Ariès (2009 [1976]) showed, whilst the Ancients had 'feared being near the dead and kept them at a distance,' (2009:14) the early modern age was defined by the coexistence, familiarity and 'promiscuity between the living and the dead' (2009:25). By the time of the Enlightenment, the dead had overridden the Ancient *extra urbem* and secured re-entry into the *urbe*. In Paris' Holy Cemetery of the Innocents, the bodies of the dead were buried in ditches for the poor until their bones were unearthed and moved to one of the many surrounding ossuaries or charnel houses and the process started over. 'The fact that the dead had entered the church and its courtyard did not prevent both from becoming *public places*,' Ariès wrote (2009:23, emphasis added). 'The use of the cemetery for non-funeral purposes developed from the notion that it was an asylum and a refuge.' Thus, the modern cemetery built within the city walls became a public place where the living could seek promiscuity with the dead as a means of recreation. 'People became accustomed to meeting within this asylum ... to dance and gamble, or simply for the pleasure of being together.' As Penny Roberts observes, 'cemeteries were often open spaces, in towns one of the few public places where people could meet together and the setting for a number of communal activities: dances, markets, games, fights, agitation and gatherings of all kinds' (Roberts in Gordon and Marshall 2000:138). What they lacked in bicycles and footballs, early modern visitors made up for in feasts, music, theatrical shows, and

intimate and even sexual encounters.¹⁶ Whilst there is no suggestion that sexual practices have taken place at the Memory Park (unlike the Berlin Memorial), and the traditional Argentine *parilla* is strictly forbidden due to its association with the burning of bodies during the dictatorship, theatrical shows and other recreational acts are permitted and celebrated, as Brodsky's comments show. This excites criticism from those writing from the purview of death tourism who witness 'moment[s] of pleasure' at sites where they expect to see people 'who feel sad and moved' (Sion 2015:100).

Ariès skilfully mapped out the shifting social, religious and cultural tectonics that contrived to bring the cemetery back within the city as 'a place both physical and moral – which it had lost in the Middle Ages, but which it had occupied throughout Antiquity.' (2009:74). The Romantic collision of the erotico-macabre with its new, hysterical form of mourning and cult of the tomb and cemeteries spoke to a fear not of 'the death of oneself' that had characterised mortality from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries in the 'upsurge of individualism' but 'the death of the other.' The turn to the modern cemetery with its landscaped gardens and ornamental, and inscribed, sepulchres marked late modernity's new relationship with its dead; holding them at one remove in line with the modern discourse of hygiene whilst keeping them close out of a new understanding of society as 'composed of both the dead and the living' (2009:74). The two forces that shaped the burial of the dead from Antiquity through the Middle Ages to early modernity suddenly collided; the return to the individual tomb inscribed with a name characteristic of Ancient burial (in Antiquity sarcophagi often also featured likenesses of the dead) was conjoined with its situating within the city typical of the Middle Ages. Neither *ex urbe* nor *ad sanctos*, the individual tomb in the modern garden cemetery was coda for the 'survivors' unwillingness to accept the departure of their loved one' (2009:70). 'Now people wanted to go to the very spot where the body had been placed,' Ariès wrote, 'where they have become accustomed to place flowers on the tomb. They meditate there, that is to say they evoke the dead person and cultivate his memory' (2009:72-73). In Paris, the Holy Cemetery of the Innocents was razed in 1786 to be replaced by, among others, Père Lachaise in 1804. In London, Tower Hamlets was one of the original Magnificent Seven constructed in the early nineteenth century. Closed for burial in 1966, Tower Hamlets is now a Cemetery Park.

The 'thin demarcation' (Roberts 2000:138) between the living and dead in sixteenth and seventeenth century Catholic France did not extend equally to all citizens. The Huguenots were buried along with beggars, stillborn infants, plague victims and lepers in separate cemeteries out of the city. There were also 'isolated incidents' in the 1560s of Huguenot remains being

¹⁶ Even once the jugglers and charlatans were banned, '[w]ithin the Cemetery of the Innocents public scribes offered their services' (Roberts 2000:23-24) along with seamstresses, booksellers and second-hand clothes dealers well into the seventeenth century.

dug up from the Innocents and cast out (Harding in Gordon and Marshall 2000:174). 'As persons who were outside normal society,' Vanessa Harding writes, their bodies were liable to be treated in the event of their deaths in ways that reflected their 'exclusion.' In many ways, the disappeared as the social lepers of their time were subjected not to a posthumous exclusion but the 'inclusive exclusion' (Agamben 1995) of a living death as one which marked them along the impossible ontological threshold of the natural and political worlds, law and politics and life and death. The elision of the living and the dead was marked on their bodies through the original act of their disappearances. There are hints of such a reading in Brigitte Sion's work. Sion cites from Nicolai Ouroussoff, for example, who wrote of the Berlin Memorial's focus 'on the delicate, almost imperceptible line that separates good and evil, life and death, guilt and innocence' (2015:xii). She also alludes to Avery Gordon's notion of forced disappearance as 'a form of power, of maleficent magic, that is specifically designed to break down the distinctions between visibility and invisibility, certainty and doubt, life and death that we normally use to sustain an ongoing and more or less dependable existence' (2015:36). Finally, she recalls the words of Berlin's architect Peter Eisenmann, who noted perceptively: 'Today, an individual can no longer be certain to die an individual death, and architecture can no longer remember life as it once did. The markers that were formerly symbols of individual life and death must be changed' (2015:14). Her concept of embodied memory stopped short of teasing out the significance of such contributions.

'Touching war memorials, and in particular, touching the names of those who died, is an important part of the rituals of separation which surrounded them,' Jay Winter wrote in *Sites of Memory*. 'Many photographs of the [First World War] period show mourners reaching out in this way ...' (2014 [1995]:113). Borrowing from Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholy, he wondered out loud whether this might offer some a sense of closure:

'the non-melancholic mourner tests the reality of loss and ultimately disengages from the departed. The melancholic cannot do this, unless some mediating element can help isolate the loss, and establish its limits. Then the individual knows what is gone, and what has survived. Is it fanciful to suggest that rituals at war memorials, and in particular the reading of the names of the fallen, and the touching of those statues or those names, were means of avoiding crushing melancholia, of passing through mourning, of separating from the dead and beginning to live again? (2014 [1995]:115).

Winter seemed to answer his own question a few years later. By the time the co-authored volume *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (1999) appeared, his faith in the ability of a process of mourning to affect the transcendence of grief had been fundamentally shaken. His belief in these rituals as a form of symbolic intercourse nonetheless remained. Of the 'tangible character of war memorials,' he and Emmanuel Sivan now wrote: 'Those in mourning used them not only for ceremony, but also for a ritual of separation, wherein touching a name indicates not only what was lost, but also what has not been lost. Visitors to

such memorials frequently leave flowers, notes, objects, which serve as a focus of a ritual exchange. The dead have given everything; the living, symbolically or tangibly, offer something in return. The Museum of American History in Washington's Smithsonian Institution has a large store of such objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial' (1999:38).

Is the touching of the name of the *desaparecido* on the monumental wall an act of physical embrace or symbolic separation? Of embracing the disappeared or separating from the dead? My sense is that it is both – and at the same time. That is, that Winter and Sion are both correct, if in their very different ways. By quietly reaching out to touch the name on the monument or tending a flower to the monument or river, family members can be understood to 'give body' somatically and symbolically to the disembodied dead (Sion 2015:74). But they can also be understood through the performing of these practices to symbolically and performatively "give death" to those whose forced disappearances had suspended them along the liminality of a living death. As both a 'tangible encounter' (Sion 2015:74) and symbolic exchange between one who is left and one who is lost (Winter and Sivan 1999:38), these practices instantiate the fluid – though no longer liminal – boundary between the living and the dead *in the act of transcending it*.

This is not closure. There is no sense of the bereaved being able to find in the cultural grammar and social rituals of mourning 'a way of remembering which enable[s] [them] to live with their losses, and perhaps to leave them behind' (Winter 2014:115). Rather, it is a symbolic re-alignment in the relations that hold between these relatives and their missing children. It is a 'reordering of people's entire meaningful worlds' (Verdery 1999:35). Through the embodied mediation of memory in mourning, a new "we" is constituted (Butler 2006, 2010) which transcends the two individual "I's" but which *betrays in its transcendence* the new relationship forged as that between one who survived and one who is lost, skin and stone, life and death. Ironically the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Asociación appear to have understood this better than most. Their objection to the park was founded on a rejection of 'plaques and monuments because they signify the burial of the dead' (Sion 2015:xiii, see also chapter five). 'After burial and commemoration,' Zoë Crossland argued, 'the disappeared no longer exist in a powerfully liminal state' (Crossland 2000 in Sion 2015:30). Crossland was writing in the context of the discovery of the bodily remains of the *desaparecidos*, but the point holds. I argue that the rituals of embodied memory and mourning are rituals of both encounter and separation. And that by performing such rituals, relatives can be seen to performatively bring about the symbolic deaths of the disappeared.

a symbolic cemetery of the innocents

On 24 March 2016, Argentina's President Mauricio Macri was joined by his US counterpart Barack Obama at the *Parque de la Memoria* in a visit to mark the fortieth anniversary of the military *coup d'état*.¹⁷ Following a guided tour of the park and its Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, the two leaders gave a short press conference in the Sala PAyS where it was announced that the United States would declassify its intelligence files relating to the repression. Obama said it was 'humbling to join President Macri at this poignant and beautiful memorial in hono[u]r of the victims of the Argentinian military dictatorship and the suffering their families have endured.' The park, he said, was a tribute to the memory of the victims as well as the 'bravery and tenacity' of their parents.

'To those families: your relentlessness, your determination has made a difference. You've driven Argentina's remarkable efforts to hold responsible those who perpetrated these crimes. You are the ones who will ensure that the past is remembered and the promise of "Nunca Más" is finally fulfilled.'¹⁸

Obama and Macri were then escorted by Marcelo Brodsky to the promenade in the south-east corner of the park, where they threw white roses into the *rio de la plata* (see Figure 28). In the photographs of the event, the US President can be seen pausing at one point, meditating in memory with his head bowed as if in prayer.

So far I have shown how the Memory Park is host to quotidian and non-quotidian practices of mourning and memory. I have illustrated, borrowing from Jay Winter and Brigitte Sion, how this memory is embodied in the somatic movements of the memory-makers as mourners and the surrogacy of the monument and its synecdoche names. By tending a flower to the monument or river or calmly touching the name as if it were the name on a grave, I have argued that family members can be understood to not only 'give body' (Sion 2015:74) but to performatively "give death" to the *desaparecido(s)* they come to remember and mourn. I have traced such practices to those that previously took place at the memorials to the First World War and the cemeteries of early modern Europe, where the quiet reflection of mourners was conjoined by more boisterous regimes of recreation and refuge in a 'promiscuity' of the living and the dead. Up to this point, my reflections have largely been restricted to the role of family members in the performance of these rituals. As Obama's visit clearly demonstrates, however, the relatives of the disappeared are not the only visitors to engage with the park in this way.

¹⁷ Obama y Macri rindieron homenaje a las víctimas y coincidieron en el reclamo del "Nunca más", *La Nación*, 24 March 2016; Barack Obama en el Parque de la Memoria: "Ustedes harán que el pasado se recuerde y se cumpla con la promesa de 'Nunca más,'" *Infobae*, 24 March 2016; Obama en el Parque de la Memoria: rosas blancas, silencio y un guía por cinco minutos, *Clarín*, 24 March 2016

¹⁸ Remarks by President Obama and President Macri of Argentina at Parque de la Memoria, *White House Office of the Press Secretary*, 24 March 2016 (correct as at 18 August 2016). Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/24/remarks-president-obama-and-president-macri-argentina-parque-de-la>

Indeed, in 2016 alone Obama was joined in these by French President Francois Hollande¹⁹ (see Figure 29) and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau²⁰ (see Figure 30), German, Dutch and Danish Foreign Secretaries Frank-Walter Steinmeier,²¹ Bert Koenders and Kristian Jensen respectively,²² UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon²³ (see Figure 31), EU High Representative, Italian Federica Mogherini,²⁴ and the Mayors of Berlin and Amsterdam.²⁵ Former President of the Spanish Government Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero visited in 2007.²⁶ German Chancellor Angela Merkel²⁷ and Chilean President Michelle Bachelet²⁸ would do so in 2017. On each occasion, the visiting dignitary was provided with a guided tour by representatives of the central committee, the Argentine state and human rights organisations, before being invited to say a few words to the media and then pay their respects to the *desaparecidos* at the river. Yet, despite the rather obvious and ostentatious politics of these acts of remembrance, the park is on the whole noticeably absent of politics. Though it remains open on the 24 March each year, most Argentines bypass the *Parque de la Memoria* in favour of attending one of the demonstrations that culminate at the Plaza de Mayo or ex-ESMA (as they did during Obama's visit in 2016). Even the controversy surrounding the future of the park itself in January 2014 was re-directed through the Plaza de Mayo and the city government's main offices (see chapter five).²⁹ All of which begs the question: how is it that a park that invites the political great and the good to remember alongside others the victims of a politically-inspired violence is so sanitised of all recognisable forms of politics?

¹⁹ Hollande: "Quiero expresar la solidaridad de Francia con las víctimas de la dictadura," *Clarín*, 25 February 2016; Hollande recorrió junto a Estela de Carlotto el Parque de la Memoria, *La Nación*, 25 February 2016; Hollande rindió homenaje a víctimas de la dictadura militar en el Parque de la Memoria, *Télam*, 25 February 2016.

²⁰ Justin Trudeau emocionado en el Parque de la Memoria en Argentina, *Radio Canada Internacional*, 18 November 2016; "Un hermoso lugar de reflexion y memoria", *Página 12*, 18 November 2016; Flores al río en el Parque de la Memoria, *Página 12*, 18 November 2016; Gestos de Trudeau para Macri, los empresarios y la minería, *Clarín*, 18 November 2016; Trudeau visitó el Parque de la Memoria antes de viajar hacia Perú, *Youtube*, no date. Correct as at 13 March 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Mcmd_PQ9s

²¹ Steinmeier visita el Parque de la Memoria en Argentina, *Deutsche Welle*, correct as at 18 August 2016; Alemania manifiesta un "gran respeto" por la política de Derechos Humanos en Argentina, *Agencia Efe*, 3 June 2016; El Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Alemania visitó el Parque de la Memoria, *Buenos Aires Ciudad*, 3 June 2016. See also Ministro de Exteriores, Steinmeier, visita el Parque de la Memoria en Argentina, *Ministro alemán [sic] de Relaciones Exteriores*, 18 August 2016. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y6itZBOH-M>

²² El Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Holanda visitó el Parque de la Memoria, *Buenos Aires Ciudad*, 14 July 2016; Visita de Bert Koenders, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Holanda, *Parque de la Memoria website*, correct as at 18 August 2016; Parque de la Memoria – Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado, *Facebook*, 17 August 2016; See also Holanda y Argentina: Reconocimiento y homenaje en el Parque de la Memoria, *Youtube*, 14 July 2016. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kYqg4FfiP8>

²³ Ban Ki-moon llega al país y se reunirá con Mauricio Macri y Susana Malcorra, *La Nación*, 7 August 2016; Ban-Ki Moon recordó a las víctimas de dictadura argentina junto a Río de la Plata, *Agencia Efe*, 10 August 2016.

²⁴ Mogherini rinde homenaje a víctimas de la dictadura en Argentina, *Agencia Efe*, 10 March 2016.

