

Site of Memory and Site of Forgetting

The Repurposing of the Punta Carretas Prison

by
Ana Guglielmucci and Luciana Scaraffuni Ribeiro
Translated by
Margot Olavarria

Efforts to classify the Punta Carretas Prison, repurposed as a shopping center, into a “site of forgetting” imposed through the logic of the market obscure the ongoing productivity of the place as a vehicle of memory linked not only to the military dictatorship but also to the privatization of public patrimony. They fail to account for the dynamic and complex process of construction of a common past resulting from direct confrontations between different sectors of Uruguayan society. The increasing politicization and spatialization of collective memory, focusing on past experiences of repression, overlook the link between memory, history, nation-state, museum, everyday life, people’s dreams, their sense of the future, and utopia.

Los esfuerzos para clasificar la prisión de Punta Carretas (ahora transformada en un centro comercial) como un “lugar del olvido” impuesto por medio de la lógica del mercado ocultan la productividad en curso del lugar como vehículo de la memoria ligado no únicamente a la dictadura militar pero también a la privatización del patrimonio público. No toman en cuenta el proceso dinámico y complejo de la creación de un pasado común que es el resultado de los enfrentamientos directos entre diferentes sectores de la sociedad uruguaya. La creciente politicización y espacialización de la memoria colectiva, con el énfasis en las experiencias pasadas de represión, pasa por alto el vínculo entre la memoria, la historia, el estado nacional, el museo, la vida cotidiana, los sueños de la gente, el sentido del futuro y la utopía.

Keywords: Site of memory, Site of forgetting, Punta Carretas, Uruguay

Ana Guglielmucci has a Ph.D. in social anthropology and is a professor of anthropology at the University of Buenos Aires and an assistant researcher at the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research. She has published *La consagración de la memoria: Una etnografía acerca de la institucionalización del recuerdo sobre los crímenes del terrorismo de Estado en la Argentina* (2013) and *Memorias desveladas: Prácticas y representaciones colectivas sobre el encierro por razones políticas* (2007). Luciana Scaraffuni Ribeiro is a doctoral candidate in social anthropology at the University of the Andes, an associate researcher of the national research system in Uruguay, and is currently working on the doctoral dissertation project “Forms and Practices of Resistance of Uruguayan Culture during the Civil-Military Dictatorship (1973–1985).” They thank Carrie Hamilton, Roberta Villalón, and Clare Weber for their valuable comments on the first version of this article. Margot Olavarria is a political scientist and a translator living in New York City.

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES, Issue XXX, Vol. XX No. XXX, Month 201X, 1–14
DOI: 10.1177/0094582X15570882
© 2015 Latin American Perspectives

The more we are expected to remember, as a result of the explosion and the marketing of memory, the greater the risk of forgetting and the need to forget. What is at issue is distinguishing between usable and disposable pasts. . . . Discernment and productive remembrance are required; the culture of the masses and the virtual media are not inherently irreconcilable with that proposal . . . and perhaps it is time to remember the future instead of worrying only about the future of memory.

—Andreas Huyssen, 2002

In recent years, researchers such as Susana Draper (2011) and María Eugenia Allier Montaño (2008) and essayists such as Hugo Achugar (2003), among others, have promoted a debate about the demarcation of the sites of memory of the last military dictatorship in Uruguay (1973–1985). Our approach to this issue, from an anthropological perspective based on sociocultural studies (e.g., Anderson, 2006; Connerton, 2008; 2009; Huyssen, 2002), aims to problematize some of the assessments of these works. We argue that the delimitation of these spaces is not simply a product of government but the result of the representations and constructions of various social groups, including quiet disputes that occur within and outside of the very spaces that are targeted for designation as sites of memory or forgetting.

