

*Intermittences: Memory, Justice and the Poetics of the Visible in Uruguay.* By Ana Forcinito, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2018, 257 pages.

The poster for the documentary film *Por esos ojos*, directed by Gonzalo Arijón and Virginia Martínez, superimposes a blown up image of a child's face over a blurry typed document and an image of a street demonstration with photos of disappeared and stolen children. The eyes staring out at us belong to Mariana Zaffaroni Islas, from a childhood photograph, before she was abducted, illicitly adopted, and renamed by another family during the Uruguayan dictatorship. An image of the poster (161) and analysis of the documentary launches a moving chapter in Ana Forcinito's book *Intermittences: Memory, Justice and the Poetics of the Visible in Uruguay*, guiding the reader to appreciate the penetrating force of visual images as poetic gestures of evidence, justice, and memory. This is one of many haunting images that readers will encounter in this study of visual and testimonial work that documents the experiences of opposition, militancy, resistance, imprisonment, survival and the search for truth under but mostly after the military dictatorship in Uruguay (1973-1985).

Forcinito's new book is a welcome contribution to Southern Cone studies, post-dictatorship and human rights studies, and visual studies, with the added interdisciplinary emphasis on law and judicial processes in Uruguay. This exploration of testimonial work, fictional narratives, documentary film, and photography in post-dictatorship Uruguay fills a significant gap in the critical literature and expands the canon, particularly by adding to the chorus the voices and agency of women and youth.

The author's experience researching these topics is impressive, and she offers readers in English a rare perspective, since Uruguay is often side-lined in the critical literature on state terrorism and dictatorship, with much more attention given to Chile and Argentina (as the author points out directly in the Afterword [201-202]). This book presents a case for Uruguayan exceptionalism, based on historical and political circumstances such as the gradual political shift from democracy to authoritarianism in the early 1970s, and the legal limitations on investigating and prosecuting cases decided in 1986. *Intermittences* covers initiatives of the post-dictatorship, including the return to democracy and the varying processes of truth and reconciliation, judicial interventions, ways to honor the disappeared, and modes of telling and showing (Forcinito identifies her visual emphasis as "looking relations") the stories of those imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared, as well as witnesses and children.

Key events in Uruguayan history frame Forcinito's latest book and anchor our understanding of the post-dictatorship period. The Expiry Law of 1986, that imposed a statute of limitations on claims of human rights abuses, legally established amnesty and institutionalized the obstruction of justice for victims of the dictatorial regime. Many aspects of the law persist, and this tacit impunity has

defined the post-dictatorship decades. Other significant moments and places highlighted in this book include the refashioning of the Punta Carretas prison into a shopping mall (1994), the presidential Peace Commission (2000), installing the Memorial for the Disappeared (2001), and establishing the Memory Museum (2006), all in Montevideo. Forcinito problematizes the location and placement of these memory sites, along the lines of Pierre Nora and Andreas Huyssen, to reveal "an aesthetics of dissent that help redesign the visible" (9).

Each chapter begins with an example—a monument, a film, a photograph, an exhibit, a testimonial work—that aims to make visible the hidden, secret, buried, or ignored cases of human rights abuses in the country. This invisibility, that the politics of memory studies in the Southern Cone calls "pacts of forgetfulness" (*pactos de olvido*), drives Forcinito's exploration of both visual and textual works that aim to "make visible what remained invisible in the recording of evidence" (15). The judicial and the poetic (the latter a term that Forcinito uses in the wider sense of aesthetic projects articulated through the verbal or the visual) interweave in this study, adding to its originality but also to its challenges. At times the discourse is dense as the intricacies of the legal system and the political history of judicial processes bump up against cultural and visual studies analysis of films, exhibits, photographs and testimonial works. Forcinito also examines the use of public spaces for memory and confrontation, and maps a critical geography of collective memory. I found Chapter 4, "The Posttraumatic Subject, Plasticity, and Testimony," particularly profound in its treatment of films and narratives on the prison experience, including the perspectives of children. While the book is not specifically chronological (in fact, Forcinito underscores the gaps, forgotten episodes, hidden and obstructed information that make neat chronology impossible in these acts of memory), an attention to generations—of writers, of families, of political movements—structures the chapters. The last two chapters turn to disappeared children and the next generation.

The book's introduction links memory, poetics, evidence, and the visual. Forcinito resists the idea of collective memory as cohesive in favor of "a process of poetic rearticulation and . . . points of escape that are a result of a recurrent battle of memories and . . . struggles" (12). Her rethinking of testimonial practices (via writing as well as photography and film) updates this essential genre of Latin American cultural and political expression, engaging with the vast field of critical literature and contributing new perspectives. The frame of transitional justice, including its obstacles and challenges, leads to nuanced arguments that reveal the fraught, fractured and inconclusive nature of memory work.

The role of women's agency contributes an essential perspective. Testimonial and fictional narratives by Eduardo Galeano, Mauricio Rosencoff, Omar Prego and others are considered alongside lesser known voices of women such as Edda Fabbri, María Conde-

nanza, and Ana María Araujo. A particularly noteworthy project is the three-volume *Memoria para armar*, discussed in Chapter 5, that gathers texts by hundreds of Uruguayan women militants, detainees, witnesses, and children, in an array of genres. This project restores “the right to remember and the right to contribute to the construction of the social memory” (122). Forcinito points out the “constant shifting from the personal to the political” (56), for example, in her analysis of Graciela Jorge and Silvana Monzilo’s testimonial *Sin noticias de Margaret: uruguaya desaparecida en Argentina* in Chapter 2. The inclusion of photographic exhibits and documentary films, often featuring women or young girls, examines the evidentiary and aesthetic roles of photography in reconstructing collective memory. Women’s marginal voices counter hegemonic masculinity and uncover how women’s memory “disrupt[s] both phallogentric memories and patriarchal visual fields” (141).

*Intermittences* is theoretically rich and rigorously researched. Forcinito effectively interlaces theories of trauma, affect, space, psychoanalysis, gender and visual studies as they pertain to her corpus. The writing style, though, is uneven with passages that read

like awkward translations from Spanish. Some quotes from original Spanish works appear only in English, others include the original in endnotes. The technicalities of the judicial system are not always easy to grasp. In chapter 3, the term “hostages” appears early on, in reference to a group of Tupamaros political prisoners (75), and I wondered how to distinguish “hostage” from prisoner, detainee, or other category of victim. The definition appears two chapters later as “prisoners who spend years in solitary confinement” (118). These inconsistencies and structural issues undermine Forcinito’s finely argued and ethically informed analysis.

*Intermittences* offers readers a dynamic definition of collective memory and introduces understudied initiatives that have a strong public dimension. Forcinito leads us to see the invisible while guiding us “to observe that awareness of not completely knowing, of not having seen for sure” (70).

Marcy Schwartz  
Rutgers University