²⁵ Interview with Claudio Avruj; El alcalde de Amsterdam visita el Parque de la Memoria en Argentina, *Agencia Efe*, 18 June 2016.

²⁶ Zapatero homenajea a las víctimas de la repression argentina, *El País*, 11 November 2007; Zapatero homenajea a los desaparecidos durante la dictadura argentina, *El Mundo*, 11 November 2007.

²⁷ Angela Merkel visitó el Parque de la Memoria, *La Nación*, 8 June 2017

²⁸ Para Bachelet, el Parque de la Memoria es una maravillosa expression del recuerdo de las víctimas de la dictadura, *Telam*, 20 July 2017

²⁹ Parque de la Memoria: el jueves habrá un reclamo de los trabajadores, *Infojusnoticias*, 6 January 2014; "El cierre del Parque sería un delito contra la memoria," *Infojusnoticias*, 4 January 2014; Acusan a Macri de querer "convertir el Parque de la Memoria en una plaza vacía de contenido," *Telam*, 3 January 2014; NO al cierre del Parque de la Memoria, *Change.org*, correct as at 15 December 2014. Available at: <https://www.change.org/p/horacio-rodriguez-larreta-no-al-cierre-del-parque-de-la-memoria-2>; Contra el vaciamiento en Derechos Humanos de la ciudad, *Página 12*, 9 January 2014.



Figure 28: Obama and Macri in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Image courtesy of *La Nación*, used without permission.



Figure 29: Hollande in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Hollande is joined by French Foreign Secretary Jean-Marc Ayrault (left), *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* President Estela de Carlotto (centre) and her *nieto recuperado*, Guido Carlotto (right). Image courtesy of *La Nación*, used without permission.



Figure 30: Trudeau in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Trudeau is accompanied among others by MP Victoria Donda (to his right) and *Madre de Plaza de Mayo* Vera Jarach (in the headscarf to his left). Donda was the daughter of *desaparecidos*, and a *nieta recuperada* by the *Abuelas*. She is also the Victoria, née Claudia, who features in Ari Edward Gandsman’s article of 2012 (see chapter two). Image courtesy of *Clarín*, used without permission.



Figure 31: Ban Ki-moon in the *Parque de la Memoria*. Ban is joined by the *Abuelas’* Estela de Carlotto (centre left), Argentina’s Under-Secretary of State for Human Rights Claudio Avruj (centre) and Marcelo Brodsky (centre right) among others. Image courtesy of *Twitter*, used without permission.

Marita Sturken (2007) has coined the term tourism of history ‘in order to understand how sites of loss can enable a sense of innocence and particular kinds of politically naïve responses’ (2007:12). In a study of the memorialisation of the 1995 Oklahoma bombings and 9/11 in New York, Sturken unmasked the paradox by which the foregrounding of mourning at sites like these acts to foreclose any critical engagement with the complex history and politics that culminated in the deaths being commemorated. Though the atrocities they commemorate are often thought to represent as the loss of innocence of the nation, Sturken was able to show how the promotion of affective, emotional and sentimental responses at these sites is not innocent but rather ought to be read as a ‘depoliticization’ (2007:6) which operates by inviting visitors to remember the victims in ways that tap into – and help to perpetuate – American cultural codes of innocence and comfort-amidst-fear. As tourists of history, visitors in Oklahoma and New York are encouraged to express their ‘sorrow at the lives lost there, without trying to understand the contexts of volatile world politics that produced [these] attack[s]’ (2007:10). That is, a volatile politics in which the United States is often intimately involved. One of the ways this is achieved is through the commodification of teddy bears. Having been bought and sold, brought along and left behind at everything from the commemoration of AIDS victims and Vietnam through to Oklahoma and 9/11, Sturken showed how the intervention of the teddy bear in the cultural circuit opened up from sites of loss to sites of conflict³⁰ allows for an expression of grief that is politically retarded and acquiescent.

How does Sturken’s analysis of memorial practices in the United States help us to gauge those that take place at the Memory Park? And, what do they tell us about how such a diverse range of visitors are able to perform the same rites of mourning there, from the family members of victims to the US and French Presidents and UN Secretary General? There is no clear read-across from Sturken’s critique of landscapes of memory in the United States to Argentina. Putting aside for one moment the problems with ascribing a set of national cues to a population that is racially plural, economically uneven and socially heterogeneous, and thus a nation in which there is considerable inequality in distribution and access to the kind of social narratives and goods being described, Argentina lacks the carefully-choreographed and socially-constructed discourses of innocence that shape and help to define how Americans have come to see their relationship to the nation – and through this, to one another. The Park of Memory also lacks a parallel in its practices of memory to the teddy bears that Sturken and Winter et al. trace from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to the Smithsonian via Oklahoma and the bedrooms of forcibly displaced Iraqi children. Only flowers are left at the Monumental wall

³⁰ A cluster of bears left at Oklahoma’s memorial was sent by the archive manger to Iraqi children displaced as a result of the US invasion (Sturken 2007:92).

in Buenos Aires, and there is no gift shop in the Sala PAYS to sell the snow globes or teddy bears that might contain and assuage the grief of its visitors.

Rather, what Sturken's analysis does is help us to close a conceptual circle that has Butler's (2010) notion of grievability at its centre. Winter and Sivan et al. (1999) argued that in order for mourning to take place as a mediation of memory, the personal memory of survivors must be re-located within social frameworks of memory. For social memory to proceed, the social recognition of loss must take place. In a study of the difficulties of post-revolutionary Russians to transition to a state of mourning as a means through which to make sense of decades of war, revolution, famine, collectivisation and the Great Purges, for example, Catherine Merridale (in Winter and Sivan 1999:75) wrote movingly of how 'personal grief had no wider framework, no mirror in which to observe itself gradually diminishing.' Studies such as these revealed how 'the social recognition of violent death is a crucial stage in the process by which the bereaved come to terms with loss' (1999:73). What they lacked was an appreciation of the mediating role of space in effecting and inflecting this translocation in memory.³¹ In her study of two such spaces, meanwhile, Brigitte Sion's sketch of the Memory Park was of a curiously aspatial and apolitical landscape. Sion assumes that the absent body of the disappeared can be redeemed through the surrogacy of the embodied practices of memory regardless of the time or place or discourse in which the victims are held in relation to a society's cultural frames and collective memories. That is, regardless of whom is mourned by whom.

What Sturken does is to marry these two together. Once read in conversation with that of Judith Butler, Sturken's work suggests that in order for the social recognition of loss to take place – on which a process of mourning among a greater constituency than just the relatives of the dead is dependent – those being remembered must either be commensurate with *or be remembered in a way that is commensurate with*, visible to, and recognisable via, the interpellated society's 'norms of recognition' (Butler 2006, 2010). Sturken helps us to see that the membrane between disembodiment and embodiment is politics. And that the surest way of squaring this circle and negotiating this membrane is by constructing the innocence of the victims. As Antoine Prost would write in the case of France's 'non-remembrance' of its 'non-war' in Algeria: 'suffering and losses are necessary but not sufficient conditions for victimhood. Innocence is needed too' (in Winter and Sivan 1999: 176). The argument that I wish to make then as I look to close this chapter, and indeed this thesis, is that rather than re-configuring the cultural norms and frames as part of a broader organic transformation in its social relations over time, and as a re-configuration that would invite Argentine society to re-calibrate its

³¹ Contributors to this volume were asked to deliberately forsake the study of place and places of memory; something that more than one appeared to find difficult.

relationship with its disappeared in turn, the human rights community in Argentina has instead transformed *in and through the acts of mourning and memory* the identities of the victims so that they “fit” the existing frames and norms just the way they are. And that by doing so, they have made it less and not more likely that the promise of *Nunca Más* to which Barack Obama and so many in this community aspire might one day be realised.

It is here that we return to the importance of the representation of the disappeared through the writing of their names on the monumental walls, to which we shall now want to add the representation of their images in the park’s memorials. When we visit the park, whether it is in our capacity as a visiting dignitary or researcher, a family enjoying a picnic or a skateboarder, a schoolchild or one of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo who can be seen accompanying them, we are free to negotiate the landscape in any way we see fit. But our bodies, as the vehicles through which we make sense by making memory of the disappeared, are channelled by the monument in one of two prevailing directions. If we resist the Monument’s chronological pull and read its story of forced disappearances in reverse, as Obama and Hollande did, then we will end up at the promenade that guides us gently into the river at the park’s south-east corner (Figures 28 and 29). It is here, in the photographs and the videos, that Obama can be seen pausing to reflect on the meaning of the park and the suffering of those it remembers before throwing his ritual offering into the river. If we were to follow the monument as we perhaps ought on the other hand, not inserting ourselves midway into its form from the grassy verge nor reading it in reverse but following it through the chronology of its story from its beginning inscription to its final plaque at the end, then we would end up, as Merkel and Steinmeier did, at the walkway that guides us past the Sala PAyS into the water at the north-eastern side. It is here in the photographs and videos that Angela Merkel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier can each be seen pausing to give their reflections to a busy media before tendering their ritual gift to the river. In the two films, we see the flowers smash onto the river’s surface; refusing to break but not breaking the threshold, not crossing the threshold between the natural and political worlds, life and politics, life and death. Until we glance the small, fragile, beautiful white carnations slowly pass Claudia Fontes’ *reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez* (see Figure 32). Having allowed our bodies to curve and be curved around the monument’s jagged ruptures, as ruptures which nonetheless refuse to suture, and having pressed our hands against the names of the disappeared to search in an affective engagement for the memory of those who disappeared, all that remains is for us to quietly look out and reflect on the portraiture of Pablo as it perches impossibly atop the river, bobbing and weaving with the pulse of the tide. We see Pablo’s impression on the water. We can make out his figure, but not his face. Pablo’s face is turned away from us.

Pablo's face is turned away from us, just like Baylee Almon's face was turned away from us as the interpellated audience when we were asked to give an affective – but not political – response to the 1995 Oklahoma bombings (Sturken 2007, see Figure 33). His face is turned away from us, just like the face of Aylan Kurdi was turned away from us as we were asked to respond by expressing our sorrow – 'without trying to understand the contexts of volatile world politics' (Sturken 2007:10) – to the images of his broken body as it lay motionless on a beach in Turkey before being collected up in the "migrant crisis" of the summer of 2015 (Figure 34). Pablo's face is shielded from us, just like the face of Kathy Kollwitz's victim-son is shielded from us as it sits shrouded in its mother's arms – its motherly embrace (Sion 2015:74) – when we join the parade of politicians in performing our grief this time at the German Pietà in the Neue Wache and not the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe a short walk away along the Unter den Linden (see Figure 35). As we pause and reflect, take stock and look out upon the water, our sentient and somatic bodies having navigated the park with its memorials and monumental walls of stone, we can make out in our mind's eye perhaps the sight of Pablo amidst the bricolage of this global mourningscape. What is it that we look upon in this textured memory (Young 1993), this cultural kaleidoscope of a century of mass political violence?

The four media that make up this mourningscape are the four images of innocence. This innocence is not a neutral or inevitable category that accrues to particular representations or people. Rather, this innocence must be patiently and ardently constructed, socially constructed and made. It must be *performed*. A child is seen as virtuous. A child is seen to be innocent. No child is thought to play an active, thinking or voluntary part in a politics of violence. And so herein lies the paradox: for *the greatest political intervention is that of the non-political actor of representation*. The performance of innocence is more difficult in some cases than others. Baylee Almon's broken body asks of us a recognition in mourning that can be freely given. Her life, now lost, is almost certainly a grievable life for whoever it falls to to calibrate in line with their cultural values and norms of recognisability (Butler 2010). So too is that of Aylan Kurdi. Other representations hold within themselves a card trick. The child held in mourning in Kollwitz's Pietà stands in for the German soldier. This asks that we suspend disbelief; that we put to one side any thoughts of the soldier as an active participant in wars which may have led to the deaths of innocent civilians or the perpetration of atrocities, and instead accept this figure only as he is offered to us, as an innocent victim who asks only to be mourned. So too, I would argue, does that of Pablo Miguez: a young man caught up in a conflict in which some of the victims were children, and innocent children, but many more were not.



Figure 32: Reconstrucción del retrato de Pablo Miguez.



Figure 33: Baylee Almon. Image courtesy of *USA Today*.



Figure 34: Aylan Kurdi. Image courtesy of the *guardian*.



Figure 35: Kathy Kollwitz's Pietà in the Neue Wache.

In almost all the four frames of memory, the agent that performs the act of deliverance so that the innocent child and all those she stands in for might now be mourned is the state. It is the representative of the state that enacts the motherly embrace and whom we see coming to the aid of the fallen or defenceless. Indeed, there is something of a gentle progression through the iconography. The religious sacrifice of Michelangelo's Pietà has been replaced by that of a German soldier, to be remembered by the German Nation, with thanks. The United States firefighter is superseded by the Turkish gendarme in collecting together their fragile national and then international human cargos, before carrying them to a place where they might now be mourned. In three of the four images, the Security State steps in and in the anguished face of its representative, turns to face its people and the world with its most caring face. Only Pablo Míguez, and the disappeared he stands in for, is denied the succour of the state's embrace. His body, thrown too high from an aeroplane and shattered by the water, must instead be claimed and put back together in the embodied memory of those who come to mourn him. In each case, however, the state remains nameless; it does not, it cannot, ask for a name. We do not name those whose bodily frames frame (or not) our figurative memorials, whether on paper or in cyberspace or stone, given that we see them as standing in for the nation entire. There was disquiet when the Unknown Soldier of Vietnam was identified from his casket. The three figures of Hart's hasty footnote to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial could be racialized, but not named. We know not the name of the Turkish gendarme whose anguished face frames the broken body of Aylan Kurdi in the photos that shot across the world's bows. We name only those who are rescued, in death.

The difference is crucial. It is not a migrant that is rescued in death from the water. Or rather, it is not a migrant that is rescued *in the act of their rescuing*, on the event of their death. It is Aylan Kurdi. It is not an unnamed victim that is rescued in death from the contorted rubble and dust and debris of Oklahoma – or New York – but Baylee Almon. It is not a *desaparecido* that sits ebbing and flowing atop the water in the far northern shore of Buenos Aires, just as it is not any *desaparecido* that we mourn through the invocation of the synecdoche names of the enclosing monument wall, but Pablo Míguez and Franca Jarach, Ana María Baravalle, Lila Epelbaum, Alejandro Almeida and others. Today we insist on naming the victims. Were it otherwise, then they probably wouldn't be rescued in memory at all. Bound by their particular configurations of cultural norms, discourses and values, many societies do not recognise the plight of migrants or soldiers from an unpopular or lost war, or those suspected of links with terrorism. If they don't recognise them then they cannot remember them. They cannot mourn them. The alchemy resides in the name.

'All we see are names,' wrote Jay Winter (2014:105). Winter dismantled the interest in memorials as aesthetic or political sites of interest in favour of returning them to their original function as places where relatives could mourn their dead. But in so doing he tilted the scales too far in the opposite direction. As a result, he glided over (as many have since) the importance of the names that were written on the monuments and memorials that he otherwise so meticulously surveyed as they began to pockmark every town, village and heartland of England and France. Winter reads the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the direct lineage of Lutyens' cenotaph, seeing in both the desire to 'go beyond the political, and beyond conventional architectural forms, to express existential truths too often obscured in the rhetorical and aesthetic fog of war and its aftermath' (2014:105). Yet, we cannot today attend to the one without the other. The aesthetico-political is complicit in the existential, and we fail to tease out the significance of contemporary memorial landscapes if we swap the one lens for the other. For what utterly powerfully and yet powerfully simplistically differentiated the two memorials, Lutyens' and Lin's, was the latter's addition of the names of the dead. Maya Lin attempted to write the conflict she commemorated back within the history of the American nation, as he says, just as Lutyens attempted to write that of the First World War into the hearths of a bewildered British nation. She created a 'point of pilgrimage' and 'provided a focus of mourning' just as Lutyens had done (at one point Winter describes the effect of the cenotaph as 'making all of 'official' London into an imagined cemetery' (2014:104)). She did so through the intercession of the names.