Analyzing a space such as the former prison of Punta Carretas, now a shopping center, allows us to examine Uruguayan society's significations and representations of the place and to reflect on the various means of appropriation of material and patrimonial records of the past in urban public spaces. At the same time, it problematizes the classification of certain spaces as sites of memory and /or of forgetting in a historical context characterized by the increasing politicization and spatialization of memory (Draper, 2011; Guglielmucci, 2013). With this objective we employ the concepts of *lieux de memoire* (Nora, 1984) and what might be identified, in counterposition, as sites of collective forgetting due to the deformation or manipulation of memories (Candau, 2002), concepts that have been used in the social sciences to examine the construction and transmission of memories in the public sphere. We use them to interpret the repurposing of the Punta Carretas Prison as a shopping center, giving special attention to studies that refer to this process as the imposition of social forgetting through the logic of the market (Achugar, 2004). Our central hypothesis is that this approach obscures the ongoing productivity of the place as a vehicle of memory linked not only to the military dictatorship but also to the logic of neoliberalism and the privatization of public patrimony (Yaffé, 2010). Such macroeconomic processes, deepened since the 1990s, have promoted a reorganization of cities and citizenship in terms of the logic of the market and globalization (García Canclini, 1995), which has been accompanied by a noticeable increase in museumization and monumentalization of common memories encouraged by the supposed fear of society's forgetting its present-past. In this sense, as Andreas Huyssen (2002) points out, one of the questions that we should pose is how to explain the success of the museological past in an era characterized by the loss of a sense of history, the deficit of memory, and generalized amnesia. The planned obsolescence of consumer society has found its counterpoint in an implacable "museomania." This collective amnesia does not necessarily have to be read as equivalent to personal or subjective forgetting,

but it can be thought of as selective and dynamic memory linked to the difficulty of transmitting personal memories to those who did not live those events (Yerushalmi, 1998) or its counterpart, the impossibility of being heard (Pollak, 2006).

In considering these observations about modernity, the deficit of memory, and museomania, we question whether the repurposing of the Punta Carretas Prison into a shopping center (instead of a museum or a memorial) can be read as simply the epitome of the imposition of a collective amnesia in connection with certain government policies related to the dictatorial past that guaranteed impunity for crimes committed during the military regime (such as the Law of Expiration).¹ Our objective is to reconsider this reading, which tends to sift in advance through our analyses of the relation between memory, forgetting, and materiality, and therefore we begin by providing a brief historical review of the former prison of Punta Carretas and some sociological interpretations of its present use with the aim of initiating a new debate. This exploration will allow us to critically examine some epistemological approaches to the social memory linked to museums or memorials about the past dictatorships of the Southern Cone.

THE FORMER PRISON OF PUNTA CARRETAS

The Punta Carretas Shopping Center is located on José Ellauri Street between Solano García and García Cortinas, in the neighborhood known as Punta Carretas, near the waterfront promenade of the city of Montevideo. The building was constructed around 1910 to serve as a men's prison. In the 1960s political in addition to ordinary prisoners were held there, mainly activists and leaders of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement—MLN) of the Tupamaros and other leftist organizations. On September 6, 1971, 106 political prisoners and 5 ordinary prisoners escaped from the prison through a tunnel that they named "Marx," which was linked with another named "Bakunin" that had been dug by anarchists who escaped in 1921. The stories of this and other political events circulated in the documentary *Tupamaros: The Escape from Punta Carretas*, shown on the History Channel in April 2009, which was based on the testimonies of police who worked in the prison at that time, politicians, and many members of the MLN who were detained there, among them the current president of the republic, José Mujica. These testimonies were also published in *Huellas de la represión* (Centro Municipal de Fotografía, 2009), in which places used as detention centers (prisons, military and police locations, and private homes) were identified photographically.²

For Uruguayan society, the Punta Carretas Shopping Center is a symbolic space that accommodates an abundance of different kinds of memories about the past. These memories make reference to, among other things, repression by the Uruguayan state, political activism in revolutionary organizations, practices of resistance during the dictatorship, daily life in the neighborhood, and urban transformations. They are memories that circulate through books, documentaries, photographs, journalistic reports, blogs, academic research, and



Figure 1. The main entrance of the Punta Carretas Shopping Center, which preserves the architectural structure of the old prison. (Photo © Ana Guglielmucci 2012).

testimonies, among other means of diffusion.³ This condensation of memories of the place is not, however, reflected in any commemorative plaque placed on its façade, and this could be read as a failure to transmit the building's history to a broader public (Figure 1).

Beyond the absence of any type of external sign referring to the history of the building, other aspects of the place (such as the building's structure and the testimonies associated with lived or transmitted experiences) could bring the past into the present.⁴ In fact, the architectural structure of its façade and the arch in its interior are those of the former prison.