'All we see are names,' writes Winter, oblivious of their political *and* existential function: depoliticising the political conflict and clearing the way for the public recognition of the dead to take place *in and through the act of mourning*. The VVM could not provide a language and a framework for mourning and hold out any promise for the possibility of a future transcendence in their grief for ordinary Americans – this mourning could not *take place* – unless or until the bitterly-divided conflict these lives were lost as part of had been stripped of its politics by the representation of the dead in such a way as to foster their recognition by their kin. The names performed the innocence of the dead at the same time that they made possible the performance of their mourning. The aesthetics of the name, in other words, was key to the existentialist function of it providing a cultural language and a space in which a wider group than merely the relatives could accept the invitation to mourn. This would almost certainly not have happened had the one appeared without the other; had Lin's design been superseded by that of Hart, for example, or had the Vietnam memorial bade its public to mourn as a cenotaph without the mediation of the names as an instruction to consider those who fought as its ordinary, innocent victims and not the perpetrators of a war that split the

nation and led to accusations of war crimes. *A cenotaph would not have done for the Vietnam conflict* as it did for the First World War. Just as it would not have done for Argentina's disappeared. In the end, it wasn't even enough for the dead of the First World War. A few years after its inauguration, Lutyens was commissioned to design the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. At Thiepval, the cenotaph-like Stone of Remembrance is accompanied by the names of 73,000 soldiers who went missing and whose bodies did not present themselves at the conflict's end for them to be mourned. The names and the empty sepulchre stand in together and 'give body' to these disembodied dead. The inclusion of the names is vital, yet in their dialectic between the politico-aesthetic and the existential-functional is missed by those who would trade in the one for the other.

conclusion

Scholars have been slow to realise the significance of the turn towards the representation of victims through the vehicle of their names and faces in the recent wave of new memorial spaces, places and museums. Some naturalise the practice, seeing it as old as time. Others have gone so far as to suggest that the use of names on memorials is a 'trope' (Laurie Beth Clark in Sion 2014:27). Neither is correct. Rather, the name and the face are the new synecdoche for the absent and disembodied dead. They are the replacement for the hair or the suitcases as the metonymic remnant of the person who died. They are the new symbolico-material "object" that stands in for these persons. Not only a humane response to the ferocious violence that sees states and non-state bodies attempt to obliterate the lives and existences of their victims, the name and the face play a role in how, and indeed whether, these persons are able to be socially recognised, remembered and thus mourned by others, from their own families and friends to the UN Secretary-General and the Presidents of France, the United States and now Germany, too.

One of those who can sometimes be seen accompanying such guests as they are paraded as tourists of history around the park to perform their mediatised rituals of mourning is Minister for Human Rights Claudio Avruj (see Figure 31). Avruj says he finds it 'very strong to see people when they go as part of families or groups and place a flower' at the park. He believes that for many of these families, 'the true cemetery ... is in the park.'³² By restoring a name and a face to the victims of state terrorism, and individualising the victims, the park permits 'the possibility of a memory that doesn't necessarily have to be discursive' but which 'allows a connection with an awful lot of people that, ideologically, would never [otherwise] approach the park but whom through this memory can locate ... a significance of what it represents in the social conscience.' Through places of memory such as these, he told me, Argentine 'society

³² Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014, p.7.

is advancing slowly to this healthy exercise of memory: not political, a natural exercise ... freed from ideology.’³³ Avruj’s reading is in many ways astute. But there is nothing ‘non-political’ or ‘natural’ about the form of memory the park works to stimulate among those who visit. The practices of memory and mourning that the park encourage speak not to the end of discourse but its subtle and powerful re-direction, its re-routing. Its subverting. Mourning is not an apolitical process. It is a powerfully political device, *a political depoliticisation*, that allows for the remembering of the politically-charged violence and the people who paid for this violence with their lives in a way that strips them of their complexity, their historicity, and their politics.³⁴ When we express our sorrow at the lives lost in the park, sing *Abide with Me* on the hundredth anniversary at Thiepval, or mourn the lives of the innocents lost in the Neue Wache rather than at the Memorial down the road, we leave the world just as it was when we found it. In doing so, we make it less likely that the promise of *Nunca Más* will ever be truly fulfilled.



Figure 36: ‘All we see are the names’ on the monumental walls. These names invite us as tourists of history to mourn the victims of a depoliticised conflict whom we help to produce through these practices of mourning and embodied memory as depoliticised subjects, and innocent victims. Image courtesy of *Infobae*, used without permission.

³³ Interview with Claudio Avruj, 19 March 2014, pp.1-2, p.8.

³⁴ This includes the forced disappearances as forms of political violence that the United States and France were themselves deeply implicated in. See J. Patrice McSherry (2005) and Robin (2003).

the emptying out of the *desaparecido*

a conclusion

'estamos cayendo en el mismo error ... no importa el número [de desaparecidos] ... no se pueden discutir, es vaciar de contenido el hecho.'

Chiche Duhalde

'madres se quedó enganchada en la heroificación [de los desaparecidos] ... no aguantan una discusión, ya no hay que discutir con ellas, no se puede, ... como no han hecho un ejercicio de pensamiento libre, repiten como loros ...'

Graciela Fernández Meijide

In August 2016, President Mauricio Macri was asked in a television interview how many people he thought had been killed under the last military dictatorship. 'I have no idea,' he replied. 'That's a debate I'm not going to enter, whether they were 9,000 or 30,000.' Macri was accused of 'denialism.'¹ Journalist Uki Goñi, suggested that the President's intervention had shattered the nation's 'consensus on the gravity of the dictatorship-era crimes', which 'almost uniquely among nations that have suffered mass killings under brutal dictatorships' had seen it not only prosecute a large number of former perpetrators 'but establish a consensus across all political sectors that its 1976-83 military regime had executed a lower-intensity Nazi-style genocide that lacked any moral justification.' In November the same year, Macri's Human Rights Secretary Claudio Avruj, published a report which revised the number of *desaparecidos* in Argentina to 7,010, along with 1,561 who were assassinated.² Avruj asked for respect to be given to the figure of 30,000 *desaparecidos*, however, which he suggested was 'emblematic more than symbolic.'³ President of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo Estela de Carlotto, called his intervention a 'provocation.'⁴ In January 2016, de Carlotto had accused another government official of being 'evil' for 'daring to question this figure.'⁵ Minister of Culture for the Buenos Aires city government Darío Lopérfido, claimed that there 'were not 30,000 *desaparecidos*' but that this figure was 'a number that was decided upon at a roundtable' meeting. 'If this gentleman thinks that this is not the number [of disappeared] then let him give us the list of those he thinks they really are.' Asociación Madres' leader Hebe de Bonafini said Lopérfido's comments were 'poisonous'⁶ and told him to 'get lost.'⁷ In January 2017, Minister for Customs Juan José Gómez Centurión, argued that '8,000 truths and 22,000 lies were not the same

¹ Blaming the victims: dictatorship denialism is on the rise in Argentina, *guardian*, 29 August 2016

² Avruj dijo que hubo 7010 desaparecidos, *La Nación*, 8 November 2016

³ Un pedido de informe que busca reabrir la discusión sobre el número de desaparecidos, *Tiempo Argentino*, 9 November 2016

⁴ Estela de Carlotto, indignada con un informe oficial sobre la cantidad de desaparecidos, *Diario Registrado*, 8 November 2016

⁵ Estela de Carlotto le respondió a Darío Lopérfido sobre la cifra de desaparecidos, *Perfil*, 26 January 2017

⁶ Un discurso que atrasa treinta años, *Página 12*, 27 January 2016

⁷ Hebe de Bonafini: "Lopérfido, andate sos un asco", *Urgente 24*, 30 June 2016

thing.’⁸ Gómez was charged with ‘extreme brutality.’ Human rights groups called for him to be sacked from government. ‘We are falling into the same error,’ Chiche Duhalde, a former first lady, remarked. ‘The number [of disappeared] doesn’t matter ... it could be thirty thousand, twenty-eight thousand ... The number speaks to us of the gravity [of the crimes], they cannot be debated, [to debate them] *is to empty out the substance of the act.*’⁹

In this chapter, I conclude the thesis. I want to conclude by concluding my argument. My argument is that the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentina has been historically regulated and framed according to two political logics of memory as the means of articulating two divergent ways of doing politics in the enduring absence of the disappeared. By reconstructing the expanded cultural field of memory through a (re)construction of its cultural biography, I have demonstrated in this thesis how some human rights activists have sought to frame the violent recent past in order to elicit among a wider interpellated public an affective and political response in mourning. And I have shown how others have sought to foreclose this social grieving and animate instead a politics of grievance. My aim in this chapter is to take stock of these logics as a means of trying to understand the Argentine transition to democracy. As part of this, I want to tease out the idea that these logics are also social logics. Whether the disappeared are constructed, deconstructed and re-constructed in Argentine collective memory as persons-as-such with a name, a face and an identity uniquely and irreplaceably their own or as a revolutionary vanguard of 30,000 militants for social justice, human rights and/or democracy, the disappeared cannot it seems be both human and political. In this chapter, I want to argue that this is because of the refusal of wider Argentine society to recognise some victims as humans who are deserving of being remembered and mourned.

I proceed in five parts. Firstly, I retrace my argument in this thesis. This holds that Argentine collective memory has been regulated and framed according to two political logics of memory which shape, and have been shaped by, the interventions of human rights actors over space and time. Secondly, I show how these political logics of memory are not aspatial or atemporal logics floating in a vacuum or void, but rather how they can be understood to have reached their high watermarks in the public politics of memory and human rights of Raúl Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner. In part three, I argue that the logics of memory are social logics. In part four, I tease out the implications of the lacunae that locate at the heart of the memory of the disappeared. I suggest that these lacunae make more difficult a transformative transition through contentious co-existence towards a more liberal and egalitarian democratic future. I

⁸ Juan José Gómez Centurión, sobre los desaparecidos: “No es lo mismo 8.000 verdades que 22.000 mentiras,” *La Nación*, 29 January 2017

⁹ “*es vaciar de contenido el hecho.*” Los organismos de DDHH piden que el Gobierno eche a Gómez Centurión, *Página 12*, 30 January 2017

conclude by considering some of the implications and limitations of my argument, and by pointing to possible lines of future enquiry.

héroes y tumbas

In Ernesto Sabato's book, *sobre héroes y tumbas* ([1961]), the protagonist finds perspective by heading into exile south. It is in Patagonia that Martín finds the distance that he needs to make sense of Alejandra and his love for her. Sabato's story is an allegory. Alejandra and Martín stand in for the contradictions of Argentina. Set in the mid-twentieth century, the old world of the landed gentry is pitted against the forces that will increasingly come to surround it in modern industrial capital, large scale migration and the emergence of the working class. Alejandra's father looks to fantastical explanations to try and make sense of the tumultuous changes taking place around him. In his descent into madness he comes to see the blind as part of an international conspiracy lurking behind these contradictions and the social and political eddies that they unsettle and provoke. Alejandra's father writes a Report on the Blind. In time, Ernesto Sabato himself would be called on to draft a very different report. In *sobre héroes y tumbas*, however, when Martín returns from his internal exile he discovers that Alejandra and her father have been consumed by a fire. The old and the new do not co-exist in easy alignment in Argentina. Sabato weaves a further allegory into the narrative. The fate of the young lovers is contrasted with that of General Juan Galo Lavalle. Following his retreat to Bolivia a century before, Lavalle's followers burned his body and guarded his remains so that Juan Manuel de Rosas' *Mazorca* would not retrieve them. The dead aren't safe in Argentina. They lack a resting place. They do not rest.¹⁰

In this thesis, I have argued that the memory of the disappeared in Argentina is historically regulated and framed. I have used the *Parque de la Memoria* as a prism through which to reconstruct the field of collective memory and trace the discourses and logics of the memory of the disappeared. Using the park to guide me, I have traced discourses on the politics of memory, politics of anti-memory and anti-politics of memory (chapter five), as well as discourses of sacrifice, redemption and denial (chapter eight). More importantly, perhaps, by reconstructing the expanded field through a (re)construction of the cultural biography of the frames of memory in which the reality of the past is delineated and the field is re-configured over space and time, I have shown how the memory of the disappeared in Argentina has tended historically towards what I have called two political logics of memory. Throughout this

¹⁰ There are more contemporary examples of the mutilation or desecration of bodies in Argentina. The body of Perón's second wife, Evita, disappeared for twenty years after it was stolen and sent abroad to Milan following the 1955 Revolución. The Montoneros stole the coffin of General Aramburu in 1974 to demand Evita's return. The hands of Juan Domingo Perón were cut off and stolen from his casket in 1987. See Ceferino Reato: "Cada vez que muere alguien trascendente, en la Argentina nace un mito. Somos un país trágico." *El Tribuno*, 28 August 2017

cultural biography we have seen how these logics have governed the practices, testimonies and representations in which the disappeared have come to be remembered and recognised. They have shaped – and been shaped by in turn – the concrete material interventions of human rights actors acting over time and space to prosecute their struggle for the truth and justice to be secured for what happened to the *desaparecidos* and for an alternative politics to be erected as a lasting legacy and a means of ensuring that such violence should never again take place.

In the thesis, we have seen these logics guide, inform, shape and underpin the memory of the disappeared across an eclectic and dynamic range of cultural representations, practices and testimonies (see chapters five to nine). Opening up a dialogue between the park and its memorials and other frames as frames of the memory of violence (cf. Butler 2010) I have traced the configuration and re-configuration of this memory within an expanded constitutive field. This has included an analysis not only of the memorials that help the park's visitors to construct a relationship with the disappeared and their disappearances, but the testimony of the relatives. Not only the practices of memory that take place at the park but social performances in the city. Indeed, this study has not been limited to conventional memorials or practices of memory at all. We have seen how the construction of the memory of the disappeared and the disappeared in this memory has also taken place through the truth commission and resulting trials, as transitional instruments that are usually understood in a very different guise in transitional justice. The meaning of the disappeared and their disappearances should not be understood to situate in the discrete texts, practices or speech acts themselves. This meaning cannot be deciphered as the hidden true significance that lurks in the signified underneath the signifier (see chapter three). It is not that there is a symbolic dimension underneath which there is a material base. Rather, the meaning locates in the relation between these interventions and frames within and across this expanded memory field: it situates in the contours and between the lines that connect them (see chapters six and seven). The field of memory as a field of meaning and representability is a dynamic, contested and constantly re-configured field; it is never complete, and never-to-be-completed. Both inside and outside the park, the visitors who are interpellated by the images and narrative discourses of the disappeared through these cultural frames uses these contours to guide them as they seek to construct a relationship with the violent recent past. In doing so, they help to activate, co-constitute and socially construct not only the meaning of the recent past but the subjects of the disappeared whose ontologies are produced in and through this memory.

Two ontological subjects in particular have been socially constructed through these logics of memory. Through a cultural biography of the frames of the memory of violence, as well as an analysis of interventions in testimony and practices of memory too, I have shown how one group of actors has historically framed the past and reconfigured the field in order to remember and construct the *desaparecido* in memory as an individual ‘person-as-such’ (Edkins 2011:2) with a name, a face and an identity uniquely and irreplaceably her own. In so doing, they have sought to elicit an affective response in mourning among the interpellated Argentine population as the basis for instilling a form of politics that would recognise and respond to their disappearances.¹¹ This was countered by other human rights actors and their supporters. These actors – the same or different actors using the same or different instruments – have sought to forestall this social grieving and instead hold open the political space for a politics of grievance in relation to the disappearances. This group has sought to frame and remember the *desaparecidos* not as individuals but as an undifferentiated mass of 30,000 revolutionary figures who are said to have been seeking to bring about a more socially-just society. Through their interaction with the space as a public place, proponents of the first logic of memory have converted the park of memory into a symbolic cemetery (see chapter nine) adjacent to the *tumba (inexistente)* of the river into which many of the victims were thrown. Proponents of the latter vindicate the *desaparecidos* as revolutionary *héroes* for a future-past Argentina that all Argentinians were to have enjoyed.

The configuration in the field of collective memory of the *desaparecidos* as ‘persons-as-such’ or a population of 30,000 revolutionaries does not tally with the logics of Jenny Edkins (2011, see chapter four). In her study, Edkins assumes that relatives always ‘challenge’ (2011:14) the ‘police logic’ of the biopolitical state as that which objectifies and instrumentalises the missing as heroes or ‘objects to be governed’ and controlled (2011:viii). In doing so, they seek to propel a ‘political logic’ that returns the politics to the missing by remembering them for *who* they were rather than *what* they were (2011:13). I would want to make two points here. Firstly, a society’s collective memory is never a process of objectification. It is a form of subjectivation, as Michel Foucault (1991) helped to remind us. It is the subject and never the (person as) ‘object’ that is brought into being as a result of the way these persons are socially constructed and framed in this memory. Secondly, the experience of Argentina shows that the construction of the *desaparecido* as a subject in collective memory cannot be reduced to the contrast between the irreplaceable political individual and the objectified, non-political mass. It does not divide this neatly, but rather cuts across these three cleavages in fluid and really

¹¹ This was never an inevitable response, as the scant support and indeed open opposition to the mothers in the early dictatorship years helps to remind us. The Madres asked at one point: ‘*por qué nadie se hace eco de nuestros pedidos?*’ See Ulyses Gorini (2006).

rather interesting ways. Not only have some *relatives* been instrumental in helping to constitute the disappeared as *depoliticised subjects* (see chapter six) in this memory, contrary to Jenny Edkins' central tenet, but the government on occasion has aided them in this *political depoliticisation* to the mutual benefit of both. Not only have other *relatives* been instrumental in rejecting this form of depoliticisation and re-politicising the disappeared as *heroes*, but this form of heroism has also been co-opted on occasion by the state. We can further appreciate how this has worked by considering the presidencies of Raúl Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner.

alfonsín and kirchner

Néstor Kirchner took office in 2003. His presidency was defined by two factors. The first was his response to the country's cataclysmic default. Kirchner's economic record was good.

Together with his finance minister Roberto Lavagna, he oversaw a nine per cent annual increase in GDP between 2003 and 2007. Unemployment was reduced from 20 to 9 per cent.

Poverty fell by almost half (Levitsky and Murillo 2008, Murillo 2008, Calvo and Murillo 2012, Schamis 2008, 2013). Kirchner defied the IMF, paid off the \$9.8 billion debt that Argentina owed it in a single transfer¹² and managed to restructure 93 per cent of its remaining

commitments at 43 per cent of their value.¹³ His presidency was also defined for its interest in human rights (see chapter five). Kirchner cleansed the military, police and judiciary. He retired more than half of the country's generals (Levitsky and Murillo 2003) and began impeachment proceedings against four Supreme Court justices.¹⁴ He ordered the removal of the portrait of Jorge Rafael Videla from the Patio of Honour at ESMA¹⁵ and the conversion of this and other former clandestine detention centres to public ownership as sites of memory. He cancelled Fernando de la Rúa's ban on the extradition of Argentine officers to face charges abroad.

Importantly, he oversaw the annulment of the so-called impunity laws *Obediencia Debida* and *Punto Final*. In August 2003, Kirchner sent a law to Congress for these to be declared null and void.¹⁶ The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this law in 2005. This paved the way for the resumption of human rights trials. In 2006, the first trials for twenty years against perpetrators of human rights violations in the military dictatorship took place.

Before taking office, however, Néstor Kirchner had no background or interest in human rights. During the time of the last military junta he and his wife and successor Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, had fled from their studies in La Plata to internal exile in the south. In Santa Cruz, the

¹² Obituary: former Argentina President Nestor Kirchner, BBC News, 27 October 2010

¹³ Argentina elections: Highs and lows of 12 years of the Kirchners, The Telegraph, 10 December 2015

¹⁴ Judges Julio Nazareno and Adolfo Vázquez resigned before being impeached. Judges Eduardo Molino O'Connor and Guillermo López resigned in similar circumstances. Under the new system introduced by Kirchner, potential appointments to the Supreme Court would be vetted by the human rights organisations. See nuevo sistema para nombrar jueces, *La Nación*, 14 August 2003

¹⁵ La Argentina fracturada que Kirchner quiso evitar, *El País*, 19 May 2013

¹⁶ Here Congress built on Alfonsín's precedent in declaring the military's self-amnesty null and void in 1983.

place of Kirchner's birth, they represented banks and other financial organisations that filed foreclosures.¹⁷ It is said that their office defended military repressors accused for their part in the dictatorship. When Carlos Menem backed out of the 2003 election, Kirchner was declared president with 22 per cent of the vote. This is the lowest mandate of any Argentina leader. Lacking legitimacy, Kirchner turned to a tried and tested Peronist tactic. Where Juan Domingo Perón had inculcated a working-class consciousness in order to secure enough support to carry himself to the Presidency (see chapter one), Kirchner hijacked the human rights movement to secure the votes he needed, this time of the middle classes. The Kirchners never recovered from accusations of opportunism and hypocrisy in this area. Former chief prosecutor in the Trial of the Juntas Julio Strassera, recalled how of the five thousand depositions that had come across his desk in preparation for the trial not one had been signed by anyone with the name Kirchner.¹⁸

Unlike Néstor Kirchner, Raúl Alfonsín had a background and demonstrable commitment to human rights. Alfonsín was a founding member and former vice-president of the Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights). The APDH, as we noted in chapter six, played in key role in denouncing the human rights violations that were taking place during the dictatorship. A lawyer by training, Alfonsín remained in Buenos Aires during the dictatorship and represented political prisoners. When the dictatorship fell, he put human rights at the centre of his campaign. His electoral slogan, *Somos la vida*, was taken directly from the movement. Alfonsín was driven by the conviction that a liberal democracy could never recover from such devastating human rights violations if nothing was done about the military's crimes (Nino 1996). Human rights were thus the ethical cornerstone of his administration. This marked him out against his opponent, Peronist candidate Ítalo Luder. Luder had given assurances that he would respect the military's amnesty if he was elected.¹⁹ It was also unprecedented in Latin America and in much of the world.²⁰ Spain had already by that point sealed its transition to democracy through its *Pacto del Olvido*. Chile would strike only for truth and as much justice as possible when its own dictatorship collapsed a few years later.

Alfonsín's approach was encapsulated by the mechanisms that he and his team of advisors devised to prosecute the struggle for truth and justice. These were based on the truth

¹⁷ The Kirchners 'never shook off allegations that they ... had benefitted financially under military rule', Legacy of leader who brought Argentina out of crisis, *BBC News*, 27 October 2010

¹⁸ "Los Kirchner no firmaron nunca un hábeas corpus", *La Nación*, 13 December 2014; "En la dictadura, los Kirchner sólo hicieron plata", *La Política Online*, 23 September 2010; La verdadera historia de los Kirchner, *La Nación*, 17 February 2010; The awkward couple – Argentina and the Pope, *the Economist*, 23 May 2013.

¹⁹ According to Graciela Fernández Meijide, this was one of the reasons why support among the wider Argentine society arrived late to the notion of securing justice for the crimes of the dictatorship; many people assumed simply that the Peronists would secure the presidency and the military's amnesty would remain in force. Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide.

²⁰ Portugal and Greece had by that point also prosecuted former members of their military juntas; Sikkink (2011).

commission of 1983 to '84 and the 1985 Trial of the Juntas (see chapter six).²¹ CONADEP, as we have noted, documented the abuses of the military junta in a manner that was systematic and beyond reproach. The commission's final report, *Nunca Más*, contributed evidence that was used as the corpus for the trials that followed. Crucially, it was also written in a manner that was accessible. This helped the history of events to reach a broader audience. Alfonsín's pursuit of a liberal democratic polity underscored by the ethical flagstone of human rights created the space for other advances in this area. During his tenure a forensic anthropology team emerged in Argentina.²² The EAAF is world-renowned. It continues its work today to try and identify the remains of the disappeared, and to reunite these remains wherever possible with their relatives.²³ He also worked with the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo to create a national genetics bank, thus helping to aid the identification of the grandchildren of the Abuelas, or *nietos*, who as the children of the *desaparecidos* had been forcibly removed from their biological families and given to the regime's supporters to be brought up.

The governments of Raúl Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner can be understood to have been the high watermarks of the political logics of memory that I have identified in this thesis. What separated them were not only the instruments that each invoked or devised to pursue their respective public politics of human rights, nor their trajectory in the human rights struggle. Rather, it was their understanding of how the disappeared and the violence they were caught up in should be remembered as the basis for their respective politics of human rights. In both the truth commission and the trial of the juntas, as I noted in chapter six, the violence of the 1970s and '80s was carefully framed so as to regulate and construct the ontological subject of the *desaparecido* as a unique and individual person; a legal but not political subject; and an innocent victim. In this framing, *the disappeared could be humans, but not activists*. No mention was made as to any militancy they might have once had. No political ideals they were drawn to was alluded to or advanced.²⁴ The identification of the *desaparecidos* and the *nietos* as their *hijos* followed the same logic. As Michelle Bonner (2005) has argued, the data bank could be supported by the government because it presented the issue as a humane endeavour and sidestepped the controversy over 'whether or not the state recognized the disappeared as

²¹ Already by 1983 two other countries had attempted a truth commission. However, the attempts by Uganda and Bolivia did not reach a conclusion, and were widely seen to have failed. They did not produce a final report, and their existence was barely known.

²² In this the Madres were again instrumental.

²³ It is the EAAF, as we noted in chapters seven and eight, that gives *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* including Taty Almeida continued hope of finding their children's remains.

²⁴ Indeed, when the militancy of the disappeared was alluded to then this was on the part of the defendants, as senior commanders deliberately referred to the *desaparecidos* as terrorists and armed subversives. Ironically, they often did this by reproducing the same interpretive key that they sought to break down. That is, by referring to the disappeared individually, rather than as an indistinguishable mass, as the Montonero terrorist son of a member of CELS for example. See chapter six.

subversive' (2005:64).²⁵ The identification of the *nietos* is intended to reunite the person with their biological family, and thus to restore them to the relations that constitute their shared ontological being (Butler 2010). Clearly, it is the unique and irreplaceable person who matters here for the families. Not any child will do, as Clara de Israel reminded us earlier. For Néstor Kirchner and his wife, on the other hand, what was important was not who the disappeared were but what they were. Kirchner's public politics of human rights vindicated not the individual but the population of *desaparecidos*, undistinguishable among themselves. In successive speeches, Kirchner spoke of wanting to secure a 'more just' nation;²⁶ 'a more equitable country, with social inclusion, struggling against unemployment and injustice.'²⁷ He echoed, and used the power of the state to accentuate, the memory of the *desaparecidos* as a revolutionary brigade of 30,000 militants who fought for social justice and even democracy. In this portrayal, *the disappeared could be militants, but not human beings*. What mattered was the continuation of their ideals, as ideals that nonetheless continued to be instantiated through the acts of their being remembered (see chapter eight).

Intriguingly, but as so often before, the two political logics of memory that propelled these rival politics came to a head in the same instrument as a means of framing and re-framing the reality of the past. This instrument was the prologue to the CONADEP report, *Nunca Más*. The original prologue was written by Ernesto Sabato. Writing in 1984, Sabato had authored the violence as one that took place between the military and the terrorist organisations. This came to be known as the *teoría de los dos demonios*. Sabato is likely to have drawn here on Raúl Alfonsín's interpretation. By this point, Alfonsín had already signed decrees 157 and 158 authorising the arrest of senior commanders from both camps, seeing both the military junta and the terrorist leadership as equally culpable for the violence that engulfed the nation in the recent past. In 2006, the prologue was redrafted under the presidency of Néstor Kirchner. Moving away from the notion of the two demons, the revised draft re-wrote the history of the same period using the interpretive key of state terrorism alone (Lessa 2013). The violence of the guerrilla and that of the state could not be equated, it argued. Systematic state violence was operationalised 'when the guerrilla had already been militarily defeated' (CONADEP 2006:9). And anyway, the dictatorship had not been embroiled in a battle against terrorism and Marxist subversion but neo-liberalism, as a way of life that would supposedly have put in jeopardy the previous years' advances in social change. The disappeared and the violence they

²⁵ Menem's reparations policy, unveiled in 1994 as a result of pressure from CELS and the Inter-American Court, was a further instance of the importance to the state of avoiding this issue. As Bonner notes: 'The state [could] compensate families without recognizing that the disappeared were not subversives or terrorists' (2005:66). Under this policy, each family of a *desaparecido* is able to claim A\$240,000. The policy was extended under successive governments, including that of Néstor Kirchner.

²⁶ Discurso de Néstor Kirchner: Acto de asunción presidencial ante la Asamblea Legislativa, 25 de mayo de 2003.

²⁷ Speech on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the military junta at the former ESMA.

were caught up in were thus reframed – using the same instrument – as a struggle in which the disappeared had fought for social justice. The new text even repeated the claim that there were 30,000 disappeared (see chapters seven and nine). This was despite it being added to the same volume that had so meticulously found evidence of 8,961 disappeared.²⁸ Whereas Alfonsín has been accused of propagating the theory of the *dos demonios*, there are those who see in the Kirchners’ politics of memory the theory of *ángeles y demonios*. For one commentator, the re-draft makes it appear ‘as if [the disappeared] were a chorus of unarmed angels who were prevented from realising their ideals through the dark forces of evil.’²⁹

Francesca Lessa (2013) argues that memory narratives and transitional justice instruments are not stable but evolve and change over time (see chapter two). Following ‘critical junctures’, ‘several narratives surface’ to suggest possible interpretations of the violent past ‘and they acquire different levels of legitimacy and appeal within society depending on how compellingly such narratives present a contested past’ (2013:19). That some groups are able to secure legitimacy for their interpretive schema and others are not allows ‘some narratives to become hegemonic, while marginalizing others in the societal realm’ (2013:3). Those narratives that are marginalised will then remain ‘latent’ in society. Lessa discriminates between three phases which she believes characterise the Argentinian ‘trajectory’ from political violence to democracy: Truth and Limited Justice (1983-1985), Impunity Laws and Pardons (1986-2002) and the Return of Prosecutions and Memory (2003-2012). The first and last are seen as the two phases of accountability in the country’s transition.