As Paul Connerton (2009) points out, the names of places mark a certain spatialization and anchoring of memory. The fact that people continue to refer to the building as "Punta Carretas" indicates mnemonic continuity associated with the building as an iconic place in Montevideo's history. This is important because the façade of the Punta Carretas Shopping Center does not need to have a commemorative plaque for those who do not know about its previous use to learn about its function as a prison. From our perspective, memory is not a process exclusively fixed to a space, understood as external materiality, condensed and immobile (although indisputably the space serves as mnemonic base). The movement of bodies through a space generates an interaction between the site and those who pass through it that configures a space of cultural memory linked to traced and incorporated itineraries (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). In this sense, it is relevant to underscore Connerton's warning about the notion that our societies hold about spaces—that they have to be thought of as fixed and static, which in a way would explain the demarcation or delimitation of memory in a specific space.⁵ In fact it is common to suppose that, for memory to be present, it has to be explicit, fixed, and delimited to a place and repository, which translates into museumization, monumentalization, or archives of memory. This prevalent conception about the relation between memory, space, and materiality has led to the assumption that the absence of marking of a place as a "site of memory" is equivalent to the inability to create an echo through the remembrance of those who pass through it or



Figure 2. The grocery store diagonally across from the former prison. (Photo © Luciana Scaraffuni 2013).

a lack of social processing about the past, especially in reference to critical events (Das, 1995).

Consistent with Connerton's proposal, the repurposing of the former Punta Carretas Prison as a shopping center cannot be read as an example of an imposed amnesia linked to the Law of Expiration. This spatial repurposing incorporates new relations generated from the place that differ from those given previously (in the time in which it functioned as a prison) and that lead to a resignification of the place's memories that is not necessarily the imposition of collective amnesia. In this regard, it is important to cite the reconstruction of a conversation we had with two neighbors of the place, a grocery store owner whose business is next-door to the building and a regular customer of that grocery store (Figure 2):

On García Cortina Street, on one of the sides of the shopping center, a grocery store still exists in one of the oldest buildings in the neighborhood. During a visit to the store, we found that the owner and a neighbor from the area were talking, and that moment allowed us to ask them about times past. When asked why sometimes people did not remember that the shopping center had been a prison, the neighbor's words were "No one remembers because we forget rapidly." But he quickly began to remember his childhood and youth in the neighborhood, which coincided with the existence of the prison in its different phases, since he has lived in the same place for more than 40 years. His memories were nostalgic; for him the neighborhood was better before because he was young. When he was a boy he played ball in the street, and if the ball went into the prison, the prisoners or even the police on shift would return it. Sometimes they would even let him go get it himself when the prisoners were not in recess, since according to him "the prisoners from then were not the prisoners of today and the police from back then are not the same police today." When asked about the escape of Tupamaros from the prison in 1971, the neighbor recalled that he was already twenty-something then and that at that moment he found himself in the bar in front of the prison, where the neighborhood residents always went to drink beer. "It was a quiet neighborhood. There were only houses, and everyone knew each other."

Given that the life and history of the place interact with the lives and history of the people who pass through it or visit it, the past and present of the place

are also resignified through the experiences of those who visit the shopping center or live near it. In this sense, concern about the possible loss of memory in this space is no longer relevant; what matters is the changing meanings that are assigned to its past uses and its current ones. For example, for some people this place means nothing more than a shopping trip, while for others it is significant in their lives either because they or people they know were detained there or because it is related to state terrorism and the current impunity for past crimes.⁶ In this connection, it is worth pointing out that even if the former prison had been institutionalized as a “site of memory,” this would not have determined the kinds of memories that would persist. As Hector Schmucler (2006) suggests, anyone can recognize historic places (“historic” in the sense that they are verifiable), even as spaces in which something used to be, but the memory that emerges is due not only to its material presence but to the voluntary act of remembering. What is remembered, as Schmucler (2006: 3) points out, is much more than the place: “There is no place that simply by being there brings a memory.” At the same time, it is wise to consider that although the planned obsolescence of consumer society and the fear of forgetting can demand the creation of memorials or museums of memory, the mass creation of these symbols can evolve into new forgettings (Huyssen, 2002). Among other issues is the fact that circumscribing certain facts in a museum or a monument means selecting certain events and leaving others aside. Then, as already noted in various studies (Draper, 2011; Guglielmucci, 2013), the events or facts destined for oblivion in a monument are also part of the stories that configure the space itself and its possible memories. For example, from the moment that the government grants them official status as sites of memory, these places are constrained by the institutional framework that has delimited and marked them. Susana Draper (2011) has characterized this phenomenon as a double bind in which certain marginal memories are incorporated into these museums’ scripts and because of this demarcation become dominant memories responding to a new arbitrary framing of images of the past. This is how a central narrative about the past is generated—by marginalizing other possible representations and narratives.

Vestiges of the prison persist in the Punta Carretas Shopping Center, a space of which the memory is permeated by the logic of neoliberalism and the subsequent architectural renovation to transform it into a commercial center (Figure 3). In 1989, the same year as the vote for amnesty for those who had committed crimes against humanity during the last civil-military dictatorship, the Punta Carretas Prison was emptied and abandoned. In 1991 the building was sold for US\$7 million (Allier Montaño, 2008: 98), and in 1994 the renovations to convert the prison into a shopping center were finished (Centro Municipal de Fotografía, 2009: 10). In a historical context in which the interpretation of past political violence and how to judge those responsible was being debated, the repurposing of the prison into a shopping center was read by some members of social movements and analysts as being synonymous with forgetting about and granting impunity for state crimes.

Pointing to the link between this architectural reconfiguration, the deepening of neoliberal political-economic measures, and the abandonment of the prosecution of past state crimes, Allier Montaño (2008) and Achugar (2003)



Figure 3. Interior of the shopping center, showing an arch that was part of the structure of the former prison. (Photo © Luciana Scaraffuni 2013).

have characterized the Punta Carretas Shopping Center as a “place of imposed forgetting and consumption.” Our analysis seeks to go beyond this assessment, taking into account that the shopping center constitutes, in its neighborhood, a landscape or itinerary that shelters diverse memories— that questions different memories of the place that are not necessarily expressed in overt struggles over property or meanings of the past in that place, such as those involved in the repurposing of clandestine centers of detention in Argentina as “spaces of memory about state terrorism.” Many of the detention centers were reclaimed by neighborhood and human rights organizations to denounce state crimes, thus becoming objects of dispute among different social groups and even of material and symbolic conquest. This did not occur in the same way in Uruguay. In the city of Montevideo, the main institutional projects related to the dictatorship are the Memorial to Detained and Disappeared Persons, inaugurated in 2001 in Vaz Ferreira Park, and the Museum of Memory Cultural Center, inaugurated in 2006 in the Prado Norte neighborhood, which was the country home of the dictator Maximo Santos (1847–1889).

In this urban-memorial context, when we refer to the iconic building in the Punta Carretas neighborhood, we can speak of social processes of memory-forgetting that mark the space, resignifying existing materiality in relation to the past. We cannot restrict Punta Carretas to a “site of forgetting,” as proposed by Allier Montaño, or as a “site of memory,” since it does not constitute a “place of excess closed in on itself,” as Pierre Nora would put it, a place that condenses memory and folds over an identity, a meaning, and may end up “saturated with meaning” (Candau, 2002). The public identification of a space as a former clandestine center of detention or prison is a way of reconstructing the history of what was, which does not keep memory from circulating by way of that space or being transmitted through it in different ways, beyond the initial intention. In other words, the past is being reconstructed today in multiple ways through the shopping center building even though it has not been recognized or demarcated by the state in a particular way.

In an exercise that is consonant with the one realized by Susana Draper (2011) about the content of the exhibition at the Museum of Memory, we ask



Figure 4. The '80s/Bands and Blocs, produced by the Municipal Center of Photography in Montevideo and installed in Rodó Park December 2012–February 2013. The poster contains a photograph of the door of one of the cells of the old Punta Carretas prison. (Photo © Luciana Scaraffuni 2013).

why a mention of the recent past of the Punta Carretas Shopping Center is assumed necessary to affirm that Uruguayan society “remembers.” In fact, various institutional, social and political, artistic, academic, or journalistic narratives about the recent past are periodically staged in which there is reference to Punta Carretas—for example, in the photo exhibit mounted by the Municipal Center of Photography in Montevideo in Rodó Park (Figure 4), the permanent exhibit at the Museum of Memory, and the urban intervention realized by the National Comedy on June 27, 2013, the fortieth anniversary of the coup. The selection of points for this intervention included spaces that had witnessed events concerning the dictatorship, with the former prison of Punta Carretas being one of them. This intervention, realized with the support of the municipality in the framework “Montevideo, Ibero-American Capital of Culture,” consisted of an audiovisual presentation in which actors from the National Comedy represented the testimonies of victims of state terror.⁷ The activity called “Time Passes” was held outside of the shopping center, aiming to appeal to passersby through sensitive testimonies projected on a giant screen located in front of Community Center No. 5. This activity sought to denounce impunity with regard to past state crimes, given that the Law of Expiration is still in force (Scaraffuni, 2012). At the same time, it sought to activate memories circulating in and about Punta Carretas, since even though the life histories that were acted out did not have a direct correlation with what happened in the prison, they were part of a symbolic activity that identified it and denoted it as an important social and cultural locus of political life, past and present. The absence of public and explicit material references to the past does not necessary lead to forgetting.