The two political logics of memory that I have sketched in this thesis correspond to the ‘two phases’ of accountability that Francesca Lessa describes. The presidencies of Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner were the apogee of the two logics. These logics reiterate the importance of continuity as well as change in our understanding of the way the memory of the disappeared has been constructed and re-constructed over time. However, in doing so they suggest that the government might not select from a suite of narratives before conveying legitimacy upon one but may in fact drive or *co-opt this struggle* to the mutual benefit of both. In helping to shape the *desaparecidos* as innocent victims, the truth commission and trials were not the direct “application” of Alfonsín’s thinking in terms of human rights. Nor is it the case that Kirchner “applied” the discourses of memory that had been there since the *siluetazo*, *show del*

²⁸ This number was embellished by Kirchner’s introduction of a new category of victim in the 2006 edition: the victim of summary execution. This category includes militants who were killed as part of armed confrontations with the police or those who had died in revolutionary justice by their terrorist peers. As part of the reparations policy unveiled by Alfonsín and Menem, and extended by Kirchner, relatives of these persons as the newly-classified “disappeared” also now receive state reparations. See *Polémica por una lista de indemnizaciones*, *La Nación*, 5 September 2011

²⁹ “Los Kirchner le deben mucho a Verbitsky, por dar contenido a su gobierno”, Interview with Ceferino Reato, *La Política Online*, 19 December 2010.

horror and *aparición con vida*. Rather, each inserted his politics of memory into the historical trajectory that had been configured and re-configured over space and time within a wider expanded field. Their interventions shaped, and were shaped by, these competing political logics. As two of the most important administrations since the restoration of democracy, they showed the flexibility and flux of the politics of memory in Argentina; as a politics that could be co-opted as well as internally driven by an incoming administration with previous experience or none in human rights, to the benefit of both the state and the relatives of the disappeared.

human rights norms and social logics

If Raúl Alfonsín and Néstor Kirchner's presidencies can be understood as the high-water marks of the political logics of memory that I have elaborated in this thesis, then where does Argentina go from here? What does it mean when new president Mauricio Macri, refuses to enter into debate about the disappeared, and enter into the field? If the collective memory of the disappeared, as a memory that shapes and regulates the politics of transition in Argentina really is defined by two political logics of memory, then where did these logics ultimately come from, and where do they leave Argentine politics and society in the years to come? How far can we attribute the political logics that have done so much to regulate the memory of the disappeared to the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and other relatives, who have done so much to prosecute the struggle for human rights, truth and justice in Argentina? Let me take the last of these questions in this section, before considering the remaining questions in what remains of this conclusion.

When the disappeared disappeared, their relatives sought to find out what had happened to them. They trawled the Interior Ministry and the morgues, and went to look for them at hospitals, military barracks and newspaper offices. The mothers – it was often safer for the mothers to enquire – asked the military government to clarify the whereabouts of those who had suddenly disappeared. They demanded that if their sons and daughters had been accused of a crime then they be charged and tried in a court of law. If not, then they asked that they be set free. Almost universally at this point,³⁰ they demanded the return of the missing person as a person-as-such: that is, a person with a name, a face and an identity uniquely their own. For Clara de Israel, for example, it was not enough that she had five children: she demanded the safe return of her daughter Teresa. The mothers' search for their loved ones was a search to restore their relations in their relations and as the relations in which they constituted their being and their meaning. It was a search riven in the mothers' DNA. Juana de Pargament told a police officer that if he disappeared tomorrow, his mother would join them arm-in-arm, just

³⁰ Where those groups such as the Families already existed, as a group with strong communist leanings, they did not vindicate the militancy of the disappeared or advocate for their ideals as a group.

like all the rest (see chapter six). Following the visit of the CIDH to Argentina in 1979, it became clear to many (though not all) mothers that their children would not return home.³¹ As a result, they pushed for justice to be secured for what had happened to them – *japarición con vida!* – and for the perpetrators to face trial.

In their search for truth and justice the Madres did not reveal the party membership or political beliefs of their children, if they had them. Alberto Pargament was a doctor of psychiatry, with no known militancy. Teresa Israel was a member of the Communist Party.³² Nor did they mention if their sons or daughters had been members of armed terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) or the Montoneros. Ana María Baravalle was an *ERPista*. So too was Alejandro Almeida. The *hábeas corpus* that the Madres filed with the judiciary and the depositions they sent to international human rights organisations including Amnesty International or the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights did not ask for, and were not used to give, information on any political militancy the disappeared may have had (see chapter six). To have provided this information, Graciela Fernández Meijide confided to me, would have amounted to a death sentence.³³ When the military junta collapsed, and the death sentences ceased, they did not add this information. The mothers knew better than most that something else was needed – or something ought to be masked – if they were to gain recognition from Argentine society for the plight of those who remained missing and whose fate was still unknown, and thus be able to prosecute their struggle for the truth and justice for what had happened to them to be realised.

It might be argued that the logics of memory that I have elaborated as constitutive alongside the frames to the field of memory in Argentina derive from the international norms of human rights (see chapter six). Through the emergence of inter/national NGOs (such as Amnesty International or Americas Watch, today Human Rights Watch), regional bodies (including the CIDH, Inter-American Court and European Court), and the foreign policy of Jimmy Carter in the United States, human rights were gaining in ascendancy. They earned a precedency that they had not enjoyed since the shadow of World War Two (Moyn 2012, Sands 2017, Sikkink 2011). Following its founding in 1961 – the same year that Sabato published *héroes y tumbas* – Amnesty defined its support for prisoners of conscience as support for:

³¹ Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide, 8 August 2014.

³² Base de Datos, Parque de la Memoria. Correct as at 13 December 2017.

³³ Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide, 8 August 2014.

'any person who is physically restrained (by imprisonment or otherwise) from expressing (in any form of words or symbols) any opinion which he [sic] honestly holds and which does not advocate or condone personal violence. We also exclude those people who have conspired with a foreign government to overthrow their own.'³⁴

The key passages in this text are the final passages. Amnesty's activism for human rights victims was based on, and limited to, those who did not advocate or condone violence and who had not attempted to overthrow their home governments. Amnesty visited Argentina in November 1976. The forms that were distributed by the APDH to allow the mothers to make depositions to the CIDH from 1976 onwards were drafted by Amnesty as a result of its earlier work in Chile. The APDH continued to work in close co-operation with the organisation, with Graciela Fernández Meijide visiting them in person at some point between 1979 and 1980 to corroborate the accounts of women who had survived captivity in ESMA and who had fled to exile abroad (see chapter eight).

How far should we attribute the production of the *desaparecidos* as innocent victims to international human rights norms? Kathryn Sikkink (2011) has put forward the argument that we are witnessing a 'justice cascade.' The notion of a cascade refers to the increasing global purchase of the norm of individual criminal accountability for human rights violations. Sikkink argues that 'ideas and practices about individual criminal accountability for human rights' become norms (2011:230). The norms 'come directly from domestic legal systems' (2011:244). Once established, they spread and diffuse regionally and internationally due to their 'intrinsic power' and the efforts of a 'pro-change alliance' including 'like-minded states and NGOs, who are in favour of change.' Sikkink's theory is therefore agent-centric. The increasing purchase of these norms is dependent on the tireless activism of NGOs, regional organisations, state representatives and what she calls 'norm entrepreneurs' who see it as invidious that criminals can be held to account within states for their crimes but not human rights repressors who operationalise the full coercive apparatus of the state to murder and repress. In Argentina, this alliance included the *afectados* (Madres, Abuelas, Familiares) and solidarity organisations (APDH, SERPAJ, Liga de Derechos Humanos) as well as 'norm entrepreneurs' including Juan Mendez, Emilio Mignone and Patricia Tappatá de Valdez. It also included courageous actors such as Bob Cox, Jean-Pierre Bousquet, Tex Harris and Patricia Derian, who acted as nodes to pass *habeas corpus* and other *papelitos* up through this nexus to the Oval Office or newsrooms where they would then 'boomerang' (Keck and Sikkink 1999) and put pressure on the junta back home (see chapter six).

The situating within an emerging international human rights architecture played an important part in the struggle of activists for truth and justice in Argentina. It enabled these activists to

³⁴ I owe this point to Stefanie Grant.

leap-frog the insidious and pervasive state of repression and denial that existed at home, and direct a malleable power against the military regime. In helping to mould the *desaparecido* in her absence as an innocent victim it made it more likely that a response would be owing not just in Washington, New York and Brussels but in Buenos Aires, Mendoza and Córdoba too. As an apparatus that Michel Foucault would recognise (1991), the idea that a discursive nexus emerged to constitute the subject through its various tactics, strategies, instruments and technologies suffers from the limitations that are frequently positioned against such 'infernal machine[s]' (Bourdieu 1992). Though it is agent-centric, this explanation attributes too little agency to the actors whose struggle was paramount, and too much determinism to the tactics and technologies such as the NGOs and forms they used that might be said to have resulted in them coming to be constituted in the way that they were. More persuasive, I would like to suggest, is the argument that the norms that shaped the framing of the violence and the construction of the subjects of the disappeared were internal and not external to Argentine society. What I would like to argue, then, by way of a conclusion to this thesis is that the logics of memory relate instead to the norms of recognition that help to determine whether a society considers a person worthy of being recognised and thus remembered in their claim.

In this thesis, I have engaged repeatedly with Judith Butler's (2006, 2010) ideas on the frames of violence, the field of representability and the norms of recognition. In doing so, I have been able to build a better understanding of how it is that the collective memory of the disappeared has been so heavily and yet subtly regulated and framed. Butler's work on the grievability of lives has helped me to understand how the social construction in and through memory of the subject who is to be remembered (or not) does not take place prior to social contract and its interpellation by a viewer but is always already performatively enacted with this contract in mind. That the US government would frame the victims of its (future) violence in the Middle East so as to forestall an affective response among folk back home prompted me to think of how *frames of the memory of violence* might have been used in extraordinarily dynamic and innovative ways to elicit or forestall a similar reaction among a public as one which takes place over time rather than space. In this investigation I have understood these frames to include everything from memorials and practices of memory to transitional instruments and social manifestations. The idea of the frames of memory of violence has helped me to explore the paradox of memory in Argentina; that is, how the turn towards such innovative, open and new frames as the means for a population to work through its past has resulted in fewer, clearly-defined interpretations. In chapter four, I left open the idea of the providence of these norms of recognition. I would now like to return to this question.

Butler's concept of grievability allows us to see how the political logics of memory that I have traced in this thesis are always also social logics. Specifically, it allows us to understand how the disappeared have always already been co-constituted and framed in Argentine collective memory *according to the invisible hand of society*. Working in tandem with international organisations, heads of state, solidarity organisations, 'norm entrepreneurs' and even at times alongside the new political classes including Kirchner and Alfonsín, the relatives of the disappeared were instrumental in framing the reality of the past violence in such a way as to configure the field of memory in Argentina and stimulate or retard an affective and/or political response to the disappearances. The relatives were indispensable then to the operation of the twin logics of memory. But they did not create the logics. The logics are not the expression of their reason and rationality. They did not shape them at will; nor do others interpret them at random. Rather, it was society's invisible hand – it was the logic of society – that resulted in the *desaparecidos* being represented and remembered as one of two predominant types of subject. Just as it is the logic of society that continues to define and configure this field as the field into which young Argentines are socialised, the contours of which they use to construct their own relation to the violent past. Graciela Fernández Meijide suggests that 'you cannot argue with the Madres' de Plaza de Mayo. 'It's pointless,' she suggested during our interview, 'you cannot debate with them.' But the inability to reason with the Madres stems *not from their lack of reason but that of society*. If the collective memory of the disappeared in Argentina sometimes appears illogical, irrational or unreasonable, with its quirky *aparición con vida*, its *escraches* and *siluetazos*, there is nothing illogical about this memory or the way it was made. The memory of the disappeared in Argentina was fashioned in an image, or two images, according to two political logics in order to secure the support of the wider Argentine public. If it hadn't been, then it is almost certain that the memory of the disappeared would have disappeared along with their physical bodies.

Human rights organisations produced the disappeared as a subject, or as two subjects: the person-as-such and the revolutionary figure. It could be argued that they produced them as such in accordance with an emerging discursive infrastructure of international human rights norms. More persuasive is the argument that these organisations framed the violence, configured the field, and produced the ontological subject of the *desaparecidos* in this way because *this is how they were allowed to produce and remember them* if they were to gain legitimacy and recognition for the disappeared among those whose support they needed if they were to continue this struggle. The refusal of Argentine society to countenance terrorists as humans who are deserving of being remembered and thus mourned created the negative feedback loop, and the social logic, that helped to regulate the disappeared as they were being

produced and re-produced in collective memory. This was not prior to social contract, and before the exchange, but constitutive of it. It is said that a society gets the politicians it deserves. Does it also gain the disappeared it deserves? Perhaps we can say that *it was society that produced the disappeared*. It was society that regulated at every frame in the constitutive field through its invisible hand the disappeared as they came to be re-membered, re-made and dis-disappeared in and through this social memory.

humanos y héroes a la misma vez

As I prepared to leave Buenos Aires following my period of fieldwork, I attended an event in August 2014 at the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires. The event was to mark the identification of the remains of Lila Epelbaum. Lila Epelbaum had disappeared at the age of twenty in 1976. She had studied at the Colegio before beginning a degree at the University of Buenos Aires. The Colegio was also the school where relatives had gathered in 1996, and from where the idea for the park of memory was born (see chapter five). Lila was one of three children of Renée Epelbaum, all of whom were forcibly disappeared. Renée died in 1998, without discovering the remains of her daughter. Lila's remains were identified in 2014 through the work of the EAAF. Members of the EAAF were present at the ceremony, along with Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora, Secretary of State Claudio Avruj, and Bob Cox. When the Madres entered the main hall, wearing their *pañuelos blancos*, a sudden silence washed over the audience in respect. As part of the remembrance ceremony, Lila Epelbaum's registration certificate and her photograph were displayed on a large overhead projector. Accompanying one slide were the words: '*Hoy podemos despedir a Lila.*'³⁵ No mention was made of any political beliefs or ideals that Lila might once have had. Following the ceremony, her remains, held in a small brown coffin, were taken to be buried privately in a *tumba* and cemetery in Buenos Aires the following weekend.

At another ceremony I attended in March the same year, human rights organisations and artists came together to remember the life of Juan Gelman. This time the ceremony was held at the Haroldo Conti cultural centre in the former ESMA (see chapter five). Present that day was Gelman's *nieta (recuperada)* Macarena Gelman. Born in captivity to *desaparecidos* to his daughter-in-law María García Iruretagoyena, Macarena Gelman had been stolen and given up for adoption by the military regime. Brought up as María Macarena Taurino Vivian, she was identified and returned to her biological family in 2005.³⁶ Juan Gelman was a popular poet in Argentina and Uruguay. At the ceremony to mark his passing, artists remembered his contribution through the media of art and dance. Macarena Gelman also gave a short speech.

³⁵ Today we can say goodbye to Lila.

³⁶ Mi nombre es María Gelman, *El País*, 28 April 2005

No mention was made of Juan Gelman's militancy. Gelman had risen to a senior rank of the Montoneros before leaving it. His son and daughter-in-law were members of the same terrorist organisation.³⁷

Where does Argentina go from here? Since the resumption of the human rights trials in 2006 many commentators have spoken of their hope for a brighter democratic future. Indeed, human rights activists and scholars highlight its experience as the exemplary model for other nations to follow. The central claim here is that by remembering the past and using this memory to guide the struggle for a politics of justice and truth, societies can follow Argentina's example and prevent further violence in the future. Ricardo Gil Lavedra, has written for example that the pursuit of justice for human rights atrocities is a positive thing in countries where institutions and respect for the law was still relatively weak.