SITE OF MEMORY OR SITE OF FORGETTING?

Pierre Nora coined the notion of the “site of memory” in a monumental work divided into seven volumes and published in France between 1984 and 1992.

The definition, as it originally appeared in the first volume, was a place where “memory crystallizes and secretes itself,” where “the exhausted capital in collective memory condenses and is expressed” (Nora, quoted in Allier Montaño, 2008: 87). In turn, he made clear that to be considered as such, a place had to have three dimensions, material, symbolic, and functional, although they might be present to different degrees. He added that what made a place a site of memory was the play between memory and history—that it was the interaction between them that allowed its reciprocal overdetermination—and that a will to remember was always required.

In the following two volumes, Nora expanded upon the concept of the site of memory as any significant unit, material or ideal, that “the will of men or the effect of time has created a symbolic element of the material patrimony of a community” (quoted in Allier Montaño, 2008: 87). The site of memory was a “crossroads” of paths of memory and persisted “despite being constantly remodeled, retaken, and revisited.” A neglected site of memory was “at most, the memory of a place” (88). This definition, as many analysts have noted (Allier Montaño, 2008; Lavabre, 2007; Valensi, 1996), has provided an exceptional tool for making history of memory. The export of this concept to other latitudes has, however, raised a series of questions over its application.

According to Eugenia Allier Montaño (2008: 90), the first objection has been concerned with the translation of the expression: “It is a neologism of Latin origin, from the ancient rhetorical tradition of Cicero and Quintilian. . . . Neither English nor German contains an equivalent.” The second objection has referred to the specific context of the appearance of the notion (at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s), the moment when “it became evident that the immense capital of collective memory was falling into oblivion, to revive only by means of a scientific and reconstructive history.” This was a moment that, according to Allier Montaño, was specifically French, although for other analysts it was part of broader historical processes linked to the crisis of socialism, the deepening of capitalist development, and Western modernity (Huyssen, 2002).

Allier Montaño argues that the first objection does not limit its export because questions about the diagnosis of the present and the ways of writing history are applicable to other national cases but the second objection deserves more attention. It seems to us, however, that the use of this tool in studies of memories of the recent past in the Southern Cone has brought to light a series of additional difficulties about its application to realities that are very different from the French. These difficulties are related to the growing politicization and spatialization of memory in Latin America, which have revealed controversy about the appropriation of records of the past that makes these sites ambiguous and conflictive (Draper, 2011). Struggles to establish territorial markers and disputes over the meaning of dates and public spaces have arisen in various Latin American cities in recent decades (Jelin and Langland, 2003). Fundamentally, this is because these sites generate an abundance of demands about remembrance and forgetting that determine the way in which memory is thematized, demarcated, and displayed in and from the present (Guglielmucci, 2013).

The counterpart of the site of memory had been described as a place of forgetting or of fractured memory (Achugar, 2004; Allier Montaño, 2008; Viñar,

1993). Allier Montaño (2008: 98), drawing on the work of Lucette Valensi, calls this a place that crystallizes the forgetting of an event or a period of history and categorizes the Punta Carretas Shopping Center as such a place. In Candau's (2002: 115) terms, in contrast, a place of forgetting is one in which "memory did not engage, did not become incarnate," as a result of the censorship that a society imposes on itself with regard to the construction of its collective memory. But do such spaces inevitably reflect censorship? Or is it simply that the stories about these places circulate by way of other, nonspatial vehicles as well?

Draper (2011: 184) recommends reflection on the "politics of the spatialization of memory"—the criteria for appropriation of the past and the configuration of memory in public spaces. For Draper a society's "duty of memory" of the recent past is expressed in the establishment of museums of memory and monuments that become part of urban tourist sightseeing circuits. The memory that is configured in such spaces is biased (or, better, localized) in that it makes visible and situates some aspects of the past and omits others. A "politics of knowledge" determines which aspects are made perceptible and what is marginalized in different places.

One problematic aspect of this tendency toward a public policy of spatialization of memory is linked to the naturalization of the circulation of memory in the places that house it, the memory in question being the one that is legitimated by the space designated as a site of memory (a museum, a monument, a plaque, a building). The memory that is thus demarcated represents "a thin layer of recent history" (Draper, 2011: 184). When a particular space is made available as a site of memory for the purpose of organizing and reorganizing the past (Candau, 2002), the memory ends up being to some degree manipulated and biased but consecrated by the materiality that sustains it (Guglielmucci, 2013).

Because of this, we are not arguing for the location of the memory of the dictatorial past in the current Punta Carretas Shopping Center. Rather, we seek to reflect on the act of making memory, recognizing it as a place where what was and what is are simultaneously present in a dynamic process of memory-forgetting. As various writers have pointed out (Candau, 2002; Halbwachs, 1952; 1968; Lavabre, 2007), all remembrance implies a process of selection among what was, what is, and what is expected. As a result, struggles over the meanings of the past may be situated in a place or not, but this does not make the place a site of memory or forgetting. The Punta Carretas building is not necessarily a place of disputed memory. It may be more interesting to argue that what is perceptible is primarily what is shown rather than what is explicitly allowed to be seen and what is deliberately hidden. Perhaps we should ask the neighbors and passersby what this building represents to them and how it is intertwined with their experiences and with Uruguay's political-economic history.

FINAL REFLECTIONS: WHAT FORGETTING? WHY MEMORY?

With regard to the former Punta Carretas Prison, in which it is often assumed that history has been erased or demolished, it is necessary to recognize that

“what is forgotten is holes filled with something” (Candau, 2002: 81). The act of forgetting, as Connerton (2008) points out, should not be considered a failure; forgetting and remembering are two sides of the same coin. The Punta Carretas Shopping Center is not an epiphenomenon of fractured memory or memory in ruins but a place of construction and resignification of the past and the present through the differential appropriation of the space. The relation between remembering and forgetting is complementary (Candau, 2002).

The transformation of the former prison into a shopping center was accompanied by the economic, political, and cultural changes linked to the neoliberal policies implemented during and after a series of military dictatorships. This transformation configured new forms of social and cultural relations—in Néstor García Canclini’s (1995) words, of citizenship—in pursuit of the satisfaction of individuals’ consumption needs. It is striking that the transformation of the prison into a shopping center has jeopardized the repurposing of the space with an architecture that can be considered a palimpsest, with past architectural forms overlain by new features (Harvey, 1998 [1990]).

It cannot be said that there are no memories circulating in the Punta Carretas Shopping Center. The place signifies and resignifies the relations between persons within it and with the surrounding neighborhood and the city. The space generates certain corporeal dynamics, just as it did when it was a prison, for, as Foucault (1979: 136) says, “The body [is] in the grip of very strict powers, which [impose] on it constraints, prohibitions, or obligations.” In the organization of movements within the space, bodies are guided by vast glass surfaces, escalators, and elevators that guide bodies. While the prison and the shopping center generate different spatial experiences associated with, among other things, the architectural changes of modernity, they also produce what Foucault called a particular “exercise” in bodies, making the individual obedient and useful to the tasks of the space whether it is a place of obligatory confinement or a place of leisure and consumption.

A type of habitual memory also enters into this process, since in this physical interaction with the space memory is also being configured in bodies. In other words, an incorporated memory is generated that seeks our bodies’ response “so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines” (Foucault, 1979: 138). Communication is generated between the bodies and the space, causing them to appropriate it and integrate it into their habitual and everyday movements, which in turn generates an internalized memory of the place (Connerton, 2009). Reference to this habitual memory does not mean overlooking the profound differences between the corporeal discipline mediated by penitentiary confinement and that mediated by consumption, but it also does not mean failing to recognize that in both spaces mechanisms of surveillance and control are imposed on people that may be incorporated passively or creatively, implicitly or explicitly evaded or resisted. This occurs in what Connerton (2009) calls a “locus,” a place of cultural memory, which signifies and resignifies different relations of power through everyday practices. The locus spatializes individuals’ practices, whereas the monument produces a sense of having always been there, generating a familiarity with that construction of memory that eventually allows us to ignore it.