'In societies like ours where there is very weak compliance with the law, where the authorities tend to put themselves above it and [where there] exists little understanding of the inalienable vigilance of human rights, the work of the judiciary applying the law in respect to the gravest violations helps to strengthen respect for human rights and the law.'

The trials were not to 'condemn the bloody past,' the former prosecutor in the trial of the juntas argued, 'but to look to a human rights-respecting future'³⁸

Argentina has done everything scholars and others working from transitional justice's normative and positivist purview have asked of it (Hite 2015, Sikkink 2014, Crenzel 2011, Balardini 2016). The line on its 'overall trend towards accountability' graph soars inexorably upwards in one account, despite some regression (Balardini 2016:71). Yet, it is still to locate a space in which its politics of transition as a politics of memory might satisfy scholars operating from the more critical, interpretivist tradition (Andermann 2009, Huysen 2003, Bell and Di Paolantonio 2009, see chapter two). Argentina's transition might therefore be considered as much a model exemplar as an exemplary model. The political logics that I have traced map this literature in transitional justice and memory studies as it divides along the axes of positivism-interpretivism. It does so with one important exception. As I demonstrated in chapter eight, there is a lacuna at the heart of the memory of the disappeared. This lacuna has to do with who the disappeared really were. In the regulated field of Argentine collective memory, the disappeared can be human, but not activists or they can be (unarmed) activists but not human beings. They cannot, it seems, be both.

³⁷ Base de Datos, Parque de la Memoria, correct as at 13 December 2017.

³⁸ Las cuentas del pasado, La Nación, 6 December 2017 (my translation)

This is not *dos demonios*, nor *ángeles y demonios*. It is not even the case that the disappeared were '*humanos, no héroes*' (Fernández Meijide 2013) if by this we mean that the one cannot exist alongside the other. The history of memory in Argentina that I have traced through its cultural biography in this thesis using the park as a prism and guide attests to an inability to recognise that as humans *we are often both angels and demons and humans and heroes at the same time*. We are deeply human to those whom we love, and are loved by, and those who we may come to see as helping to constitute who it is we really are. We are capable of reaching for the highest ideals. We are also deeply flawed. Juan Gelman wrote beautiful poetry. But he also helped to lead a terrorist organisation that killed, tortured and maimed, and he left little behind that suggested that he repented for this part of his past and this violence. So too did Alejandro Almeida, whose own poetry and membership of a sister group, the ERP, is seen by his mother as evidence of a social commitment and not his training in medicine. Ana María Baravalle tended to the sick, in hospitals and in shanty towns. Her mother will never know what she did for others (see chapter eight). But she also joined a Revolutionary People's Army that sought to bring another society into being through armed violence.

I'm not sure that to argue this point is necessarily to say with Jenny Edkins (2011) that we cannot locate the full personhood of a person; that memory's perfidy means that we are always destined to fail (though I do agree that memory will always be contested and never complete). Membership of a terrorist organisation is real, as real as the written word on the page or the spoken word of a person on a bus late one night. And I don't wish to argue simply the opposite: that each of us has a real essence, a deep, underlying significance that only the truth through memory beyond discourse can help to recover (see chapter three). My point is simply that as humans and heroes and angels and demons at the same or different times over what are often complex and complicated existences we each of us lead thick, sticky, ambiguous and political lives. These are the lives that are missing from Argentine collective memory as it has been patiently and carefully configured and re-configured within the field across forms of representation, testimony and practice; these are the lives of the missing that are missing as this memory has been carefully and historically regulated and framed. With such a lacuna at the heart of their shared social memory, it will be difficult for Argentineans to locate the shared social existence that mourning might reveal to them (Butler 2010), nor work through 'contentious co-existence' (Payne 2008) to a form of radical and democratic egalitarianism that is theirs, is shared.

Writing in a very different context, Ai Kobayashi and Bart Zino (2010) noted how a group of Japanese war dead lay unattended by their kin in an Australian cemetery for seventy years. As soldiers who had died in captivity in New South Wales and not in combat, their deaths, and

their lives, were seen through prevailing Japanese norms as shameful. And then the norms changed. As the norms changed it allowed these soldiers to be recognised and for their lives to be mourned by Japanese society as they had been lived: as soldiers, who had not died a heroic death but who had done their duty, a difficult duty, and lost their lives doing it. Argentine society is still awaiting a comparable and organic transformation in its prevailing social logics and norms. The names and faces that we have traced at the park in the memorial practices and on the memorial walls are a political depoliticisation. Those who visit the park are therefore asked through these names and faces to mourn as 'tourists of history' (Sturken 2007) the persons who were forcibly disappeared but not the political actors, or political lives, of those who died in a political conflict. The figures and silhouettes that we have traced in the urban social imaginary are a political depoliticisation, too. Visitors to the Plaza de Mayo, ESMA and elsewhere are asked as tourists of memory to consent to a memory that instantiates a set of safe and sanitised revolutionary ideals that the majority of the disappeared did not sign up to in life. By mourning or refusing to mourn these lives as depoliticised lives, in the park and elsewhere, we facilitate their perambulation via memory in death around cultural norms and values that are thus to be left intact. Unbeknown to those who erected the banner, the idea of the emptying out of the park and the politics of human rights can have two meanings, and must have two meanings, if it is a memory that requires the 'emptying out of the substance of the act.'³⁹ It is not the park and its public politics but the *desaparecido* himself through this public politics that has been carefully and historically emptied of its meaning and its significance.

implications, limitations and next steps

The lacuna that I identify in this thesis may be the lacuna in my own methodology. The number of interviews with relatives of the disappeared was small. Only one interview was carried out with a Madre from the Asociación branch, although this branch is a corporate body and Mercedes Meroño claimed to speak for the group as a whole. There is a significant gap in my analysis in terms of recent Spanish-language texts. As a study of the collective memory of the disappeared, the thesis also lacks attention to the way that this field has been re-configured through literature and film as alternative cultural frames. It may be that there are testimonies, representations and practices to be found on the political struggle of the innocent victims or the humanity of the revolutionary activists if one looks at cultural frames other than those explored in the cultural biography here. It might be that there are alternative discourses that emerge, for example, if one speaks to actors who shared the *desaparecidos'* activism in the

³⁹ Juan José Gómez Centurión, sobre los desaparecidos: "No es lo mismo 8.000 verdades que 22.000 mentiras," *La Nación*, 29 January 2017

1970s or who were born into it subsequently as their biological kin. Of course, such avenues might reproduce the same lacuna. Ludmila da Silva Catela's interviewees (2000) spoke to her of the 'years of militancy' not militancy itself. They also showed a similar tendency to idealise the disappeared; 'the like of which we will never see again' (2000:72). Do the *nietos* and HIJOS too, fight their fight, speak their truth and practice their practice, as a fight, a truth, a practice and a political logic that they too help to perform and performatively instantiate in the act of telling and doing it now?

An important point to note is that not all 'memory entrepreneurs' (Jelin 2003) or memory-makers have equal power to enter into the field of collective memory and re-configure the way the past is written, erased, re-written, read and understood by the wider Argentine public. As Ludmila da Silva Catela again argues persuasively: 'The madres/abuelas and hijos are at the summit of the hierarchy; then the brothers and sisters, and lastly, the wives and husbands' (2000:73). Cecilia Sosa (2011) has written of the 'heteronormative matrix' of memory in Argentina. Clearly, the Madres' power to shape collective memory through their testimony and their interventions in practice and cultural representation is greater than that of other actors whose images and narrative discourses may be different – and more political. Other actors must therefore insert themselves and their discourses into this field as it is already powerfully and historically delineated. This is true not only of those within the human rights community but those who approach it from without as well. When Macri, Avruj, Gómez and Lopérfido enter this debate, they enter an expanded field, the contours, vectors and lines in-between which they speak are already densely configured. They may try to co-opt this movement. But their interventions, if they are to do more than merely provoke, will otherwise need to be expressed in relation to the existing expanded field of memory whose contours hold not only meaning but force, and legitimacy. Darío Lopérfido admitted to this tacitly when he argued: 'Argentine history says that it was the Montoneros who built our democracy when in reality they attacked it.'⁴⁰ Ceferino Reato conceded it too, when he complained that the government's sacrificing of Lopérfido was '*beyond reason*'⁴¹. For reason in this collective memory, as we have seen, is socially-constructed and regulated. There has never been a 'consensus' in Argentina about the violence that took place in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, despite Uki Goñi's fantasy. There has not even been a consensus within the human rights movement, although there has been an extraordinary slippage and cross-fertilisation across the two political logics of memory that help to define it. It is sometimes argued that intrusions such as these help to stimulate a form of debate that is conducive to democracy (Payne 2008). But 'public debate' of the kind that Macri and de Bonafini, Lopérfido and de Carlotto, espouse

⁴⁰ Por qué el Gobierno entregó a Lopérfido, *Infobae*, 11 June 2016.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

might not 'help erode social polarization by creating a range of different perspectives on the past' (2008:34) if the field of debate is already circumscribed by representations of the past and the disappeared that befit its continued polarisation. Polarised logics of memory set the framework – and the frame-work – for the debate that follows, which constrain subsequent confessions. In sum, I do not argue that counter-narratives of thick and sticky political militancy do not exist. I argue, with Ludmila da Silva Catela (2001), Andreas Huyssen (2003) and Judith Butler (2010), that collective memory is not a marketplace (cf. Bilbija and Payne 2011) but an expanded field of representability, and a field of force, in which different discourses and logics have different legitimacy in relation to the greater or lesser power of actors to reconfigure this field.

Visitors to the park of memory situate themselves within this field in order to make sense of the recent violent past. They situate amidst its contours, as contours which – as Rubén Chabobo pointed out to me – they cannot ever see. In doing so, they activate the memorials as frames and help to co-constitute the meaning of the disappeared and their disappearances. The memories that they generate are fluid, but not random. Not random and yet not determined. Not determined and yet structured in some way. The visitors are predisposed towards two predominant interpretations of the past and what this past might mean to wider society today. Of course, this is not only the case for memory-makers but memory entrepreneurs too. Much as they claim to be innovative and new, *aquella mañana* (see chapter seven) and the *baldosas por la memoria* (see chapter five) are citational iterations of the existing logics and discourses. Though it has not been my standpoint in this thesis, this insight could be developed through a Bourdieusian analysis. This would seek to tease out the 'capital' that accrues to the Madres (Bourdieu [1980]). It would deepen the understanding of the contours of meaning in memory as the 'relations of force' that constitute the field (Bourdieu [1972], [1980], 1992). Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus would also help to illustrate how the construction of a society's collective memory takes place within a field in which actors are predisposed to strategies of thinking, acting and feeling which internalise structured structures as structuring structures, and thus internalise history, as the means of taking social action. Bourdieu wrote beautifully of the 'well-worn tracks' on which we tread when we take such action ([1972]). The expanded field of memory in Argentina has its own well-worn paths. In the park of memory and elsewhere in this expanded field, we walk along these tracks, and between these lines, across these contours and among these vectors, as tracks and lines and contours that we cannot ever see on the landscape. All we see are the names, and the silhouettes, among the frames of the memory of violence.

This thesis points to one further productive line of enquiry. Though it has not been situated in this literature, its findings hold potential implications for the scholarship on human rights. For it suggests that human rights might not automatically accrue to each human being. Indeed, it suggests that this accrual can be regulated over time and thus retroactively moderated and denied. My argument, that the collective memory of the disappeared has been regulated and framed in accordance with political logics and social norms that turn on whether a person will have been recognised and thus remembered as having lived a grievable life, is limited to Argentina. It suggests that Argentinean human rights organisations have configured the memory of the disappeared and the subjects of the disappeared in this memory to fit the cultural frames and norms of a society that is unwilling to recognise, and thus remember, those who participated in armed revolutionary violence. It does not explain why this might be the case. Yet, allowing for these limitations, this finding is consistent with anecdotal evidence from elsewhere. The suicide bomber who took part in the London terrorist attacks, Hasib Hussain, is mourned by his family on the anniversary of the attacks. He is ostracised by the community in Yorkshire and by Britain as a whole. As is the German pilot Andreas Lubitz, who took his own life and the lives of his passengers in the Barcelona air disaster. Lubitz' family is not welcome in the mourning community in Germany. We tend to think of human rights as alienable rights that accrue to each person on account of their being human (Donnelly 2003:7). This thesis appears to challenge this assumption. It is worth exploring further. What we might be dealing with here is a right to memory, *a right to be remembered as a human*. The human in human rights might not necessarily be whom we think.

annex

interviews

Interviews were conducted with the following people during fieldwork from August 2013 to August 2014:

Chile:

Marta Rocco, Marta Vega, Mónica Pílquil, Vilma Montoya, Gabriela Zuñiga (*Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos*, AFDD), Jon Benjamin (British Ambassador to Chile), Javier Maldonado (Human Rights advisor to British Embassy, Chile), Antonia García Castro (academic; author, *La Muerte Lenta de los Desaparecidos en Chile*, 2011), Carla Espinoza (academic, *Universidad de Chile*), Daniela Fuentealba (*Investigadora Archivista, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, Santiago), Felipe Aguilera (organising committee member, *Londres 38*), Ricardo Brodsky (Director, *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, Santiago).

Argentina:

Mirta Acuña de Baravalle, Nora de Cortiñas, Vera Jarach, Taty Almeida (*Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora*), Mercedes Meroño (*Madres de Plaza de Mayo Asociación*), Graciela Fernández Meijide (former member of APDH, author: *La Historia Íntima de los Derechos Humanos en la Argentina* (2009), Marcelo Brodsky (co-founder, member of the organising committee, *Parque de la Memoria*), Rubén Chabobo (Director, *Museo de la Memoria*, Rosario), Iván Wrobel (*Investigación y Monumento* team member, *Parque de la Memoria*), Cecilia Nisembaum (*Artes visuales* team member, *Parque de la Memoria*), Cristina Gómez Giusto (*Educación* team member, *Parque de la Memoria*), Claudio Avruj (Minister of State for Human Rights, Argentina), Ceferino Reato (journalist; author: *Disposición Final* (2012), *Viva la Sangre! Córdoba antes del golpe*, 2013), Marga Steinwasser (creative artist: *Química de la Memoria*), Helen Zout (visual artist: *Huellas de desapariciones*), Valeria Durán (academic, co-editor: *Topografías conflictivas, Memorias, espacios y ciudades en disputa*, 2012), Leonor Arfuch (academic, *Universidad de Buenos Aires*, author: *Identidades, sujetos y subjetividades*, 2006), Bob Cox (former editor, *Buenos Aires Herald*), Andrew Graham-Yooll (former journalist, *Buenos Aires Herald*; author: *Memoria del Miedo*, 2016 [1986]).

Uruguay:

Ignacio Errandonea (*Madres y Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos*), Elbio Ferrario (Director, *Museo de la Memoria*, Montevideo), Rafael Sanz (creative artist: *árbol familiar*).

original transcripts

bearing witness, proving fact, unmourning the undead relatives' testimony: original spanish quotations

Nora de Cortiñas:

p.163:

'La memoria es honrar a la gente que no está porque luchaba por todos, por nosotros, por un país distinto, por una situación económica y social que nos beneficiara a todos. Entonces los jóvenes de hoy toman la lucha por los Derechos Humanos pero no partiendo o volviendo al pasado, sino partiendo de que hubo una lucha popular que fue reprimida y que ellos quieren guardar este compromiso, llevarlo, para que no se olvide ese pasado funesto que tuvimos.'