In sum, regarding the interpretation of a place as a site of memory or forgetting, worrying about identifying it as one or the other, as has been done with regard to the iconic Punta Carretas building, prevents us from reading the memories that converge there between the lines. Debates about memory in the Southern Cone have tended to be founded on the relation between memory and space, and this has prevented us from noticing the interstices of memory—beyond what is shown or not shown—in a particular space, what links memory not only to history, the state, or the museum but to everyday life, dreams, the future, and utopia. The owner of the grocery store at Punta Carretas does not forget that this building was a prison; what he misses is the scale and dynamic of human relations in the neighborhood, where “everyone knew each other.” Memory operates in elusive ways and sometimes through underground networks. Of course, there are official regimes of memory, constructed through the implementation of public policies of remembrance-forgetting, but this does not anchor them in our own representations of ordinary life. Perhaps the Punta Carretas building, instead of displaying its history as a prison through an explicit exhibit such as a commemorative plaque, allows us to experience ways of relating marked by broad socioeconomic changes and to see other pasts and possible futures in the interstices of the place. If we understand the space as a palimpsest—an ancient manuscript that preserves traces of earlier writing that has been erased or an ancient tablet that has been erased in order to write on it again—the spatial localization of memory becomes an opportunity for reflection and even intervention in collective remembrance. Neither memory nor forgetting is exclusively anchored in a material space or imposed by outside forces; rather, it corresponds to representations linked to experiences and desires. Perhaps it is time to focus our critical attention on this increasing politicization and spatialization of collective memory.

NOTES

1. Law 15.848 put an end to the exercise of the state’s punitive intention with respect to crimes committed up to March 1, 1985, by military or police officials in the course of the fulfillment of their duties or following orders (<http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/ AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=15848>). On April 16, 1989, a referendum was held on it and the law was reaffirmed (<http://www/factum.edu.uy/node/31>). In mid-2007 a campaign for a plebiscite on a constitutional amendment that would partially annul the law was conducted, and on June 14, 2009, the Electoral Court confirmed that enough signatures for it had been secured. The plebiscite was held on October 25, 2009, in conjunction with the national elections, and failed. The Supreme Court had declared the law constitutional in 1988 but late in 2009 declared that it was not. In Uruguay the constitutionality of laws is declared case by case, and being declared unconstitutional simply makes a law inapplicable to the particular case.

2. Through conversations with workers at the shopping center, neighbors, and people who were there to shop, we found different memories about the place, but all of them knew that it had been a prison before.

3. Including the documentary *Tupamaros: La fuga de Punta Carretas*, by Anima Films (<http://documentales.com/tupamaros-la-fuga-de-punta-carretas>), the exhibit Los 80/Bandas y Bandos at the Municipal Center of Photography; Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro’s (2010) *La fuga de Punta Carretas*, the stories posted on web sites (e.g., <http://www.elortiba.org/notapas1258.html>) and the blog <http://colectivoeprosario.blogspot.com/2011/09/uruguay-1971-2011-la-fuga-de-la-carcel.html>), and reports in the various national and international media (e.g., <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-176372-2011-09-09.html>).

4. Security guards, workers, and visitors told us that the shopping center had previously been a prison, mentioning that its name referred to the prison and the neighborhood and that there were many parts of the building that had been maintained since that time, such as the internal arch, the openings that had connected with the cells, and the wall in the parking lot behind the building, where the prison yard had been. One of the guards added that when some who had been guards at the time visited the shopping center they remembered stories about the place. A saleswoman in one of the shops commented that her brother had been an assistant to the architect when the prison was renovated and he told her that people who worked on the project felt the presence of ghosts.

5. Conducting various open-ended, in-depth interviews and informal conversations with neighbors of Punta Carretas, workers from the shopping center, and shop owners in the area, we noted their recollections and current perceptions about the place and its successive transformations. Simultaneously, we produced an ethnographic record and a documentary survey of the communications media (artistic interventions, photographs, documentaries, books, blogs, etc.) through which different testimonies about the space circulate. Based on the information collected through the fieldwork and the literature on the Punta Carretas Prison, we sought to broaden the questions on which we based this analysis and problematize the theoretical categories that are usually used in studies about memory.

6. According to Connerton (2009), an old principle holds that memory depends on topography. In fact, the art of memory was located within the great system of rhetoric that dominated classical culture, which was reborn in the Middle Ages and flourished during the Renaissance and only dissipated with the invention of printing in the eighteenth century.

7. The representation of the testimonies can be viewed in the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOiwkQNpQM>. The photos of the simultaneous transmission can be viewed at <http://comedianacional.montevideo.gub.uy/node/234> (accessed August 13, 2013).