'Memory is to honour those that are not here because they fought for us all, for us, for a different type of country, for an economic and social situation that benefits us all. So the young people of today take the fight for human rights, not starting from or returning to the past but starting from the [point that] there was a popular fight that was repressed and that they wish to safeguard this commitment, take it forward, so that this nefarious past that we had is not forgotten' (p.12).

p.163:

'digamos, ¿sabés qué? Me mueve más la lucha por ellos, la exigencia de la verdad y la justicia de otra manera, no yendo a poner una flor a una tumba (...) los desaparecidos son como un muerto sin tumba, entonces cuando pedimos, yo no pido el cuerpo de mi hijo, yo quiero que me digan qué pasó con mi hijo, no voy y le digo al funcionario "quiero el cuerpo de mi hijo." Pero hay gente, familiares, que sí quieren eso, que van a pedir "busquen, busquen en una tumba el cuerpo de mi hijo."'

'Let's say, do you know what? I'm more interested in the struggle for them, the demands for truth and justice of another kind, not going to lay a flower on a tomb, (...) The disappeared are like the dead without a grave, so when we ask for, I do not ask for the body of my son, I want them to tell me what happened with my son. I'm not going to say to a public servant: "I want the body of my son." But there are people, relatives, that yes, do want this. They go and ask: "look, look in the grave for the body of my son" (p.9).

Mercedes Meroño:

p.163:

'Nunca dimos a nuestros hijos por muertos, porque nadie se hizo cargo de eso. Nos tienen que decir quién, cómo y cuándo. Tampoco las madres buscamos cadáveres hoy por hoy; queremos hacer lo que nuestros hijos hacían, eso que te dije antes: estamos luchando por lo que ellos luchaban, que nos parece lo más importante, seguir la lucha que ellos hacían. No fallarle a nuestros hijos es seguir la lucha de ellos, por eso es que hay muchos jóvenes que siguen con nosotras, pensando lo que ellos pensaban, y creemos que lo más importante es reivindicarlos como eran ellos, y seguir la lucha que ellos hacían.'

'We've never given up our children as dead, because no-one ever assumed responsibility for that. They have to tell us who, how and when. Nor do we as mothers look for the bodies nowadays; we want to do what they did, which is what I was telling you about before: we are fighting for what they fought for, which to us seems the most important thing: we continue the fight that they undertook. That's why there are so many young people that follow us, thinking what they thought. And we believe that the most important thing is to vindicate them as they were, and continue the struggle that they began' (p.5).

p.163:

‘Después sí, empezamos a hablarnos, y nos que cada uno pensaba cómo era cada uno, fuimos aprendiendo de ellos. Te voy a decir, hay más que 30 mil, más de 30 mil desaparecidos ... Todos son revolucionarios, nosotros reivindicamos a nuestros hijos como revolucionarios, y nosotras también nos hicimos revolucionarias, por lo tanto, seguimos su ejemplo.’

‘Afterwards yes, we began to talk [among ourselves] and about what each one thought of how they were. We were learning about them. I’m going to tell you: there are more than 30,000, more than thirty thousand disappeared (...) They are all revolutionaries, we vindicate our children as revolutionaries, and ourselves also as revolutionaries, for which, we continue their example’ (p.4).

pp.163 – 164:

‘A nosotros nos parece que, como no los damos por muertos a nuestros hijos, creemos que la mayor memoria es seguir su lucha y hacer lo que ellos querían, y que no haya chicos que pasen hambre, que era por lo que ellos luchaban. Que todo el mundo tenga derecho a los que te dije antes: que vean trabajar a sus padres, que se pueda comer en familia, que puedan ir a la escuela, que tengan educación, que tengan derecho como ser humano a lo que todo ser humano necesita. Por eso luchaban nuestros hijos, y eso es lo que nosotros seguimos.’

‘To us, it seems that, given that we’ve never given up our children as dead, we believe that the best memory is to continue the fight and do what they wanted, so that there are no children that are hungry, which is what they fought for. That everyone has the right to what I told you before: that they see their parents work, that they can eat as a family, that they can go to school, that they have an education, that they have the right as a human being to whatever a human being needs. That’s what our children fought for, and this is what we continue’ (p.9).

Mirta Acuña de Baravalle:

p.166:

‘Digo, “Ana, ¿qué pasa, hoy no vas?” “No, ya le dije que hoy no iba, porque como es tu cumpleaños yo te lo voy a dedicar a vos.”’

‘I say, “Ana, what’s happened, are you not going today?” “No, I already told him that I wasn’t going today, because today is your birthday and I’m going to dedicate it to you.”’

p.167:

‘ya [era] una obsesión de alguna manera como para poder llegarle a las personas, aliviarles las penas, nosotros con Ana ... siempre había alguien que estaba necesitado de algo y bueno, y nosotros cómo, no íbamos a decir no, que no nos interesa, que se arreglen, no, pero por eso ella, a lo que voy, lo que sé, porque ella sabía ... siempre por todos lados, bueno Ana, un día encuentro un muchacho allí, venía de, ya veníamos de una marcha, la marcha del 24 de marzo, esto hace muchos años, en un colectivo a las dos de la mañana, así en un micro, iba lleno allí, parados, yo iba parada, de esto te estoy hablando hace no sé, treinta años, y veo que un muchacho allí en el pasillo pide permiso, permiso, y se acerca y me dice “¿usted es la mamá de Ana, no?” y le digo “Sí”, había otros muchachos, allí gente, pero él, antes de, me decía “usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí,” me decía, ¿cómo, cómo”. Dice “usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí, yo no le he vivido nunca más.” Entonces se hizo lugar, y me decía “yo todos los días miro a ver si en las listas está Ana” – porque él trabajaba en el Ministerio, para ... – “pero no, no aparece Ana, no aparece, pero ya le voy a contar.” Y estaba con ... “no sabe usted lo que hizo por mí, yo Ana desde que supe que no estaba ...” y esas cosas que te cuentan. Después yo ya me tenía que bajar, ya para ese entonces eran como las tres de la mañana, y él seguía y nos íbamos a dar, a conectar, pero yo ya después no lo ví. No sé que habrá hecho Ana por él. Dice “usted no sabe lo que hizo Ana por mí.” Y bueno, cosas que te cuentan.’

‘It was an obsession of some kind, to reach out to people, alleviate their suffering, for us with Ana ... there was always someone who was in need of something, and well, we weren’t going to say no, we’re not interested, let them sort it out themselves, no, but for this she, for what I, what I know, because she knew ... always everywhere, well Ana, one day I meet a young lad there, he was coming from, we were coming from a march, the march of the 24 March, this was a long time ago, in a bus, it was two in the morning, in a bus, it was full, we were standing up, I was standing up – I’m telling you

something that happened about thirty years ago – and I see a lad there in the aisle ask to go past, to get past, and he approaches me and he says to me “You’re Ana’s mum aren’t you?” and I say to him “yes.” There were others there, people there, but he, before he, he said to me “You don’t know what Ana did for me,” he said to me. “Pardon, pardon?” He says “*You don’t know what Ana did for me*, and no one has ever done anything like that for me since.” So he took his seat, and he said to me “every day I look through the lists to see if Ana’s name is there” – because he worked in the Ministry, to ... – “but no, Ana doesn’t appear, she doesn’t appear, but I’m going to tell you.” And he was with ... “*you don’t know what Ana did for me*. Since I found out she was missing ...” and these things that they tell you. After that I had to get off, at that point it had gone three in the morning, and he continued and we were going to meet, to meet up, but afterwards I never saw him again. *I don’t know what Ana must have done for him*. He says “*you don’t know what Ana did for me*.” And well, things like that that they tell you.’ (pp.27-18, ellipses in original).

Taty Almeida:

p.169:

‘... un periodista me pregunta qué había sentido yo el 24 de marzo, el día del golpe. Yo le digo “Mirá, yo te voy a contestar con la mente de la Taty de antes.”’

‘a journalist asks me how I had felt on the 24 March, the day of the coup. I tell him “Look, I’m going to answer with the mind of the Taty of before.”’ (p.3).

pp. 169 – 170:

‘A mí me costó mucho Daniel, darme cuenta, como yo digo “aterrizar”. Me costó mucho. Yo me acerqué muy tarde a Madres eh? Yo sabía que había un grupo de mujeres que iban a la plaza, pero yo decía “¿Y quiénes serán esas mujeres?” Además, con todo mi curriculum, todos milicos en la familia, yo decía “Uuh, van a pensar por allí que soy una espía”, ¿entendes? Hasta que me decidí, fines de los ochenta recién ¿eh? Fines de los ochenta fui a la plaza, fui a la casa de las Madres, que en esa época estábamos en la calle Uruguay, estábamos todos juntas. Recién en le ’86 nos separamos de Bonafini, ¿no? Bueno hasta ese momento todas juntas. Yo voy con mi hija Fabiana, porque tengo tres hijos: Jorge, Alejandro y María Fabiana. Bueno, en ese momento voy con Fabiana a la casa de las Madres y cuando entramos, vemos una pared llena de fotitos, fotitos, y dije “Ay, Dios mío, no soy la única.” Y me atendió, para mí, la madre con mayúscula, María Adela Gard de Antokoletz, una distinguida señora. Tenía su pelo blanco, me acuerdo, una señora grande, que ella buscaba, bueno, hasta hoy desaparecido, su hijo abogado Daniel Antokoletz, y me acuerdo que ella me atendió, fue la que ... y entonces me dijo lo único que se le preguntaba a una madre cuando se acercaba por primer vez: “¿A quién te falta a vos? ¿A quién te falta a vos?” No importaba política, religion, nada, era a quién nos faltaba. Bueno, cuando yo le conté a María Adela todo, hablamos [de] toda mi vida, todo, todo, yo me acuerdo que le dije “Ay, María Adela, que estúpida que he sido yo, qué estúpida” y me dice “No digas eso,” me dice, “Mirá, mi hijita” – como decía ella, ¿no? – “No digas eso, tal madre se acercó cuando fue su momento.’

‘It was very difficult for me Daniel, to realise, or as I say “land”. It was very difficult for me. I approached the Madres very late, eh? I knew that there was this group of women that was going to the plaza, but I said: “and who would they be, these women?” What’s more, with all my curriculum, all military in the family, I said “Ah, they’re going to think that I’m a spy.” Do you understand? Until I decided, at the end of the eighties, eh? At the end of the eighties I went to the plaza, I went to the House of the Madres, which in those days we were in Uruguay Street, we were [still] all together. Only recently in ’86 we separated from Bonafini, no? Well, until that point [we were] all together. I go with my daughter Fabiana, because I have three children Jorge, Alejandro and María Fabiana. Well, at that point I go with Fabiana to the House of the Madres and when we enter, we see a wall full of little photos, little photos, and I said “My God, I am not the only one.” I was met by who for me is the Mother with a capital letter: María Adela Gard de Antokoletz. A distinguished lady. She had white hair, I remember, a large woman, she was looking for, well, up to today a *desaparecido*, her lawyer son Daniel Antokoletz. And I remember that she assisted me, it was her that ... and so she said the only thing that was asked of a mother when she approached for the first time: “Who are you missing? Who are you missing?” Their politics, religion, anything else, didn’t matter. It was “who are you missing?” Well, when I told María Adela everything, we spoke of everything about my life, everything, everything, I remember that I said to her: “Ah, María Adela, how stupid I have been, how stupid!” And she says to me: “Don’t say that!” She says: “Look, my little daughter” – as she used to say, no – “Don’t say that! Every mother approached when it was her time” (pp.3-4).

p.170:

‘Por eso digo que Alejandro, esté por donde esté por allá arriba, muerto de risa ... yo digo ahora que ahora Alejandro tiene que estar, estoy segura, muerto de risa, y dirá “Mirá la gorilita de mierda en qué se convirtió” (ríe) y en buena hora, ¿no?’ ¿Qué sé yo? Son cosas que uno imagina, pero me lo dicen los compañeros de él: “Estate por segura lo orgulloso que tiene que estar Alejandro.”’

‘For this I say that Alejandro, wherever he is above, [would be] dying of laughter .. I say now that he would have to be – I’m sure of it – dying of laughter. And he would say: “Look at what that gorilla of shit has converted into” (she laughs) and in good time, no? What do I know? These are things that one imagines. But it’s what colleagues of his tell me: “You can be sure that Alejandro would be proud of you”’ (p.4).

Graciela Fernández Mejjide:

p.171:

‘... yo viajé a Europa, a hablar con un compañero de Pablo para preguntarle si Pablo tenía o no tenía militancia, él había logrado escapar porque cuando secuestraron a Pablo y a las chicas él estaba en Bariloche, por lo tanto la madre de Bariloche lo puso adentro de la Embajada de Italia y lo llevó, todavía sigue viviendo, olvido su nombre, en Francia, me lo encontré el año pasado en el Salón del Libro de Francia y me escribí con él.’

‘I went to Europe to speak to a colleague of Pablo’s and ask him if Pablo was a militant or not. He had managed to escape because when they kidnapped Pablo and the girls he was in Bariloche. As a result the mother of [the boy in] Bariloche put him straight in the Italian Embassy and they took him [to Italy]. He’s still living [there], I forget his name, I stumbled into him in France last year in the Book Fair and I wrote to him’ (p.18).

p.171:

‘Madres se quedó enganchada en la heroificación, y cualquier cosa que... no aguantan una discusión, ya no hay que discutir con ellas, no se puede, no se puede, y las pocas que quedan, como no han hecho un ejercicio de pensamiento libre, repiten como loros, siguen repitiendo, y yo tampoco las acuso, porque lo que nos pasó es del carácter de lo inhumano, y hay que tener mucho recurso interno para aguantarlo y para salir de esa situación, *yo no quise que a mí los militares me condenaran a ser la madre de Pablo, yo me salí de ese lugar*, me costó mucho, porque si vos te quedás en ese lugar terminás, primero idealizando al desaparecido, lo cual es lógico, siempre el que se muere es bueno, nunca se peleó, siempre es fantástico, y después, como es una lucha política, aunque no sea política partidaria, identificándote, entonces vos la oís a Estela Carlotto, no en estos días sino en algún momento, diciendo “nosotros luchamos por lo que luchaban nuestros hijos”, y es mentira, sus hijos eran revolucionarios, no querían la democracia.’

‘The Madres have remained stuck in the heroification [of the disappeared] and whatever happens, ... they can’t sustain a debate. There’s no point arguing with them, it’s not possible, it’s not possible, and the few that remain, given that they have not undertaken an exercise of free thinking, they repeat like parrots, they continue repeating, but nor do I accuse them, because what happened to us is of the character of the inhumane. And you have to have a lot of internal fortitude to deal with this and leave this situation. *I didn’t want the military to condemn me to being the mother of Pablo, I took myself out of this position*, it was very difficult, [but] if you stay in this position you end up, firstly, idolising the *desaparecido*, which is logical, always those that die are the good ones, they never fought, they are always fantastic, and afterwards, given that it is a political struggle, although not party political, [you end up] identifying yourself [with them]. So you hear Estela Carlotto, not at the moment but before, saying: “we fight for what our children fought for” and it’s a lie, their children were revolutionaries, they didn’t want democracy’ (p.22, emphasis added).

pp.171 – 172:

‘Era más institucional, pero además con otra mirada, que a mí me costó entender. Lo testimonial, Madres y demás, confrontaban a la sociedad, le decían “bueno, si no están con nosotros ustedes no sirven para nada.” Desde la APDH lo que se buscaba era ampliar las áreas de apoyo (...) ibas construyendo una forma de opinion. Ahora, al mismo tiempo, los que éramos padres allá de desaparecidos, que éramos pocos en comparación, íbamos a la vuelta de los jueves también, con las

Madres – y yo tengo mi pañuelo escrito y todo – eran las dos cosas. Vos hacías la confrontación testimonial pero entendías que solos no íbamos a ningún lado. Esta, y organizábamos un corpus con mirada hacia la justicia, pero cuidado eh, que no todos, porque aún dentro de la APDH había gente que no creía que iba a haber justicia, nunca, por lo tanto se acumulaban las cosas allí pero allí estaban, algunos apostábamos a que un día iba a haber justicia (...) era una pelea con los militares, pero una pelea más racional, ¿te das cuenta? Donde vos utilizabas las herramientas que podías utilizar, que te daba tu inteligencia y tu capacidad de juntar elementos y gente, por eso cuando se arma la CONADEP – que a mí no me invita el gobierno de entrada, quien pide que yo vaya es monseñor De Navares, que le dice a la Comisión “escuchen, nosotros acá no podemos procesar toda esa información, no sabemos cómo” y era verdad, tenían la mayor intención pero no estaban habituados. Yo me pasaba diez horas con los testimonios y con los familiares todos los días (...) – entonces él dijo “esto así no va” y les preguntó “¿quieren que traiga una persona que organice?” “sí, por favor” dijeron todos, éramos muy amigos, me llamó por teléfono y me dijo “andá a buscarme al Aeroparque” porque él viajaba desde Neuquén. Yo fui con mi auto, lo fui a buscar, y allí me ofreció, tardé dos días en convencerme y al final acepté, acepté porque me di cuenta que había que hacer todo el esfuerzo para que de allí saliera lo mayor. Además yo me había prometido que los iba a ver en la cárcel y que iba a trabajar nada más que para verlos en la cárcel. Y al final se me dio.’

‘It was [a] more institutional [approach], but also with a different perspective, which cost me a lot to understand. The witnesses, the *Madres* and others, confronted society, they said “well, if you’re not with us then you’re not good for anything.” What the APDH did was to widen the coalition of support (...) you keep trying to build public opinion. Now, at the same time, those of us who were parents of the disappeared, and we were few in comparison, we went to the weekly *vuelitas* as well with the *Madres* – I have my headscarf already written with the name and everything – [we did] both things. You did the personal confrontation but you understand that on its own it’s not going to lead anywhere. So, we organised a corpus with a view to getting justice, but be careful eh, it wasn’t everyone, because even within the APDH there were people that didn’t believe that there was going to be justice, never, for which they took part in gathering things together but that was it. Some of us bet that one day there was going to be justice (...) It was a fight with the military, but a more rational fight. Do you see? Where you use the tools you can use, that give you your intelligence and your capacity to bring things and people together. For that, when CONADEP was set up – and I wasn’t invited by the government at first, the person who asks me to go is Monseñor De Navares, who says to the Commission “listen, those of us here, we can’t process all this information, we don’t know how” and it was true; they had the best intentions but they weren’t used to it (I spent ten hours with the testimonials and with the relatives every day) (...) – so he said “it’s not going to happen like this” and he asked them, “do you want me to bring someone who can organise?” “Yes, please” everyone said – we were all friends – he called me by telephone and he said “come and find me at the Aeroparque [airport]” because he was travelling from Neuquén. I went in my car, I went to look for him, and he offered me [a position in CONADEP]. I spent two days trying to convince myself and at the end I accepted. I accepted because I realised that every effort had to be made to ensure that it was a success. What’s more, I had promised myself that I was going to see them [the military] in prison, and that I was going to work for nothing less than to see them in prison. And in the end I was able to’ (pp.23-24).

Vera Jarach:

pp.172 – 173:

‘... te cuento esto que es una cosa reciente para mí, y que tiene mucha importancia para mí, pero la tiene en la medida en que he cambiado un poco mi discurso. Entonces, pasó – vos ya sebes que yo soy una italiana, una judía, venida en Argentina en 1939, yo tenía 11 años, cumplí 11 años en el buque, en el barco, cuando vine porque las leyes raciales de del fascismo de Mussolini. Entonces, a mí siempre, hablé siempre de las dos historias, porque me ponen un micrófono adelante, tengo que decir dos palabras y digo: “You tengo mi abuelo que se quedó en Italia y terminó en Auschwitz; no hay tumba y, después de muchos años, mi hija lo mismo, la misma. La situación completamente distinta, muy lejos de mi país de origen, pero también, también en un campo de concentración, y no hay tumba también, no puede haber tumba.”’

‘I’ll tell you something that [happened] recently to me, and which is very important to me, but whose importance lies in the measure it has encouraged me to change my speech a little bit. So, it happened that – you already know that I’m Italian, Jewish, [I came] to Argentina in 1939, I was 11 when, I had my eleventh birthday on the boat, the ship, when I came because of the fascist racial laws of Mussolini. So, I always, I [speak] of the two histories, because they put a microphone in front of me and I have to say a

few things. And I say: "I have my grandfather who stayed in Italy and ended up in Auschwitz; there is no grave. And after a few years, my daughter the same, the same. The situation [is] completely different, very far from my country of origin, but also, also in a concentration camp, and there is no grave here either; there cannot ever be a grave" (pp.13-14).

p.173:

'se resalta: está el nombre de mi abuelo. Entonces, yo tuve algo muy fuerte allí – no hay palabra que lo traduce – en Italiano se dice "schianto". Es como algo, un disgarro interno, y dije "Bueno, yo voy a cambiar en mi recorrido de memoria" porque, en general, empezaba siempre por lo de acá. Y yo digo "No, voy a contra en la línea de tiempo correcta. Voy a empezar por allá."

'It strikes me: there is the name of my grandfather. So, I [experienced] something strong there – there isn't a word to translate it – in Italian we say "*schianto*." It's something like, an internal rupture. And I said: "Well, I'm going to change the way I remember" because, usually, I always start with that of here. And I say "No, I'm going to relate it in the proper line of time. I'm going to start from there." (p.14).

p. 173:

'Sabíamos que podían estar en peligro. Entonces, cada uno, a nosotros, a nuestra hija le empezamos a decir "Por qué no te mandamos a Italia? Por un periodo, estudias allí." Nadie se quería ir, nadie se quería ir, pero además, cada uno a su manera, Muchos se exiliaron, muchos se exiliaron allá, mucha gente se exilió, de todas las edades. Y bueno, esos se salvaron, y los que se quedaron no ... Nosotros hubiéramos querido que nuestra hija se fuera a Italia, pero no lo aceptó, no quiso. Era ya una persona, era ya grande mi hija, y no quiso, como tantas otras personas que se quisieron quedar porque era una resistencia.'

'We knew that they [young people] could be in danger. So, each one [to their own], to us, to our daughter we began to say: "Why don't we send you to Italy? Just for a while, you could study there?" No-one wanted to leave, no-one wanted to leave, but also, each to their own, many [people] went into exile, many people went into exile over there, many went into exile, of all ages. And well, they saved their lives, those that remained did not ... We would have loved our daughter to have gone to Italy, but she didn't accept this, she didn't want to. She was already by that stage a person, my daughter was already grown up, and she didn't want to. Like so many other people she wanted to stay because this was a form of resistance' (p.24).

Vera Jarach:

p.177:

'Yo iba una vez por mes a la Casa Rosada, que había una oficina del Ministerio del Interior, donde había oficiales que nos contestaban. Y ¿qué nos contestaban en el caso de mi hija? Una vez me dicen "¿Su hija es una linda chica?" "Sí" "Entonces señora, es la trata. Estas chicas se las secuestran y se las llevan a otro país a ser prostitutas." Esta fue una contestación. Otra vez voy y me dice "Señora, no se preocupe tanto, haga de cuenta que su hija está de vacaciones," esto es lo que decían, o si no, decían "se habrá ... ido, escapade de casa. No están, no están. Desaparecieron." Y esta palabra empezó a tener, más que un sentido, era una verdad: no estaban, pero estaban.'

'I went once a month to the Casa Rosada [Presidential Palace] where there was an office of the Interior Ministry where there were officials that replied [to our enquiries]. And what did they tell us in the case of my daughter? Once they tell me: "Your daughter is a beautiful girl?" "Yes" [I replied]. "In that case, this is what happens. These girls are kidnapped and taken to other countries to become prostitutes." That was one answer. Another time I go and they say to me "Señora, don't worry so much, bear in mind that your daughter is on holiday," that's what they said. Or if not, they said "she will have left home. She's not here, she's not here. They've disappeared." And this word began to contain, more than a sense, it was a truth: they weren't there, but they were there' (p.31).

Taty Almeida:

p.178:

‘El derecho que tenemos, que no nos han permitido – hasta esa crueldad – no los pudimos enterrar a nuestros hijos, no podemos hacer el duelo, ¿entendés? El dolor se profundiza, porque perder un hijo, en cualquier circunstancia, es un dolor que no tiene nombre, no, no, ... no van a encontrar un nombre. Por ejemplo, si vos decís “es viuda o vuido”, se sabe que es porque murió el marido, si hablás de huérfanos, es porque murieron sus padres. Son las palabras, pero no vas a encontrar, no hay una palabra que signifique lo que es la muerte de un hijo. Es tal el dolor, pero era, y nosotras que ni siquiera lo pudimos cuidar, por enfermedad, hasta ultimo momento, enterrarlo, ni siquiera eso.’

‘The right that we have that they have not permitted us – they were even this cruel – [is that] we couldn’t bury our children, we couldn’t mourn them, do you understand? The pain becomes more profound, because to lose a child, in whatever circumstances, is a pain that doesn’t have a name, you’re, you’re ... you’re not going to find a name [for it]. For example, if you say, “she’s a widow, he’s a widow” then it’s understood that it is because their spouse died, if you talk of orphans it’s because their parents died. These are the words, but you’re not going to find one, there is no word to describe what it is for a child to die. Such is the pain, but there it is, and we couldn’t even look after our children, through illness, to the end, bury them, we couldn’t even do that’ (p.8).

el parque de la memoria

as a symbolic cemetery

of the innocents

embodied practices of memory

and mourning in the memory park:

original spanish quotations

Vera Jarach:

p.190:

‘lo más importante es el monumento ... porque están los nombres, los nombres de miles de personas que no tienen tumba. Entonces, cada ... digamos, todo ser humano, toda cultura, desde que el mundo existe, toda cultura tiene ritos, ¿verdad? Uno de los ritos, es el final de la vida, con un funeral, con ritos fúnebres, y con ... una tumba. Bueno, la mayoría no la tiene. Después vamos a hablar de la tarea de los antropólogos; se rescatan, a veces, los restos. Pero, ¿qué es una tumba? Una tumba es un lugar donde la persona que vivió tiene una constancia de lo que fue su vida. O sea, hay una fecha. Hay una fecha, a veces hay un epitafio, y esto indica la presencia de una persona que existió, cosa que la dictadura quiso borrar. O sea, quiso, no solamente desaparece[r] las personas físicas, sino que es como que no existieron, no están. Entonces, tener un monumento con los nombres, no es una, por supuesto que no es un cementerio. Nosotros no queremos que sea un cementerio. Es un cenotafio, los que se llama un cenotafio [...] En Buenos Aires, por ejemplo, hay otro cenotafio en la plaza San Martín, que es para los muertos en Malvinas. Están los nombres, y bueno, esa es una importancia.’

‘the most important [thing about the park] is the monument ... because there are the names. The names of thousands of persons that don’t have a grave. So, every ... let’s say, every human being, every culture, [from the beginning of time], every culture has its own rituals, isn’t that right? One of the rituals [comes] at the end of one’s life, with the funeral, with the funeral rites, and with ... a tomb. Well, the majority don’t have one. Afterwards we’re going to talk of the work of the anthropologists; sometimes remains are rescued. But, what is a tomb? A tomb is a place where the person who lived has proof of what was their life. Or rather, there is a date, sometimes there is an epitaph, and this indicates the presence of someone who existed, something that the dictatorship wanted to erase. Or rather, it wanted to, to not only disappear the persons physically, but [do so] as if they never existed, they are not here. So, to have a monument with the names, it’s not a ... of course, it’s not a cemetery. We don’t want it to become a cemetery. It’s a cenotaph. It’s what they call a cenotaph ... In Buenos Aires, for example, there is another cenotaph in the plaza San Martín, which is for the dead of the Falklands [War]. The names are there, and well, that is important’ (p.3).

Iván Wrobel:

p. 192:

'no querían que el parque fuera un sustituto de un cementerio, sino que ahora nos sirviera de un memorial, más que nada pensando en eso, en que no sea pensando para venir a ver a un nombre particular, sino pensando para recordar un proceso colectivo. O también proponían, por ejemplo, que el que venga a tirar flores, en vez de ponerlas al lado del nombre, las tire al río. Pero la realidad es que, con el uso cotidiano también, van, no sé, hay gente que viene y que ve el nombre por primera vez en su vida. Ve un nombre escrito en un lugar y lo toca y se emociona ... y deja la flor ahí.'

'didn't want the park to become a substitute for a cemetery, but rather as something that would serve as a memorial; more than anything they were thinking about this. That is, they weren't thinking about coming to see a name in particular, but thinking of it [as somewhere] to remember a collective process. Or they proposed for instance that instead of coming to place a flower next to the name, they would throw them into the river. But the reality is that, with the quotidian use as well, there are people that come and see the name for the first time in their lives. They see the name written [on the monument], they touch it and they get emotional ... and they leave the flower there' (p.21).

Marcelo Brodsky:

p.194:

'Permite el proceso del luto o de elaboración, pero no es un cementerio, para nada. Es un lugar active, abierto, donde viene la gente a tomar mate el fin de semana, a andar en bicicleta ... no pasa a ser un cementerio. Es un monumento público que recuerda a víctimas para los familiares de los desaparecidos, que es el único lugar en el que está el nombre. Pero al mismo tiempo, es un parquet público, donde hay movimiento de jóvenes, movimiento, de música, de vida, de actividades, de fútbol, de bicicleta, es decir, en un lugar abierto, un lugar, un espacio público de la ciudad. Y nos interesa que sea así, no queremos un cementerio, no nos interesa un cementerio, queremos un lugar de vida en recordación [...] Una tumba contiene un cuerpo, continen el cuerpo, por empezar, que es una diferencia substancial. Eso es un monumento, es decir, recuerda, a través del nombre, a un ausente, que no está, que no tiene cuerpo. Entonces, la ausencia del cuerpo es absolutamente y radicalmente diferente de un cementerio. No está el cuerpo, no hay ningún cuerpo ahí [en el parquet] solamente de la tipografía del nombre, digamos, si entendemos, se llama cuerpo tiopográfico a la letra, pero no hay ningún cuerpo humano.'

'[Though] it permits a process of mourning or of elaboration, it is not a cemetery, not at all. It is an active place, open, where people come to sip *mate* at the weekend, to roam around on bicycles, it doesn't become a cemetery. It's a public monument that remembers victims for the relatives of the disappeared, which is the only place where you can find the name. But at the same time, it's a public park, where there is movement of young people, movement, music, life, activities, football, bicycles, that is, in an open space, a place, a public space in the city. And that's how we see it, we don't want a cemetery, we're not interested in a cemetery, we want a place of life in memory [...] A tomb contains the body, they contain the bodies, for a start, which is a substantial difference. This is a monument, that is, it remembers, through the name, an absent [person], who is not there, who doesn't have a body. So, the absence of the body is absolutely and radically different to a cemetery. The body isn't there, there is no body there [in the park], only the typography of the name, let's say, if we understand it [like this], the lettering is called the typographical body. But there's no human body' (p.15).

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