REFERENCES

- Achugar, Hugo
 2003 "El lugar de la memoria, a propósito de monumentos (Motivos y paréntesis)," pp. 191–216 in E. Jelin and V. Langland (eds.), *Monumentos, memoriales y marcas territoriales*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
 2004 "Territorios y memoria versus lógica del mercado: a propósito de cartografías y shopping malls," pp. 117–228 in H. Achugar (ed.), *Planetas sin boca: Escritos efímeros sobre arte, cultura y literatura*. Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce.
- Allier Montaño, María Eugenia
 2008 "Place of memory: is the concept applicable to the analysis of memorial struggles? The case of Uruguay and its recent past." Translated by Christine Walsh. *Cuadernos del CLAEH*, 2d series, 31 (96–97): 87–109.
- Anderson, Benedict
 2006 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Candau, Joël
 2002 *Antropología de la memoria*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.
- Centro Municipal de Fotografía
 2009 *Huellas de la represión: Identificación de centros de detención del autoritarismo y la dictadura (1968–1985)*. Montevideo: Centro Municipal de Fotografía.
- Connerton, Paul
 2008 "Seven types of forgetting." *Memory Studies* 1 (1): 59–71.
 2009 *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Das, Veena
 1995 *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Draper, Susana
 2011 "De cárceles y museos: alas, itinerarios artísticos y encuadre de temporalidades." *Revista Contemporánea Historia y Problemas del Siglo XX* 2 (2): 183–201.

- Foucault, Michel
1979 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.
- García Canclini, Néstor
1995 *Consumidores y ciudadanos: Conflictos multiculturales de la globalización*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- Guglielmucci, Ana
2013 *La consagración de la memoria: Una etnografía acerca de la institucionalización del recuerdo sobre los crímenes del terrorismo de Estado en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Antropofagia.
- Halbwachs, Maurice
1952 *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Paris: PUF.
1968 *La mémoire collective*. Paris: PUF.
- Harvey, David
1998 (1990) *La condición de la posmodernidad: Investigación sobre los orígenes del cambio cultural*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.
- Huysen, Andreas
2002 "Préteritos presentes: medios, política, amnesia," pp. 13–40 in A. Huysen (ed.), *En busca del futuro perdido: Cultura y memoria en tiempos de globalización*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica/Goethe Institut.
- Jelin, Elizabeth and Victoria Langland (eds.)
2003 *Monumentos, memoriales y marcas territoriales*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Lavabre, Marie-Claire
2007 "Maurice Halbwachs y la sociología de la memoria," pp. 1–13 in A. Pérotin-Dumon (ed.), *Historizar el pasado vivo en América Latina*. <http://www.historizarelpasadovivo.cl/downloads/wilde.pdf> (accessed December 20, 2012).
- Low, Setha M. and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.)
2003 *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Nora, Pierre
1984 *Les lieux de mémoire*. Vol. 1. Paris: Gallimard.
- Pollak, Michael
2006 *Memoria, olvido y silencio: La producción social de identidades frente a situaciones límite*. La Plata: Ediciones al Margen.
- Scaraffuni, Luciana
2012 "La impunidad reina en Uruguay." February 25. <http://elturbion.com/?p=6560>. Accessed May 2014.
- Schmucler, Héctor
2006 *La inquietante relación entre lugares y memorias*. Buenos Aires: Memoria Abierta.
- Valensi, Lucette
1996 "Historia nacional, historia monumental, les lieux de mémoire (nota crítica)." *El Contemporáneo: Revista de Historia, Universidad de Barcelona*, no. 8, 39–44.
- Viñar, Marcelo
1993 *Fracturas de la memoria: Crónicas para una memoria por venir*. Montevideo: Trilce.
- Yaffé, Jaime
2010 "Dictadura y neoliberalismo en Uruguay (1973–1985)." Paper presented to the Seventh Conference of the Uruguayan Association for Economic History. <http://www.audhe.org.uy/jornadas/septimas-jornadas/Yaffe-Dictadura-y-neoliberalismo.pdf>. Accessed May 2014.
- Yerushalmi, Yosef
1998 "Reflexiones sobre el olvido," pp. 13–26 in Y. Yerushalmi, N. Loraux, H. Mommsen, J. C. Milner, and G. Vattimo (eds.), *Usos del olvido*, second edition. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.